

The learning formats of coach education materials

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This paper reports on an investigation into the design of coach education materials. At a time of significant change in coach education in the UK, it was appropriate to examine the extent to which coach education materials conform to good practice in terms of adult learning design principles and the formatting of the content. Coach education materials from level 1-3 of coaching awards in 5 sports were content analysed, along with a selection of generic education materials. These data were accompanied by opinions from 60 coaches and tutors, a focus group, and number of interviews.

In the absence of a substantial literature on this aspect of coach education, a framework of analysis criteria was derived from the adult learning literature and prescriptions of good practice from those who had substantial experience in materials design. The framework elements (each with sub-groups of 5 to 18 items) were progression, feedback, interactivity, reflection, operation, contextualisation, summarising, attractiveness, layout & structure, and accessibility.

There were substantial differences in the quality of the resources. The generic learning materials displayed very clear differences between those that displayed information-led design with lower learning principles scores in interactivity, feedback, and summarising, and those intended to be stand alone or open learning materials, which scored more highly. The coach education materials were mixed in quality, and the analyses were usefully focused on two issues – presentational formatting and learning principles design (structural formatting). The materials were strong in contextualisation, accessibility and attractiveness, but poor in summarising, operation, and layout and structure. Overall the scores for interactivity, reflection and feedback were less positive than might have been expected.

Coaches and tutors valued clarity, feedback and practical examples, and felt that these qualities along with good diagrams, CD/DVD support and clear instructions for use would be useful improvements. It was also evident that the relationship of the learning materials to the delivery method was very relevant, as were the resources available for production quality. The project was able to provide a valuable set of criteria for guiding the future production of learning materials in coach education.

Presenter

John Lyle is Professor of Sports Coaching at Leeds Metropolitan University, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland. He established the first professional diploma in sports coaching and the first Masters degree in coaching studies in the UK, and has played a significant role in the development of sports coaching as an academic field of study. He is the author of the influential textbook *Sports Coaching Concepts* (Routledge, 2002). John has contributed widely through publications, presentations, masterclasses, working groups, and other media to academic and professional developments in sports coaching. John's academic experience is complemented by a considerable personal experience as a volleyball coach, and engagement in consultancy, policy and the delivery of coach education.