

Framing the discussion of competencies in coach education

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Aims of presentation:

1. To introduce a framework for defining a 'comprehensive set of key competencies'.
(Rychen, 2003, p.1)
2. To stimulate discussion about what focusing on competencies could mean for coach education.

Significance of topic:

- Competencies are:
 - being used in national coach education frameworks eg NCCP, NCAS, UKCC, NZCS
 - stimulating debates eg ICCE: linking competencies and coach effectiveness
 - not new to coaching (see Halden-Brown, 1994; Miller, 1982; Richards, 1997)
 - being used in tertiary coach education (see Demers, Woodburn & Savard, 2006)
 - being discussed in relation to adopting a process orientated approach to coaching (see Lyle, 2002)

Before proceeding any further...

- Let's ask ourselves some questions
 - What is a competence?
 - Which competencies are important and for what?

OECD project DeSeCo* (Rychen, 2003)

*DeSeCo = Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations.

Main goal of DeSeCo

- ‘the construction of an overarching frame of reference relevant both for the development of key competences in a lifelong learning perspective and for the assessment of these competences in an international setting’

(Rychen, 2004, p.317)

DeSeCo frame of reference

Using tools interactively

- Ability to use language, symbols and text interactively
- Ability to use knowledge and information interactively
- Ability to use (new) technology interactively



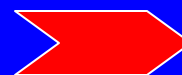
Acting autonomously

- Ability to defend and assert one's rights, interests, limits and needs
- Ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects
- Ability to act within the larger context



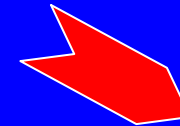
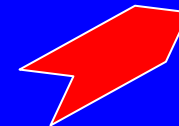
Interacting in socially heterogeneous groups

- Ability to relate well to others
- Ability to cooperate
- Ability to manage and resolve conflict



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SUCCESSFUL
LIFE



WELL
FUNCTIONING
SOCIETY

(Rychen, 2004)

What is a key competence?

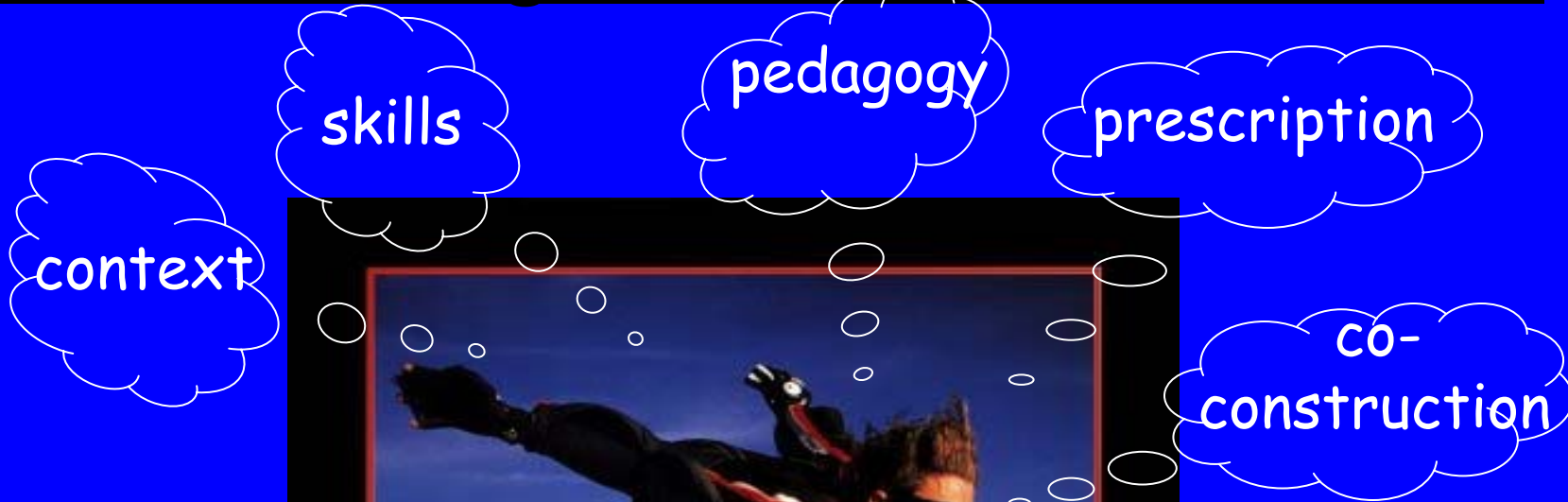
- Two important criteria for key competence:
 - Contribute to successful life and well-functioning society
 - Enabling individuals to successfully cope with ‘complex demands and challenges across a wide spectrum of relevant contexts and domains’ (Rychen, 2004, p.321)
- Key competencies are grounded in ‘a vision of the world as complex, interdependent and conflict-prone... Thus reflectivity represents a transversal characteristic of key competencies’ (Rychen, 2003, pp.3-4)
- Key competencies are interrelated and ‘meeting any objective will require constellations of key competencies’ (Rychen, 2003, p.4)

What is competence?

- Ability to successfully meet a complex demand in a particular context
- The mobilisation of knowledge, practical and cognitive skills as well as social and behavioural components such as emotions, values, attitudes and motivations
- A holistic concept that is not synonymous with 'skill' (the latter refers to the ability to perform motor and/or cognitive acts)

(Rychen, 2003; 2004)

Five challenges for coach education



CHALLENGE

Life is about a daring adventure or nothing.

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Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtago

1. To consider the limitations of prescribing competencies

- May generate 'formulaic, technocratic pedagogies' (Burrows, 2005, p.11)
- Has potential to deskill practitioners
- May reinforce practices that are reproductive and apolitical rather than transformative
- Emphasis is on 'doing' rather than 'knowing about'
- Education programmes may focus on technical, demonstrable and workplace-oriented skills
- Has potential to fragment, technicise and decontextualise practitioners work
- Can have a strong normalising dimension (Macdonald et al., 2006)

2. To consider what competencies mean for pedagogical practice

- Learning
 - Suits a situated view of learning and the concept of life-long learning
- Instructing
 - Learner centred practices
- Content
 - ‘Authentic’ learning situations
- Assessment
 - ‘competencies must not be regarded as being things that are ever completely or absolutely “achieved”’ (Burrows, 2005, p.3)

3. To consider co-constructing competencies

- Co-construction offers an ‘opportunity to clarify concepts in an on-going process of shared meaning-making’ (Rutherford, 2004, p.2)

4. To value context

- The context of student learning is as equally important as the content (Burrows 2005)
- ‘Identity is the vehicle that carries our experiences from context to context’ (Wenger, 1998, p.268)

5. To not equate competencies with skills

- Components of competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation) are inextricably linked (Rutherford, 2004)

Concluding thoughts

- The benefits of drawing on the OECD DeSeCo project for framing the discussion of competencies include it:
 - being ‘based on extensive and robust cross-disciplinary research and international debate’
 - being able to be ‘used as the basis for international assessments’
 - being able to be adopted as a starting point for policy developers (Rutherford, 2004, p.3)
- Five challenges posed in the presentation may stimulate debate