

Learning and teaching strategies employed in a Masters Coach Education Course

Donna O'Connor (PhD), Associate Dean (Learning and teaching), M.Ed (Coach Education) Coordinator, University of Sydney

Room 334, Building A.35
Faculty of Education and Social Work,
The University of Sydney,
Sydney NSW Australia 2006

P: +61 2 9351 6343

F: +61 2 9351 4580

E: d.oconnor@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Currently there are very few opportunities for coaches to engage in professional development in Australia. There is a demand for coaching professionals to share and collaborate with coaches from other sports to enhance their effectiveness. The postgraduate Coach Education course at the University of Sydney was designed to meet these demands. Challenges that were addressed in the course design included the time constraints of the current elite coaches and experienced elite athletes as they manage professional, personal and educational commitments, and the coaches' preference for interpersonal interaction of face-to-face delivery of units of study.

This course aims to develop the coach's knowledge, skills and experience to benefit their athletes 'on and off the field'. According to Ramsden (2003) the teaching strategies that are employed can influence whether students adopt a deep approach to learning (as opposed to a surface approach). Consequently, 'outcomes', 'context' and 'student focused' were important considerations when designing and implementing learning activities.

Through the use of specific examples, this presentation will explore the effectiveness of the different learning and teaching strategies employed (e.g. case study, online activities, video, workshops, guest presenters), the development of relevant & authentic assessment tasks for learning (e.g. team meetings, coach-athlete role play, operational plans), while also evaluating the course based on student experiences in individual units of study. This presentation will also provide guidance to other academics considering implementing a variety of learning and teaching strategies for practitioners.

Donna O'Connor (PhD) is currently the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. She lectures in the Human Movement and Health Education program and is the course coordinator of M.Ed(Coach Education) program. Donna has worked with professional teams in Rugby League, Rugby Union and Australian Rules Football, as well as the Australian Touch and Rugby Union teams. She is currently the strength and conditioner with the Opals (Aust Women's Basketball team).