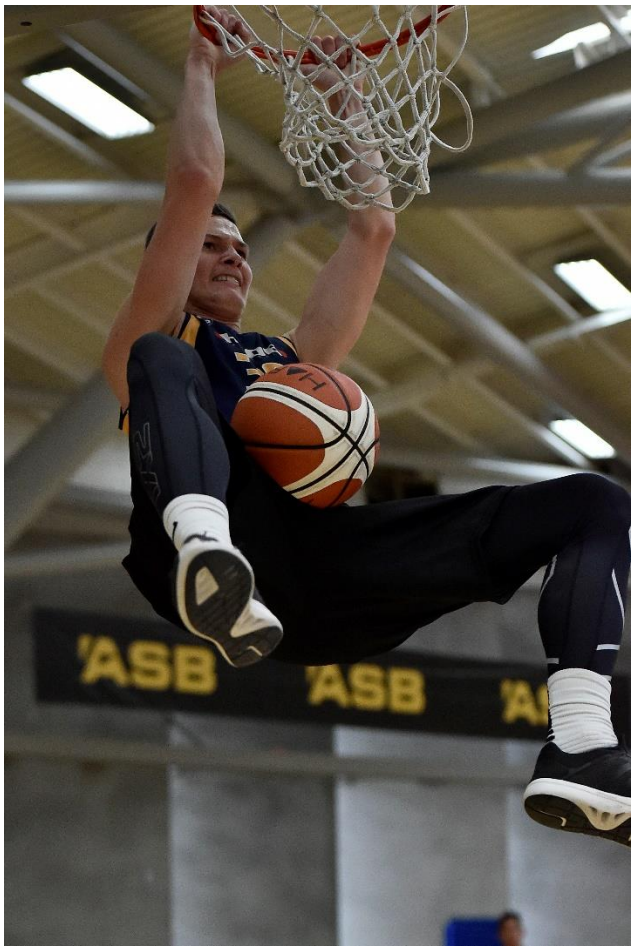
# Master's Thesis

## Identifying best practice in sport coaching and its application in coach education




**Master of Professional Practice**

**By: Stephen Ede 1000039808**

# Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of an institution of higher learning."

Candidate's Signature _____

Stephen Ede

# Acknowledgement

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# 1. Executive Summary

This thesis focuses on understanding what constitutes best practice in coaching. The requirement to do this has come about through a realignment of sport and recreation related courses across the tertiary sector which has been triggered by a Targeted Review of Qualification (TROQ) commissioned by the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA). As a coaching tutor at NZIS (New Zealand Institute of Sport) the review necessitated a reexamining of our level five and level six courses to see whether they were still meeting the needs of the students and the industry and whether the content of the courses was considered best practice.

Firstly, a definition of best practice had to be established. This was "a working method, or set of working methods, that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry" (Collins English Dictionary, 2018).

The next step was to look at what the literature had to say about best practice in coaching and what it currently looked like. Sources relevant to coaching best practice were examined including documents from SportNZ that they disseminate to coaches on the subject. As their lineage is very similar I also looked at best practice in education as well. I then also explored more into what the literature had to say about the purpose of sport, as I thought having a grasp on this would be key to unlocking what the key elements to be included in best practice should be. If, as the literature suggested, the higher purpose of sport is to teach values, morals and life lessons. Then the complexion of best practice could like quite different to a purely physical purpose to sport.

The next task was to find out what specifically best practice in coaching currently looks like and whether we were covering it in our courses and if we weren't where the gaps are. This was done by interviewing 12 respondents from a cross section of the coaching community including coach educators, international level coaches, recent graduates from my course and a university lecturer.

Their thoughts, along with what the literature said plus my own experiences in teaching my course and coaching were distilled into what I have termed the coaching wheel. The outside of the wheel contains the elements of leadership, connection, planning, culture, coaching philosophy and the purpose of sport, which corresponds primarily with our level five course. The inside of the wheel contains context, approach, outcome and reflection which corresponds with our level six course. The outer and inner circles are built around athlete development at the centre of the coaching wheel.

Once this process was done I had to examine my courses to see whether we covered each of the elements identified to a level that could be considered best practice. Particular areas identified as requiring improvement were coaching specific leadership, developing connections with athletes, more of an appreciation of long-term athlete development, development of team culture other than codes of conduct, more depth and practical application of coaching styles and teaching methods.

Undertaking this process has somewhat redefined my understanding of best practice in coaching. Going into the project I was expecting attention to detail, planning and analysis and the organisational aspects of coaching to come through as key elements of best practice. These elements were present, but far and away the greatest emphasis was placed on the softer skills such as connection and communication. This forced a rethink on my behalf as to what was really important in the coaching process. It also led me to delve deeper into what sport can provide to its participants if delivered in the right way. From a teaching perspective, I do certainly talk about the importance of planning and organisation in coaching. But I have shifted my focus to people skills such as connection, culture and leadership as being the keys to unlocking athlete potential.

## 1. Introduction

Prior to embarking on my current career in teaching I was involved in the advertising industry. During this time, I rekindled my love affair with basketball, getting back into playing socially and coaching young kids. After 10 years in the industry I found I wasn't particularly suited to it and it had become apparent it was time to move on. At somewhat of a crossroads I was finding the thing I was getting the most satisfaction from was coaching. After a bit of convincing my wife supported me in my decision to embark on a sport coaching degree at the University of Canterbury. I loved being at university, I loved learning new things and rubbing shoulders with like-minded people. During my last year at university I had an internship at North Canterbury Community College for a month. I enjoyed the experience; it was very much hands on.

At the end of the year a teaching job came up at the Community College for the level two adventure - based learning course. I applied for the job and got it, after spending three years in

the role I moved into teaching a level four sports course at the College. Unfortunately, after a couple of years of teaching this course, low student numbers had made the course unsustainable. However, I applied for and got a job at the New Zealand Institute of Sport (NZIS). I felt I had certainly fallen on my feet. Throughout these years I had continued to coach basketball and collect a wide range of experiences, working with high school teams, representative teams and a variety of other age groups both male and female. During this period, I had the opportunity to work alongside and be mentored by some highly qualified and experienced coaches, something that has stood me in good stead for my current position.

NZIS is a private training establishment that was started back in 1996 by John Fiso, an ex-physical education teacher who believed that he could use sport as a means to better meet the learning needs of Maori and Pasifika. NZIS has grown from its beginnings in Wellington to include campuses in Auckland and Christchurch as well as a satellite campus in Hamilton. Over the past 22 years the student numbers have steadily grown to be around 600 students across the campuses.

The range of courses has also grown over time with offerings including level two and level three sport courses, personal training courses as well as diploma level exercise prescription and sport management courses. We are also in the preliminary stages of developing a degree course. Although NZIS has been bought and sold a couple of times since John Fiso's ownership and we do cater for every student who walks through our doors; we still do acknowledge our Maori and Pasifika roots.

I am currently in my sixth year tutoring at NZIS, mainly in the areas of coaching and sports psychology. As well as teaching I am also responsible for leading curriculum and assessment development and developing teaching resources around these subjects.

This project has come about through a change in the structure of our NZIS level five diploma course. This was triggered by a TROQ (Targeted Review of Qualification) process undertaken by the NZQA (New Zealand Qualification Authority). The TROQ was a process that has led to, in my opinion, a much needed "clean up" in the education in sport and recreation sector, as it had become a bit of a jumble of disparate courses that didn't really give students clear pathways

that lead to particular jobs in the industry. The result of this process was a revamping and realignment of the qualifications delivered in the sector into levels and pathways for example fitness, coaching or facility management, that lead to particular graduate outcomes that fulfilled industry requirements.

Once this review was completed our brief was to completely reexamine our courses to bring them into line with the new course structures and graduate profiles. As I deliver a coaching course at level five I decided as part of this process I would go out to the coaching industry with a brief to discover what best practice in coaching looks like, and whether what I have been teaching my students is still relevant and considered best practice in the industry.

Best practice is an accepted concept across nearly every industry and provides a benchmark of quality to which to strive. Although there may not be total consensus across a discipline such as coaching as to what all of the elements that make up best practice are, I am sure there will be some core areas that will be agreed upon. I feel having a framework of best practice to teach my students would be a good starting point for them, and then they can add to this through their own experiences in coaching.

To be able to discuss best practice I will need to have a working definition of what best practice actually is. I see best practice as tested and proven methods of coaching that have a track record of success. I will need to research other best practice definitions to compare with my own. This will allow for a more complete definition of best practice. This process needs to be undertaken with one eye to the future, I need to be mindful that I am preparing my students for the future of coaching, and practices that work currently might not be as effective with future generations.

I teach a level six coaching course as well, so once I have gone through this process I will also look at what elements of coaching best practice fit within the level five course and which elements would be considered more advanced and therefore fit within the level six course. The result being a curriculum based on best practice for each of these courses.

This process will also require some self-reflection on my part to compare my own knowledge of the coaching process against the elements of best practice that make up the final curriculums. This process may well show up some knowledge gaps that I will need to address in order to be able to teach the new curriculums.

The first step in the process is to examine the literature to explain, and establish criteria for, best practice. Then see in what ways it can be applied to coaching. Drawing from coaching research and related areas we can then start to piece together a picture of what best practice in coaching currently looks like.

# 2. Literature Review

### 3.1 A brief history of best practice

The Collins English Dictionary (2018) defines best practice as "a working method, or set of working methods, that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry: *The company identified best practices that have led to more successful product development".*

The concept of best practice appears to have originated in the agriculture sector with references appearing as far back as the mid 1700's (Henley, 1723) by the late 19th century the term was being used regularly in farming bulletins and agricultural reports to refer to the most efficient means of production of crops and other farm products. "The work of our experimental farms and dairy stations is to bridge over the gap and illustrate the application of the best practices to the production of butter, cheese, livestock and all other farm products." (House of Commons, 1890, P. 42). The term has since been picked up and used across many sectors including manufacturing, health and business.

A term often used in conjunction with best practice is benchmarking. Camp (1989, P. 12) describes a benchmark as "a reference or measurement standard used for comparison", and benchmarking as "the continuous activity of identifying, understanding and adapting best practice and processes that will lead to superior performance".

When researching how best practices in different sectors are arrived at I came across an interesting model used in a document put together for the non-profit sector (Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center, 2010) that talked about categorising levels of best practice these categories are:-

**Research Validated Best Practice** – described as a programme, activity or strategy that has the highest degree of proven effectiveness supported by objective and comprehensive research and evaluation.

**Field Tested Best Practice** – described as a programme, activity or strategy that has been shown to work effectively and produce successful outcomes and is supported to some degree by subjective and objective data sources.

**Promising Practice** – described as a programme, activity or strategy that has worked within one organisation and shows promise during its early stages for becoming a best practice with long term sustainable impact. A promising practice must have some objective basis for claiming effectiveness and must have the potential for replication among other organisations.

This model provides an ongoing process by which to evaluate practices that are being proposed within organisations and sectors. A practice isn't automatically stamped as best practice based on where in the chain of command it is conceived. Instead there is a recognised process based on longitudinal and if across a sector latitudinal evidence of its effectiveness. Only after a body of research and evidence is collected and examined would a practice be instated as a best practice.

### 3.2 A brief history of coaching

The term coaching entered the English language through the hallowed halls of Oxford University, where in the early 19$^{th}$ century tutors who worked with struggling students to get them through exams were nicknamed coaches, as it was felt the practice was akin to driving a horse and coach (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). While the term has only been around for 200 years or so the practice of coaching in a sporting sense goes back to classical times (Day, 2016) and has continued through the subsequent 2,500 years. The term "coach" has been broadly interpreted in Britain as the individual responsible for training others for an athletic contest and "coaching" as preparing an athlete for competition (Day, 2016). This preparation usually has a technical component, involving the acquisition and mastery of skills and techniques, together with the requisite muscular co-ordination. Any athlete needs an optimum level of fitness and the psychological tools to be able to compete effectively so, although specialists can be responsible for each component, a "coach" often assumes the responsibilities of technician, trainer and psychologist (Woodman, 1989). Generally, while the range and extent of this coaching role differ according to circumstance and cultural context, the prime attributes of

successful coaches have been identified as knowledge of an activity combined with an ability to communicate effectively (Day, 2016). The transfer of the term from education to sports during the nineteenth century was initiated and sustained by sportsmen applying the language of school and university in a different context. It is significant that when “coaching” became associated with preparation for competitive events it should be in those sports most closely associated with the universities, rowing and cricket (Day, 2016).

**3.3 Best practice in coaching**

When looking at what the literature had to say about best practice in coaching, I thought a good place to start would be with what already exists for coaches to access in terms of best practice. Sport New Zealand had produced the publication Good Practice Principles (2017). Their 10 principles are –

1. Create a safe social and physical environment
2. Treat children and young people with dignity and respect
3. Model good behaviour and values
4. Be consistent
5. Become familiar with developmental ages and stages
6. Let children play
7. Ensure there is full participation and inclusion
8. Modify or adapt activities to suit the ability of participants
9. Provide an appropriate amount of activity
10. Prepare children and young people to compete successfully

Although some of these principles could be applied across the coaching spectrum, it is my opinion these principles are aimed primarily at coaches of younger players in a community setting rather than the competitive to elite end of the coaching spectrum.

However, the information that Sport New Zealand disseminates to coach educators (SportNZ, 2017) takes a different tack and differentiates between coaching at different levels, dividing

coaches into coaching communities being the foundation, development and performance levels. They set out their expectations for those that coach across the different communities.

- The coach understands that their key role is to help the athlete learn
- The coach is supportive and understands the needs of their athletes
- The coach has his/her own philosophy, models the Coaching Code of Ethics and models appropriate values
- Sessions are planned, organised, varied and are enjoyable
- The coach creates a positive environment and culture
- The physical and personal environment is safe. Emergency procedures are known and first aid equipment accessible
- The coach uses varied communication and learning and skill acquisition approaches that:
  - cater for a range of learning styles
  - are appropriate to the group and suit the age and stage of development of the athletes
  - meet individual needs. For athletes with disabilities, the emphasis should initially be on inclusive processes, but from secondary school age increasing options to explore competitive pathways should exist
- Coaching approaches support the NZ Coaching Strategy and the Coach Development Framework directions and:
  - are ethical, athlete centred, flexible, inclusive and provide leadership
  - involve reflection, questioning, shared decision making, shared responsibility and positive two-way communication
  - produce self-reliant athletes.

Along with these expectations there are additional points to be focused on at the performance level –

- Producing excellence
- Individualisation

- Refinement
- Specialisation
- Innovation and improvisation
- Intensity and pressure
- Use of technology to inform analysis
- Integration of sport science
- Involvement of specialist support team
- Self- reflection and evaluation
- Coach and athlete leadership

The above standards from SportNZ set out what expectations they have for coaches in New Zealand. They have acknowledged the differences between coaching communities, between athletes at different developmental stages and different physical capacities.

**3.4 Values and Morals**

At this point I would like to posit that sport not only can be used as a vehicle for teaching the values and morals of society, but should be used as a vehicle for teaching the values and morals of society. Why? Because like MacIntyre (as cited in Hardman, Jones & Jones, 2010, P. 4), I subscribe to the fact that "moral character virtues remain central to realising the essential value of sporting practices for, without them, sports are reduced to radically impoverished instrumental activities". I also agree with Hardman, Jones & Jones (2010, P. 2) when they say," the coach, as a central part of the sports milieu, has moral responsibilities. Such moral responsibilities extend beyond policing foul play, teaching good manners and inculcating a raft of 'fair play conventions', to the cultivation and fostering of certain virtues which are directly implicated in the realisation of the value of sport".

Research has shown that orientations of motivation in sport strongly impacts the corresponding value of the sporting context in terms of the character development of the athletes. These orientations can either be task-orientated (wanting to master a skill) or ego orientated

(focusing on the outcome of performing the skill). More specifically – "a perceived coach-created ego involving motivational climate tends to correlate with negative cognitions, affective responses, and behavioural patterns", (Duda & Balaguer, 2007, P. 18 ). Results of another study conducted by Sage, Kavaussanu, and Duda (2006) revealed a task orientation to be a predictor of prosocial while an ego orientation emerged as a positive predictor of antisocial judgment and behaviour. Duda & Balaguer, (2008, P. 123) concluded, "individuals are seen to exhibit quality of motivation when their athletic engagement adds to their lives – physically, psychologically, emotionally, morally, etc. – and has the potential to contribute to a common and greater good that is beyond the person per se and his or her immediate sport involvement." I believe having an understanding of an athlete's motivation and the long term benefits of developing a more task-orientated motivation versus an ego-orientated one will help the athlete gain the most out of his/her sporting experience.

Often coaches find themselves in the role with little training or support. Sometimes it's a reluctant parent that takes on the job, due to there being no one else willing to do it. However, no matter how the position is come by the coach instantly becomes a role-model to their players whether they like it or not. The coach's decisions are scrutinized by parents and players, mainly from the point of view of their own self-interest. There is acknowledgement that coaches are a culmination of their historical sporting experiences and influences. "Drawing on one's sporting inheritance provides a means for reflecting on one's coaching preferences, biases and basic philosophy", (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac 2009, P. 56). Under these circumstances is every coach likely to be on the same page? This being the case it can't be assumed that all coaches personal sporting experiences had a moral basis. To get some sort of consistency across sport coaching on this point it would seem logical to have it embedded as an element of coaching best practice.

**3.5 Olympism**

So if we accept that teaching the values and morals of society can be a higher calling of sport and that it should be recognised in coaching best practice. Is there a reference point for a conversation as to what that might look like in coaching best practice? I would contend that Olympism would be a good place to start. Olympism has its origins in ancient Greece where the Games were held in honour of the Gods. Men from the different Hellenic states came to compete in a range of sports, many of which are still around today (Young, 2004). The Games eventually died out in the 4th Century AD when Christian Roman emperor Theodosius banned all Pagan festivals including the Games (Young, 2004). They lay dormant until !896 when the first modern Olympic Games took place. They were revived as the brain child of French educator and historian Pierre de Coubertin. Around the Games de Coubertin grew an ideology that came to be known as Olympism. Its principles were embodied in a charter document. One particular principle in the document supports the assertion made by MacIntyre around the moral value of sport - “Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced

whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles." (Olympic Charter, 2015, P. 11) Within this principle we can find a call for those involved in sport to be good examples, show social responsibility and respect ethical principles. I feel this begins with the example set by the coach.

### 3.6 Te Whare Tapa Wha

The principle of Olympism also emphasises the concept of the balanced whole – body, will and mind. If we look a little closer to home we can find these same sentiments echoed in Professor Mason Durie's (1994) Te Whare Tapa Wha model. Although originally developed as a philosophy for Maori hauora or wellbeing it has been used to describe a holistic approach in a number of different disciplines including health, education and sport. Te Whare Tapa Wha speaks of the four walls of the whare (house) making up someone's hauora. All four walls must be in balance for the whare to remain strong. The four walls being Taha Tinana (Physical), the capacity for physical growth and development. Taha Wairua (Spirit), this determines us as individuals and as a collective, who and what we are, where we have come from and where we are going. Taha Whanau (Social), the capacity to belong, to care and to share. Where individuals are part of wider social systems. Taha Hinengaro (Mind), thoughts, feelings and emotions are integral components of the body and soul. If we were to re-evaluate sport in the light of Olympism and the Te Whare Tapa Wha model we can see that sport is capable of strengthening a person in domains other than the physical. However, it would take a paradigm shift by coaches to see these qualities in sport and not simply focus on the physical. As a coach educator it is incumbent on myself and other coach educators to emphasise the importance of developing all domains as part of any best practice model.

### 3.7 Teaching social responsibility through activity

Another model worth exploring as part of a best practice framework is Don Hellison's (1995) teaching personal and social responsibility (TPSR) model. Hellison, a former marine turned

educator, spent 40 years developing his model. He believed that physical activity had the potential to develop social skills in young people if delivered in the right way.

The model was made up of levels that represented where each student was sitting at in terms of his/her social skill development. He then used his PE classes to develop his students' social skills and in turn elevate them up the levels. The six levels he devised were – Level 0, *Egocentric*: lack of self- control, non-team player. Level 1, *Respecting the rights and feelings of others*: self-control and peaceful conflict resolving. Level 2, *Effort and co-operation:* getting along with others, being a self-starter, trying new tasks. Level 3, *Self-Direction*: being on-task, setting and sticking to personal goals and resisting peer pressure. Level 4, *Helping others and leadership*: Showing caring, sensitivity and concern for others in the class. Level 5 *Taking TPSR outside the gym:* integrating TPSR values into other areas of life—being role models.

Hellison's model provides coaches with another lens with which to view the purpose of sport and continues the theme that has been developing around the holistic development of athletes. Coaches need to deeply consider all aspects of the sporting experience when developing their coaching philosophy and what they want, not only the immediate experience for the athlete to be, but also the long-term impact.

**3.8 Fixed v Growth mindset**

Another aspect of overall athlete development that can be developed as part of a best practice model is mindset. Research conducted by Dr Carol Dweck of Stanford University highlighted the advantages of cultivating a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset. Dweck (2009) talks about the fixed mindset being based around talent and intelligence and the belief we are granted fixed levels of these that can't be changed. People with this belief tend to be concerned with protecting their status as an intelligent or talented person rather than seeking out difficult experiences that may challenge these assumptions. Whereas those with a growth mindset understand that effort is the key to improvement. They believe intelligence and talent are not

the determining factor when it comes to one's success, rather how much effort you are willing to put in and how long you are willing to persevere are far more important.

Obviously this concept is equally applicable to the sporting arena. In fact, Dweck (2009) has conducted research involving athletes, being a small study of college soccer players. Interestingly she found that the more a player believed athletic ability was a result of effort and practice rather than just natural ability the better that player performed over the next season. What they believed about their coaches' values was even more important. The athletes who believe that their coaches prized effort and practice over natural ability were even more likely to have a superior season.

The results of Dweck's, (2009) research also showed that a growth mindset coach is also more likely to foster teamwork and team spirit. When a coach has a fixed mindset, players will be eager to impress the coach with their talent and will vie to be the superstar in the coach's eyes. However, if athletes know that their coach values passion, learning, and improvement, these are things that players can work together to produce.

These findings show a coach should be focusing their athletes on the process of learning and improvement and to remove the emphasis from natural talent. A focus on learning and improvement tells athletes not only what they did to bring about their success, but also what they can do to recover from setbacks. A focus on talent does not.

I believe adopting a growth mindset as a coach and instilling it into players is a component of coaching best practice as it not only sets an athlete up for success as an athlete but also in their life going forward.

**3.9 Athlete-Centred approach**

Many of the models and theories outlined above feed into what is termed the athlete-centred approach to coaching. Lynn Kidman is one of the main proponents of this approach, she defines athlete-centred "as a leadership style that caters to athletes' needs and understandings where athletes are enabled to learn and have control over their participation in sport" (Kidman and Lombardo, 2005).

Five values that underpin the athlete-centred approach are – **Safety:** The physical and emotional safety of the athlete is the number one priority**. Life skill development:** Sport is fundamentally a vehicle to develop life-long skills in athletes so they can be effective and meaningful contributors to society. **Athlete uniqueness:** Every athlete is unique and this is respected by the coach and each athlete is coached in a way which is appropriate for them. **Self-awareness:** Through self-awareness, athletes learn about their strengths, limitations, motivations and needs. With their coach's guidance, athletes can begin to self-correct their technique, develop their own tactical approach and ultimately take complete responsibility for their training and game day performance. **Holistic perspective:** Athletes are people first and athletes second. A coach's role therefore is to assist in developing their athletes within a holistic framework, so the athlete can develop outside of their sport as much as inside. (Hanson, 2016).

Kidman's involvement in putting together the coaching framework for SportNZ means you see many of the key tenets of an athlete-centred approach as cornerstones of the framework.

**3.10 Reflective Practice**

Dewey (1910, P. 6) wrote that reflective practice refers to 'the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'. Dewey went on to say that being reflective 'enables us to direct our actions with foresight … It enables us to know what we are about when we act'.

Reflective practice underpins a best practice approach as it -

- anchors theory in meaningful, concrete experience
- gives recognition to learning gained in non-academic contexts
- provides a bridge between practical experience and academic study
- helps develop understanding of difficult work situations, improving professional practice

(Cottrell, 2011)

Looking back on the process and the result of your practice, will allow you to identify what went well, what needs improving and why you got the result that you did. Without reflection coaches are likely to simply repeat their current practices without giving any thought to whether they are being effective with their players or improving themselves as a coach. SportNZ recognises the importance of reflection and refers to it in the expectations they have for coaches across the coaching spectrum (SportNZ, 2017).

John Dewey is acknowledged as a pioneer in the area of reflective practice. When practitioners are fully engaged in the reflection process Dewey says there is open-mindedness – listening to all sides, consider possibilities, and accept that you may be wrong. Wholeheartedness – to be thoroughly interested in what you are doing. Responsibility – considering and accepting consequences of actions as being fundamental features of the process (Dewey, 1916 as cited in Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009).

Van Manen (1977 as cited in Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009) put forward three levels of reflection – technical, practical and critical. On the technical level coaches would be asking themselves such questions as –

Did I achieve the goals I set for this session?

How can I fix this problem?

How can I better structure this drill or activity?

Practical questions may include –

What other ways can I get my message across?

What is it about the way I have structured this session that does not appear to suit the athletes?

What am I doing as a coach to cater to all learning styles?

Critical questions may include –

Why is there a difference between the type of feedback I give to the more skilled and less skilled members of the team?

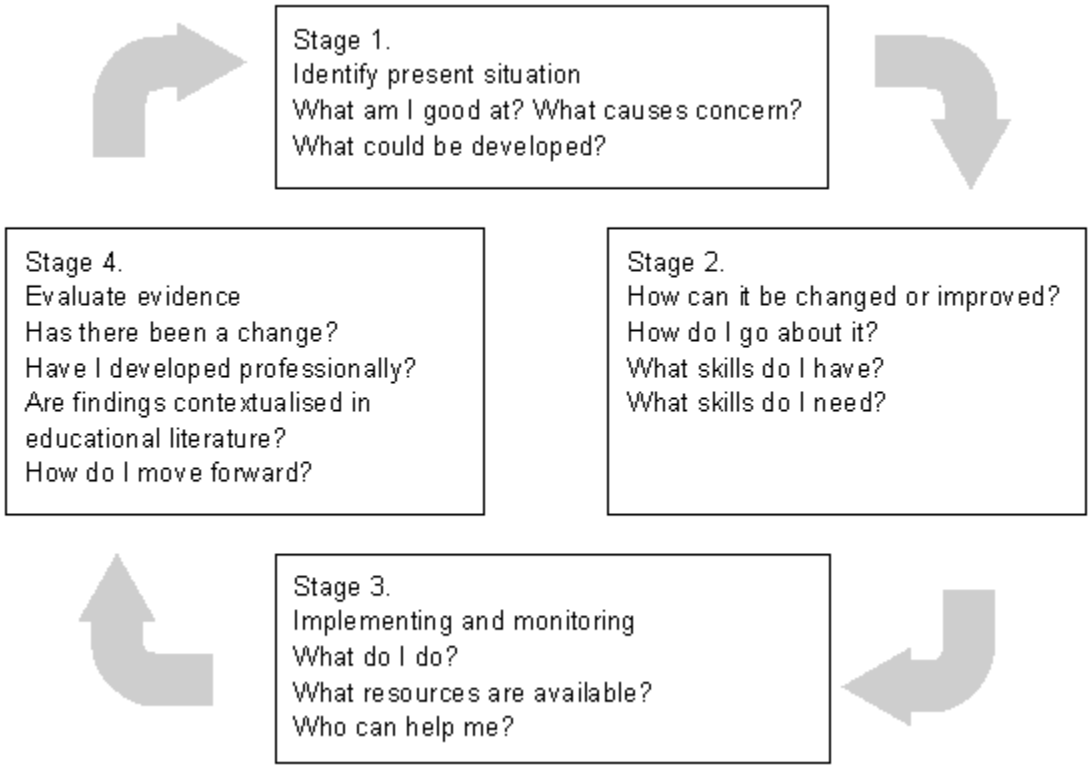
What do I do about those practices that are inequitable or unjust but are part of the team or club traditions?

What do I do if one of the athletes is only 80% fit but he or she is the best on the team? Do I play him or her when the team is up against the leaders in the competition?

(Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009)

A more contemporary framework for the reflection process was developed by Stephen Brookfield (2005). His approach asks the coach to reflect on their practice using four different lenses – 1. What did the athletes think of the session? (athletes' eyes). 2. What does my own experience tell me about how the session went? (coach's eyes). 3. What can I read to help me make sense of what happened in the session? (the eyes of scholars). 4. Who can I ask to help me make sense of what happened in the session? (Peer's eyes). Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton's reflection model (1995) below also provides another good model to help step coaches through the reflection process. Being self-reflective and using such tools as the ones outlined helps coaches to put athletes at the centre of their thinking and challenge themselves by asking questions of their practice and whether they are doing things in the best way or could they be doing it better.

**Fig 2. Reflective model Source: Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (1995)**




### 3.11 Best practice in education

In their book *Understanding sports coaching*, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) discuss the shared history of sport and education. They point to the US where in the early twentieth century the teaching of physical education and athletics were merged in the school system. With coaching becoming the preferred role for many teachers (Fione, 2001 as cited in Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009). Closer to home the British introduced team sports through schools in New Zealand as a "civilizing agent" for those in the colonies. Bergmann Drewe (2000, as cited in Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009) suggests it would be helpful for coaches to regard what they do as teaching as they would be more inclined to take a more holistic approach to educating their athletes rather than simply focusing on the physical.

Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) also draw upon the parallels between education and coaching in determining quality coaching. Pointing to the standards- based system for education that

outlines what a quality teacher should know and be able to do. Arguing that a similar system should be applied to coaching (see 3.3 for what SportNZ has produced).

Teaching has always been considered a profession and integral to a successful society, as such you would expect to find a well-developed set of professional best practice standards. Investigation revealed some points I would consider applicable to the practice of coaching. I discovered a document that set out the professional standards for the teaching profession. This was a draft document commissioned by the Ministry of Education it was part of a commitment to strengthen the evidence base that informs education policy and practice in New Zealand. This appeared to be based on research work done by Alton –Lee (2003) published on the education counts government website. What follows is a condensing and a culling of the two sets of practices found down to what I believe are the most relatable across from education to coaching. These being -

1. **Expectations**

The teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes and the pace at which learning should proceed.

2. **Pedagogy**

Pedagogical practices create an environment that works as a learning community (interdependence of the social and the academic in optimising learning conditions).

Academic norms are strong and not subverted by social norms.

Teaching includes specific training in collaborative group work with individual accountability mechanisms, and students demonstrate effective co-operative and social skills that enable group processes to facilitate learning for all participants.

Use an increasing repertoire of teaching strategies, approaches, learning activities, technologies and assessment strategies.

Relevance of instruction is made transparent to students.

Tasks and interactions provide scaffolds to facilitate student learning (the teacher provides whatever assistance diverse students need to enable them to engage in learning activities productively, for example, teacher use of prompts, questions, and appropriate resources including social resources).

3. **Learning Processes**

Provide opportunities and support for learners to engage with, practice and apply learning to different contexts and make connections with prior learning.

Teachers have knowledge of the nature of student learning processes, can interpret student behaviour in the light of this knowledge and are responsive, creative and effective in facilitating learning processes.

Teaching promotes sustained thoughtfulness (e.g. through questioning approaches, wait-time, and the provision of opportunities for application and invention).

Teaching promotes critical thinking.

Students have a strong sense of involvement in the process of setting specific learning goals.

Teaching and tasks are structured to support, and students demonstrate, active learning orientations.

Students have opportunities to resolve cognitive conflict.

Students are able to engage in and complete learning processes so that what is learned is remembered.

Teaching makes transparent to students the links between strategic effort and accomplishment.

4. **Opportunity to Learn**

Design and plan approaches which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences on learning.

Demonstrate effective management of the learning setting which is physically, socially, culturally and emotionally safe.

Management practices facilitate learning (rather than emphasising compliant behaviour or control).

5. **Feedback**

Students receive effective, specific, appropriately frequent, positive and responsive feedback. Feedback must be neither too infrequent so that a student does not receive appropriate feedback nor too frequent so that the learning process is subverted.

6. **Relationships**

Critically examine own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs and how they impact on practice and the achievement of learners now and into the future.

Work collegially and collaboratively in the pursuit of improving practice.

Show leadership that contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Establish and maintain learning-focused relationships with learners where there is a shared ownership and responsibility for learning.

Teachers use class sessions to value diversity, and to build community and cohesion.

Students help each other with resource access and provide elaborated explanations.

Student motivation is optimised and students' aspirations are supported and extended.

For me the above education best practice forms much more of a detailed framework to work within than does the coaching practices. You can argue that the two are different disciplines, but I don’t think you can argue that any of the practices outlined above aren’t equally as applicable in the coaching arena.

The table below summarises the similarities in best practice between coaching and education. It shows how the recognised features of good teaching in an education setting can equally be applied across the board in a coaching setting. As coaching continues to go through the process of establishing itself as a profession it could and should draw upon the proven elements that make up teaching best practice as well as those developed from a coaching perspective.

Table 1 - best practice similarities coaching v education Source: authors own

| **Component** | **Coaching** | **Education** |
|---|---|---|
| Individual philosophy | √ | √ |
| Learning as a priority | √ | √ |
| Positive environment | √ | √ |
| Inclusion – culture & diversity | √ | √ |
| Building relationships | √ | √ |
| Varied learning approaches | √ | √ |
| Safe environment | √ | √ |
| Self-reflection and evaluation | √ | √ |
| Use of technology | √ | √ |
| Development of leadership | √ | √ |
| Quality feedback | √ | √ |
| Development of group and social skills | √ | √ |

In this section we have looked at a definition and the concept of best practice, also a definition of coaching. We then broadened our perspective somewhat based on literature, research and thoughts around the meaning of sport and its nobler purpose as a vehicle to deliver many of life's lessons – for instance bouncing back from adversity, dealing with conflict, teamwork, the joy found in effort and morals and values. We then examined what best practice in coaching was according to Sport NZ and then made comparisons across a similar sector – education.

Now that it has been established what the literature has to say about the current state of best practice in coaching and what other areas should be up for inclusion in any reworking. The next step was to establish what best practice in coaching might look like going forward. To do this an appropriate type of research had to be decided upon and an appropriate way to conduct it.

# 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Understanding research methods

Before undertaking the research component of this thesis, I needed to familiarise myself with the various research methods available, so I could make an informed decision on what would work best for my project. I found that there are four types of data – primary and secondary and qualitative and quantitative. Primary data and secondary data differ based on source. Primary data is data that is collected first hand through methods such as surveys, interviews or observation (Walliman, 2011). Whereas secondary data is data that already exists from previously conducted research. This can be found in the likes of books, journals and articles as

examples. It is important that secondary data can be validated and be shown to be from a trustworthy source (Ibid).

Quantitative data and qualitative data differ based on characteristic. Quantitative data can be reduced to numbers and analysed using statistics, examples of ways of collecting quantitative data are polls, likert scales and measurement (Ibid). Qualitative data is collected in words and records such things as opinions, judgements, ideas and beliefs. Observation notes, interview transcripts and recollections are examples of ways of collecting qualitative data (Ibid). Because of the abstract nature of qualitative data, it may require to be corroborated (triangulated) with another source to verify the accuracy of the data.

**4.2 Research type selection**

Firstly, I had to define what data was required and what different options there are to capture it. I had to weigh up the pros and cons of collecting qualitative versus quantitative data. Obviously, quantitative data would be more robust in terms of showing up statistical trends as there would be numbers to back up any assertions made from the research done (Walliman, 2011). However, I felt if I chose the right cross section of participants I could get better quality and depth of information from qualitative data that would be representative of the different tiers of the coaching community. Especially by talking to coach educators and finding out what they are teaching the coaches they work with, as what they are advocating would permeate out amongst their coaching communities, and to some extent be able to be extrapolated out to give an insight into the line of thinking within that particular cohort. Also choosing respondents that would be considered role models or opinion leaders within their particular coaching context would have a similar affect.

**4.3 Research instrument**

I developed a research instrument based around a series of questions designed to present a well- rounded description of what best practice in coaching consists of. I had to come up with questions that would cover the different aspects of coach education and would yield quality information that would be comparable across respondents. The research in the literature

review had come up with sets of standards for both coaching (SportNZ, 2017 ) and education (Alton-Lee, 2003). The questions I developed around best practice were to find if there was a common understanding amongst coaches as to what constitutes best practice and what the commonalities and differences were and whether the answers reflected the standards.

The literature review had also highlighted some areas around a wider purpose of sport and what athletes can be educated in for example moral character and social responsibility (MacIntyre, 1985, Hardman, Jones & Jones, 2010, Hellison, 1995). I then wanted to ask the respondents as to what they thought were the important areas a coach should be educated in. This question was left quite open to see whether the wider purpose of sport came up and whether their thoughts corresponded with what I am teaching.

Don Hellison's model (1995) measures success as moving athletes up the social responsibility levels and Carol Dweck (2009) measures success in terms of developing a growth mindset. I wanted to find out what measures coaches used to judge their performance and in what ways they related to athlete performance (wins and losses, skill development or the more intangibles such as social and moral development) and what tools they used to help them improve their performance.

Hardman, Jones & Jones (2010) believe coaches have moral responsibilities and are charged with the development of virtues related to the value of sport. The Olympic Charter (2015) talks of the educational value of good example and the respect of ethical principles. Asking a question around what they looked for when they hired coaches would reveal whether these qualities were valued in other coaches and relevant to themselves. This would also show whether the qualities I was developing in my students were indeed valued in the coaching community.

For the ongoing development of my course, it was important to have a question on what the future of coaching might look like. The trends within these answers would serve as a guide as to how I could develop my course to better prepare my students to be successful as coaches of the future. Lastly, I wanted to get an idea of where my course stood now. Asking questions to ex-students who have been working in the coaching sector to clarify how well the course

prepared them and in what areas the course might be deficient would help the continued development of the course going forward.

The questions were –

How would you define the term best practice?

If a coach educator was teaching best practice. What would he/she be teaching?

What do you believe are the key areas that a coach needs to be educated in?

What tools could a coach use to improve his/her own performance?

What are some key areas a coach's performance should be measured against?

Are there any coaching practices you have used that you have found to be particularly effective?

If you were to hire a coach what qualities and skills would you be looking for?

Looking to the future what differences do you think there will be in the role of a coach?

Are there any areas in coaching that you weren't taught that you feel would've been of benefit to you?

What were you taught that you have found of the most benefit to you in coaching?

Do you feel what you were taught equipped you well for the reality of coaching or do you feel there was a disconnect between the theory of coaching and coaching in the real world?

The last three questions were only asked to recent graduates from coach education courses.

**4.4 Participant selection**

Each of the respondents were chosen based on either their knowledge of coach education as taught by me (previous students), their knowledge of coach education as coach educators, or their deep knowledge of coaching and what their coaching journey could tell us about coaching

best practice. I wanted a range of people at differing stages in their coaching careers, some in their first coaching roles after recently graduating from a coach education course. As well as respondents who are coach educators in particular sports, and tertiary and community settings. I was also keen to hear the thoughts from successful, international level coaches who have no formal coach education. The reason being I wanted to compare and contrast what the two coaching cohorts thought about coaching best practice and whether there were commonalities that had been arrived at via different routes.

**4.5 Data collection**

I felt 12 respondents would allow me to have good representation across the different sectors of coaching I had identified. I produced a list of potential candidates for the research based on the criteria described earlier. Respondents who showed an interest in being part of the research were sent an information sheet outlining the project and a consent form to sign if they agreed to participate. Once the signed consent form had been received I would contact the respondent to arrange either a face to face or phone interview. I would then send them the questions at least a week ahead of the scheduled interview time so they could think about and formulate answers ahead of time. I felt the questions were best asked via face to face or phone interviews, as this would allow me to get clarification of any answer or the respondent to get any of the questions clarified by me during the interview process. Each interview was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by me. The original audio files and transcripts have been kept in password protected online storage with the names changed to aliases. The privacy of the respondents is protected by referencing them with aliases in this thesis.

**4.6 Data analysis**

The first task after collecting the data was to collate the respondents' answers for each question, then summarise those findings for each question. The next step was to analyse the data, looking for commonalities in answers across the various respondents. This process began with the conducting of the interviews and then subsequently transcribing the interviews. As I spent quite a bit of time with the data the common themes became quite evident. Closer analysis of the data was to establish what themes would already be considered part of a best

practice approach – for example planning, and what themes had the potential to be part of a best practice approach when compared to the criteria outlined in the literature review – for example connection. Once these themes were established I needed to examine my own teaching and curriculum to see whether it covered the current elements of best practice identified. I then needed to look at what I would need to add to take account of some of the potential elements of best practice identified in the research.

### 4.7 Ethical considerations

I have given due consideration to ethical issues that may arise during the process of producing this thesis. They have been documented and submitted to the Capable NZ ethics committee in accordance with the B2 category rating the project received (see appendix 9.5). The submission was consequently approved by the ethics committee. Each of the issues included in the document have been addressed in the appropriate methodology section above. The ethical measures outlined have been implemented and adhered to.

After collecting, collating and analysing the data the next stage was to find out what the research could tell us about coaching best practice.

## 3. Findings

### 5.1 Defining Best Practice

The table below shows a selection of definitions of best practice in coaching from the respondents.

Table 2 – Defining best practice. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Gavin – Experienced International level coach | So it's someone who's got to care for the person more so than just offering coaching or teaching type advice or whatever it might be**.** So having a wider view or wider perspective than just what happens on the field. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mike – Recent graduate | The best technique to use for the situation. |
| Martha - Experienced International level coach | So best practice to me almost rings out as almost having a holistic and connected view on team, athletes within a team. |
| Kath - Experienced International level coach and coach educator | I'm not that fond of that statement or the best practice statement that people use because I always think If you've got best practice you are not going to get any better. |
| Rick - Recent graduate | What we use in New Zealand rugby league is the values so we've got passion, integrity, leadership there's two more. Five values anyway and they sort of talk about anything that we do. |

The first question on defining the term best practice drew a range of responses. Kath (coach educator, community) was not fond of the term best practice as it suggested a static state rather than something that was evolving. Kelvin (coach educator, football) was also not a fan of the term as it suggested that there is only one right way of doing things, which had not been his experience. Greg (coach educator, tertiary) was of a similar opinion stating best practice was a very contextual thing. Those respondents that were very experienced coaches saw best practice as being very much athlete focused and coaching the athlete in a holistic way. While young coaches that had recently finished coach education focused in more on organisation and pitching the session at the appropriate level (Harley), while Mike tended to agree with Greg in that he thought best practice was more situational specific. Rick's answer was more values based and talked about what it means to be a coach and the role of a coach. After mulling things over a bit more Kath came up with seeing someone being the best that they can be as skillfully as they can be in imparting or undertaking the pedagogy of coaching as her definition.

Discussion

Best practice would appear to be a point of contention in coaching. Not, I think, because coaches don't strive for quality. But more the connotation of the term best practice suggests there is only one best way to do something which may not be so applicable to an endeavour as dynamic and contextual as

coaching. The other connotation of best practice is that it is a static state, that when accomplished no further development is required, when in reality coaching is constantly evolving.

Many of the themes discussed in the literature review were evident in the respondents' answers, such as focusing on values, the coach as a role model, coaching the athlete in a holistic way and understanding athlete development. These themes could also be found among the SportNZ standards, suggesting these themes were widespread amongst the coaching community.

### 5.2 Teaching Best Practice

The table below shows what a selection of respondents thought teaching best practice would entail.

Table 3 – Teaching coaching best practice. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Gareth – Former U S college basketball coach | I think it would be athlete-centred with the needs of the athlete first and foremost. |
| Wendy - Recent graduate | Gathering information about each person that's in their group and the relationship of how they are going to interact with each member in their group that they are working with, and their team. |
| Colin - Recent graduate | By asking them questions to develop their knowledge so basically they don't have to tell them what to do so the athlete understands where they're going wrong and where they need to be corrected. |
| Greg – University lecturer | Developing people as a whole is the primary task and role of any educator including a sport based or related educator. |
| Neil - Experienced International level coach | A knowledge of changing expectations from 5,10,20 years ago to now is important, the style of relating to children has considerably changed and a good coach needs to relate and be relative in a child's learning. |

Again providing for the needs of the athlete was at the centre of teaching best practice. Having a safe, positive environment and using the teaching method that best suits the athletes (Gareth). Questioning was mentioned as being part of this process (Colin). Greg believed that too often the emphasis of coaches was on developing the physical skills in their athletes.

However, a good coach educator should also be teaching coaches how they can develop affective skills in their players such as learning to work together, cognitive skills and morals. Kath also mentioned the "soft skills" saying that is what she wants to see developing in the coaches she works with. Martha and Neil also talked about a holistic approach and genuinely caring about the athlete and being able to relate to athletes in different age groups. Kelvin added that it also depended on the level the coach was coaching at – community versus high performance. Mike and Rick, two of the younger coaches, thought the teaching of best practice to be more around coaching techniques and the how to coach, while Wendy agreed with the more experienced coaches, believing getting to know the players as individuals as being an important factor.

Discussion

Athlete-centred and a holistic approach to athlete development would appear to be becoming synonymous with best practice in coaching. In order for this shift away from a sole emphasis on the physical development of an athlete to developing all of the different domains, coaches will need to get to know their athletes on a deeper level. To do this they will need to develop their "soft skills" and use techniques such as questioning.

### 5.3 Educating the coach

The table below shows what some of the respondents thought were key areas for coaches to be educated in.

Table 4 – What a coach should be educated in. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Harley – Recent graduate | I would say player development and before that just communication, more or less being effective as well, so all good being able to talk to people, but actually understanding and being effective with what you're saying. |
| Kelvin – Coach educator | We believe that there are key areas in which coaches need to understand… they're based on the 5 core areas if you like of the vision and philosophy, training and match management and knowledge. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Gavin | Man management is absolutely critical. If you're not a man manager I don't think you will be successful at all. |
| Kath | Certainly building relationships, how to work with that and to work with people.<br>I guess I think one of the areas again in communication is managing the difficult conversation which I find in coaching is very common.<br>Planning which involves yes being organised but the whole time management of self and the process and as you go up the scale of coaching from foundation to development to performance being more and more meticulous is required to be able to be really effective. |
| Martha | They need to be well into relationship building and communication is absolutely paramount. You can't move someone if they don't really believe in what you are saying. It all comes down to key relationship building. So understanding as well what style of coach you are and being authentic and sticking to that style as well and not being afraid to just be yourself. |

Gavin, a very successful international level coach, believes man management is a key to successful coaching, he was quick to point out he hadn't had any formal coach education but had learnt through experience who he was as a coach and how he could relate to and get the best out of his players. Martha and Neil were of a similar mind talking about understanding what type of coach you are and not fearing being yourself and how important relationship building and communication skills are. The younger coaches (Mike and Harley) agree, citing communication, especially rapport with participants, as a key area for education. They also mentioned they had found planning to be important as well. Gareth's answer bears a resemblance to Greg's answer to the previous question in that he emphasises understanding the psychological makeup of the athlete in order to get the best out of them. Colin (younger, netball coach) also sees the psychological understanding of athletes as important, especially how they perform under pressure. Rick talks about coaches having to be adaptable to what

they see going on in front of them, teaching of life skills as well as the core skills of the sport. Neil agrees on the point of being competent in teaching the core physical skills of the sport.

Kath talked about a three pronged approach of which the building of relationships with players is one. Communication is another, as part of that she specifically talked about managing the "difficult conversation" when having to drop players and dealing with parents, and the lasting impact these conversations can have. The third prong was planning, but planning in a purposeful way, setting objectives based on improving on previous outcomes and becoming more meticulous in the process as you coach further up the ranks. Wendy also saw planning based on level of athlete and what skills were to be improved on as being an area of focus.

As a coach educator in Football Kelvin talked about the areas he looks to educate coaches in - vision and philosophy, competencies in training and the match phase, management of self and others and knowledge. He discussed preferring the idea of coaches reflecting on and being able to articulate their own reasoning behind what they do in these areas as opposed to "educating" coaches. If coaches are able to document the "why" and the "what" they do, they are better able to identify and fix things when they go wrong. Kelvin also talked about coaches needing to have a philosophy to guide their decision making and the way their team plays.

Discussion

As stated in the methodology this question was designed to perhaps draw out some thoughts around a broader purpose for sport. Also it would show areas the respondents thought important, and allow me to compare these areas to what I teach.

How to build life skills did come out in this question as an education area for coaches. Suggesting the respondent felt life skills could be built through sport.

Building rapport came through as a key area in coach education, having a good rapport with athletes allows better communication and smooths the way for difficult conversations. This is an area I definitely should bolster in my course.

Other areas that came through were being able to plan well and articulate a coaching philosophy. Both of these areas are covered extensively in my course. A reflective coach may take into consideration whether or not sport has a broader purpose when putting together a coaching philosophy, however this process is highly individualized.

**5.4 Improving performance**

In the table below respondents talk about techniques coaches can use to improve their performance.

Table 5 – Techniques to improve coaching performance. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mike | I've found like using research and using videos from the internet and stuff like that has been real important. Especially like I did some literature reviews and stuff through my studies which I've used for coaching which is helpful. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Wendy | Coach setting goals for themselves and then also for their players, so if their objective was for the players seeing if they have improved over the season, seeing if that has met their objective as well. |
| Gareth | Focusing on the athlete's behaviour and how the athlete's responding and picking up cues. Because sometimes when you are coaching and teaching your focus is on how you are delivering it as opposed to how the athletes or students are responding to your teaching. |
| Rick | I think to improve the coaches performance I think having some sort of mentor… being in the mentor space some sort of mentor coach education side. |
| Colin | I would like for me to have, like I have a coach mentor, she coaches with me sometimes. It would be nice if there was a handed out sheet that she could grade me for a session. |

Wendy thought that setting goals for athletes as well as coaches setting goals for themselves were good tools for coaches to use to look at performance. Feedback from the athletes being coached was a good tool to use when evaluating the performance of a coach and the effectiveness of a coaching session. She also talked about video as another lens to determine whether coaches and athletes had successfully achieved the session goals or not. Kath agreed with the tools Wendy talked about, but also added the use of a mentor to help in the reflection process, Rick and Colin agreed with the mentor approach. Gareth also agreed with the use of video for reflection, however he did say that the coach should focus not only on their delivery, but also the reaction of the athletes to the communication given. Was the result of the communication what you hoped for? He also agreed with the mentoring or peer reviewing during the reflection process.

Gavin talked about coaches needing to be open to receiving feedback during this process. He also talked about coaches spending a lot of time analysing when things have gone wrong, but seldom understand what makes their team successful. Martha found filling out a coaching assessment to deduce her coaching personality useful, as well as her players filling out an

assessment on her. The assessment is something she gets the young coaches she mentors to do as well.

Neil pointed out that watching other coaches perform can give you a different perspective with which to view your own coaching. Neil also talked about keeping abreast of technical advances in coaching and the sport and understanding how they can aid coaching performance. Mike was also an advocate of watching other coaches perform and spent time watching video and researching how other coaches go about teaching certain skills.

Greg thought that improvement was essentially a product of increased understanding of what he calls the coaching continuum. The continuum runs from authoritarian, behaviourist style coaching at one end, to problem solving, constructivist coaching styles at the other, with a range of other coaching styles in between. His argument is that all of these coaching styles are valid options in certain circumstances. Where coaches can improve is being aware of this and having all coaching styles at their disposal and knowing when each one is appropriate to use.

Discussion

Reflection through analysing video and receiving feedback from a mentor were the main techniques mentioned for improving performance, as well as watching other coaches. Improving command of the different styles and methods a coach could utilize was also mentioned as a way a coach could improve.

### 5.4 Measuring coaching performance

In the table below respondents answer the question how can a coach's performance be measured?

Table 6 – Measuring coaching performance. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Neil | I believe my role is not just teaching a sport it's about them growing up with the right values to contribute meaningfully to society. I have always thought the best measure of my success as a coach is having parents return with their children and putting them into the sport. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Greg | So if we as educators are in the process of educating the learner then that logic extends that the learner is best to evaluate whether or not we are effectively coaching. So if I'm true to my principles around humanistic coaching then the learners are probably the best people to determine my accountability in my performance as a coach or as an educator in that respect. |
| Harley | I guess it would be from the players. You can take results, take wins or whatever. I guess the key thing is the players enjoyed it. I know that's what I like more than anything, |
| Kelvin | It depends on the spectrum of where they are at, in terms of whether they are at a community level, at a high performance level or at an elite level certainly from a coach developer point of view, I'm a firm believer that their performance should be based on the progress that they've made and adaptable change that they've been able to bring about through the players in a positive way. Also their ability to uphold the vision and values of the organisation. |
| Martha | I don't even know how to explain it, moving athletes or just incremental improvements, even in gains in themselves physically as well as their mental capacity could or should be measured but it's often not. |

Kath and Gavin both agreed that it shouldn't be about wins and losses, but how much the athletes have improved while under your tutelage. Gavin did however acknowledge that at the professional level there is no getting away from being measured by results. Colin agreed that it was about results at the top level, but the levels below that it was about the athletes getting better each week. Gareth and Harley agreed with the others on the point of improvement being a measure, but went on to say that learning and improvement was tied to enjoyment. The more the athlete was enjoying what they were doing the more rapid the rate of improvement.

Martha also mentioned results as she had coached at the highest levels of netball. But said having players go on to make the Silver Ferns, Under 21's or Young Internationals had given her the most satisfaction, a point that Kelvin agreed with from his Football perspective. She talked of incremental improvement in athletes cognitive as well as physical skills as something that should be measured but isn't. She was also critical of the fact that the only surveys that were done were done at the end of the season where the players may be emotional after a loss that shouldn't have defined the whole season.

Mike coaches younger athletes and his measure of success is seeing an increase in confidence and engagement and how it often has a positive affect socially as well. For Rick the key measure of success was retention, giving the athletes an experience they feel was worthwhile, regardless of the results so they are excited about coming back the following year. If there were aims set for the season were they met? And did the athletes think they were met? Neil's definition of success echoes that of Rick's as it is based around his athletes' continued participation in the sport and the overall development of the athlete into someone who can make a meaningful contribution to society. Greg has a similar opinion to Neil and Rick in that he believes the athlete is in the best position to determine success as they are the ones that are receiving the coaching experience.

Kath felt the measure of success should be athlete- centred, again not in terms of results and not even necessarily in terms of performance, but their satisfaction, did they feel they were learning and did they feel supported. Kath also talked about measuring whether session goals have been met. Wendy agreed with this point saying achievement of session goals and season goals is a good measure of success. She also felt a key to improvement for coaches was self-reflection and being open to the process of looking at yourself and seeing where you could be better.

As many of the other coaches have talked about, Kelvin also points to a difference between evaluating high performance versus community coaches in terms of the importance of results. He says as a coach educator his criteria for success wouldn't be that different between the two. For high performance it would be based more on player progress and positive changes made

and were they able to do it while upholding the vision and values of the organisation. With community coaches he agrees with Rick in that player retention and satisfaction is important. He points out that realistically his criteria for high performance would be different to a board or someone hiring a coach where results would become more of a focus. An interesting criterion that Kelvin added was how well the coach communicates with stakeholders for example parents, the club and other coaches. To be fair to the coach Kelvin believes expectations need to be discussed and agreed to at the beginning of the season so the coach knows where they stand. Often coaches will put their own measures into the mix as well.

Discussion

In the answers to this particular question I saw the further development of the theme around the holistic development of athletes. There was an acknowledgement that at the higher levels sport was results driven. However, coaches would rather be judged on the improvement their athletes had made, the development of their athletes across all domains and how satisfied the athletes were. Some coaches took a longer term view in that their measure is about creating people that will make a meaningful contribution to society. Here I start to see some of the themes surface that were raised in the literature review around sport developing character through making moral and ethical decisions.

### 5.5 Effective coaching practice

This table shows what coaching practices respondents have used that they have found the most effective.

Table 7 – Coaching practices found most effective. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Kath | I think for me the whole change into using questioning probably as a key tool to help people develop themselves and to learn through questioning and achieving their own objectives. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Gavin | Rating an individual over a wide range of things and picking out what they are best at, and then making them absolutely excel at it was one particular way. |
| Wendy | Time on task, so making sure all students are always doing something or your team is always doing something. No one is standing around watching or waiting and if they are it's when you are demonstrating. |
| Rick | I've found the DEPE practice effective. Demonstrate Explain Practice Evaluate. In terms of coaching I've found that really effective, and then also being able to provide players with feedback. |
| Gareth | I think for basketball, building team culture values sessions, and the way that we've done the values sessions began with an inspirational message or we've used video highlights a two to three minute video highlight about the programme and the organisation that we're representing. |

Kelvin felt his use of personality and behaviour profiling on not only his players but himself as well was something he found particularly useful in his coaching situation. This helped him to adjust his delivery when required to get his point across to different personality types. Also understanding how different players were going to react in different situations on the field helped with putting the right lineups on the field.

Over her career Kath has developed from being a directive coach to being more facilitative in her approach. Specifically utilizing well- constructed questions as an effective learning tool to give more responsibility to the learner and helping them to make their own decisions. Kath has also used reflection to understand how her athletes are learning. Rick has also found questioning effective and talks about asking the right questions and including players in the process. He also talked about finding a DEPE approach – demonstrate, explain, practice, evaluate – effective as well as delivering quality feedback.

Martha talked about strategies she had used to keep players in the moment and engaged. Things such as having players put their metaphorical baggage in a suitcase as they enter practice. Martha also liked to use themes if the team required to be bought together. A good example is the “strength of the wolf is the pack and the strength of the pack is the wolf” where she had every player carrying their own picture of a wolf that they needed to stick on the wall with the rest of the team’s wolves at practice.

An interesting approach she talked about was “coaching by feel” something she had seen used to great affect by a fellow coach. The coach would coach based on how the team presented at practice, getting a sense of energy levels etc. having a plan or an idea in your head but being able to run with the flow of the practice.

What Gavin found most effective was rating a player across a number of different skills and picking out a player’s strength and to try and make them absolutely excel at it. Even if players were struggling in other areas, Gavin felt this approach allowed players to always feel as though they could contribute in a game. He also found that the confidence they gained from further developing a strength carried over into other areas and the players showed improvement in other areas as well.

Gareth talked about the success he had seen in teams he had been a part of where a focus had been put on building a strong team culture. He talked about putting together videos to show the team great moments and players from the past. This is to give the players a sense of the tradition and the legacy of the team. He also used video to point out desirable values such as unselfishness and hard work, then having the team articulate their values. Interestingly he found this approach most effective when the focus was not entirely on performance but on other areas such as contributing in the community and how they wanted to be remembered.

Colin talked about the effectiveness of different coaching styles he had used. Saying he found different coaching styles more effective when used with different generations. He found a more authoritative style effective with the older generation, believing this generation is more used to being told what to do than the younger generations. The reaction he received from using an authoritative style with younger players was that they didn't enjoy not having a say. He puts this down to a more inquiry based teaching approach being used in schools, rather than telling the students to do something, it is more suggested. He points to his sister, a primary school teacher, who employs more of questioning style asking for the whats, hows and whys of doing something. He says he has used a more questioning approach with younger players and believes he has certainly seen improvement from a player development point of view, but not necessarily on the scoreboard.

Greg believed the key to any learning situation is to build a connection with the learner. A fact he says has been backed up by decades of research. One simple thing he says he does to put this into practice is to be in class before his students arrive and greet them as they come in.

Wendy felt time on task was important, making sure athletes aren't waiting in lines for long periods. Effectively dealing with athletes that are causing a distraction by getting them to lead and keeping them busy was also important to allow the session to have a good flow.

Neil says the athletes seeing that you have a genuine love for the sport will be reflected in their performance. Neil agrees with Greg's point about developing a connection with the learner but takes it further saying an athlete needs to have total confidence and trust in their coach. He cites a previous coach who knew when to push and when to lighten the mood, he had very

good morals. He felt this coach empowered him with great self-belief which he tries to pass on to his athletes. He doesn't take himself too seriously but understands the difference he can make in his athletes lives and the responsibility that comes with that.

Mike tends to work with younger athletes and finds a reciprocal teaching approach works well with the 12 – 14 year old age bracket. He shows the athletes how to do the skill then pairs them up, generally a more skilled athlete with a lesser skilled athlete, and allows them to spend time practicing and working it out. Like Kath, Mike's feedback tends to be around asking questions, if he sees the athletes struggling to pick up the skill he will ask them questions around why it is not working.

Harley is a young coach and works with younger athletes so puts an emphasis on organisation and catering for the players. Harley also coaches rugby and talks about spending quite a lot of time building trust. He doesn't elaborate on the point too much, but I read this as building trust as much between the athletes as it was between athletes and coach. He also talked about how creating this trust would be important for them in the future.

Discussion

The main point to come out of this question is how crucial it is for coaches to have a deep connection with their athletes to be able to get the best out of them. Tools such as personality profiling were mentioned for their value in getting to know the athlete better. Team cultures built around developing values such as trust, unselfishness and hard work, created to connect not only the athlete to the coach, but the athletes to each other.

The use of different teaching methods such as reciprocal teaching and questioning was also a point of emphasis, used to draw out athlete knowledge and put the athlete at the centre of the learning process. Rather than the athlete being a passive receiver of knowledge, they are a co-constructor of knowledge with the coach and the other athletes.

### 5.6 What to look for when hiring a coach

This table shows what qualities the respondents would look for when hiring a coach.

Table 8 – Hiring a coach. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Neil | Coaching skills can be taught, technique can be honed, attitude and a willingness to understand a coach's role in our athletes lives looms as the greatest requirement. |
| Colin | Obviously their (knowledge of the) technical skills of the game. Probably their energy and their focus for their team. Once you've finished that game it's not finished you go home and figure out why you won or why you lost. |
| Mike | Definitely organisation, time management and communication, then leadership obviously. I find it's important as a coach to be able to lead your group otherwise you're not really going to go too far. |
| Harley | Organisation is a big one. They can have everything set and ready to go or if they are slack and late that would be a big one. Trust with what they do, delivery, so coaching delivery and in general. I guess the other one would be communication as well as how good they are with people. |
| Martha | I would definitely hire a coach on whether they had a good feel and a good relationship and connectedness, and their personality and you can feel that they're passionate about what they do. |

Greg stresses the main factor he looks for in a coach is personality. Extrapolating Greg's answers to previous answers I think it would be reasonable to infer that the personality type he would be looking for would be one that emphasises building relationships. He puts personality above knowledge of the sport as he believes if you understand constructivist based learning models and you have motivated learners you can still achieve results.

Wendy comes from a different perspective having coached in more of a foundational skill development role in schools. She puts more of an emphasis on the experience they have had

working with a range of people and their ability to work with different ages and skill levels. Time management and planning skills were also important to her.

Neil, who along with his wife, runs a trampolining club. Believes that any coach coming in would need to hold similar values to them and be able to fit into the club culture. Neil held similar views to Greg in that he believed coaching skills can be taught, but having someone with the right attitude and the willingness to understand the coach's role in his athletes' lives was paramount.

Rick has been involved in the coach interviewing process and a big red flag for him is when a coaching applicant puts results above things like enjoyment and player welfare. As Neil talked about Rick also talks about the philosophy of the coach in terms of whether it fits with the organisation. As most of the coaches Rick works with are volunteers he tries to place them in a level that best suits their coaching abilities, sometimes this can be a touchy subject. He also looks at whether a coach has been able to develop skill levels across the board with teams or has the improvement been in particular areas, particular positions or with particular players, the results sometimes might suggest they are more suited to a specialised role.

Mike's top four were organisation, time management, communication and leadership. He says it's important for a coach to be able to lead a group for it to get very far. He goes on to add flexibility, especially in his situation working with school groups as the numbers fluctuate a lot and equipment and facilities are sometimes scarce, so thinking on your feet is definitely a requirement. For Harley being organised, prepared and punctuality are important as well as quality coaching delivery and also a quality mentioned that keeps coming up is people skills.

Gavin would be looking for someone who understands the requirements of the job, while he says experience is a factor, he is also aware that there are good coaches out there without the experience that just need the opportunity. To this end he sometimes will look beyond the record and try to envisage what the coach may be able to do.

Like Rick and Neil, Kelvin also thinks a coach's philosophy needs to be in alignment with that of the employing organisation as well as the coaching group he/she will be working with. Looking

at it from the perspective of a head coach hiring assistants he talks about selecting someone that has complementary skills and attributes to the head coach. However, there still needs to be enough common ground between you to work together. He says coaches need to be able to reflect honestly on themselves to understand their own strengths and weaknesses and realise that they aren't necessarily going to have everything.

Colin would want someone who was committed to the job and was prepared to analyse why the team won or lost and be willing to reflect on the effect of decisions made.

Martha holds a similar opinion to Greg in that she would hire a coach based on their personality and whether they had a good feel, as well as their ability to connect and build strong relationships. She says having a passion for it is important, especially in a sport like Netball where you work way more hours in the sport than you get paid for, if you get paid at all. So you have to have a passion for it.

Gareth agrees with a lot of the points that have been made by other respondents on this question. He talks about the ability to plan and then reflect effectively, also to be able to build a rapport with their athletes. He also says a coach should be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and be willing to work with others in their coaching group that not only complement their skills but will challenge them as well.

Interestingly Kath put a bit more of a premium on knowledge than most of the other respondents but also agreed with the others in terms of being able to build a rapport as an important skill. Kath points to some other personality traits that have not been mentioned so far such as honesty, vulnerability, humility and being able to put ego aside and get alongside people more. Kath also talks about time management both in terms of being able to plan sessions and balancing their lives.

Discussion

I was interested in the answers to this question from the point of view of my students moving into the coaching workforce after they had finished with us. I would then have a good idea of

what employers were looking for and whether what I was teaching on my course was valuable to potential employers.

Intangible qualities such as attitude, personality and people skills were highly valued amongst the coaches, in many cases more so than experience. There was a feeling that coaching skills could be taught if the right personal qualities were present.

Traits such as organisation and planning were unsurprisingly mentioned by my former students. These were elements that we put a fair amount of emphasis on.

Something I found interesting was the mention of alignment of the candidates coaching philosophy with that of the organisation. Although we do spend quite a bit of time on coaching philosophy, this answer showed me just how important it is for students to invest in their coaching philosophy and be able to articulate it to a potential employer.

### 5.7 The future of coaching

In this table respondents look to the future and offer some insights as to what the future of coaching might look like.

Table 9 – What is the future of coaching? Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Greg | So the role of a coach in the future becomes understanding who they've got in front of them and what they're trying to coach and adopting the appropriate style or way of going about it. So they become more of a facilitator, they become more of a people manager really and a constructor of a learning environment, as opposed to the director of the learning environment. |
| Gareth | I think in the future there will be less coach directed stuff. I think we are moving into a society that is more self- directed so things like apps on the phone, video games and virtual reality. |
| Rick | The ownership is being put on the participant, instead of put on the teacher or put on the educator. I think that's where we need to start moving in terms of our coaching. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Kelvin | I think the biggest thing we are noticing with coaching and coach development in general is that there is a huge, huge focus on the interpersonal and personal skills that coaches have and their ability to set visions around teams, around having a philosophy, around being able to manage people, connect with people, and listen to people. |
| Kath | Someone who can pull and push knowledge, be pretty receptive to athlete input a lot more than perhaps we have been up until now. Really prepared to make sure the athletes have a lot of responsibility for their own learning. |

Kath sees a much more facilitative approach to coaching required going forward. She sees that the generations of athletes coming through respond best to a collaborative approach to learning. Again the theme of knowing the athlete and having everyone feel included was raised. Kath also talks about the ability to pull and push knowledge, being able to allow athletes to have input as well as impart knowledge when required, and athletes having responsibility for a lot of their own learning. Kath says the coaches of the future will probably need to be real people managers more than just sport coaches, managing and guiding in the environment rather than telling.

Gareth also sees the future as being a more self-directed place where the athlete takes more control and the coach plays the part of mentor or support person. Gareth also sees technology playing more of a role in skill development in the future. He sees the use of a video game type approach driving skill development with athletes trying to reach the next level of the skill as something that will develop. Gareth still believes that society still values sport as much as it ever has and there is still a desire to play the game and have the competition, this is where you will see the coach more hands on. Whereas the coach will play a more informal role, more indirect, more games where the outcome is driving the skills that are required.

Gareth also believes coaches will need to be savvy with statistics. He still believes there is room for the coach's gut feel but they will need to be prepared to find statistics to back up their

hunches. He says the players have bought into statistics as well, driving them to improve in certain areas to develop their game. He says statistics work well if they're used appropriately to motivate and to keep things fun rather than to criticise players.

Martha also sees the position of coach in the future as perhaps being more of a managerial role, with the employment of specialist coaches underneath. She points to All Blacks coach Steve Hansen as a managerial type coach with his assistants and specialists – scrum coach, strength and conditioning and others. She says this approach is obviously dependent on the funds available, and the type of sport. In this situation the overseeing coach has to have good management skills. She also talks about coaches having to be media savvy, and being able to manage their image during the game when the camera is on them, as well as in interviews and in public.

Colin sees a time coming where you might not see coaches on the sidelines in his sport of Netball, simply because they are too vocal and directive with their players from the sideline. When I talked to Colin about sideline direction disempowering athletes, he said some groups responded to being told what to do (he mentioned an older age group he worked with) he talked about coaching younger age groups and having some success with a questioning approach. Interestingly he found there may be a cultural component to the success of using questioning. He has found when working with Maori and Pasifika athletes that they are often very shy and don't like being put on the spot when asked a question. He has got a better response from these players by simply telling them what he needs them to do. Colin feels this might be because these players are used to this approach in other areas of their lives.

Kelvin sees that there is a focus now on the interpersonal and personal skills that coaches have and their ability to set visions around teams, around having a philosophy, around being able to manage people, connect with people, and listen to people. Kelvin doesn't think the game itself will change a lot in the foreseeable future but says the biggest change will be in how athletes coming through the education system are being educated. He believes there is a massive focus on empowerment, on questioning, on collaboration in education now and says this will have a direct impact on how we can coach in 10 years' time.

He agrees with Kath and Gareth in that the role of a coach will move to more of a mentor role rather than a hierarchical coach – athlete relationship. He believes we should be preparing coaches and athletes for the future rather than the now. Another point that Kelvin emphasised was his desire for coaches to move away from a copy culture to a creative culture. He says it is too easy now for coaches now to put together sessions from what they find on youtube or elsewhere on the internet. He would like to see coaches be more creative and put together bespoke sessions based on the unique needs and abilities of their players and the opposition they are training. In terms of statistics Kelvin had a similar philosophy to Gareth in that he felt their best use is more to back up what the coach is focused on, to track what is relevant to the game plan and to show progress. Rather than necessarily being a key driver of coaching decisions.

Gavin's hope for the future of coaching is that community coaches get the recognition and support that they deserve based on the positive influence they have on shaping young people's lives.

Mike sees more coaching happening over the internet with players given more video to watch and homework to do and less one on one time with the coach. He sees this coming in more and more with team sports as well as individual sports. He points to his own experience in rugby where he receives fitness programmes from his coach and is expected to take care of this area of his preparation himself.

Like Kelvin and others mentioned, Rick also references changes in the way children are educated and how that is likely to be reflected in coaching practice in the future. He talks about young people taking more ownership of their own learning. He uses the example of co-captains and leadership groups where team members are responsible for many aspects of running the team. He says the coach shouldn't act as though the players don't know anything but be willing to tap into the knowledge that the players have. He believes for coaching to move forward the emphasis will need to be on the 'how' to coach rather than the 'what' to coach.

Greg agrees with the sentiments of Rick in that the coach of the future is a facilitator. He/she needs to understand who they've got in front of them and what they're trying to coach and

adopting the appropriate style or way of going about it. They become more of a facilitator, or people manager. As Greg puts it "a constructor of a learning environment, as opposed to the director of the learning environment," he believes many coaches acknowledge the merits of such an approach, but struggle to implement it and tend to default back to methods they are comfortable with. Greg also says that many coach educators don't seem well equipped to develop such a facilitative approach as they don't seem to model that approach well themselves when mentoring coaches. Often reverting to telling their mentees what they know on the subject rather than drawing out what their mentee knows. Greg sees the next step as facilitative coaching being normalized, at the moment he sees it as being acknowledged but not implemented as well as it should be.

Harley didn't believe there would be that many major developments in coaching in the future. However, he did agree with Martha in that coaches should get better at handling the media, being more adept at handling the questions of the media and staying composed when the cameras are on them. He points to Australian rugby coach Michael Cheika as an example of a coach who often allows his emotions to get the better of him at times when in the eye of the media.

Neil touches on some pertinent areas that haven't been raised by coaches to this point. Areas such as financial viability. Neil runs and coaches in his own trampolining club so understands his livelihood is tied in to the experience he gives his athletes. He says in the era of user pays coaches need to be more than technically knowledgeable and good talkers to hold a job. He believes personal integrity will be increasingly important as anybody involved with children, especially sports requiring physical contact, will be increasingly scrutinized. He also feels there will be an increased need to help more athletes psychologically through personal issues happening beyond the gymnasium or sports field as schools and health authorities struggle to deal with increasing numbers of developmental issues.

Neil says children, especially males, require challenging environments that satisfy their need for personal challenge and understanding and managing risk is a factor coaches need to be aware of in these environments. He goes on to say there is a need to provide situations that require

common sense evaluation to ensure the best chance of sensible decisions later in life, and that as a coach we have the opportunity to install good judgement with the ability to control confidence in motion.

Wendy raises the point about being able to modify games and activities, to keep it a bit faster flowing. As she says "over the years' sport has been modified in general, so I think the games and activities we are doing now will be modified in the years to come, so coaches will need to be able to modify and adapt their activities even more".

Discussion

People manager, mentor, facilitator are terms that were used to describe the coach of a much more athlete – directed, collaborative future. It was felt that this approach reflected what the school system had evolved to and what young athletes were used to. Given the ties established between education and coaching mentioned earlier it is hardly surprising that this connection would be made. A reality of coaching that was mentioned was dealing with developmental issues with athletes that may not be being addressed anywhere else in the athlete's life. As we seek to connect with athletes and get a better understanding of them, we have to be prepared to deal with what we find there.

Technology was mentioned in terms of using statistics to motivate athletes and coaching remotely when required. It also came in for criticism in that coaches can just get all of their drills and activities off youtube and not come up with any creative solutions to their coaching problems.

Below are the responses to questions that were only asked to students that had come through our coach education course at the New Zealand Institute of Sport (NZIS).

**5.9 Identifying the gaps**

In this table respondents who are recent graduates of our course identify any areas they feel would've helped them in their coaching but weren't covered.

Table 10 – Identifying the gaps. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mike | No it was pretty well covered, just maybe if we spent more time on learning disability, teaching and behavioural issues. It's a bit hard to deal with more the behavioural type stuff. |
| Wendy | Probably how to engage students or teens that don't want to do what you are teaching them. |
| Rick | I guess it's stuff that you aren't taught, I guess I was quite naïve before going into some of the coach education roles. I guess a good way to explain it, or to talk about is performance versus development. I used to be on the performance side in terms of winning and losing and judging performance on that sort of stuff. |

Colin emphasised the importance of getting player buy in to what the team is trying to achieve. He says that it wasn't that the subject wasn't covered; he just feels that since he has been coaching he has realised how important a factor it is, and would've liked to have seen a bit more emphasis placed on it.

For Wendy it was how to engage students or teens that don't want to do what you are teaching them. At the time of interviewing Wendy was coaching in schools so sometimes the children have to come to the coaching sessions but don't necessarily want to engage in what she is teaching them. She feels it would have been helpful if she had been shown some tools she could try to engage them when they aren't showing any interest. Wendy has come up with some good ideas of her own such as asking them what they like doing and incorporating that information into the activity by doing such things as naming the teams after the children's favourite movie or movie character. This makes it feel like the activity is based around something that they like.

Harley had been exposed to good coaching practices through his high school rugby career before arriving at NZIS. Harley seemed to misunderstand the question and went on to talk about planning, organisation and time management. But not in terms of what he wasn't taught at NZIS, but what he was taught at NZIS.

Rick feels he didn't come out of coach education with the proper perspective on sport. He felt he put too much emphasis on winning and losing and felt that early specialization was important for player development. He has now gained an appreciation of coaching for development versus coaching for performance. He sees now that unless you are playing professionally winning isn't that important and the development of the athlete as a person is a much better outcome from sport than a win.

Like Wendy, Mike has done most of his coaching with children in a school setting so one of the areas he has pointed out was having more of an understanding of learning and behavioural issues and how to manage children with these issues in a coaching setting. He says when you want to have full participation in a session you don't want to sit children out for long periods, knowing how to deal with those sorts of situations would've been helpful. He says some of this was covered in coach education but more in relation to older athletes.

Discussion

Strategies to improve engagement was an area that was raised as the ex-students often found themselves working with reluctant participants or participants with short attention spans. We do cover some strategies in our course material, but we could expand on this. Getting athlete buy-in was also mentioned, setting shared goals and developing shared codes of conduct are some ways we teach to help this process. Another area that was thought to require more emphasis was athlete development over results. I think this is a realisation a coach has to come to, and believe in themselves. This can be addressed through the coaching philosophy.

### 5.10 What's working well

In this table respondents who are recent graduates point out the areas they have found most useful to them in their coaching since they have finished the course.

Table 11 – Areas that have worked well for recent graduates. Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Colin | Definitely the imagery for them to go home and use. Sort of have them in that image set before they would go. And the self- talk definitely. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Harley | Time management particularly with the coaching courses we did through Diploma one, writing out the plan and making sure everything was ready to go that was definitely a big one. |
| Mike | Definitely being able to write an effective plan. I've found that real helpful coming into it. |

Mike has attention to detail in planning as an area that he has learned that has been of benefit to him. As mentioned previously, Mike coaches in a school setting often having multiple sessions in a day. Making sure sessions are timed out and planned is important so the required content is covered and the session is completed before the next one is due to start. Mike also felt he had gained a degree of confidence and calmness in his coaching from the experience he had at NZIS. Harley agrees with Mike in that he feels time management and learning to put together a detailed session plan has been a real benefit to him.

Wendy felt she now understands that every participant is different in terms of skill level and that they are not all going to take in information the same way. Therefore, understanding and using the principles of learning styles and delivering information using visual, auditory and kinaesthetic elements has become very important.

Colin has been the first to mention benefits athletes have received from his use of mental skills with them. He says methods such as imagery and self-talk have proved helpful with developing confidence and skills with his players. He says as he only had limited time with players he would ask them to use imagery to focus on a skill that they wanted to improve on before the next game. He would often see a lift in performance in that area that the player would often attribute to the use of imagery.

Rick believed that learning about different coaching styles and teaching methods gave him the tools to examine himself as a coach and where he sat in terms of coaching style. Understanding the different coaching styles, Rick says, also allowed him to think what he wants to be like as a coach. Rick says he has realised the importance of putting athletes in positions to be successful

and what a definition of success for some athletes might look like. For some, he says, it might be as basic as getting to practice on time.

Rick has had opportunities to watch top level rugby league coaches in action. What he took from that he says is an understanding that what coaches do at the top level is not that different from what coaches do at any level. The top coaches are just better at teaching why the skills of the sport are important and why they should be performed well. He says you can find out a lot about how top performing coaches go about their jobs if you are prepared to do a bit of research.

Discussion

Detailed session planning was mentioned as beneficial as often they were working in tight timeframes. Understanding that athletes take in information in different ways and how to account for this when delivering information was also seen as helpful. Being educated on the different teaching methods and coaching styles allowed the coaches to reflect on their own preferred coaching style and whether it best served their athletes.

### 5.11 Preparing for the real world of coaching

In this table the recent graduate respondents give an overall comment on whether the course they have done has prepared them for the real world of coaching.

Table 12 – How prepared did you feel for coaching in the real world? Source: authors own.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rick | I think it prepared me really well, you've definitely got to have and understand the theory. The theory is well and good but you've still got to do practical, the more experience that you actually get in front of people, I guess that's how you find your style. |
| Wendy | I think I was equipped for the reality of coaching it was everything that I went and learnt on what it was going to be and it was exactly that. |
| Colin | The disconnects I sort of thought about was between so like when we were in coaching situations with students we kind of all behaved |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ourselves. We were probably put into the school situation where those kids were interested in looking at time outside the classroom. |

Colin felt there was a bit of a disconnect in terms of the coaching practicals feeling a bit contrived, in that the children we coached at the intermediate school were on their best behaviour because they did not want to have to go back to class. When they coached their peers everyone was also very compliant because they did not want to ruin the coach's assessment. Colin has found at times that what he has come across in terms of attention and compliance from players has proven more difficult than experienced at NZIS.

Wendy believed she felt the course she did equipped her well for the coaching situation she went into. She felt coaching was exactly as she was taught it was going to be. Harley agrees with Wendy saying it was an easy transition for him going from the course into his coaching experience. He also adds that some of the coaching skills he learnt, such as organisation, he applies in his daily life.

Mike felt he could've done with a bit more practical during the course as he found he developed more through the hands on experience he's had in coaching. He also felt working with a variety of age groups would've helped as they only really coached their peers in their second year.

Rick agrees with Mike that although understanding the theory is important it is through the practical act of coaching that you get better at it and begin to find your own style. He says that practicing will allow you to get a feel for what coaching styles are needed at particular times and you can flick in and out of them. To do this successfully you need to understand what environment you are trying to create and what the athletes need at any given time. He also feels coaches should be encouraged to stay relevant and stay up to date with new ideas that are coming out that might help them to connect with the new generation.

Discussion

In general, the course would appear to have prepared the ex-students for the coaching careers they have gone into. It was however pointed out that more practical would've given them more experience to cope with different situations. Having students coach teams over longer periods of time, rather than a few discrete sessions with school children, would allow them to experience some of the trials and tribulations of dealing with athletes on a regular basis. This would prepare them more for higher level coaching positions.

I would also look to encourage the students to be life-long learners and continue to study, improve and learn new coaching approaches once they leave.

Now that we have heard from the coaching community as to what is important to them and what they believe constitutes best practice in coaching. The process becomes analysing what the literature has emphasised versus what the coaches at the coalface have talked about as being important to them.

# 4. Conclusion

Basically all respondents referred to an athlete-centred approach as being the key tenet in best practice in coaching, although there was some disagreement around whether all coaching styles were athlete-centred (Greg arguing that the use of an authoritarian coaching style can be in the best interests of an athlete at times). The next step then became identifying what the elements of athlete-centred coaching are. Going back and reviewing the path the literature had led me down it became apparent to me that a critical question for a coach to answer was what is the purpose of sport? As I had dug deeper into the literature ideas such as morals and values, Olympism, and developing a growth mindset became prominent. All of these concepts could be developed through sport and for me it became a point of emphasis in terms of coach education and what I will teach on my course. The reality is that coaches will have their own views on the purpose of sport and their own reasons for getting into coaching. But I feel they should be educated on the possibilities that sport offers and think deeply about the sporting experience they wish to deliver. If the best interests of the athlete are put at the centre of this process, then I believe the first step of an athlete-centred approach is achieved.

Having a coaching philosophy was mentioned as part of SportNZ's (2017) best practice as well as being a key point of coach education for Kelvin. Kelvin talked about a coaching philosophy being a document that sets out the whys and hows for a coach. It also can act as a guide for decision making and how a coach wants a team to play. Having taught coaching philosophy as part of our current level five curriculum I believe in the value of it and would retain it as part of any new iteration of best practice.

All of the coaches mentioned connection in one form or another. Greg particularly believing the connection between the student or athlete and the teacher or coach as crucial for learning to take place. Others talked about being able to have the "hard conversations" with athletes when things aren't going well. Also being aware of what else athletes may have going on in their lives that could be affecting their performance, and being sensitive to it. The fact that connection was so widely mentioned across the coaching spectrum and the emphasis placed on it by many of the respondents suggests it should be a key area of coaching best practice.

Developing a positive team culture was included as part of the good practice principles put out by SportNZ (2017). It was also discussed by some of the elite level coaches who used different themes (Martha), the achievements of previous teams and illustrations of desirable team attributes such as selflessness, teamwork and work ethic (Gareth) to try and develop a strong team culture.

Bo Hanson (PlayNRL, 2017) talks about the dangers of letting a culture emerge organically in a team, as it is likely that the stronger personalities in the team will influence the process. This could be a positive or negative depending on what type of people the influencers are. Given that a team culture will emerge whether the coach drives it or not, a coach should have the tools to develop a team culture and then decide how and when to apply them. Having a good team culture allows those traits such as moral character and virtue that were discussed earlier to develop and take root. Therefore, culture should form part of best practice.

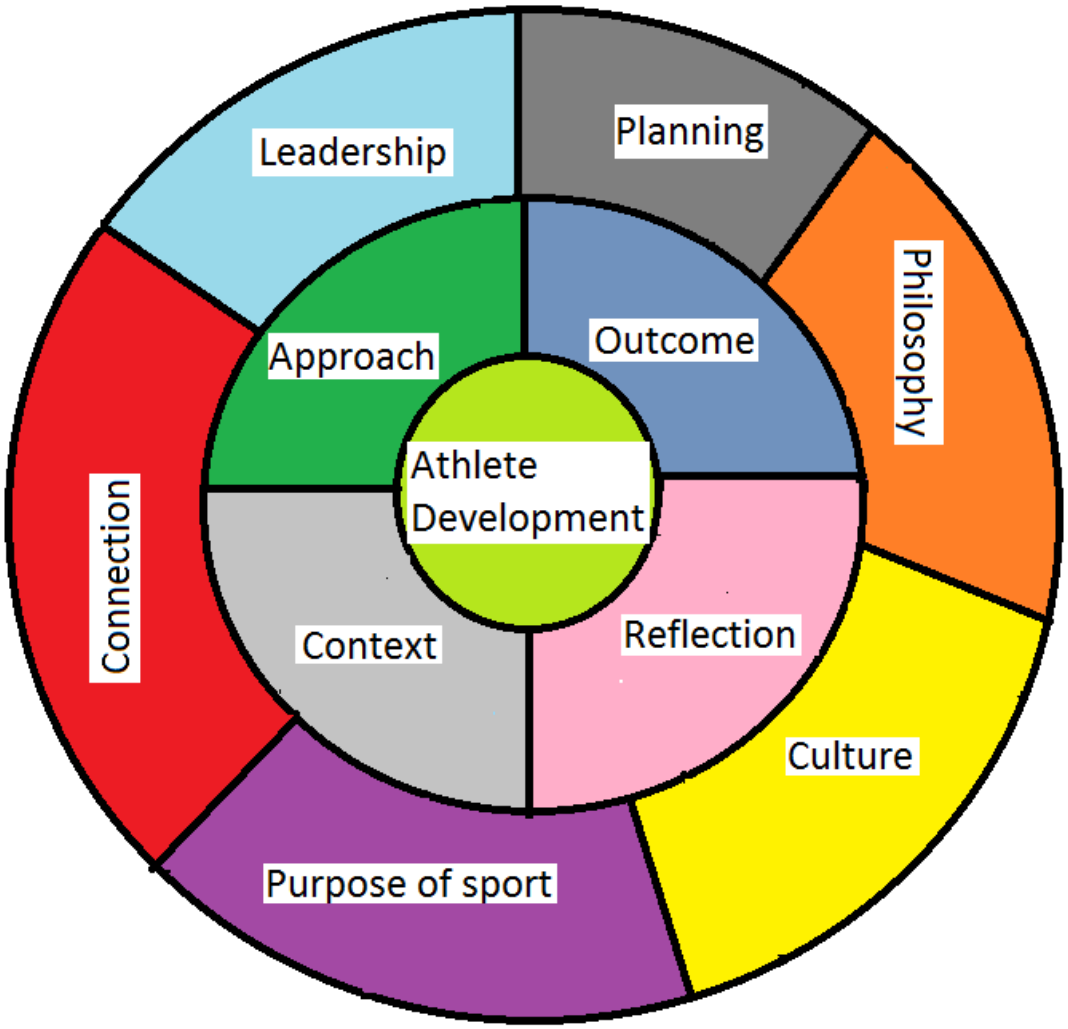
Leadership is seen as an important element of best practice in both coaching and education research (Sport NZ,2017, Alton-Lee 2003). It was also commented on by the recently graduated students (Mike and Rick) as being a key element of good coaching. Leadership is not only something that needs to be provided by the coach, but also needs to be fostered within a team. This will not only enable the team to have better decision making processes within the game, but also where appropriate allowing the team to make decisions around the running of the team. Showing and developing leadership skills as part of a best practice approach will build those skills for use outside of the sporting environment.

Planning is fundamental to good coaching practice and is included in SportNZ's (2017) coach educator approach in terms of planning to provide enjoyment and variety. Whereas from an educational point of view it's more around planning to use different approaches that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences on learning. Many of the respondents spoke about planning, Kath especially saw planning in a purposeful way as essential. Kath says often she sees coaches running practices that don't appear to have a goal or is addressing any issues shown up in the game. As Neil points out coaches need to know what athletes require at different stages of development and be able to plan around delivering

those requirements. Coaches have access to statistics on every aspect of the game and the athletes and as Kath says, “as you go up the scale of coaching from foundation to development to performance being more and more meticulous is required to be able to be really effective”.

The next task became consolidating the findings into a form that represents my interpretation of what has come out of this process. To this end I developed a model in the form of a wheel with three circles. The outside circle representing the areas that the respondents identified as foundational to being able to deliver best coaching practice, those being – leadership, connection, culture, coaching philosophy, planning and one that I think sets the scene for the coach and the team is their understanding around the purpose of sport. There were other candidates that could have had a standalone position as part of the foundational circle – for example communication or time management. But for the sake of keeping things manageable, they could be seen as subsets of other areas e.g. communication as a subset of connection or leadership. In the end I think the elements that have been included provide the framework within which quality coaching can take place. This would make up the bulk of the level five course. This would provide the students with the foundation to then look at more of the “how” of coaching in the following year.

**Fig 1. The Coaching Wheel Source: authors own**




### 6.1 Leadership

In its coach education material SportNZ (2017) refers to providing leadership to athletes and producing self-reliant athletes. For their high-performance coaches they refer to coach and athlete leadership, inferring the athlete should be encouraged to provide leadership as well as the coach and develop their leadership skills. Alton-Lee (2003) also refers to leadership in the education setting in that it should contribute to effective teaching and learning.

Leadership was also mentioned several times in the interviews. To me leadership in coaching is understanding how to build a team out of a group of individuals and get them to work together to achieve a common aim. The coach needs to develop leadership within his/her team; this can be done by delegating roles and responsibilities to the players as they show the capacity to cope with them.

The students are taught leadership in a standalone course at level six. I think we should be teaching leadership theories relevant to coaching at level five so we are completing the foundational elements at level five. We could look at different leadership styles and analyse each student's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to leadership. We can talk about the fact that different leadership styles are likely more appropriate at different stages of team development. For example, referring to Tuckman's model (1965) – forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning – the storming stage may require a firmer hand than once the team has moved to the performing stage. The students should come to an understanding that they may have their own preferred leadership styles, but need to be flexible enough to move between styles as required. Once they are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of leadership styles they can make decisions about other coaching staff or captaincy appointments that complement their own particular strengths and weaknesses. I would also need to point out how the use of coaching styles such as delegating (delegating certain tasks to athletes during a coaching session) can help develop leadership within a team.

### 6.2 Connection

Connecting with players was a theme throughout the research. A good coach is able to connect with each player on a personal level and treats the player as a person first and an athlete second. They take a holistic approach to athlete development wanting them to grow not just as an athlete but a person as well (Martha, Gavin, Greg). They show this by knowing what is going on with their athletes outside of the sports environment (Martha) and they take this into account when making decisions. They are sensitive when giving feedback and having hard conversations with athletes (Kath). They do things as simple as greeting each player before practice and using their name when speaking to them (Greg). Coaches can use things like

personality profiling and preferred learning style tests to better understand their athletes and the best way to teach them (Kelvin).

Even though connection has been identified as the key element in the coach-athlete relationship it is not something we specifically cover in our coaching curriculum. We do cover the best ways to give feedback to athletes. But we need to look at how we can develop the soft skills of our students to allow them to build trust with athletes and be able to have hard conversations and resolve conflict when required. Some appropriate topics to help with this would be active listening, body language, communication styles and the use of tact during a difficult conversation.

**6.3 Culture**

Duda & Balaguer (2007), Sage, Kavaussanu & Duda (2006) tell us that the culture created in a team environment can have a profound effect on the sporting experience an athlete has. Developing a task-orientated culture promotes prosocial behaviour whereas an ego- orientated culture tends to develop, "negative cognitions, affective responses, and behavioural patterns", (Duda & Balaguer (2007), P. 18.) Duda & Balaguer, (2008) also concluded that individuals show much higher levels of motivation when their athletic involvement contributes to a common and greater good. If coaches can create a culture where engagement in the activity is more valued than winning, then a wider purpose of sport can start to flourish.

SportNZ (2017) in its good practice standards counsels coaches to create a positive environment and culture. From an education point of view Alton-Lee (2003) advocates creating a culture where learners feel physically, socially, culturally and emotionally safe.

To me developing a culture within a team creates a framework for player development to take place. The culture sets out how a team will function, it puts into place standards, expectations, values and forms of accountability. Each team member should be involved to ensure everyone buys into, and feels a part of, the culture development process. Coaches can make up videos that highlight desired behaviours or bring in players to talk about the cultures and core values

of past teams as a way of having some influence in the culture building process. Of course coaches should have their say however; ultimately it is the players sporting experience so the coach should respect this.

We don't look specifically at the wider theme of culture in either of our courses but we do cover codes of conduct relating to how coaches should act and then the process of putting together a code of conduct for a team. I feel we could be teaching more around setting relevant team goals and the development and maintenance of a team culture. An example of a culture development approach we could introduce on the level five course is the GRIP approach developed by Bo Hanson (2012). G – being development of goals, values and behaviours. Behaviours is discussed in terms of above the line, or acceptable behaviours and below the line, or unacceptable behaviours. R – being roles that team members have and what they are going to do to uphold the standards to help the team reach their goal. I – stands for interpersonal, addressing how the team will communicate and work together. Lastly P is the processes and procedures that the team wants to run with.

**6.4 The Purpose of Sport**

This element may form part of, and feed into, a coach's coaching philosophy, but as I wanted to highlight what I believe is the significance of it I have chosen to deal with it separately here. As outlined in the literature, if a coach is willing to consider the possibilities that sport can offer in the right context and if the right environment is provided. Then around the sporting experience social responsibility (Hellison, 1995), moral development (MacIntyre, 1985) growth across all domains (Durie, 1994) and the educative value (Olympic charter, 2015) of sport can be realised. To this end I believe it is important for a coach to take a wider view and think deeply about what the purpose of sport really is. I feel this then sets the tone for ones coaching journey. If a coach believes sport is about winning, then a coach should seek out opportunities in sport where this attitude is appropriate (perhaps the elite level). If such a coach ends up in a development role then they can do a lot of damage to young athletes if they are left to sit on the bench while the coach leaves his best players on with the intention of winning at all costs. Likewise, a coach that believes sport is about enjoyment, developing people and participation

may fall foul in a cut throat elite sport environment where results are paramount. However, some of the very best coaches are able to balance these seemingly incongruous views. I feel it is important for a coach to be honest with themselves as to what their views are and be able to express them when they are applying for coaching positions, as well as to their athletes and where appropriate to the athletes' parents, as this means everyone knows where they stand from the outset.

In my course I feel I have only really scratched the surface in terms of the purpose of sport. We discuss things like fitness, enjoyment, socialising, learning new skills, teamwork and so on. But I have been encouraged from what I have read in the literature to urge my students to consider the opportunity sport provides for considerable development of young people's values and morals. I know I can only encourage and role-model this as the students will have their own views on this when it comes to putting together their coaching philosophies.

**6.5 Coaching Philosophy**

Once the purpose of sport has been established in the mind of a coach. This will clarify the process of putting together a coaching philosophy. Helping coaches develop a coaching philosophy is one of the expectations of SportNZ's coach educators (SportNZ, 2017). Respondents (Kelvin, Rick and Neil) mentioned the importance of coaching philosophies in the hiring process, as it was important to get a feel whether the candidates philosophy aligned with that of the hiring organisation. From my perspective a coach needs to be aware of what their own personal values and beliefs are and how they feed into and affect the way that they coach. A useful way to do this is to develop a coaching philosophy. This allows you to understand why you coach, how you will coach, what you want from your athletes and what you want out of coaching. Going through this process means the coach can make better decisions around choosing teams to coach. If there is not an alignment between the level of ability, competitiveness and expectation of a team and its coach this can result in frustration on both sides.

Coaching philosophy is an area that we cover in some depth in our level five course and it also forms part of an assessment within the course. As it has been identified as an area pertaining to best practice it should remain as part of any revamped course.

**6.6 Planning**

Planning is at the heart of any successful endeavour and as such you would expect to see it as part of most if not all codes of practice. Coaching is no exception SportNZ's coach educators ask their coaches to run sessions that are "planned, organised, varied and are enjoyable" (SportNZ, 2017 P. 10). We also see this same focus on planning in Alton-Lee's (2003, P. 6) education standards, "design and plan approaches which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences on learning". Although this is the only element that specifically mentions planning, other elements such as "using a repertoire of teaching strategies, approaches, learning activities, technologies and assessment strategies" (Alton-Lee, 2003 P. 6), could not be achieved without detailed planning.

The collective responses of the respondents (Kath, Mike, Harley) showed that planning was a staple of good coaching. Through understanding the principles of long term athlete development (See appendix Sport for life, 2014) a coach can plan more effectively based on the stage of the athletes they are coaching. Along with the players the coach can set appropriate goals and then plan to achieve them. A coach can also plan to develop athletes in areas other than the physical by setting other goals in domains such as the social and cognitive (the coaches own philosophy and their beliefs around the purpose of sport will determine their commitment to do this). At the higher levels where competing is important the coach needs to be taking into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of his/her team and the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition and plan accordingly. Coaches need to have measurable goals for each session and a reason for the drills and activities they run in a session. It should be clear where the session fits into the overall scheme of things and how it will help the team reach its goals.

We spend a lot of time on this in both the level five and level six courses. Level five planning is more around what elements to cover in a coaching session and what a well-structured coaching session looks like. In level six the planning becomes more about understanding the athletes

being coached, looking at such things as their sporting background and their current skill level in relation to the skill being taught. I think we cover planning pretty thoroughly; however, I would add in long term athlete development and planning across a season at level six.

With the coaching foundation set in the outer circle the inner circle became about the “how to” of coaching. The question then became what to include? For this content I looked to the course I currently teach at level six. In the course the students have to profile, across a range of categories, the athletes they are going to be working with. This allows them to have some idea of the ability levels of those they are going to be working with before they start, thus providing the context for them to structure their session. From understanding the starting point of their athletes, the students can then come up with an appropriate goal for the session and how it is to be measured.

The students also learn the full range of different teaching methods – for example reciprocal teaching, task teaching and teaching games for understanding. Having a range of teaching methods at their disposal allows them to select the most appropriate ones to use given the context of the session. Straight afterwards we debrief the session with students getting feedback from me as well as other students as to how well the session went. They then, using video analysis, undertake a process of reflection where they judge their performance against set criteria looking at areas they did well in and what they can improve on in future sessions. The elements of context, approach, outcome, reflection, form a coaching loop that a coach can work through when developing their sessions.

**6.7 Context**

Context is understanding the setting in which the coaching session is taking place – in season or out of season, teaching a new skill or revising a well learned one, preparing to play a particular team or introducing or combating a particular style of play. Answering these questions when planning the session will help the coach select the appropriate coaching style and teaching method to achieve the desired outcome. I think this is a step that is often overlooked with coaches generally reverting to type and delivering in their preferred style regardless of the context.

We currently do touch on this area as part of putting together our coaching sessions in level six. Students have to ascertain the current capabilities of their participants and put together an appropriate coaching session based on this information.

**6.8 Approach**

"It is incumbent upon the coach to be proficient at using the different styles and methods so as to have a range of these at their disposal depending on the context" (Greg). This allows a coach to move between styles as the requirements of the session and the response from the athletes' dictates. Many educators advocate only for certain coaching styles and teaching methods as being athlete-centred while others they see as not. Yet others believe there is a time and a place for all types of styles and methods and all could be considered athlete-centred depending on the context (Greg). A coach may find that in general that their preferred style is appropriate; however, the coach needs to ensure whatever style used is used because it is the best option for the situation and in the best interests of the athlete.

Our level six students are taught a full range of coaching styles and teaching methods and then are asked to select appropriate styles and methods for their coaching sessions based on what they believe is appropriate for the group they are working with and what they know about each athlete in the session.

**6.9 Outcome**

It is important to have ways to assess the effectiveness of a session. By having specific goals that can be measured the players know what is expected of them and the coach has a way of judging how well the session went (Wendy, Kath). Often goals are centred on the physical aspects of the sport such as skill development. But coaches who have a broader view on the purpose of sport may have goals around fair play, communication or team work. Doing things like taking a baseline measure of the area to be developed at the beginning of a session and then retesting at the end is an easy way of measuring progress. Demonstration of correct technique or players being able to articulate key points about a principle may also be appropriate. Too often coaches finish delivering their sessions without much thought as to

whether what was hoped for was actually achieved. When video footage is available tools such as silicon coach and hudl can also be used by coaches to assess whether the team has been successful in achieving the session objectives (Wendy, Kath, Gareth).

When the students put together their coaching sessions at level six they have goals for their sessions and build their sessions around achieving them. At the end of the session they have to review with the participants whether the goals of the session have been achieved.

**6.10 Reflection**

There was plenty of evidence among the scholars and coaches alike that reflection should form part of a best practice model. Unsurprisingly reflection appears as part of SportNZ's (2017) recommendations to coaches right across the coaching spectrum. When asked how this reflection should take place coaches pointed to watching back over a video of a session and being able to objectively evaluate its effectiveness as a useful tool, they also believed having a mentor or a coaching peer involved in this process was often helpful (Kath, Gareth, Rick, Colin). As well as watching their own delivery of the session, the coach should take note of the participants response to what is being delivered. The coach needs to determine whether the right coaching style and teaching method was used in the context, whether the feedback given to the participants was effective and also whether there is a good flow to the session (Greg). The results of reviewing the session should be reflected in the planning for the next session, thereby closing the loop.

In our level five course we do reflect at a somewhat superficial level. We are more concerned with participant engagement, behaviour management, transition between activities and explanation and demonstration of skills and feedback given. I lead the discussion with some points and then ask questions of the group to encourage them to come up with their own opinions on their performance and areas they could improve, as part of an assessment the students have to evaluate how well they did against certain criteria.

At level six the students coaching sessions are videoed, directly after the session the student is given feedback from the participants (who are also their classmates) on the session. They then

take more individual responsibility for reflection as part of the assessment process, watching the video back and then evaluating themselves against a set of criteria. To help this process I could provide a bit more of a theoretical grounding for the reflection process. Using Stephen Brookfield's (2005) four lenses approach to reflection would provide a good place to start. This approach very much aligns with what I currently teach in this area. So it would just be a matter of delivering the theory of the approach a bit more.

I would also look at using Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton's reflection model (1995). As I think it provides a good template for the students, stepping them through the stages of reflection and providing them with appropriate questions to ponder at each stage. I think this approach would complement the four lenses and provide a good overall reflection framework to work with.

**6.11 Athlete Development**

Whether it has been talking to the coaches or reading the research articles, there has been one constant in all of the ground that has been covered in this project and that is the athlete is the central character. When giving consideration to all of the other elements in the other two circles the development of the athlete needs to be uppermost in the mind of a coach. I think if the coach is making decisions based on what he/she believes is in the best interests of the athlete then I feel the coach is being athlete-centred in their approach and consequently using best practice.

**6.12 Debate**

I willingly accept that the complexities of coaching make something like a best practice framework contestable ground. I fully intend to engage with my colleagues as we plan for the next year, as well as other coaches and coach educators at an upcoming coaching conference and coaching workshops I will be attending. These will be good testing grounds for the wheel as during these conversations I expect the place of some of the outer elements of the coaching wheel to be debated. Having said that I don't imagine any of the elements can be removed, my concern is that the outer circle might grow and grow until it becomes unworkable. I think I will be defending that the elements raised are applicable to an already existing element. However, I

expect the integrity of the basic framework to remain and the inner circle and middle of the coaching wheel to be left intact.

I believe the coaching wheel can provide an accessible package to turn coaching theory into practice. It is not prescriptive in its nature, under each element coaches are free to use whatever methods they feel best suits the needs of their athletes.

As far as my own practice is concerned the coaching wheel gives me a framework for me to use in my own coaching. I can document as I go whether what I have proposed is working and examine whether the elements need to be changed or whether it is the implementation of that particular element that needs to change. This provides a loop of trial and reflection that will inform my teaching as I will be able to use my own narrative as to what I have tried and what has worked and not worked in my situation. This will help guide the students in the coaching decisions they make.

Below is a comparison of what our level five and level six coaching courses currently cover against what I have identified as the elements of best practice in coaching.

Table 13 - Elements of coaching Source: authors own

| **Best practice** | **Level Five** | **Level Six** | **Recommendation** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | Not taught. | Taught as a standalone course. | Add coaching specific leadership into level five. |
| Connection | Standalone communication course. Cover forms of feedback and how to deliver them. | Standalone communication course. | Need to prepare students to have hard conversations and grow relationships with their athletes. |
| Planning | Covered comprehensively. | Covered well | Cover long term athlete development and season planning. |
| Purpose of Sport | Covered to a degree. | Not covered. | More depth required on the moral value of sport. |
| Coaching Philosophy | Covered comprehensively. | Not covered. | No alteration required. |
| Culture | Covered in form of code of conduct. | Not covered. | Need to teach more around development of team culture at level five. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Covered. | Well covered. | No alteration required. |
| Approach | Not covered. | Covered but could be done more comprehensively. | Need to elaborate on coaching styles and teaching methods so students have a good understanding and can make informed decisions on which ones to use. |
| Outcome | Covered. | Covered well. | No alteration required. |
| Reflection | Covered well. | Covered well. | Provide some theories and templates for students to use. |

This project has highlighted some areas for me to address. One particular example is some of the past students that were interviewed didn't necessarily feel they got authentic coaching experience (Colin), or enough practical opportunities to develop their coaching identity (Rick). To this end I could look at sourcing opportunities at schools for our students to coach a team for a season rather than one off coaching sessions with school classes.

As we looked to the future of coaching many of the respondents (Gareth, Mike, Kelvin) pointed out the increasing role of technology. I can see going forward I will have to improve my knowledge of data analysis, both in terms of player statistics and analysis of technique, player conditioning and game play. Technology is becoming an important coaching tool and also becoming more user-friendly. As a coach educator I will need to upskill myself in this area, as there will be an expectation from my students to be up to speed with this.

The respondents could see the future being a movement towards the coach as a facilitator. For my students to be successful in this coaching environment, they will need to be able to structure sessions that allow a facilitative approach to be taken. For example, when teaching players to use space in a sport a coach may start working with the players passing a ball around in a small area. Then increase the size of the playing area, the coach can then bring the players in and discuss the differences. The success of this approach is contingent on the quality of the questions, so I would need to place special emphasis on this.

The athletes of today prefer a collaborative approach to learning. They like to test out ideas and discuss the results. They like to have input into their sporting experience. They also like to know why they are doing things and why they have to do them a particular way. Those coaches that struggle to adapt will not only alienate their players, they could turn them off sport altogether. As a coach educator I want my students to not only learn how to survive in this coaching environment, but go on to thrive.

# 7. Critical Reflection

### 7.1 Reflecting on – Defining best practice

The purpose of this project was to establish what best practice in sport coaching looks like, and to compare it to what I currently teach as being best practice. To do this I had to have a good grasp of what best practice looks like to start with. The term is generally used in relation to the business world, so I had to see whether this neatly translated across to a coaching context. In the business context it is about meeting a predetermined set of standards; was there anything comparable for coaching? My first port of call was SportNZ, what I found was more broad good practice principles aimed at community coaches, which was not really what I was after. Digging

a bit deeper I found some more specific areas of focus for high performance coaches where there was likely to be more accountability. However, there weren't any benchmarks as such. To this end I looked at what I thought was a comparable industry to coaching, education. Education is a hot button with governments so you would expect some robust research around the topic, this proved to be the case. Education also tends to demand a high level of accountability and is outcome driven, so you would expect standards to be set.

I also wanted to gain some perspective around what the purpose of sport actually is, and I guess what it is capable of being. I found some very good frameworks and models that had been specifically developed to use in a sport and physical activity setting with the noble aim of producing more well-rounded individuals. Hellison's social responsibility model and Olympism were examples of this. Although not specifically designed for a sporting context, Carol Dweck's growth mindset and Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha model can easily be adapted to be applicable in a sports setting.

Putting sport in a wider context forced me to think more broadly about what best practice in coaching should encompass. Certainly now I think coaches should conduct a thorough investigation as to their own beliefs of the purpose of sport and how they relate to the development of their coaching philosophy.

**7.2 Reflecting on – The research process**

Once I had my own grasp on the concept of best practice. I could start thinking about how best to further explore what best practice in coaching currently looks like. To this end I think taking a more in depth qualitative approach as opposed to a quantitative approach worked well for this project. I think a wider spread survey without the opportunity to get in depth answers would not have yielded the quality of information that I have had to work with. I have also had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions where appropriate which has improved my understanding of the concepts talked about. I found the qualitative research labour intensive as I transcribed all of the interviews myself, this added a lot of hours to the overall project, but proved very beneficial in the analysis process. Obviously sending out a survey that the respondent typed out and emailed back themselves would have reduced my workload.

However, I think it was worthwhile in that I got very familiar with the contents of the interviews and could kind of process it as I went along. One of the other advantages of the phone or face to face interview was that I was able to form a connection with the respondent, which helped them open up and give more detailed answers and share some good anecdotal stories. I do feel that through this project I could contact any of the respondents for advice in the future.

I am very happy with the range of respondents that I chose to interview. I originally had a list of 10 coaches to interview, but had the opportunity to interview two very successful, international level coaches. I am glad I took this opportunity as it added some valuable insights, as both had reached the top of the coaching tree without any formal coach education. I feel I interviewed a good cross section of the coaching industry; I had coach educators that were sport specific and ones that were working in the community and in high performance. There were also international level coaches in team sport as well as individual sport. The individual sport coach also makes his living by running a club, which also added a different perspective compared to those who are hired by organisations and are only responsible for their team.

At the other end of the spectrum were the recent graduates sharing their coaching experiences and how prepared they felt going into the coaching environment. Their perspective was compared and contrasted with the views of the more experienced coaches. I think this worked well as this showed up some areas where the graduates struggled, then you could often find answers in what the more experienced coaches had to say on that particular topic. This then lead me to look at my own course as to whether we were adequately preparing the students in that area.

Once the respondents had agreed to be a part of the project, I sent the questions out to them a week or so ahead of the interview. Which I think worked well as it allowed the respondent time to give due consideration and give well thought out, quality answers and not having to come up with answers on the spot. I also think assuring the respondents that the information they gave me would be secure and that I would use aliases in the final write up allowed them to perhaps be a bit more candid with their answers.

I think overall the questions yielded the information required to get the right output from the project. I think some respondents may have got a bit confused when asked what they thought best practice was and what they would be teaching if they were teaching best practice in coaching. The respondents often came up with similar answers to these two questions. The first question was really designed to get an answer as to what they thought the term best practice meant in a generic sense as opposed to immediately putting it into a coaching context. I was unsure as to whether I should try and explain the question more or allow them to speak to their own interpretation of the question as I didn't want to influence the respondents' answers, I opted for the latter.

The rest of the questions I think worked well. The question around best practice allowed the respondents to consider what best practice in coaching is. I think for many of them they hadn't actually considered this question, even the international level coaches, as some didn't have any formal coach education and had never given pause to consider the idea of best practice. That's not to say they didn't reflect on what they were doing, it was just more around what was working and what wasn't working. Which meant when you asked a question like "are there any coaching practices you have used that you found to be particularly effective?" you would get detailed answers backed up with stories of their own experiences.

The questions around what tools a coach can use to improve and what a coach should be measured on drew out some interesting answers. Without exception the coaches agreed that looking at wins and losses was not the right measure with which to judge a coach. However, the higher level coaches acknowledged that in their position there was no getting away from results being a key performance indicator for them. They felt that this was because the people that they answered to use a different lens with which to view success in sport. In that wins equal dollars. The coaches understood that they couldn't focus on winning as that was something that was beyond their control, but instead focused on internal team goals that they could control, as well as team and individual improvement. Knowing full well if they concentrated on these areas the winning tended to take care of itself. However, Greg did point out that losing could be symptomatic of an issue within the team.

The “what would you be looking for when hiring a coach?” question gave me some insight into what a coach in a position to hire another coach would be looking for. This meant I could look for the commonalities and make sure I was addressing these areas as part of the curriculum. As a lot of the coaches have got to where they are without any formal coach education they were a bit skeptical of what they call the “paper coaches”; In other words, coaching students who have come out of tertiary education with all of the right qualifications but no real “feel” for coaching. They talked about the more intangible things like passion, the right personality and being able to connect with people as being the most important, other areas such as planning and the nuts and bolts of the game can be learned through experience. I think for me this means identifying those intangible traits in students and giving them opportunities to develop them.

As a tertiary tutor I am aware that I am not so much trying to prepare my students for the coaching industry as it is now, but for a dynamic future ahead. To this end I wanted to find out what the respondents thought coaching would look like going forward. Predictably many thought technology would play a major part. Something that was mentioned that gave me pause for thought was the idea of gamifying skill development, where athletes are engaged in trying to reach higher and higher levels with a particular skill based on what results they achieve. For instance, making a certain number of basketball shots out of 100 from a certain distance gives you a particular rating in that skill. With this approach the player might be internally motivated to improve to the next level or motivated to do better than a team mate. This approach works with and leverages off what young people are familiar with and engaged in to make practice more attractive to them, as opposed to traditional drill type approaches which are likely to be less effective with the current generation. In this scenario the coach has very little input other than providing the opportunity.

With technology athletes are able to access many different coaching videos on any sport that show all sorts of variations on skill performance and game tactics. Potentially players can improve technique and learn new moves by watching their favourite players on youtube and practicing them with their mates on the court or sports field, again no coach really required in

this scenario either. This led me to thinking where does the coach of the future fit in? To me it's being the person that provides the right environment to foster the growth of the athlete not only in terms of developing their skill but also as a person. They can do this by role-modelling and promoting appropriate behaviours such as teamwork, resilience and sportsmanship.

Increasingly there is a culture of specialization developing in coaching, especially at the professional level. We don't have to look past our backyard to find evidence of this, just take a look at the All Blacks they have a defensive coach, backs coach, forwards coach, scrum coach, kicking coach and the list goes on. In this setup the head coach becomes more of a man manager where they are making sure everyone is aligned and heading in the same direction. For students it is good for them to have an awareness of this specialization approach as it means that if they don't have the "full package" as such to be a head coach, it is still possible for them to identify a particular strength that they can develop – video or statistical analysis as a for instance - that they can then bring to the table as part of an overall coaching team.

For me I need to develop my knowledge further in the technology area as coaches have acknowledged its increasing significance in terms of statistical analysis and analysing performance. There is an increasing array of tools coaches and players can use to pick a part a performance and look for areas of improvement. Whether you agree with it or not ipads with cameras and easy to use statistical apps have meant that statistics keeping has crept into the lower grades as well. I can see for myself that this is an area I need to upskill in as the demand for analysis will only increase, this area could provide good career pathways for students in the future.

One of the interesting things looking back on the process of writing the thesis, is the fact that I originally found and adapted a critical thinking model (Medlin, 2009) that I thought would work well as a structure for the project. The model lead you through a five stage process that involved – ***Stage 1: Inform and describe*** **-** Begin to clarify what you need to know, what you already know, and what information you have about your issue/topic ***Stage 2: Discover and explore*** - Look at your issue/topic more closely; start to be more directed and purposeful in seeking information. ***Stage 3: Negotiate and cooperate*** **-** Consider different perspectives;

engage in discussion with others. ***Stage 4: Test and revise*** - Weigh up the evidence, test out different ideas and alternatives. ***Stage 5: Integrate and apply*** - Bring together the various ideas that you have considered in order to consolidate and articulate new understanding(s). However, once I had collected and transcribed the interview material I found it very cumbersome to try and relate back what the respondents had said question by question to the critical thinking model. This became a real block for me so the decision was made to ditch the critical thinking model and focus on simply analysing the answers and looking for the similarities and differences between the respondents and how that could represent best practice. Ironically, now that I am reflecting back on the journey of writing the thesis, I can see that I have in many ways worked through the stages of the critical thinking model, just not in the fashion that I had envisaged.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this process was connecting with coaches from a range of different backgrounds so willing to share their knowledge and experiences, not only the successes but also the failures. Although the questions provided a structure for the interviews, often the respondent would open up and talk about some of their own trials and tribulations which gave great context around the point they were making. It was fascinating to see the points where coaches from such varied backgrounds converge. It is also bought into focus some of the differences between coaches that are coaching teams, coaches that are coaching individuals, and those that are doing skills sessions for primary school students. For instance, engagement was pointed out by some ex-students as being an issue as some of the children they were working with hadn't chosen to be there. This would likely be less of a problem for coaches of teams or individual athletes as they will have chosen to be involved.

**7.3 Reflecting on – The outcome**

I am happy with the coaching wheel that has been the outcome of this project. I think it encapsulates the key aspects that were highlighted throughout the interview process. The wheel was a culmination of reflecting on the learnings from my conversations and literature review as well as mixing in my own thoughts on the coaching process. It was arrived at as much through insight as it was through logical deduction. It became apparent that whatever the

result that was arrived at the athlete needed to be at the centre of it. From this point it became like putting pieces of the puzzle together. The outer circle being more the foundational pieces a coach needs to have in place to be successful. For me it started with having your own understanding of what the purpose of sport is – competition, enjoyment, building life skills e.g. resilience, humility, morals. Then, as many of the coaches pointed out, having a coaching philosophy setting out for example your beliefs about coaching, why you coach and what you want your athletes to get out of being coached by you.

Developing a culture that provides a structure for learning and development to take place was another important element, some of the respondents talked about themes they had used with their teams to bring them together for example "the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf". This developed a sense of selflessness and unity within the team. A good culture sets a foundation for the piece that all coaches agreed on was the most important, that being the coach developing a relationship and connecting with each and every player. Understanding what makes their players tick, what is going on in their lives off the sports field, and caring about them as a person first and an athlete second.

Providing leadership to a team is important, but I learnt that building leadership in your team is more important. Setting realistic goals and empowering your team to reach them. Giving team members responsibilities in certain situations and reflecting on the result. Allowing team members to have a say on how the game is played. Sometimes as coaches we forget that it is our athletes sporting experience not ours and they should have a say in how that experience unfolds. The final element on the outer circle is planning. Once goals are set planning is required to realise them. At the same time, it was related to me how experienced coaches are flexible and are able to change what they are doing based on the result they are getting and how the team is responding, they are secure enough to question and get input from their players and adapt accordingly. This will be an area for further exploration for me going forward as I will need to be able to comprehend how these two philosophies on planning can co-exist for a coach, in order for me to be able to successfully teach it.

As the outer circle of the wheel took shape as setting the foundation for good coaching to take place, the inner circle of the wheel became the nuts and bolts of the coaching process and what that might look like. Greg especially had talked about teaching methods or models as he called them and the importance of being flexible enough as a coach to be able to employ each one as required to achieve the outcome of the session. So the sequence I settled on was analysing the context the individual coaching session is taking place in. For example, the age and ability level of the athletes and the purpose of the session, as it relates back to your overall planning.

The next step became selecting the most appropriate teaching method or model based on the context. I know from my own experience and my discussions with Greg, that academics and coach educators promote certain methods and styles over others and see them as applicable in just about every coaching situation. The temptation was to debate the merits of the various teaching methods and coaching styles and advocate for certain ones over others. Firstly, this would be beyond the scope of this thesis and also I subscribe to Greg's point of view that a coach needs to be flexible and have a range of tools at his/her disposal depending on the situation. A coach needs to familiarise themselves with the different coaching styles and teaching methods available to them. A coach will tend to have their own natural style that will likely work for them most of the time. But need to be able to recognise when a different approach is required and be flexible enough to implement it.

Reflection was the last piece of the inner circle puzzle. It had been pointed out throughout the interviews as being a key aspect to coach improvement. Some of the tools a coach can use to reflect are - having feedback from a mentor, feedback from the players themselves, own thoughts and watching video - paying attention to not only what you as the coach are saying, but also how the players are reacting to it. As well as these I looked at some of the theoretical models that would be useful from a coaching standpoint. Brookfield's (four lenses and Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton's (1995) reflective model I felt were good options.

It became apparent that a step was needed prior to reflection to provide a measure for reflection to take place. So I created an outcome step where the coach actually takes a little time to determine whether the goals for the session were actually met. To be able to do this meaningfully the coach has to set measurable goals for the session. This then allows the coach to assess - if the goal was reached then why? If not, then why not? Then begin the reflection process using some of the tools above. From this process the coach can answer some questions as to whether the right method and coaching style was used and delivered in the right way.

After analysing the interviews with the respondents it was unanimous that the middle of the circle should be the development of the athlete. The development of the athlete needs to be the focal point of the entire process, and not just from a physical standpoint, but cognitively, socially and emotionally as well. For a coach to be able to do this effectively he/she needs to be aware of the process of long-term athlete development and what the focus should be at different stages of a young athlete's development. Coaches can sometimes get caught up with putting results ahead of player development. A long term approach needs to be taken, with the athlete being carefully nurtured through each stage to maintain the athlete's personal growth and growth within the sport, their overall wellbeing and willingness to continue with their sporting experience.

**7.4 Reflecting on - Next steps**

Having arrived at the concept of the coaching wheel it remains to look at how to develop it further into a curriculum format. I see the foundation elements in the outer circle forming part of our level five coaching curriculum. We already cover the subjects across the level five and level six curriculum but not all necessarily under coaching. NZIS also teach standalone subjects around leadership and communication over level five and six. It would have to be looked into as to whether we revamp the standalone courses to incorporate the coaching specific elements or cover them under the coaching course. The areas of the meaning of sport and coaching philosophy are covered in the level five coaching course and I think should remain there.

Planning forms a big part of what we do at level five but it tends to be around individual sessions as opposed to planning over the longer term. There are planning elements in the level six course around looking at the sporting background of the athletes, and other domains such as leadership and psychological skills. From this information realistic goals are set for the athletes to achieve across the coaching sessions they have with them. I would like to move this into the level five course, then having the individual session planning using the different teaching methods in level six.

Communication at level six is mainly career focused with some speaking in front of a group. At level five the course is currently a real mixture including delivery of instruction, communication with different cultures, as well as business and media. I think elements related to connection could easily be embedded in this course - things such as active listening skills, building relationships, having the difficult conversation, body language - to name a few.

Leadership and culture in a broader sense are not covered until level six so we would have to include the relevant elements of these in the level five coaching course. This would include group dynamics, how to develop a healthy culture in a team and showing examples. As well as leadership styles relevant to coaching and how to develop leadership within your team. Having these outer circle elements covered in level five would mean I can focus on the inner circle elements in level six. At this point they will start with understanding the concept of long- term athlete development and what should be focused on at the various stages of a young athletes' development. My knowledge in this area could do with some development, currently we bring in Sport Canterbury to cover this subject at level five. Having this knowledge will allow the students to better analyse the context of the coaching session they will be delivering.

The students will need to become familiar with the various teaching methods and try them out so they can ascertain which ones will work best in different contexts. I am confident with my knowledge in this particular area as it was an area we spent quite a bit of time on at university and I have some good resources on. We currently do outline the main methods and encourage

the students to use them in their sessions, but I think I could teach them in more depth and cover the full range of them.

The students are asked to set objectives for their sessions and do spend time analysing whether the objectives were met. As for reflection, we do have the students reflect on their coaching sessions as part of the assessment process. They receive feedback on their performance from myself and their peers, they also have access to video of their sessions to review and comment on. I believe however, the reflection process could be done better with the students being shown some reflection models to help them better understand the reflection process and what they should be looking for. Worked examples would then provide a template to help step them through the process.

**7.5 Reflecting on – Effect on professional practice**

As this project unfolded it became clear that the focus of what I was teaching my students was going to have to shift. Where I had previously tended to concentrate more on the organisational aspects of being a coach. The results were telling me the central aspects of good coaching were about the ability to develop a meaningful connection with athletes, communication skills and providing a positive culture in which development can take place. Yes, these had always been part of the coaching process, but as the athlete has been put more at the front and centre of this process, these aspects have been bought more into sharp relief.

This shift in focus has influenced my practice as the challenge has now become how to effectively incorporate these very complex aspects into my coaching curriculum and develop ways to teach them. Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) suggest using narratives, allowing coaches to talk about situations that have arisen, how they dealt with them, and the result. Another option they suggest is discussing various case studies and scenarios that could occur and how they could be dealt with. They also advocate for communities of practice where coaches can cluster together and communicate regularly and share ideas on coaching issues

and practice. These are all teaching options I will look to explore as I revamp our curriculum. I have already trialed role playing to help students work out ways to have difficult conversations with athletes using tact and being sensitive to the athlete.

As I expanded my outlook on sport and its possibilities for growing athletes in domains such as social, cognitive, emotional as well the physical. It became apparent that this view needed to be incorporated into a best practice approach. I now feel that coach education starts with having students answer the question "what is the purpose of sport?" for themselves as it will influence their coaching philosophy and how they coach going forward. Introducing the students to the possibilities that sport can provide will hopefully enable them to come to an educated conclusion on this.

As the elements of the coaching wheel are phased into the curriculum and become embedded, I will monitor my students' success in using the coaching wheel over time. This will allow me to accumulate a body of evidence as to whether the coaching wheel approach has been successful, needs adapting or should be abandoned altogether. As coaching is such a dynamic endeavour, keeping in contact with past students as well as other coaches and coach educators and documenting their experiences will mean I can make informed decisions going forward.

**7.6 Reflecting on – Final thoughts**

Having now completed the process I have asked myself whether best practice was the right lens with which to examine the material. Some of the respondents were a bit skeptical of applying the term to coaching because of their belief that coaching is contextual by its very nature. The suggestion that there is only one way of doing something stifles innovation, and suggests that we now don't need to look any further as we have already discovered the best way to do it. I was beginning to think the term best practice was better suited to something like a manufacturing process, rather than something as dynamic and complex as coaching. However, as the conversations continued it became clear that there was common ground between the

respondents that could form a skeleton to build around. As this skeleton formed I began to apply my own knowledge and experience and the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. I think the end result has been an overall framework for coaching that highlights the key areas but still allows for the flexibility to deal with the contextual nature of coaching. From a teaching point of view, a framework approach that leads the students through the process of coaching works well. I can then plug in some examples for each element, the students can then relate it to their own context and come up with what they think will work and try it out.

I don't see that I have come up with anything particularly revolutionary during this project but it has turned out to be more of a validation of a lot of what I have been taught over the years and what my own experiences in coaching have been. What I feel I have been able to do is package up that information into a form that is accessible to my students and at the same time for me has laid out a clear pathway to follow to develop a student with a complete bag of tools to be successful in coaching.

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# Appendices

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Long-Term Athlete Development

# Playground to Podium

## Planning for the sporting excellence and well-being of Canadians.

Sports can be classified as either early or late specialization. Early specialization sports include artistic and acrobatic sports such as gymnastics, diving, and figure skating. This outline is for late specialization sports.

### Active Start

Males and Females 0-6

Fitness and movement skills development as a FUN part of daily life

### FUNdamentals

Males 6-9 Females 6-8

Learn all FUNdamental movement skills and build overall motor skills

Play many sports

Focus on the ABCs of Athleticism: ability, balance, coordination, and speed

### Learning to Train

Males 9-12 Females 8-11

Learn overall sport skills

Acquire sport skills that will be the cornerstone of athletic development

Play a variety of sports focusing on developing skills in three sports in particular

### Training to Train

Age is growth-spurt dependent
Males 12-16 Females 11-15

Build an endurance base, develop speed and strength towards the end of the stage, and further develop and consolidate sport specific skills

Select two favourite sports based on predisposition

### Training to Compete

Age varies depending on sport
Males 16-23 +/- Females 15-21 +/-

Optimize fitness preparation and sport, individual, and position specific skills and learn to compete internationally

### Training to Win

Ages are sport specific based on national and international normative data
Males 19 +/- Females 18 +/-

Podium Performances

### Active for Life

Enter at any age

A smooth transition from an athlete's competitive career to lifelong physical activity and participation in sport

"I was involved in many sports growing up, which helped me develop many physical and psychological skills, which helped me when I focused on speed skating at the age of 17. It paid off as I stood on top of the podium 10 years later."

Catriona Le May Doan,
Olympic and World Champion

"As a developing athlete, my coaches encouraged an intense but highly social program that kept our training group hungry for more work, and eager to take on new challenges. We worked hard, but in an environment with a lot of variety, where fun was always a major priority. Success came easily to our group as we made the transition to international competition because another challenge was just what we were looking for."

Adam Van Koerverden,
Olympic Champion

"I have gone through all the same stages of development as Canada's other elite athletes. From training hard as a teenager, through learning to compete on the international stage, to standing on the Olympic podium, my development has taken time and perseverance."

Chantal Petitclerc,
Olympic, Paralympic, and World Champion

"I knew I always had the ability to perform at the highest levels, but my peaking was always hampered by serious injuries in the middle of the competitive phase. When I came to understand the value of adequate recovery, through regular therapy and regeneration techniques, I was able to perform consistently throughout the year. Being uninjured during the competitive season enabled me to spend more time on race specific preparation and modelling practices and that ultimately played a major role in my bronze medal performance at the 2005 world track and field championships."

Tyler Christopher,
World Championship medallist

"Even though one must specialize quite young in my sport - diving - I still had to go through all the stages described in the Long-Term Athlete Development Model; I just had to go through them a bit quicker."

Alexandre Despatie,
Olympic medallist and World Champion

"I believe in the power of play to develop a healthy child. My childhood was very physical, full of fun and creative, self-organised, unstructured play. I tried many different sports, particularly running, and developed a healthy, strong body that loved to move. I was 17 when I first discovered rowing and found that my active childhood had laid the foundation needed for me to be successful competing in a sport I loved."

Silken Laumann,
Olympic medallist and World Champion

"When I was growing up, I trained many, many more times than I played games, which allowed me to develop the skills and the physical conditioning to play at the world's highest level."

Owen Hargreaves,
England and Bayern Munich, Champion League Winner

"Winning medals in both Summer and Winter Olympics was not easy. I believe the most crucial ingredient to my success as an athlete was my development as a youngster in an incredible range of community and school sports. From ringette to hockey, ballet to gymnastics, softball to soccer, track and field to volleyball, roller speed skating to speed skating and cycling, I was able to develop the attributes that carry me to success on the international playing field. I also learnt how to have fun with sport long before I knew what the pressure of competition entailed. I learnt how to play before I learnt how to win, and now I do both!"

Clara Hughes,
Winter and Summer Olympic Games medallist

## Appendix 2 Record of Learning

I am Stephen Russell James Ede, middle child of Derrick and Diana Ede. I grew up in Ashburton with my two brothers Ken and Andrew. We were a working class family at best, my Dad worked hard and managed to put food on the table despite the TAB and local Pub taking their share. One thing about my Dad was that he was never afraid to take a risk. He changed jobs quite a bit, which wasn't really the norm back then. He worked for himself on a few occasions owning a dairy and a hay carting business he had an entrepreneurial spirit but we always seemed to manage ending up in debt. Mum never worked after she was married as she struggled with bipolar disorder. Mum's illness put a lot of stress on the family, especially my Dad. Despite having his own demons to fight Dad was able to keep our family together, something I was very appreciative of and I have told him that.

Because of these family circumstances I became quite independent at a young age, often spending time away at the homes of friends or family and getting myself up and off to school. Us kids regularly attended sport and other activities such as cubs, outside of the home. Looking back I believe these activities helped develop much needed social skills. Because of our family situation we always felt a bit isolated and didn't really have friends over that much, things like sport and cubs allowed us to get out and have fun with our friends outside of school. I learnt to work as part of a team, and felt as though I fitted in. I didn't really develop any leadership skills as such, I was more happy to go with the flow and be part of the group

My brothers and I regularly attended Sunday School although we wouldn't have considered ourselves a religious family. That is until the Mormons came knocking. My mother became a devoted Mormon for the rest of her life. Although the rest of the family did not embrace Mormonism as my mother had we couldn't help but be affected by it. Spending time with the Mormon elders grew my love of basketball. I also feel a good set of values had been instilled in me, things like spending time together as a family became important as Mormon's set aside time during the week (family home evening) for family time. Also being respectful to others and being thankful for what we had.  I was no angel but I think it helped me grow a conscience, I didn't always do the right thing, but I knew right from wrong. Later in life those religious seeds

took root and my family and I became regular churchgoers, although we have been out of the habit lately.

I went to Ashburton College where I was a pretty good student without really fulfilling my potential. I continued playing sport throughout my secondary school years playing rugby, basketball and cricket. I had dreams of being a fighter pilot but without any real conviction to follow through. I ended up leaving school after sixth form, really for no other reason than my friends were leaving. I felt that if I had stayed at school then I was capable of at least getting a bursary in the seventh form if I had put my mind to it. However, I had no real inclination to go to university at this point and I had sixth form certificate and university entrance under my belt. I had had part time jobs throughout high school from delivering brochures to kitchen handing so I had built up a pretty good work ethic; first and foremost I always showed up and I was on time. No matter the weather I would always deliver the brochures making sure they got done. I was never the fastest worker but I was always honest and reliable.

My first fulltime job was working for the Stock and Station Agents Pyne Gould Guinness (PGG) as an office junior in their trust department. The work in the department was around administering farmers' financial affairs including tax returns, paying accounts, paying farm workers' wages, administering mortgages and providing investment opportunities. My work involved drawing cheques to payout interest to investors, banking money that had come in to be invested, and reconciling bank statements with cheque books. Also other general duties like filing correspondence and answering the front counter. I was pretty slow at the work which meant sometimes I was late getting to the banks. The cutoff for the banking being processed that business day was 3pm. Now and again I missed the cutoff which threw things out and meant investors missed out on a day's interest which didn't make me very popular. Nevertheless being a stock and station agents it had a good social scene and I had made friends who I played sport with. Socialising had become important to me as it got me out of the house. Although I still lacked confidence in these situations I had made friends that were much more confident in these social situations and more the social organiser types that I could tag along with.

When I was 20 a friend of mine suggested we go on a Contiki tour of the US. PGG had a travel department to book it and I could put the whole thing on my staff account and get a credit card from the bank. Easy, let's do it! My friend and I had a great time and it was the perfect

opportunity for me to come out of my shell a bit. We met a lot of new people from all around the world and visited amazing places like Yosemite National Park, the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, San Francisco and Los Angeles. When I came back I found it difficult to settle back down, and I began to think more about what I really wanted to do with my life. I came back to fighter pilot.

I decided to apply for the Air Force and made it into the selection process. I sat the aptitude tests but found I had real difficulty deciphering the orientation of the pictures of the planes in the sky – which way is the plane that is coming towards you banking? Which way is the plane that is going away from you banking? My brain didn't seem to be wired up the right way to cope with this. I didn't do well enough in the test to make the grade for a pilot but the examiner said that I could consider going for a non-aircrew position like engineering. Because I had set my heart on being a pilot I had no interest in engineering. After reconsidering my options I reapplied as a chef. I had enjoyed Home Economics at school and had done quite well at it. This time I had no problems with the aptitude test and they were happy to accept me. However rather than being a chef they suggested that, because of my clerical background, I enter as an accounts clerk. I was in two minds about this but the recruiter said he would see if he could get me on an RNZAF sponsored polytechnic course that could lead to officer selection. This sounded appealing to me so I signed up. The polytechnic opportunity never materialised as apparently I was too old.

My Air Force career started with a recruit course – 3 months at Woodbourne base in Blenheim. It was clear this was going to be a challenging experience, the minute we got off the bus we were yelled at for standing on the grass "who told you, you could stand on the grass, get off the grass". I enjoyed all of the new things we got to do such as shooting rifles, camping out, and going on patrol. We had to work as a team with a lot of the activities so friends were made quickly. There was plenty of physical activity with pack marches to go on, our daily run and physical training classes. I focused on keeping my head down and staying off the radar of the instructors, which I managed for the most part. For someone who considers themselves a half decent sportsperson I found myself to be completely uncoordinated when it came to marching and this is where I tended to draw the attention of the instructors. Once I had been yelled at a few times my confidence fell away and I began to dread the drill square. I found the classroom was where I excelled taking out the recruit academic award which I was both surprised and pleased about.

Once the recruit course was over I began my trade training, as an accounts clerk which involved putting together wages and allowances as well as receipting and invoicing for stores. I spent my on the job training at the Ohakea airbase which was where the fighters were based so that was exciting for me. After my on the job training was up I ended up being posted to Te Rapa in Hamilton, a stores base without planes or an airstrip. The day to day Air Force work was not that different from the job I had left behind at PGG. However I was out of home and living was cheap. We lived in barracks, ate at the mess and alcohol was cheap at the junior ranks club. Spending so much time together on a small base meant we grew pretty close, to the point I meant my future wife there. Defence cutbacks meant that the base was being wound down and staff were beginning to be shipped out. I am not sure exactly what the inspiration was but I began to have thoughts of being an advertising copywriter. So I decided to put in my resignation and give it a go.

Mel, my future wife to be, decided to stay in the Air Force for the time being as she was a medic and being well paid at the time. I continued to flat in base housing while beginning a National Certificate in Business at Waikato Polytechnic. A bit cheeky but no one seemed to mind. I did a semester at Waikato before Mel was transferred to Auckland. I decided to follow and transferred my studies to an advertising diploma at Auckland Institute of Technology as it was then and flatted with some other ex Te Rapa staff who had also headed north. I was enjoying the study and had had some good results, especially with the copywriting paper which was encouraging. In the meantime Mel had also decided to study signing up for a beauty therapy course.

Before resuming my study in Auckland and before Mel started her course we decided to spend some of our Air Force payout on a trip to the Gold Coast. Mel's aunty and uncle lived there and they had often asked her to go over so it was a chance to have a bit of a working holiday. It took us a couple of weeks to find jobs but we eventually found work as cleaners at Jupiter's Casino. In the mean time we had had a falling out with Mel's relatives so we moved into a flat. We worked at the casino for a month over the busy Christmas, New Year period before returning home. The cleaning experience came in handy as we were able to get a part time job cleaning while we were studying.

When we got back to New Zealand we decided to get a flat together closer to where our courses were. By the end of the year Mel was finished her course and had been offered a job back home

in Christchurch. However the way I had gone about my course meant I was ahead of schedule although I still had two papers to complete. In the end we decided to make the move south.

On our return to the South Island we moved in with Mel's parents in Kaiapoi. I started out on the benefit for a few months before picking up work at an industrial drycleaners where both of Mel's parents worked. It was basically manual labour – unloading the trucks, scanning the dirty overalls in and putting them through the washing process. During this transition phase Mel and I had married and soon after had a baby on the way. Shortly after my first daughter was born I landed a job selling advertising with one of the local newspapers, the Christchurch Star. Initially my job was to sell advertising features, essentially advertorial space, into the paper. Then I moved into selling classified space in the paper.

After about a year I landed a job in an advertising agency as a production planner. This involved receiving clients work from the account managers, then planning that work through the agency. A client job may require some creative work from the art director and copywriter, it may then have to go to the graphic designers to fashion into a newspaper advertisement, brochure or whatever the requirement was. The artwork would then need to go to the client for approval, at which time the finished product would be sent off to the newspaper, printer or wherever the final destination was. I constantly found myself between a rock and a hard place; I was constantly bounced back and forth between the account managers who were asking when the work was going to be ready for their client or to make a newspaper or magazine deadline and the design team who always complained that they never had enough time and the deadlines were always unreasonable. Essentially I was the whipping boy copping it from both sides. To make matters worse I was answerable to the production manager who was himself a bully, one minute being your best mate, then the next launching a verbal tirade, at one point he had tried to get me fired. Life was becoming unbearable, my confidence was shot and I was dreading going to work, I really wanted to leave but I had a wife and young family to think about.

Thankfully after five years the production manager left to start up his own business, and in the process stealing one of our big clients to get him started. Ironically he asked me to come and work for him; needless to say I turned him down. With him gone I found myself stepping into the production manager's role which I made a pretty good fist of and consequently I began to get some of my confidence back and a new baby daughter had arrived. Things were looking up.

Unfortunately I didn't get the role permanently, but the person they hired was a great person whom I got on really well with. Eventually they decided to move me into the media planning area which I found I really enjoyed.

I had been working for a year and a half in the media position when I received a call from a previous employee of the agency who had gone to work for a rival agency. He said he had recommended me for a production manager's role at the agency he was with, if I was interested. I decided to take up the offer. Even though it wasn't a great deal more money and I was enjoying what I was doing, it felt like a step in the right direction. I was apprehensive going back into a production role, I had no problem organising the work going out of the agency to be printed or distributed somewhere. But there was still the fact that I may well have to deal with the friction between the creatives and the account managers. This turned out to be the case.

It became apparent that I was struggling with the strong personalities and getting battered back and forth. I began to try and avoid the conflict and in the process communication between the different factions in the agency broke down. In the end the owners had plotted to get rid of me by "disestablishing my position" and making me redundant. I was offered the opportunity to fall on my sword and resign, which I took. They gave me some redundancy pay and I moved on. It became apparent that although I had a fair amount of internal resilience I lacked toughness and assertiveness externally, this lack of assertiveness bugged me. I also had begun to see a bit of a pattern forming. I had started off wanting to be a fighter pilot and had ended up being an accounts clerk. I had started out wanting to be a copywriter and ended up not achieving that either. I felt I was being too easily diverted off course from my goals and settling for something less. I was taking the opportunities that were coming my way but at times they weren't really heading me in the right direction. One big positive that had come out of these experiences was the ability to build and maintain good working relationships, maybe not so much within the agency, but certainly those we dealt with outside of the agency.

Looking back on this phase of my working life there were a number of skills that I had developed as much out of necessity as anything else. I developed an eye for detail as mistakes could be costly. Although my communication skills within the agency environment still needed work, my negotiation skills with suppliers around cost and delivery deadlines had improved. Also my creative and problem solving skills had also developed quite a lot through having to

bring to life, at times some fanciful creative ideas within a budget. I had to be organised, I learnt to make 'to do' lists and prioritise things on the list. I also learnt to keep meticulous records of what had been agreed to and what had been said as you needed to make sure you were covered if anything went wrong. I had also made progress with working in stressful environments although I had some way to go in this area.

During this time I had started Toastmasters and coaching basketball. These were both a chance for personal growth, to build confidence and something to take my mind off work. I had enjoyed my basketball playing days, but my competitive playing career had been cut somewhat short, with me moving around quite a bit after leaving Christchurch and then Mel coming along. I had started to play socially again and had fancied myself as being a half decent coach.

On the work front I had decided to go out on my own based on an offer of some marketing for a local speedway track that had come my way through a Toastmasters contact. I figured I could build on this and make a decent income. However, it wasn't too long before Mel had to go back to work and I was doing odd jobs picking apples or doing night fill at the supermarket to keep us afloat. Within a year my contact at the speedway was no longer on the committee and the new committee was appointing someone else. I had decided on a complete change of direction, I had had a modicum of success with my coaching, and it was enough to encourage me to want to take it further.

Mel was understandably hesitant as we weren't exactly financially stable and had two kids to look after. However, we crunched the numbers and Mel was supportive of my decision to embark on a Sports Coaching degree. Mel continued to work and I continued the night fill and we managed to keep ourselves going over the next three years. I loved being at university, I loved learning new things and rubbing shoulders with like-minded people. I discovered new subjects like sociology and philosophy that really piqued my interest. I learnt a great deal over my years at university, I was at an age where I was there to get the very most out of it. I had the organisational skills, the work ethic and without the distractions the other students had I was able to get high grades and maximise my time there.

During my last year at university I had an internship at North Canterbury Community College for a month. My involvement there was working alongside the level 4 sports course tutor, and

working through some adult teaching units. I enjoyed the experience; it was very much hands on. At the end of the year a teaching job came up at the Community College, but it was not for the level 4 course, it was for the level 2 adventure - based learning course. These kids were the ones who had been kicked out of school, or asked to leave. This was going to be a major challenge for someone who lacked assertiveness.

I applied for the job and got it. I definitely found the job a struggle; there were instances of students turning up to the course drunk or under the influence of drugs. Many of the students had criminal records, some of them for quite serious crime, on some occasions we had students attend course while on home detention. There were instances of teenage pregnancy and many of the students had difficult home lives. The job was about trying to teach them some life skills and keeping them out of trouble as much as it was getting them to pass unit standards.

The enforcing discipline side of things was always going to be tough for me, but I felt I did the best I could under the circumstances. I stuck the job out for three years before the tutor running the level 4 course left and I took over his role. The level 2 role had not been all bad, I had been paid to go out and do a lot of fun stuff on the adventure based learning side of things. I had learned about managing risk, experiential learning and how well some of these kids thrived out in practical situations. I developed compassion and empathy for many of them. There were many I wasn't able to reach because they only respected the hard-nosed approach. However I felt the worst thing I could do was trying to be something I am not: I thought they would see through that pretty quick. During this time I continued with Toastmasters and coaching, I also added martial arts to my extra-curricular activities as I felt this was another avenue I could use to continue to build my confidence.

After moving into the level 4 course I started to feel I had found my niche. I felt now I was getting a real opportunity to teach. The subject matter was much the same as what I had learnt at university, so the challenge for me was being able to get the information across in a way that they could understand. I spent a lot of time during year one making up lesson plans and compiling resources I felt would work for me. There were still a few challenges discipline-wise but I was starting to trust my judgement a bit more on this and was developing a few more conflict resolution strategies. I realised cool heads was the order of the day and there was no

point in trying to reason with someone who was angry and had difficulty controlling their anger. Best to let things cool off a bit first.

Through year two I was beginning to gain more confidence with teaching and also starting to gain confidence in the students. This meant I was able to use some of my networking skills to look for some opportunities for my students to get some experience in the sporting sector. I knew if they were given practical opportunities then they would shine. So I made connections with the local sports trust where my students would have opportunities to go out and coach not only in schools but also at the local high school where they had an opportunity to coach their students in various sports. This also included working with special needs kids to get them physically active. These opportunities gave the students the chance to feel good about what they were doing, understand what it would be like to work in the sports sector and it also got them in front of potential employers.

I was really feeling quite settled at the Community College. I had my own course that I could develop as I wished and I felt a real sense of satisfaction in seeing the students graduate and do well. However the numbers on the course were small and the viability of it was coming under scrutiny. Basically I was told if the student numbers didn't increase the course would be cut. As the start time for the new course approached it looked unlikely that the quota was going to be reached, so I jumped before I was pushed and applied and consequently received a tutoring position at the New Zealand Institute of Sport.

This role presented a great opportunity for me. It would give me an opportunity to stretch myself academically as I would be teaching at a much higher level than what I had at the Community College. I would need to know my subject material in greater depth and be prepared to be challenged and questioned on what I was telling the students. The better students would want to know the why not just accept what I had to say. At the same time I could bring in the practical learning aspects of my previous job that had worked so well for the students there.

This job also gave me the opportunity to affect many more students' lives than what I could at the Community College. Teaching across so many levels meant that I had contact with most of the students on the campus. I have come to believe that what I provide is less about what is taught; after all in this day and age they could look it up on google and read the lesson content.

But more about the intangibles, helping them to find information, interpret information, developing good time management and work habits, being a sounding board for them to help them clarify their future. I see my job as providing an environment where personal growth can occur and being able to mentor them along the way.

I felt my own personal values would allow me to be successful in the job. I felt I had developed an appreciation and empathy for young people. I wanted to draw on my own experience to help them face their challenges and be the best they can. I believed I could be a good role model by acting with integrity, by always giving my best effort during our fitness activities and displaying good organizational skills.

Without consciously setting out to, I think it comes naturally to me to employ a social learning theory approach to working with students. Pioneered by Albert Bandura, the theory suggests that learning can take place through mimicking the behaviour of others, especially of those considered role models such as parents, older siblings, coaches and teachers. I am acutely aware of this so I try to make sure I am modelling appropriate behaviours to my students. I also try and reinforce appropriate behaviour so it is more likely to be repeated while ignoring or where appropriate a negative response to inappropriate behaviours. I don't always see an immediate change in students using this approach, some students, although knowing right from wrong, take time to think more maturely and take it on board. I can say I have seen some quite big turnarounds in behaviour and attitude which has been quite rewarding.

The courses I was asked to teach were as diverse as Strategic Planning, Communications, Coaching, Sports Administration and Sports Psychology and I was teaching from level 2 up to level 6. I went from feeling settled to feeling right out of my comfort zone again. There were some resources from the previous tutor but I found myself scrambling in the evenings to put together lesson plans for the next day. Despite my Toastmasters training I was struggling in front of the class. I was finding the larger class environment daunting and my lack of assertiveness issues began to surface again. I felt under the microscope in front of the class and that I was being scrutinized. I was having difficulty controlling the anxiety I was feeling and to make matters worse my father had passed away. I had pretty much made the decision to quit, but at the same time I had decided to get some help. The doctor prescribed anti-depressants which helped alleviate the problem to some extent. I had also started some therapy sessions where it became

apparent that if I didn't stay and face the problem, it was likely to happen again in the future. I began to use relaxation techniques and self-affirmations and focusing on things that were going well. Later that same year my mother died which was a big setback for me.

Coming to grips with my current job has been a long slow process for me but I feel proud of where I have gotten to. I think getting to this point has been a culmination of a lot of different experiences, self- discovery and skill development. I think recognizing where I have been deficient, especially in self-confidence and taking steps to build it with Toastmasters and martial arts helped me. I also think recognizing when I needed help and seeking it out was important for me. I have learnt to embrace who I am and the good qualities I have including a good sense of humour and an ability to build a rapport with young people that allows me to be honest as well as motivating. Rather than looking at others and wishing I had their assertiveness style I have developed a style that works for me, and as I've found out by working with teenagers that you can't pretend to be something you are not.

Through my close to four years with NZIS I have further grown my ability to build relationships. I have developed many solid relationships with schools and regional sports organisations throughout Christchurch. I have been able to inject my creativity into my lesson planning as well as look at ways to introduce more practical application of concepts that I saw work well at the Community College. As my confidence has grown my classroom delivery has improved which has shown up in my observation feedback, which in turn has built confidence. I have learnt to develop quality teaching resources and explore different teaching approaches such as coming up with knowledge working in groups, as well as the use of questioning and reflection to extract learning from different situations. I have also had the responsibility of leading the Diploma 1 course which means I am responsible for the outcomes of close to 50 students on the course. This means monitoring their attendance, their assessment outcomes, and their pastoral care. This has been an ongoing challenge keeping students satisfied and motivated.

Time management, getting students work accurately marked and back to them in a timely manner are important areas that I have continued to develop. Furthermore I have continued to look at ways to improve the course and ways of assessing as well as reflecting on my own teaching practice and opportunities for professional development. I continue to use and further

develop my organisational skills, through my involvement in putting together a number of events for the students to participate in.

Looking back over my working life there appears to be some distinct phases based on the type of work I had experience in at the time. Initially my experience was in clerical work, and this seemed to pigeon-hole me. Even when I joined the Air Force to get away from this type of work I seemed to get drawn back into it. As for what I took out of this phase, I don't believe I found a great deal of meaning in the work itself. From early on working at PGG I knew I really had no ambitions to rise through the ranks there and I didn't find anything particularly stimulating about the work. I think it was more about PGG providing the type of environment where I could spread my social wings. I was in the process of forming my own values as distinct from my parents' ones and deciding what I thought was worth holding on to and what I would discard.

As I hadn't fully bought into the Mormonism, I'm inclined to believe that what kept me on the straight and narrow was more to do with a mixture of shyness, the fear of being labelled a bad person if I did something mum didn't approve of and being a bit socially backward compared to my peers. Yes I had tried to follow a childhood dream in the Airforce, but it really turned out to be an extension of this experimental process. I did meet some people in the Airforce that influenced the forming of my values, most notably my wife. Mel had also grown up in a religious household and had been on a similar journey to mine. Marrying Mel, being part of her family and having a family of my own reawakened some of those values I hadn't felt important to me. I began thinking about what I wanted for my family and what I wanted my family to think of me. Those things you want to model to your children became important, working hard to achieve your goals, treating others in the way you would like to be treated, being an honest reliable person. The focus became less about me and more about doing the best for my family.

The next phase was the advertising industry, a change I had made to move away from clerical work and to have a chance to be more creative. The choices I made through this phase and a lack of self-belief meant I allowed myself to be derailed into more administrative type roles. I think what ultimately drove me out of the advertising industry was the lack of genuinely nice people, or at least I never saw the nice side of them. The stress of the industry and the fact that is very money driven not people driven tends to bring out the worst in people. My family and I had begun to attend church through this period and what I was being exposed to at work didn't really

gel “with the treat others how you would like to be treated” philosophy. Also I didn’t really want my family to see me stressed and down about work all of the time.

The teaching phase I am in currently in, I think, has come about through a clarity of purpose. Through things like coaching sports teams and Toastmasters to grow and challenge myself outside of work hours I began to realise what I was passionate about and what was meaningful to me. Making a career out of my love of coaching hasn’t been easy, I have put myself in some challenging positions, but I think because I could see the next step and the fact that there was no other career path I would rather be on, I was able to hang in there. I’ve realized through having a family, coaching and now working in teaching that I am at my best when I am trying to get the best out of others, true fulfilment for me comes from seeing others succeed. It has taken me time to get past my own insecurities and believe I have something to offer. No one really stands out to me as a mentor in my working life, perhaps that’s why it has taken awhile for me to find my way. That’s not to say that no one has had an influence on me, I certainly have come across teachers and coaches that have cared about those they work with, and I have borrowed bits that I have admired about them, but I can’t say I have had an extended relationship with someone I would like to emulate. I think that is what draws me to try and fill that role for young people and bring the best out of them.

Looking at some of the theories around career stages, particularly Miller and Form (1951), I can see my own path aligning in some ways with what the research suggests. Miller and Form talk about a preparation for work phase and a transition to work phase in the younger years, learning the value of hard work and developing a work ethic through having chores and part time work to do. This I can relate to having done brochure delivering and other part time jobs that developed a good work ethic. Miller and Form also talk about a trial work period in early adulthood often characterised by changing jobs frequently. I was a bit more stable through my very early working career spending 5 years at PGG, however I would say that I was what Miller and Form term a confused worker that feels uncertain about past and future decisions and if it hadn’t been for my friends at PGG I may well have moved around more.

According to Miller and Form at my age I should be in the midst of a stable time in my work life, having “the kind of work I’ve always wanted”. This is true, but I’ve only recently felt this way as my job is one that I’ve had to grow into, not one that I was immediately comfortable with.

I can also relate some of the findings of Driver and Brousseau (1979) to my own situation. They categorise workers in terms of what motivates them in the workplace. For instance some workers use work to increase their power and status (linears), while others get satisfaction from a job well done (steady-state experts). Some only work to fund their life outside of work (transitories), others are always seeking a new challenge (spirals). I don't seek power or status at work or see it as a means to some other end. For me work is about continual improvement of both myself as an educator and the quality of the material I deliver. If I was going to categorise myself according to the Driver and Brousseau's model I would consider myself a steady-state expert.

One of the drivers that have been a constant throughout the whole journey has been my passion for sport and then taking that passion into coaching. Even though it has been a difficult path, being able to forge a career in the coaching field has been the most rewarding experience in my working career. It has been an incremental growth process, but looking back now I can see how far I have come.

I think coaching won't be exempt from the rapidly changing world we live in. As we see exponential advances in fields such as technology, coaches will have an ever expanding number of tools at their disposal to both monitor the output of athletes, and to analyse game play which is sure to impact on the skill set a coach is expected to have. Being able to manipulate and interpret data relating to athlete performance will sit alongside the traditional coaching skills such as skill teaching, team building and motivation.

Also advances in understanding the workings of the human brain has meant coaches can increasingly gain insight into how their athletes tick. Sports psychology not only is helpful to the athlete struggling to cope with the demands of sport, but also helps them to make decisions under pressure and perform in the "zone". Coaches need to understand, implement and embrace the benefits sports psychology can bring to their players.

Coaching will also have to adapt to the changing expectations of young people and their engagement in sport. Recently we have seen the truncating of traditional sport 20/20 cricket, rugby 7's, 3on3 basketball, fast 5 netball and a number of others in an effort to appeal to a younger generation with a shrinking attention span. Many teenagers prefer less traditional sports like surfing and skateboarding that don't require them to be at practices and games at certain

times, instead they can participate in them on their own terms. A particular interest of mine is skill acquisition and the efficacy of methods such as questioning and Teaching Games for Understanding, how they work as well as understanding the learning theories that underpin them.

Looking to the future I would like to continue to develop my knowledge of coaching and coaching practices. I would like to explore the merits and application of contemporary coaching practices, and continue to pass them on to my students so they go out into the coaching field armed with the knowledge to give the athletes they coach the best possible sporting experience.

I would also eventually like to add to the body of knowledge on coaching by putting my own thoughts and theories to the test and hopefully have them documented and validated. I believe embarking on this Masters course will further hone my academic skills and allow me to progress in these areas.

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## Appendix 3: Learning Agreement

***Name of learner:*** Stephen Ede

***Facilitator:*** Glenys Forsyth

***Academic Mentor:*** Jo Kirkwood

***Title of project*:** Educating Coaches in Best Practice

***Learner's Aspirational Professional Practice/Identity/Framework Statement:*** I would like to be at the forefront of firstly teaching best practice in coaching and then ultimately be involved in shaping what it might look like in the future.

***Business Objective*:** To evaluate what constitutes best practice in coaching and to ensure the content I am teaching my students represents this best practice and is equipping them to be successful coaches in the future.

### *Context and background to my project*

Over the past few years the education in sport, fitness and recreation sector has been undergoing a review (targeted review of qualification or TROQ), the purpose being to provide aligned and consistent pathways for students to follow, each leading to particular graduate profiles within the sector. Out of this process has come the opportunity to evaluate the material we teach at the New Zealand Institute of Sport (NZIS) on each of our courses, and to assess whether it still meets the requirements of the course, and ensures the students meet the graduate profile.

My particular focus is on the coaching courses that I deliver at level 5 and level 6. The TROQ process has provided a lens with which to critically analyse the content of the courses as to its relevance in light of the new graduate profiles. However, I feel it is also a good opportunity to investigate whether what I teach in the classroom actually translates into the coaching environment that my students are going into. The culmination of this would be to end up with a best practice outline for the tertiary coach education sector.

There is bound to be different perspectives on what constitutes best practice that will need to be considered to determine what elements should be included as part of a best practice approach. I would also need to determine what I need to teach in my courses that would allow my students to deliver best

practice coaching sessions. I will also need to ensure the requirements of the graduate profile are being met.

What will be interesting will be talking to organisations such as Sport Canterbury and Youthtown, who are potential employers for our students, and seeing whether there is any alignment between what the research sees as best practice and how these organisations view good coaching. In other words there may be potential for the "that's all well and good in theory, but it doesn't work in the real world" response. To have credibility with these organisations the best practice model will need to be "road tested" and be practically applicable in the field for these organisations to have confidence in it. Also the students will need to have confidence in what they have learned and what they will be passing on to others.

## *My learning outcomes*

- Lead change in coach education best practice
- To be able to identify and use an appropriate framework to critically evaluate my coaching courses to identify whether they are continuing to meet the needs of the students and the industry.
- To also evaluate what areas I need to develop my knowledge in that have been identified as being requirements for the course.
- Through this process, I will become familiar with and competent using different research processes and be cognizant of the ethical considerations involved in research.
- An outcome for the project would be to turn my findings into a curriculum document that reflects my research and what I believe will stand my students in the best stead to be successful coaches in the future.

## *Main audience for my project*

I have identified three main audiences for my project.

**1. The students** – the outcome is about providing the best standard of course that will equip the students to meet the identified needs of the industry and measure up to the graduate profiles and be successful coaches in the future.

**2. The coaching industry** – to provide an evidence based report that will at least provide a discussion point across the industry to determine whether it is meeting the needs of developing coaches and those that are being coached by them.

**3. Colleagues**– having under gone this process with the input of other tutors will mean they will have confidence in the integrity and validity of the course. It will also give them an opportunity to identify areas for their own development that would help them to deliver the course successfully.

## *Project Methodology*

I intend to use a critical thinking model based on the one provided in the appendix as a framework for this project. Although I will adapt some of the stages to better fit the project, I believe it will serve as a good guide to navigate through the research process. The model consists of five stages that step you through the process of looking at a topic from a critical thinking perspective. The first step involves reviewing what you already know, what information you already have on the topic, and identify any areas you need more information on. Step two - with clarity of what information is required a more directed and purposeful search for information begins. Step three is about gaining perspective on your findings as well as determining the relevance and validity of your information. Step four involves putting findings to the test, weighing up theories, comparing and contrasting ideas to determine what ones best meet the criteria. Step five is the application and integration phase, taking new understandings in my case about best practice in coaching and applying it in the intended setting, the education of coaches.

## *Stage 1: Inform and describe*

Begin to clarify what you need to know, what you already know, and what information you have about your issue/topic.

This will involve a review of what is currently being taught on the level 5 and 6 coaching courses. I would also find out what is being taught on comparable courses around the country, for example the University of Canterbury Sport Coaching degree. I would also need to do a literature review on contemporary coaching theory, which would give me an idea of what scholars are recommending should be taught. Using a journal I will also document a process of reflection as to what I believe the future of sport and in turn coaching might look like. I will include some anecdotal evidence from myself as well as the views of other coaches and sportspeople. I can also get the thoughts of my fellow tutorial staff. Reflection and research will need to take place to clarify exactly what coaching could look like in the future thus providing insight into how best to equip students in this new and likely very dynamic environment.

## *Stage 2: Discover and explore*

Look at your issue/ topic more closely; start to be more directed and purposeful in seeking information.

From examining the information gathered in stage 1, I will pinpoint areas that warrant further in-depth investigation as to the suitability of certain topics for inclusion in the courses and at what level they might fit. This will be determined by looking for corroborating evidence of an assertion, both in research and anecdotal evidence. I will need to consult industry stakeholders such as Sport New Zealand and Sport Canterbury to understand what they feel are key attributes for a young coach coming into the industry. I could also consult past alumni of NZIS who are working in the coaching industry and find out what they were taught at NZIS that they found useful, as well as what they felt they should have been taught that would've helped.

## *Stage 3: Analyse*

Determine relevance of findings to best practice.

At this point the stages depart from the standard model we have worked to so far to better suit the project. The data we have collected requires analysis as to its importance to a student coach and would the student coach be demonstrating the particular skill or method if they were practicing coaching best practice (meeting graduate profiles). It would also need to be decided at what level the student coach would be expected to be able to display these qualities.

## *Stage 4: Categorise*

### Determining at what level different coaching attributes would need to be displayed.

As I will be working across both level 5 and level 6 I will need to make decisions as to what areas I consider foundational to coaching and therefore set at level 5 and what areas require a more advanced knowledge of coaching and therefore are better suited to level 6.

Once it has been decided what topics warrant inclusion and at what level, there will need to be a process of putting the subject material into a logical arrangement. I will need to also ensure everything marries up with the graduate profiles and industry expectations. I will also need to make sure myself and the other tutors are comfortable delivering the material and feel knowledgeable enough to answer any questions or confident they can find out the answers. This stage may well show up knowledge gaps for both me and the other tutors that will need to be addressed perhaps by arranging a workshop with someone knowledgeable in the area.

## *Stage 5: Integrate, apply and revise*

### Integrate and apply learnings, receive feedback and revise

Although beyond the scope of this project, logical next steps would be to implement the new curriculum that has been developed. Then get feedback on how successful the implementation of the revamped courses was according to the main stakeholders – tutors, students and the industry.

## *Ethical Awareness:*

When undertaking research there are some general principles around ethics that are expected to be abided by including doing good (beneficence) and doing no harm (non-malfeasance) In practice, these ethical principles mean that as a researcher, you need to obtain **informed consent** from potential research participants; **(b)** minimise the **risk of harm** to participants; **(c)** protect their **anonymity** and **confidentiality**; **(d)** avoid using **deceptive practices**; and **(e)** give participants the **right to withdraw** from your research.

While undertaking this project there will be a number of ethical issues I will need to be mindful of. Firstly I may well be asking current students' for their opinion. In these circumstances I will have to assure them that any comments they make will be kept confidential and will only be used as part of the study, or if it is used outside I will get their permission first. If the student is under 18 I will seek their parents' permission before interviewing them. I will also need to go through the process required to interview a vulnerable subject. I will also need to be careful to remain objective during these interviews, especially with current students, to make sure the student's answers don't colour my own personal judgement of the student as the answer may well disagree with my thinking.

I will also need to be mindful of my interactions with work mates. If I am asking their opinion on a topic related to my project, I would need to make it clear whether it was "on the record" in terms of the project and if so seek their consent to be involved. I can also see the potential for disagreement on certain aspects. I think from the outset staff that agree to have some involvement will need to agree to remain objective and where possible back up opinion with evidence. Every effort should be made to keep ego, personal opinion and personal agendas out of the process.

Subject areas should be approached with an open mind and both sides of the argument researched and then presenting what the evidence points to. The integrity of the information needs to be maintained, whether presenting anecdotal quotes or any other evidence it needs to be presented in the proper context, not paraphrased in a way that changes the intended meaning, it will also need to be properly referenced.
I am sure I will come across areas during the course of this project that remain contentious or ambiguous. At these times, and really throughout the process, I will need to keep the best interests of the students' top of mind. In these situations any decisions regarding the course need to give the student the best opportunity to meet the graduate profile and ultimately get a job in the coaching industry.

## *Maori Consultation:*

The Kaitohutohu Department of Otago Polytechnic supports my project as shown below.
Kia ora Stephen,
Thank you for your submission and patience.
The office of the Kaitohutohu supports your application for Ethics Approval.
Richard Kerr-Bell
Kaitohutohu Approvals
021427865

## *Literature Summary:*

Once I decided on my topic it became obvious that there were some areas that needed clarification and definition. Firstly the concept of best practice needs to be defined within the concept of sport coaching. Wikipedia defines best practice as "a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means or because it has become a standard way of doing things, e.g., a standard way of complying with legal or ethical requirements". It goes on to say "best practices are used to maintain quality as an alternative to mandatory legislated standards and can be based on self-assessment or benchmarking".

I then found how this definition might be applied in a coaching context, and what organisations are likely to be developing best practice. Sport New Zealand have produced a document entitled Good Practice Principles: Children and Young People in Sport and Recreation (n.d.). The focus of this document was on good practice as it relates to coaching of children. It does this through setting out 10 principles covering the safety and treatment of participants, behaviour modelling and consistency of delivery, the importance of play and recognising the developmental stages of children and modifying

sport to be appropriate for the level. The importance of inclusion is emphasised, as well as appropriate levels of activity and preparing children for competition. I feel this document provides a good framework for coaches who work developing younger athletes. It also contains elements that relate to best practice such as applying the principles are likely to result in better results than other means, and certainly helps coaches comply with ethical requirements. An element of best practice lacking in the principles is that of self-assessment and measurement against a benchmark.

Another potential source of coach education best practice would be tertiary institutions such as universities. The programme of study for the University of Canterbury degree in Sport Coaching (n.d.), appears to be the only dedicated sports degree in New Zealand. It was noticeable reading through the courses documents the emphasis placed on reflection, in other words looking back at your performance and understanding what you did well and what you could improve on as it relates to best practice. In the definition of best practice, self-assessment is mentioned as a key component to maintaining quality.

Another practice often cited in the coaching related courses is that of critical analysis. I think this relates to best practice in that you should always be monitoring and scrutinizing your practices and critically analysing research and be prepared to change if the findings show it's the best thing to do.

Looking at best practice in a comparable industry, such as education, helped to provide a fuller definition of best practice than looking at coaching alone. The Education Council of New Zealand (n.d.) produces a document outlining Practising Teacher Criteria, essentially a best practice guide for teachers. This document has a number of similarities with the Good Practice Principles set out by Sport New Zealand such as creating a safe and supportive environment, showing leadership and role-modelling and understanding and adapting to the developmental stage of learners. Inclusiveness of all learners (including different cultures is strongly emphasised in education) and collaboration amongst learners are also points of emphasis. One point in the education criteria that was not mentioned in the Good Practice Principles of Sport New Zealand is a commitment to ongoing professional development. I believe this would be a key part of a best practice approach. I believe acting in an ethical manner should also be seen as part of best practice. Both Sport New Zealand and the Education Council of New Zealand provide ethical codes of conduct that sit alongside their best practice principles. These codes of conduct covered such areas as acting professionally and with integrity, as well as respecting the rights of others when it comes to things such as confidentiality and safety.

One thing advocated in coaching circles is a coaching philosophy. As Lynn Kidman (2010) says "It is useful and important for all coaches to formulate a coaching philosophy or personal statement about the values and beliefs significant to their understanding of sport and life." (Pg 30). As part of my level 5 course in Sport Management and Exercise Prescription I teach students to develop a coaching philosophy. Although both the coaching and education sectors set out ethical standards, I think it is just as important if not more so to have a personal statement or philosophy that sets out what is important to you in coaching. Kidman (2010) talks about reviewing and revising your coaching philosophy as you have different experiences in coaching. I understand that a code of ethics may be required for a beginning coach, but over time I believe a well-developed personal coaching philosophy would create a powerful guide for conduct. I can see a strong link through here to elements of best practice such as

self-reflection and ongoing professional development, as an evolving philosophy acts as a kind of record of a coach's growth.

So what should best practice in coaching look like? In my opinion it would need to include creating an environment for athletes that is safe, inclusive and focused on improvement. There would be a focus on providing leadership and role modelling appropriate behaviour. There would also be a commitment to improvement on the part of the coach through a process of self-reflection, professional development and an evolving coaching philosophy.

I believe the coach of the future will need to exhibit certain qualities to be successful. For one thing they will have to have the best interests of each individual athlete at heart if they are going to be able develop them. According to Lynn Kidman (2010), author of Athlete-centred Coaching: Developing Decision Makers, the best way to do this is by using an athlete-centred approach. Kidman says developing athletes' abilities in knowledge, understanding, skill and decision making are the four goals of the sport experience and through allowing athletes to take ownership of knowledge, development and decision making it will help them maximize their performance as well as their enjoyment.

One of the key components of an athlete-centred approach that Kidman (2010) advocates is the use of Bunker and Thorpe's Teaching Games for Understanding approach (TGfU). "With TGfU athletes can learn about the game and practice skills and techniques within the context of the game rather than separate from it. Learning in context provides a sound understanding of the game and opportunities to apply skills and technique under pressure". She believes the use of game-like situations in practice helps athletes develop their decision making processes.

Another key component is questioning. Kidman (2010) says the value of good questioning is that it engages athletes at a conscious level, enhancing concentration and thus their intensity, which transfers well to competition itself where the pressure is great. The technique contains the implicit message that athletes' thoughts are important.

A developing area for coaching now and into the future is long term athlete development (LTAD). The Canadian Sport for Life organisation (n.d.) has produced a document that outlines the framework for LTAD. The LTAD is divided into eight phases that cover the lifespan of an athlete. The first phase is Awareness and First Involvement. In Awareness prospective participants are informed of the range of activities available and how they can take part. First Involvement refers to the first experiences participants have in sport. In this phase it is critical to ensure individuals have a positive first experience in an activity as negative first experiences can lead to non-participation.

In Active Start, 3-6 year old boys and girls are encouraged to be engaged in daily active play. Through play and movement, they develop the fundamental movement skills and learn how to link them together. In the Fundamentals stage, participants develop fundamental movement skills in structured and unstructured environments for play. Once a wide range of fundamental movement skills have been acquired, participants progress into the Learn to Train stage leading to understanding basic rules, tactics and strategy in games and refinement of sport-specific skills.

Athletes enter the Train to Train stage when they have developed proficiency in the athlete development performance components (physical, technical-tactical, mental, and emotional). Athletes will generally specialize in one sport towards the end of the stage. A progression may also occur from local to provincial competition. Athletes enter the Train to Compete stage when they are proficient in sport-specific athlete development components. Athletes are training nearly full-time and competing at the national level while being introduced to international competition. Athletes in the Train to Win stage are world class competitors who are competing at the highest level of competition in the world (e.g. Olympics, Paralympics, World Championships, World Cups or top professional leagues).

Individuals who have a desire to be physically active are in the Active for Life stage. A participant may choose to be Competitive for Life or Fit for Life. Competitive for Life includes those who compete in any organised sport. Fit for Life includes active people who participate in non-competitive physical activity. I think it is important for coaches to be aware of these phases and coach their athletes accordingly.

New Zealand has adopted the LTAD approach to some extent with an outline of the phases on the SportNZ website. Sport Canterbury have integrated it into their SportStart programme which they deliver to primary school teachers in their area

## *Key Milestones:*

By 30/5/17 I would expect to finish stage 1 (Inform and describe) to have reviewed my courses and have topics ready to be explored further in the next stage.
By 30/6/17 I would expect to finish stage 2 (Discover and explore) to have analysed topics identified as being worth exploring as to their suitability for inclusion in the courses and at what level.
By 31/7/17 I would expect to finish stage 3 (Negotiate and cooperate) to have discussed my findings with fellow tutors and got some consensus as to what should be included in the course and at what level.
By 30/9/16 I would expect to finish stage 4 (Test and revise) attaching value to particular findings in different areas, levels of corroborating evidence.
By 30/11/16 I would expect to finish stage 5 (Integrate and apply) to have integrated my findings into level 5 and 6 curriculums.

## *Sustainable practice:*

For me the idea of sustainable practice in this instance would be around encouraging a culture where programme development becomes a continuous process. Where we don't simply review our programmes this year and sit back and say well that's done. Instead continue to monitor what's going on in the industry and be willing to keep adapting to the needs of the students and the industry. I believe going through this process will give me a tool that I will have tested, and if needs be refined, with which to not only continue to review, and if required, revise the coaching course. I can also apply this same

process to review any of the other courses I teach. I would also make the documentation of the process I have undertaken available to the other tutors so if they wish they could make use of it too.

## *Reflection:*

I will use a learning log to document my learnings throughout the process. I believe a learning log would be the best way to document and give structure to my thoughts and reflections throughout the process.

## *Reflective Critical Commentary:*

To begin with I had to think about what a suitable topic for the project would be. I knew I wanted it to be around coaching but I wasn't sure in what area – technology? The future of coaching? During our end of year professional development session we discussed the upcoming TROQ process and the roles we would be playing in it. This seemed the ideal project to base my masters on. Initially I was focused on putting my proposal together around the TROQ process and the revamping of my courses, but through talking with my facilitator the purpose became clear that the project should be on establishing coaching best practice and being a leader in coach education thinking. It was great for me to start thinking on a larger scale than just my own course.

The next step in the process was how to structure the project. I had noticed in some of the other examples I had seen the authors had structured their thoughts around a model. I felt this would work well for my project. The next step was finding an appropriate model to use. After looking at a number of options I feel the one I have selected will give good structure to the project and if it works as expected is one that could easily be applied to other courses or other areas. After beginning to work my way through headings I felt at times I was making up things to have something to put in under the headings, or shoehorning points under headings that didn't really sit comfortably there. After talking with my facilitator it became apparent that I couldn't stick rigidly to the stages of the original model but had to adapt them to what the project needed.

Having different headings throughout the agreement forced me to consider different aspects that I perhaps ordinarily wouldn't have thought about. A good example of this was the Maori consultation heading. Initially I didn't feel it would have much application to my project. But as I thought more about it I wondered whether the general principles of coaching can simply be applied to everyone across the globe. Or are there some unique cultural aspects that can be brought into coaching that might make the experience more meaningful and relatable to a more localized audience. Another good example of a heading that I had to give consideration to was sustainability. Reflecting on this point, I really want this project to provide the basis for an ongoing evaluative process to make sure we are maintaining best practice standards.

During the course of putting together this agreement I have found I have been putting all aspects of my courses under the microscope and looking at everything through a critical lens. Initial reading has

already made me question the value of some of the content on the course and certainly look to explore further as to what the blueprint of coaching now looks like.

I have also had to further develop my time management and focus to put in the time required to meet the standards of a higher tertiary qualification. I have been challenged by my facilitator to think less in terms of are we in line with coach education best practice, and more in terms of being a leader and developing coach education best practice. This has changed my perspective of what the project could be.

## *Main outputs from my study:*

My outputs will include a literature review, a project report and a critical commentary on my learning during the Masters' in Professional Practice programme of study. I will also submit a proposed curriculum document that covers level 5 and level 6 tertiary coaching courses.

## *References:*


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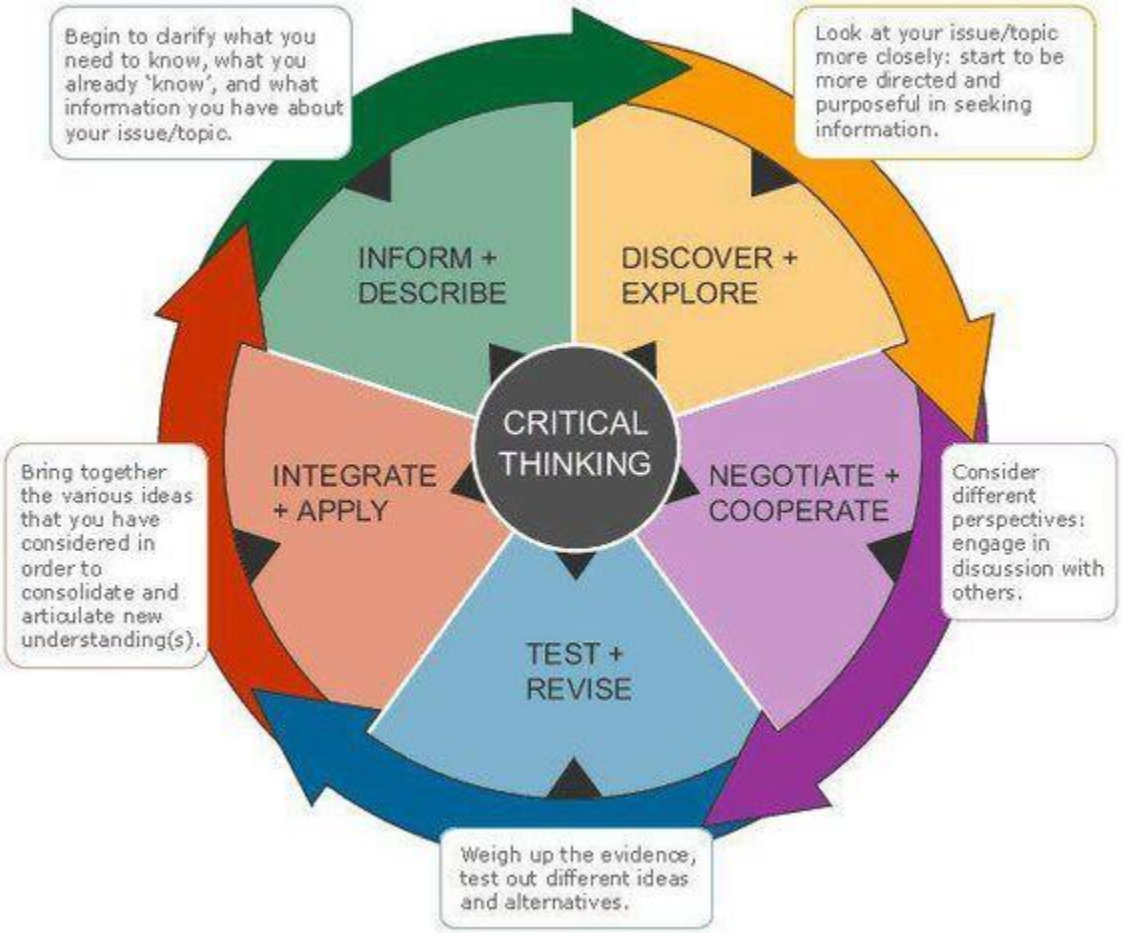
## *Appendix 1*




## *Appendix 2*

**What is a Learning Log?**

A Learning Log is a journal which evidences your own learning and skills development. It is not just a diary or record of "What you have done" but a record of what you have learnt, tried and critically reflected upon.

For example if in your Learning Log you include details of what you did or how you did something then consider asking yourself questions such as:

- Did it go well? Why? What did you learn?
- Did it go badly? Why? What did you learn?
- How can you improve for next time

A Learning Log contains your record of your experiences, thoughts, feelings and reflections. *One of the most important things it contains is your conclusions about how what you have learnt is relevant to you and how you will use the new information/knowledge/skill/technique in the future.*

It may contain details of problems you have encountered and solved (or not solved). Examples of where you have started to try out and practice a new skill and examples of your own formal and informal learning. Formal learning is 'taught' in a formal academic setting - for example via a lecture. Informal learning is learning which takes place outside a formal academic setting, for example, though talking with friends or colleagues in a social setting.

A Learning Log is a personal document. Its content may be very loosely structured and only of relevance to you. Once you have commenced a Learning Log you will find it a valuable and useful 'tool' to help your learning and to help you to think about and structure your own learning.

**How do I 'do' a Learning Log?**

Try to write something down after every new learning experience.

- What you did
- Your thoughts
- Your feelings
- How well (or badly) it went
- What you learnt
- What you will do differently next time.

On a regular basis (usually 3-5 weekly) review what you have written and reflected upon this. Be honest with yourself.

Ask yourself questions such as:

- Have I achieved anything? If so, what?
- What progress have I made
- Have I put any theory into practice?
- How does what I have been doing lead to me becoming better at a skill?
- How can I use this to plan for the future?
- How can I use this to plan new learning?
- Experiences?

In addition to 3-5 weekly reflection you should also ask yourself these questions the next day or within 24-48 hours of each one of the taught sessions you attend or within 24-48 hours of having practiced a new skill. You will find that how you view something, (your perception of something) changes over time. For example you may have been trying to develop your communication skills and have had a bad or negative learning experience when something went wrong and you feel you have made little or no or even backwards progress. You may reflect upon this the next day and your thoughts and feelings may be mainly negative ones. If you reflect about the experience 3-5 weeks later on you may find that you have now overcome the negative experience and have used it to develop further and improve yourself. Skills rarely suddenly develop or improve 'overnight'. Learning new knowledge and applying it within a skills context usually takes time, effort and perseverance. A Learning Log will help you to become more aware of how you learn, what learning tasks you enjoy (and don't enjoy) and of your emotional and cognitive (thought) processes

At first it may seem difficult to start to critically reflect upon your own learning. Over time though you will find that it becomes easier. The more often that you practice the skill of self reflection then the easier it will become.

You can use your Learning Log to record courses you went on, books you have read, discussions you have had, Internet sites you have looked at, television programmes you have watched. At the end of the day your log should become something that is directly relevant to you and your learning.

**Is there a 'best' or 'correct' way of producing a Learning Log?**

Not really, the log should be relevant to you and your job/studies/role/activities. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way of producing a Learning Log. Perhaps the three key questions when engaging in the process of producing a Learning Log are:

- Am I being honest with myself?
- Is this a useful process for me?
- Is this helping my own process of learning?

If the answers are 'yes' then your Learning Log is correct and right for you. If the answers are 'no' and you have genuinely asked yourself some of the questions previously mentioned then perhaps a Learning Log may not really be of much use to you.

**How can producing a Learning Log and developing the skill of critical self reflection help me?**

Again, that depends very much upon you. Some people will get more out of engaging in the process of producing a Learning Log than other people will. Research has identified that reflection can help people to change. Some of the changes which have been identified are listed below.

(Adapted from C Miller, A Tomlinson, M Jones, Researching Professional Education 1994, University Of Sussex).

**Changes associated with reflection.**

| **From** ⟶ | **To** |
|---|---|
| Accepting | Questioning |
| Intolerant | Tolerant |
| Doing | Thinking |
| Being Descriptive | Analytical |
| Impulsive | Diplomatic |
| Being Reserved | Being more Open |

| | |
|---|---|
| Unassertive | Assertive |
| Unskilled Communicators | Skilled Communicators |
| Reactive | Reflective |
| Concrete Thinking | Abstract Thinking |
| Lacking Self Awareness | Self Aware |

www.hull.ac.uk/php/cesagh/documents/LEARNINGLOG.doc

## Learning log

| Date | What was the learning situation? | Describe the outcome of the situation. | What did you learn? | How will you use this in the future? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

## Appendix 4: Curriculum Vitae

# Stephen Ede

2 Coulter Street
Pegasus
Ph: 9203984
Mobile: 0279499418
Email: srjede@yahoo.co.nz

## Skills

- Have built strong relationships throughout the sports industry
- Have knowledge and experience in coach education
- Passionate about coach education
- I am an experienced teacher

## Work history

2013 to present, **Tutor**, New Zealand Institute of Sport, Christchurch.

- Teaching across level 2 – level 6 subjects including Coaching, Sport Psychology, Sport Admin, Communications, Strategic Planning
- Prepare and deliver lesson plans
- Producing assessments and curriculum development
- Networking with schools and sports organisations to provide opportunities for students to gain experience
- Organised and ran level 3 gateway coaching programme
- Providing pastoral care

2011 to 2012, **Applied Sport Tutor**, Community Colleges North Canterbury, Rangiora.

- Delivering National Certificate of Sport level 4 course including Coaching, Officiating, Sport Psychology, Special Populations, Anatomy and Physiology, Gym Instruction including fitness testing
- Networking with local schools and sports organisations including North Canterbury Sport and Recreation Trust
- Providing pastoral care

2008 to 2010, **Adventure Based Learning Tutor,** Community Colleges North Canterbury, Rangiora.

- Educating young people through the outdoors.

- NZQA Level 1 & 2 employment and sports based units.

I have also owned my own marketing business as well as working in the advertising industry in the media and production areas.

## Education and training

**Masters' Degree**, Otago Polytechnic, currently studying, Professional Practice.

Currently putting together a thesis on what constitutes best practice in coach education.

**Degree**, University of Canterbury, 2007, Sport Coaching.

Covered coaching theory and practical as well as wider areas of athlete development such as skill analysis, sport psychology, nutrition and strength and conditioning. Factors influencing sport participation and sports wider effect on society were also examined.

**Diploma**, Auckland Institute of Technology, 1993, Advertising.

**National Certificate**, Waikato Polytechnic, 1992, Business.

**Certificate in Adult Education**

**Current First Aid Certificate**

**Completed Advanced Toastmasters Silver course**

## Personal interests and activities

- **Basketball coaching** – North Canterbury Women's Premier side
  North Canterbury Representative sides
  Rangiora New Life High School teams
  Kaiapoi High School teams
  Kaiapoi Junior Basketball teams

- **Martial arts** **-** Currently have a brown belt/black stripe in MMA

**<u>Previously</u>**

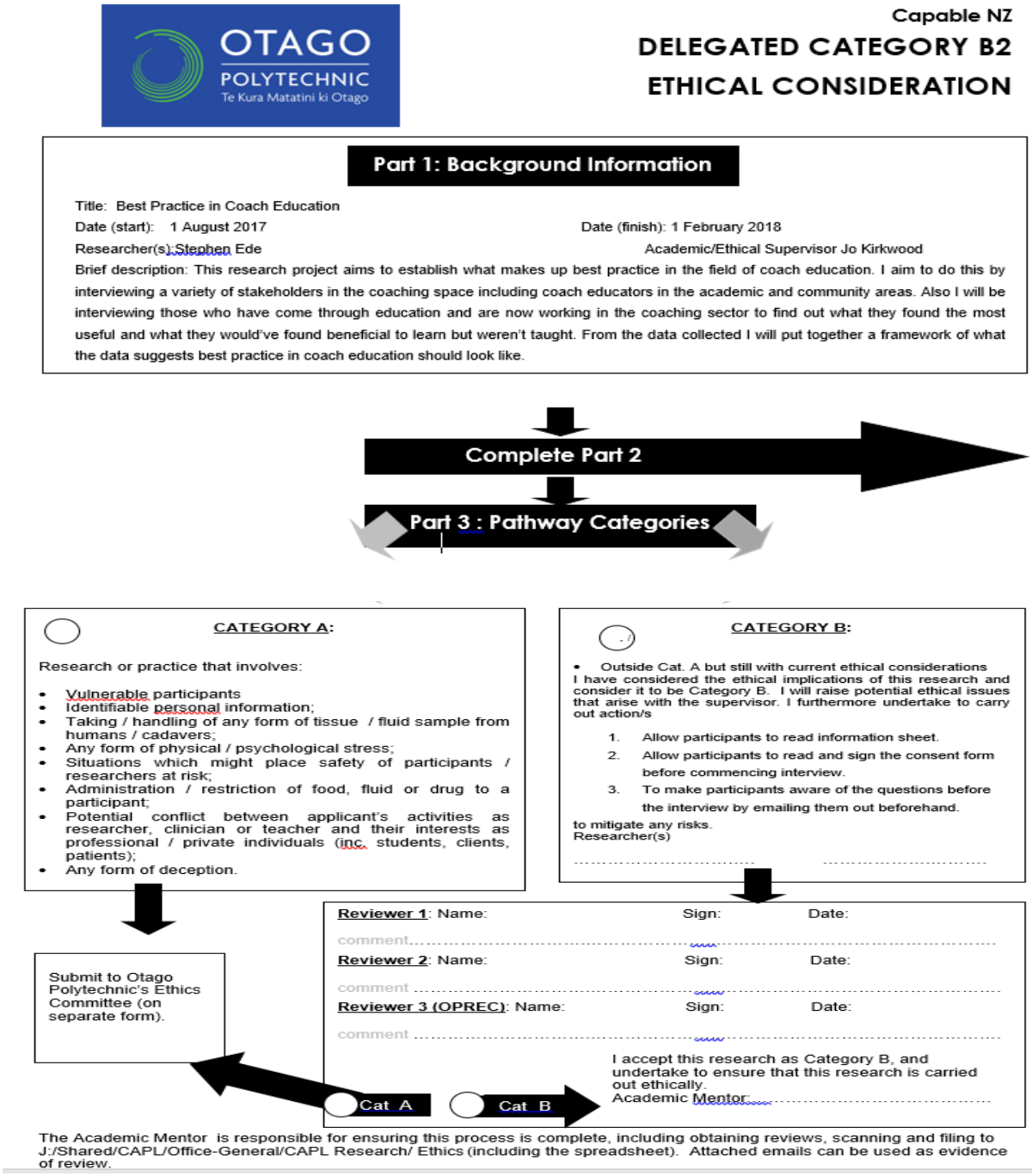
- **Toastmasters** **-** Past member and president of Kaiapoi Toastmasters

## Referees

**Stuart Murray**
Manager
Aspire2 International
0277402116
stuart.murray@aspire2.ac.nz

**Stephen Walters**
Principal
Rangiora New Life School
0277783839
stephenwalters@rnls.school.nz

# Appendix 5: Ethical Considerations



Capable NZ

**DELEGATED CATEGORY B2**

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

**Part 1: Background Information**

Title: Best Practice in Coach Education

Date (start): 1 August 2017 Date (finish): 1 February 2018

Researcher(s): Stephen Ede Academic/Ethical Supervisor Jo Kirkwood

Brief description: This research project aims to establish what makes up best practice in the field of coach education. I aim to do this by interviewing a variety of stakeholders in the coaching space including coach educators in the academic and community areas. Also I will be interviewing those who have come through education and are now working in the coaching sector to find out what they found the most useful and what they would've found beneficial to learn but weren't taught. From the data collected I will put together a framework of what the data suggests best practice in coach education should look like.

**Complete Part 2**

**Part 3 : Pathway Categories**

**CATEGORY A:**

Research or practice that involves:

- Vulnerable participants
- Identifiable personal information;
- Taking / handling of any form of tissue / fluid sample from humans / cadavers;
- Any form of physical / psychological stress;
- Situations which might place safety of participants / researchers at risk;
- Administration / restriction of food, fluid or drug to a participant;
- Potential conflict between applicant's activities as researcher, clinician or teacher and their interests as professional / private individuals (inc. students, clients, patients);
- Any form of deception.

**CATEGORY B:**

- Outside Cat. A but still with current ethical considerations

I have considered the ethical implications of this research and consider it to be Category B. I will raise potential ethical issues that arise with the supervisor. I furthermore undertake to carry out action/s

1. Allow participants to read information sheet.
2. Allow participants to read and sign the consent form before commencing interview.
3. To make participants aware of the questions before the interview by emailing them out beforehand.

to mitigate any risks.

Researcher(s)

Submit to Otago Polytechnic's Ethics Committee (on separate form).

**Reviewer 1**: Name: Sign: Date:

comment

**Reviewer 2**: Name: Sign: Date:

comment

**Reviewer 3 (OPREC)**: Name: Sign: Date:

comment

I accept this research as Category B, and undertake to ensure that this research is carried out ethically.

Academic Mentor:

Cat A Cat B

The Academic Mentor is responsible for ensuring this process is complete, including obtaining reviews, scanning and filing to J:/Shared/CAPL/Office-General/CAPL Research/ Ethics (including the spreadsheet). Attached emails can be used as evidence of review.

| ISSUES AREA | COMMENT/RELEVANT ACTION |
|---|---|
| What human subjects are involved? Provide an overview of each group of participants you will be working with (i.e. 50 people from the general public over 18 years, or two managers and three of their subordinates in [name] department). | The subjects involved in this project will be coach educators that are part of my wider coaching network, whose opinion I will seek on what constitutes best practice in coach education. The other subjects will be coaches who have been through the coach education system either academic or community. I will be interviewing approximately 10 people overall that fit either the coach educator or coaching student category. |
| How have you ensured potential participants clearly have a choice about participation (i.e. no coercion)? | I have produced a consent form (see attached) that clearly states that participation is voluntary. They can also choose to not answer any questions or change their mind about participating if they so wish. |
| How will participants know about the purpose of the study and possible consequences to themselves or others of their participation? (evidence they understand) | I have produced a participant information sheet (see attached) that outlines the purpose of the project and what it hopes to achieve. It also outlines how information will be collected and stored and how anonymity will e protected. |
| How will anonymity and or confidentiality be maintained? Explain the processes you have put in place to ensure this. | The audio files of the interviews will be kept in a passworded folder on my computer that only my academic supervisor and I will have access to. Any physical data will be kept locked away with me having the only person having a key. The anonymity of the interviewee will be protected by using a fictitious name on their file. |
| How are potential threats to physical, emotional, cultural wellbeing being managed? (particularly to participants, but also to researchers and others) | I do not foresee any situations that would pose a threat of any kind to the participant. However should one arise I would firstly try to resolve the issue with the participant. If this doesn't work we can always terminate the interview. I will be the only researcher. |
| Is there any conflict of interest or role? How will this be managed? | I will not be interviewing any current students of mine during this process so I don't see results being tainted by current students telling me what they think I want to hear for fear of consequences. I will however be interviewing past students I believe that they will be far enough removed from being taught by me to be honest if there are any areas they feel could've been covered that would've helped them in their coaching practice. I am anticipating a sharing of information with other academics from different institutions even though we may be in competition for students. |
| How is the research methodology justified, and how will you ensure it is properly carried out? | I have put together research protocols (see attached) that I will follow to ensure data integrity is maintained and the interviewee is aware of their rights and be assured that confidentiality will be maintained. I will ensure the protocols are carried out by conducting the interviews myself. |

| | |
|---|---|
| How will confidentiality of potentially sensitive information be maintained? (Information already in the public arena is not an issue) | The content of the interviews will be kept confidential with my academic supervisor and I being the only people having access to it. Each interviewees file will be labelled with a fictitious name. |
| How will the data be managed? What will they be used for? How will they be stored and for how long? | The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only my academic supervisor and I will have access to it. Any digital data collected will be kept in a password protected folder. Any physical data will be stored in a locked cupboard. At the end of the project any personal information on which the results are based will be retained in secure storage for a period of five years, after which it will be destroyed (in line with what is stated on the consent form).<br><br>The information sought is opinion from the interviewees on what the components are that make up best practice in coach education. Once the interviews are complete I will be looking for any common themes that might suggest what coach education might be. I will also be asking coaches that have come through the coach education system if there are any areas they felt they would have benefited from learning given the coaching environment they are now in. I will then attempt to put together a framework for best practice based on the research findings. |
| Who will receive a copy of the completed report? How will it be made available to participants? | The intention of the project is to inform best practice in coach education so to that end it is likely to be reasonably widely distributed. Certainly to those considering its merits at Otago Polytechnic and my teaching colleagues. I will also email a copy to any participants that wish to receive it. I do however envisage that in the future the project will be freely available to view on the internet. |
| Evidence of engagement with Kaitohutohu Office | I have emailed the Kaitohutohu office and they have indicated their support for the project (see attached email). |
| Potential threats to Otago Polytechnic Sustainability policy | I don't see that there are any elements to this project that pose a threat to the Otago Polytechnic's sustainability policy. |

# Consent Form

**Best Practice in Coach Education**

I have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.
I know that:

- my participation in the project is entirely voluntary and I am free to refuse to answer any particular question
- I am free to stop participating at any time
- I can choose to withdraw information provided without giving reasons and without any disadvantage. I cannot withdraw any information I have supplied after the data is analysed
- my data will be kept at the conclusion of the project and any raw data on which the results of the project depend will also be retained in secure storage for five years after which it will be destroyed. If it is to be kept longer than five years my permission will be sought.
- the results of the project may be published or used at a presentation at an academic conference but my confidentiality will be preserved
- You may request a summary of the research findings by emailing Stephen Ede at srjede@yahoo.co.nz

I agree to take part in this project under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

…… (signature of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature of researcher)

This project has carried out under the auspices of the Otago Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee Category B Delegated Authority. Contact Dr Glenys Forsyth for further information (glenysf@op.ac.nz 021 0549 233)

## Research Protocol

1. Potential participants will be part of my wider coaching network and approached via email with a brief outline of the project  Former students will be approached via an email from the New Zealand Institute of Sport so there is no breach of privacy in relation to accessing personal information. The participants can then contact me direct if they interested in participating.
2. If the participant is interested I will send them a participation information form and a consent form.
3. Once any questions have been answered and the participant's rights have been made clear the consent form can be signed.
4. Once the consent form has been signed a face to face or skype interview will be arranged for a time suitable to both parties.
5. The questions will be emailed to the participant seven (7) days prior to the interview so the participant has time to think about and formulate answers. They then have the opportunity to ask further questions or opt out if they wish.
6. If agreed to by the participant the interview will be voice recorded for later review after which I will transcribe it. If consent is not given to record the interview then notes will be taken instead.
7. At the conclusion of the interview the participant will be asked if they are happy with the answers they have given. At this point they can change or retract anything they have said or opt out if they wish. If they decide to opt out the recording will be deleted or notes destroyed.
8. Once final consent has been obtained I will inform the participant that the recording will be downloaded into a passworded folder and labelled with a fictitious name and the interview deleted off the recording device, any physical data will be kept in a locked cabinet.
9. Data will be kept securely for five (5) years before being destroyed.

# Participant Information Form

**Project title:** Best practice in coach education

**General introduction:** I am a tutor at the New Zealand Institute of Sport and currently undertaking a Masters in Professional Practice. My major teaching area is coaching. Through a recent tertiary review in the Sport and Recreation industry the opportunity arose to start from scratch with our coaching courses. This prompted me to use my Masters to ask the question what does best practice in coach education look like now and are we delivering it?

**What is the aim of the project?** This project sets out to provide a framework for best practice in coach education

**What types of participants are being sought?** I am looking for a variety of participants to interview including academics delivering coach education in a tertiary education setting. Those delivering coach education programmes in a community setting. Also I would like to interview those that have received coach education and are currently engaged in coaching a sport.

**How was I identified as being suitable for this project?** You have been identified as both having knowledge and standing in the field of coaching or you have recently done a course that involved sports coaching. I am seeking both the academic point of view of what determines coaching best practice as well as what recent graduates think who are now taking that knowledge and applying it in real life settings. Your interview will either take place face to face or through Skype. Permission will be sought to voice record your interview for later review.

**What will my participation involve?** Should you agree to take part in this project you will simply be asked a series of questions to determine what you believe makes up coaching best practice. If you have recently graduated from a coaching course and are working in the coaching industry you will be asked the same series of questions but will also be asked if you felt there was anything that you could've been taught but weren't that would've been beneficial in your coaching. I would email the questions ahead of time so you could formulate your answers ahead of time.

**How will confidentiality and/or anonymity be protected?** The content of your interview will be kept confidential with my academic supervisor and I being the only people having access to it. Anonymity will be protected by labelling each interview with a fictitious name.

**What data or information will be collected from me and how will it be used?** The information sought is your opinion on what the components of best practice in coach education are. Once the interviews are complete I will be looking to see if there is any common themes across the interviews that suggest what best practice might look like. I will also be asking coaches that have come through the coach education system if there are any areas they felt they would have benefited from learning given the coaching environment they are now in. I will then attempt to put together a framework for best practice based on the research findings.

You may request a copy of the summary results of the project and they will be emailed out to you.

**Data Storage**

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only my academic supervisor and I will have access to it. Any digital data collected will be kept in a password protected folder. Any physical data will be stored in a locked cupboard. At the end of the project any personal information on which the results are based will be retained in secure storage for a period of five years, after which it will be destroyed (in line with what is stated on the consent form).

**Can I change mind and withdraw from the project?**

You can decline to participate without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you choose to participate, you can stop participating in the project at any time, without having to give any reasons. You can also withdraw any information that has already been supplied until the stage agreed on the consent form.

You can refuse to answer any particular question, and ask for the recording device to be turned off at any stage.

**What if I have any questions?**

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to email Stephen Ede at srjede@yahoo.co.nz

Any additional information given or conditions agreed to will be noted on the consent form.

This project will be carried out under the auspices of the Otago Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee Category B Delegated Authority. Contact Dr Glenys Forsyth for further information (glenysf@op.ac.nz 021 0549 233)

## Interview Questions – Coach Educators

1. How would you define the term best practice?
2. If a coach educator was teaching best practice what would he/she be teaching?
3. What do you believe are the key areas that a coach needs to be educated in?
4. What tools could a coach use to improve his/her performance?
5. What are some key areas a coach's performance should be measured against?
6. Are there any coaching practices you have used that you found to be particularly effective?
7. If you were to a hire a coach what qualities and skills would you be looking for?
8. Looking to the future, what differences do you think there will be in the role of a coach?

## Additional Interview Questions for Ex-Coach Education Students

1. Are there any areas of coaching that you weren't taught that you feel would have been of benefit to you?
2. What were you taught that you have found of the most benefit to you in coaching?
3. Do you feel what you were taught equipped you well for the reality of coaching? i.e. was there a disconnect between the theory of coaching and coaching in the real world?

**Kaitohutohu** <Kaitohutohu@op.ac.nz>
To Stephen Ede

Kia ora Stephen,
Thank you for your submission and patience.
The office of the Kaitohutohu supports your application for Ethics Approval.
Richard Kerr-Bell
Kaitohutohu Approvals
021427865

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