

Coaches' learning pathways: A Canadian perspective

Pierre Trudel, University of Ottawa

Pierre Trudel is a full professor at the School of Human Kinetics, University of Ottawa, Canada. In the last 15 years his research group has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to conduct research on coaching and coach education. Over 70 articles have been published in a variety of journals and books. Dr. Trudel has been a consultant for many sport organizations, developing programs and supervising coaches.

Recent studies (e.g., Fleurance & Cotteaux, 1999; Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004; Lemyre, Trudel, Durand-Bush, 2007) have shown that coaches learn to coach not only through formal learning situations like the Coach Education Programs but also through informal learning situations such as discussing with mentors, family members or other coaches, consulting books, videotapes, and websites, and even going back to their athletic experiences. We can argue that the relative importance of each of these learning situations will be influenced by the sport culture that prevails in a country and the decisions made by the administration staff in charge of the coaches' certification. Through this communication I want to share with you how I see Canadian coaches' learning pathways developing in the future. I will first talk about the Canadian sport culture which is characterized by a lot of volunteerism. Then I will present two recent events that will have an impact on the Canadian coaches. The first event is a decision made by Coaching Association of Canada to modify its National Coaching Certification Program. This new program, developed from a competency based approach, will contain different training programs to fulfill the needs of coaches involved in different levels and contexts; community sport (initiation, ongoing participation), competition (introduction, development, high performance), and instruction (beginners, intermediate performers, and advanced performers). The second event is the implementation by many sport organizations of a specific Long Term Athlete Development model. This seven stage model is based on the physical, mental, emotional, and cognitive development of children and adolescents. In the third part of my communication I will use Moon's (1999, 2004) generic view of learning, as adapted by Werthner and Trudel (2006) to the coaching context, to explain why we cannot expect to find a 'one size fits all' pattern for coaches' learning pathways in Canada.

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