USING VIGNETTES TO ANALYSE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACHES’ BEHAVIOURS THAT INFLUENCE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction/Rationale

Effective Strength and Conditioning Coaching:

- Contributes to athletes’ development (Newton & Kraemer, 1994)
- Focus on technical/instruction
- Increased performance (Chelly et al., 2010)
- Physiological processes (Ahtiainen et al., 2011)
- Bodily responses to exercise (Greer et al., 2011)
- Effects of exercise regimes (McGuigan et al., 2009)

Social, psychological & emotional characteristics

- Survey/quantitative approach (coaches’ perspective)
- Job descriptions & profiles (Duehring et al., 2009)
- Coaching behaviours (Massey, 2009)
- Coaching practices (Ebben et al., 2005)
- Trust, respect, motivation, inspiration, relationship, authenticity, sincerity, self-confidence (Tod et al., 2012 & Szedlak et al., 2015)

Vignette development (authenticity & relevance; Smith et al., 2015 & Barter & Renold, 2000)

Rationale

How do they work?

- A hypothetical scenario to read and respond to (Hughes, 1998)

New, unscripted and richer data (Jenkins et al., 2010)

Key aims:

1. To analyse effective coaching behaviours in S&C and their impact
2. To utilise vignettes to prompt consideration of coaching scenarios

Stage 1

Emma is a 19 years old, international sailing athlete in the laser radial class, a single handed sailing dinghy. She has also just started at University to study ship sciences. She is currently training a national squad camp in the performance gym after and before the sailing sessions on the water. Emma just finished her evening S&C session when she met one of her friends in the gym, Frances. As they started talking about the training day their conversation quickly moved towards their evening S&C session. ‘How was your session?’ asked Frances. ‘Tiring but good’ replied Emma. ‘How was yours?’ asked Emma. Frances paused “Really challenging, Rob (the S&C coach) changed the programme today and I did not quite get it at first.” “That must have been difficult” Emma replied.

Yes, I could identify with all of them. You could quite literally exchange my name for one of the characters.” I felt that these stories came from my own experiences. They really made me think and helped me to remember different experiences.”

Result: all athletes’ shared and introduced their own experiences as well as responding to the vignette...
Methods/Results

- 10 elite athletes (inc. Olympic and World champions)
- Read through stages of vignette, asked what they have learned and if it reminded them of own experiences
- Narrative thematic analysis (56 units, 10 sub-themes, three broad themes)
  - Trust & Respect overarching
  - What characteristics’ & behaviours influence
  - How they influence cognition/affect & behaviour

Figure 1. Process of how S&C coach characteristics and behaviours are perceived to influence athlete outcome

Coaches’ characteristics
- caring
- knowledgeable
- understands role

Athletes’ cognitions and affect
- motivation & confidence
- enjoyment & gratitude

Athletes’ behaviours
- extra effort
- self-regulation

Coaches’ behaviours
- commits
- motivates
- prepares & communicates

If I feel really happy and I really trust you, then I would like to work with you until I retire, whereas if I am not too sure or uncertain or even unhappy, I would look for another coach. So, the trust within the relationship is important and related to the long-term factors (…), but having a coach I can trust and respect would make me feel very honoured to give 100%. I would feel safe. (Participant #5)

(…) but because I trust and respect the coach I want to impress him. The coach’s presence makes me want to do well for me and for the coach. It is motivating and the coach’s positive comments will give me something extra, at least it gives me a little bit more patience and extra strength to give it another try instead of giving up. (Participant #5)

If you are quite trusting you are going to be more willing. You might come across to people as being more motivated. I had a lot of confidence in the training I was doing, I was really driven to absolutely maximise it. As soon as I saw that my S&C Coach put in so much effort it puts on a little bit of pressure to do it from your side as well. I was massively motivated to get the maximum out of every session because I had complete trust. (Participant #9)

I felt like she cared about us as a whole, rather than just making us train hard. And she would ask about how university was going and if my training was ever impacting my education then she would make sure education came first. I really liked that because it seemed like she had all my best interests at heart. I could trust her a lot and had a lot of respect for her (…). She was almost like a friend. (Participant #10)

Multiple benefits of the vignette approach:
- to analyse perceptions/impacts where participants experience varies
- athletes level of support varies
- to study potential sensitive issues; less intrusive to respond to a hypothetical scenario
- elite sport is performance based and funding is linked
- Greater depth of data and untapped data
- evidenced by the interconnection of themes and uncovering of more latent themes

Why?

Info through written instructions has been found lacking (Scott et al., 2012)

Stories have capacity to hold attention, getting under the readers’ skin

Memory is story based – stories appear to be processed with ease

Effortless memory storage and retrieval

Arouse peoples imagination – closes knowledge to action gap – initiative imagination (Frank, 2010)

Future Research – Where to go next?

Which vignette format is best to disseminate information & why?

Scripted vignette based on previous research in three different formats:
- Information about effective characteristics of S&C coaches and possible influence (Szedlak et al., 2016 – under review)

Let’s watch a stage of the vignette

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS