Meeting the needs and development of expertise within Irish High Performance coaches through bespoke programme design and delivery

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Overview
• Role and domain of HP coaching and challenges this creates in developing coaches of this level
• Pursuit of Excellence Programme: Overview and how it attempts to overcome the challenges in HP Coach development
• Methodology of research
• Results and conclusions

High Performance Coach’s context
• Coaching is a ‘complex and dynamic process which involves the transfer of knowledge, interaction with others and reflection on experiences’ (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003).

High Performance Coaching (Cushion 2003):
• Coaching practice can be understood as ‘structured improvisation’ which means that reducing coaching to generic rules and processes, in best, hugely problematic.
• Structured improvisation, or the interaction of order and chaos, suggests that continuity in coaching comes from stability but not adaptability.
• The ‘edge of chaos’ – coach is a performer.
• Need to look at how expert coaches have learned and developed (Research – 8 Olympic coaches endorsed these messages)

Other Coaching
• Lecturer in Coaching Science, DCU
• Coach Educator, World and Euro Hockey
• 7 Years English Hockey
• 7 Years Irish Hockey
• Performance Director

HP Coach Development
What the research tells us...........

Coaches working in the HP domain tend to develop in ad hoc, idiosyncratic and self-directed means

Effective HP coaches take responsibility for own development preference to manage their own informal or experiential learning

Stoszkowski and Collins (2015) found that coaches’ most valued the modes of learning which related to their own coaching practice and context.

Formal courses insufficient in harness critical learning opportunities that are possible through interactions between participant coaches.

1. Direct task behaviours:
   1.1. Hands on coaching.
   1.2. Pastoral care.

2. Indirect task behaviours:
   2.1. Programming.
   2.2. Management of programme / squad.
   2.3. Management of support staff.
   2.4. Research involvement.
   2.5. Talent identification and selections.

3. Administrative relations behaviours:
   3.1. Administration (e.g., paperwork, budgeting).

4. Public relation behaviours:
   4.1. Liaising with stakeholders.
   4.2. Representing AIA.
   4.3. Sharing with others.
What the literature tells us.......... 

It has been acknowledged that high quality Coach development programmes around the world will help to enhance the quality of coaching (Callary et al., 2014) 

Whilst formal education is the most popular delivery route to support improvements in participants’ coaching skills, strategies and efficacy (Erickson, Bruner, Macdonald and Côté, 2008; Mallett and Bokins, 2009), this approach has been found to have a relatively low impact on actual development of HP coaches (Jones, 2000; Lyle, 2002; Nash & Sproule, 2006; Rynne, 2008).

Necessity to examine the evidence underpinning elite-level CE if the desired benefits are to be accrued and maximised.

The concerns we wanted to address in Coach development

• Lacks individual relevance
• Lacks context specificity
• Procedural based – doesn’t promote the development of expertise
• Poor delivery methods
• Avoid Indoctrination
• Doesn’t match the role of HP coaches
• Doesn’t actually enhance coaching practice

Primary philosophies underpinning the PEP

1. A coach-centred and expertise-oriented multisport programme.
2. Practical, blended learning approaches selected to best deliver the learning objectives.
3. A basis for lifelong coach learning (including allowing coaches to apply for multiple versions of the programme).
4. Support from external partnerships and collaborations.
5. A direct impact on participants’ coaching practice.

Pursuit of Excellence: Programme Aims

• Meet the BESPOKE needs of Irish HP coaches
• Support the development of EXPERTISE within PEP Coaches
• Allow Coaches to contextualise learning into their context
• Reflective practice against philosophy & epistemology
• Self-directed and blended learning

Pursuit of Excellence Programme (PEP): Developing Coach Expertise (Nash et al, 2012)

• Develop Coaching EXPERTISE
• Large declarative knowledge base in problem solving & decision making (Abraham et al., 2006); perceptual skills, mental models, a sense of typicality and associations and routines;
• the ability to work independently and the capability to produce novel, innovative solutions;
• reflection skills and a lifelong learning attitude to their own development;
• an awareness of their own strengths and limitations;
• the ability to manage complex planning processes.

Pursuit of Excellence Programme (PEP): Learning Mechanisms

Use and enhance experiential learning:

1. Reflective Practice (Galimore et al., 2013)
2. Problem-based learning (Jones & Turner, 2006)
3. Mentoring: individual (Jones et al., 2009) and group
5. Social learning:
   • Peer-to-peer interaction
   • Community of Practice (Cochin & Stanbrook, 2012)
6. Scenario learning: ethno-dramas and role-play
Learning is messy!

Needs Analysis and Programme Planning Process

Coach Needs: On-Boarding

PEP Horizon Coach Needs Analysis Post Onboarding

Methodology: Study 1

Mixed methods
- On-line surveys (n=14 Age: M=16.3 years; SD=8.51 years)
- Semi Structured interviews
- n=8 coaching exp. M= 16.1yrs (range 4-30yrs)
- 7 Olympic sports
ANCORA IMPARO
—Michelangelo

ALWAYS
LEARNING