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On Vampires and Wolves - exposing and exploring reasons for the differential impact of coach education

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Just as quality coaching is crucial for performance, so impactful coach development should be a central pillar of a psychologist's, governing body's, or even a government's development plan. Given this importance, and against a backdrop which suggests that many coach development initiatives may lack impact, we consider certain individual characteristics which may act to inhibit, limit or even prevent the impact of coach development programs. Based on theories of learning and knowledge perception, we propose that distinct sub-groups of high level coaches, which we term Vampires and Wolves, hold different views which may facilitate or limit their approach to professional development. We offer preliminary support for this contention through qualitative data which reflect these coaches' attitudes and behaviors. Finally, we invite comment and debate about how coach development can be best designed to optimally impact on coach and athlete performance.

KEY WORDS: Dualism, Learning, Professional Development Relativism.

Introduction – Is it Us or Them?

Just as quality coaching and sport science support is crucial for performance, so impactful coach education should be a central pillar of a sport's, sport scientist's or even a government's development plan. Unfortunately, despite a burgeoning literature base and the emerging sub-discipline of coaching science, evidence for performance impact and behavioral change from coach development interventions is sparse and, where apparent, inconclusive (Cushion, Armour, & Nelson, 2009; Krane, Eklund, & McDer-

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mott, 1991). This dearth must indicate clear issues with the quality and focus of coaching research. Amazingly for a self-professed applied science, too much of this academic investigation offers little to the evolution of practice while focusing on descriptive theorizing without showing how this may impact on coach (and thence athlete) performance. Thus, whilst some authors offer a more positive spin (e.g., Stephenson & Jowett, 2009) a genuine drive to practically impact on coaching remains difficult to discern: in short, we as scientists need to do more. Crucially however, it may also be that a failure to acknowledge and, if possible, cater for key individual differences in learning capacity may underpin this apparent lack of impact (Abraham, Collins, Morgan, & Muir, 2009). As a consequence, we *may* not be completely responsible for the lack of impact; at least some responsibility may lie with a subset of our target audience, the coaches themselves.

In this regard, we suggest in this paper that certain types of intervention, together with the research associated with them, can be extremely effective, but only with *some* coaches. Thus, while there are many issues which we as scientists need to address, there are also features which mean that, perhaps inevitably, some of our work, even though of high quality and potentially powerful impact, will fall on stony ground.

To present this contention, the paper is structured in three parts. Firstly, we consider some important psychological research from parallel environments of adult learning and knowledge conception which suggest that the self-schemata and development approaches which differentiate learners may underpin the differential impact that interventions achieve. In other words, why some coaches seem to be voracious in their appetite for a cutting edge, while others seem intent on impression management and engaging with development initiatives superficially or even being deliberately obstructive. Following this, we present some data that, although (perhaps inevitably) limited in 'face objectivity', offers some substantiation to our proposals in a cross-section of 19 high level British coaches. Finally, we offer potential options for effective coach development interventions and invite debate from fellow practitioners and researchers to examine if these ideas may be transferred to enhance the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of coaches in performance sport.

Some Theoretical Perspectives

Given that the vast majority of coach education is focused on adults learning and refining new sets of skills, it is surprising that research has

not exploited the perspectives offered by literature in adult learning and teacher education. For the present purpose, we will focus on one particular underpinning approach, which we feel, has particular relevance to the education of high level coaches; a relevance which should become obvious as the implications are discussed. The approach is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1 presents two developmental progressions used by Noel Entwistle (e.g., Entwistle & Peterson, 2004) in his examination of student learning styles and outcomes in British Higher Education (H.E.). It is worth noting that despite emanating from different perspectives both the conceptions of knowledge (emanating from epistemology) and conceptions of learning (emanating from constructivism and cognitive psychology) offered display similar features, with important implications for the differential impact of adult education. As the upper continuum in figure 1 shows, adult conceptions on the structure of use of knowledge can be viewed as a progressive continuum, from very distinct, ‘black and white’ dualistic and factual stand-

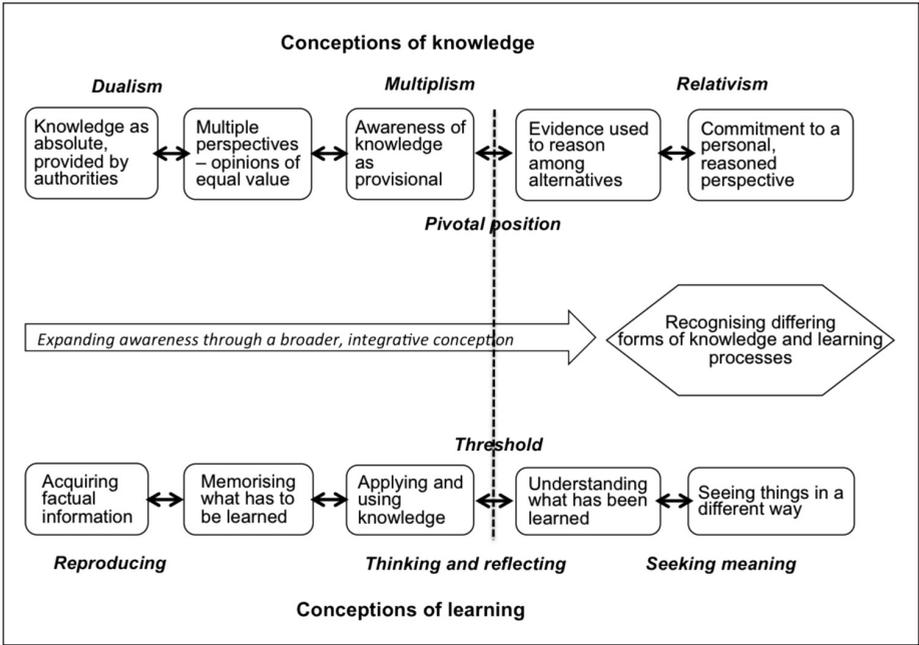


Fig. 1. - Progressions of Knowledge Use and Conceptions of Learning (adapted from Entwistle & Peterson, 2004).

point at one end, through to perhaps an equally distinct but very individual, rationally underpinned, committed relativistic and meaning focused standpoint at the other. In between, these two standpoints share several steps, starting with a realization that there are multiple perspectives about what is fact but that these perspectives are of equal value (Multiplistic). These multiple perspectives progress further to a recognition that there are times when one needs to debate between alternative perspectives in order to develop an informed and 'own' opinion. While such an opinion may be formed, it is comparatively easy to change when more 'data'¹ becomes available to provide more weight to one perspective than another.

Matched against this development of how knowledge is perceived, is a development in approaches to studying and learning by the learner (in this case the learner would be a coach) as shown on the lower continuum. Initially, learning is extrinsically motivated and focused on rote learning of externally sourced ideas, where the benchmark of correctness comes from providing the right answer to an external authority. As conceptions of learning progress, however, learners take a much deeper and intrinsically motivated learning approach where the benchmark of correctness and understanding is meaningful and critical explanations of self-practice.

Clearly, one end of both continua is more positive against the desired model of a thoughtful, innovative and reflective coach and also more conducive to the pursuit and maintenance of that goal than the other. *Hopefully*, as a process of development, learners move from the left to the right. Readers should reflect carefully on the advantages that this move may bring to the coach's 'inner learning' and professional practice.

Unfortunately, despite the obvious hope for a logical and natural progression toward thoughtful coaching, another relevant construct relating to the existence of a splitting point (identified as the pivotal position line in figure 1) midway through the process suggests that this will not always be the case. In keeping with HE's aspirations and ideas of conceptual knowledge development presented above, there is a desire to help students progress from their initial very 'black and white' factual base towards an end point of much greater relativity. Crucially however, only *some* complete the journey (cf. Schempp, McCullick & Sannen Mason, 2006), while others seem to almost 'shy away' from the inherent uncertainty of the right side, and return to a comparatively simpler world on the left (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004), where fact is fact and we know it because we do! This, we suggest, is typi-

¹ These data may come in the form of arguments from significant others, readily accessible reading, experience etc.

cally due to a lack of ability or ‘talent’ to cope with the uncertainty and/or the drive and determination to invest in learning that requires an engagement between self, experience, theory and critical thinking. In this regard, Lipshitz, Klein, et al, (2001) identify five core ways in which people can deal with uncertainty (see figure 2). Kahneman and Klein (2009) would argue that those who consistently recognize and deal with uncertainty through a mix of:

- challenging assumptions both micro (i.e. deciding why an athlete refuses to engage in practice) and macro (i.e. working out why the majority of athletes in a talent group are born in the first six months of a selection calendar)
- and/or seeking more information
- and/or developing alternative understanding and solutions that are debated
- and/or creating future contingencies
- are more likely to progress toward and retain expertise while avoiding a reliance on biases and heuristics in their decision making. Consistent use of these approaches would be in stark contrast to those coaches who rely more heavily on making assumptions and suppressing uncertainty as their ‘go-to’ coping strategies, thus becoming more biased in their practice.

		Principal Forms of Dealing With Uncertainty				
		Reducing Uncertainty by collecting additional information	Assumption based reasoning (fill in the gaps)	Weighing pros and cons	Forestalling (creating contingencies for undesirable future events)	Suppressing uncertainty (ignoring or self fulfilling bias)
Principal forms of uncertainty	Inadequate understanding		X		X	X
	Lack of information	X			X	X
	Conflicted alternatives			X	X	X

Fig. 2. - The RAWFS (RAWFS is spelt out by taking the first letter of each form of dealing with uncertainty) method of dealing with uncertainty adapted from (Lipshitz et al., 2001).

Despite expertise being only achievable by some², this shying away from relativism should not be thought to condemn the learner to life as a lower status operator. In fact anti-intellectualism evidence from other domains such as nursing or social work (Thompson, 2000) suggests that those who do shy away from such an approach can become very adept (somewhat ironically!) at creating arguments for 'keeping things simple' and avoiding over complication with developing practitioners, thus limiting others development while also saving face. In essence, instead of progressing to being committed to a personal reasoned perspective some become committed dualists, espousing this position as the place to be for all 'practical/applied' individuals.

Reflecting these two concerns, Entwistle and colleagues (Entwistle & Smith, 2002; Entwistle & Walker, 2000; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004) set out the need for effective educational systems to both drive and facilitate the journey, emphasizing that successful progression to the higher end of each continuum is neither inevitable nor even perceived by many as desirable. This need for effective education and support becomes all the more important since data from other domains such as nursing (Hoffman & Elwin, 2004) suggests that, around the time the decision to really engage in critical thinking (i.e., progress from multiplicity to relativism) occurs, so too does a drop in confidence in one's ability to do 'the job' since they become more aware of the uncertainty in their practice. This shift may reflect the difficulties in moving from a beginner to proficient coach as described by Schempp, McCullick and Sannen Mason (2006); "An interesting phenomenon occurs in coaching. Beginners appear to have a great deal more confidence in their knowledge and practices than do experienced coaches" (p. 160). So, not only does the notion of ideas being relative create uncertainty for the learner, this change occurs at a time when confidence in practice begins to drop simply because uncertainty is, by its nature, unnerving. Finally therefore, it seems that other factors, such as social encouragement, cognitive apprenticeship and role modeling (Collins, Brown & Holum, 1991) may be essential to 'support' progression and keep people on the journey, in a somewhat similar fashion to other areas of development (for example, moral development - Kohlberg, 1976; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

² This should not be seen as a nail in the coffin of people's ability to achieve committed relativism, research has consistently displayed that talent and an ability to develop it emerges over time (Abbott & Collins, 2004; Hambrick, 2003), this is why it is important to constantly leave a door open for later developers (i.e. the engagement of universities with adult returners is an example of this).

We hope that this shorthand explanation offers sufficient background to build our case, and also pique the interest of colleagues in this fascinating aspect of coach education. The link between these ideas and coach development came about because of our observation that only *some* high level coaches seem really committed to embracing new ideas, even though almost all will publicly espouse their commitment to such a philosophy. Notably, in some environments, coaches share ideas and talk incessantly with each other about the object of their passion. Consider, for example, this quote from a coach in a study by Sáiz, Calvo, and Godoy (2009), reflecting on his own personal experience of development:

We could talk for days, they were unending conversations. We had to defend and argue our theories from the rest. This taught us much about any point and many hours of knowledge construction and reflection (p. 26).

In others, however, conversation is avoided and sharing seen as selling out to the enemy: our words, but contrast the descriptions in Saiz et al. (2007) with those from some of the youth sport coaches in Lemyre, Trudel and Durand-Bush (2007). Thus, whilst some sharing is apparent, many coaches maintain a coldly formal stance, especially if coaches are seen to be ‘rivals’:

As coaches moved to a more competitive level, they tended to be more formal with most rival coaches, meaning they exchanged few words at the beginning or at the end of each game and demonstrated sportsmanship through the traditional handshake. To compensate for the absence of sharing knowledge with their rivals, some coaches observed them in an attempt to steal information. (Lemyre et al., 2007, p. 201).

This rivalry is often linked with performance outcomes, when in fact performance (win/loss) should not be a particularly high priority in youth talent development settings.

In short, some share whilst others don’t. Some innovate whilst others stand aloof.

Having carefully considered this idea against our own experience, we were keen to investigate whether the face-valid and parsimonious explanations offered by theory were borne out in real life. Accordingly, we completed a short exploratory study with three sports to examine the professional development behaviors of high performance coaches as interpreted by a third party and to match these behaviors with tangible outcomes typically associated with coaching effectiveness.

Method

PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION

For a variety of reasons (some of which will become obvious), both the sports and identity of the sample are confidential. Participants were identified from three British National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs - two individual sports, one team) through discussion with an executive representative from the coaching or performance management sections of each organization, who had initially agreed to take part. The subsequently applied criteria for individual selection were that:

- Each coach held a high level qualification;
- Each had at least ten years experience in coaching at the high performance end of the sport;
- Each had coached at least one athlete/team to a high level achievement. This was defined as a senior or age group european/world/olympic medal for the individual sport and a national final for the team, and;
- Each was at least a part time professional in coaching.

This resulted in a sample of 19 coaches; 8 from the first individual sport, 4 from the second and 7 from the team sport. Coaches (all male, mean age = 44, S.D. = 4.2) were not approached as participants and were unaware of their involvement; nor were any confidential details recorded about them, as per the requirements of our institutional ethics committee. Rather, data were based on interviews with the coach/performance representative (Point of Contact or PoC) and records kept by them as part of their monitoring process for the NGB. This approach of asking informed (and consenting) specialists to comment about the anonymised characteristics of individuals under their charge is a well-accepted methodology (albeit with larger numbers) in preliminary epidemiology (e.g. Jones & Rubin, 2009; Schellevis, de Bakker, Groenewegen, Bensing, & van der Zee, 2005). In the present investigation, the methodology permitted consideration of characteristics and perceptions which, owing to the negative connotations, would have been difficult to access in any other way.

It is important to stress that, until the completion of all data collection, PoCs were unaware of any of the theoretical underpinnings we were considering. Neither were they asked to select coaches as representative of any particular category. Rather PoCs reacted to our imperative to select high level coaches on whom they held good records and a personal knowledge which would facilitate conversation and the provision of an informed perspective on their attitude and approach.

Results, Speculation, Labeling and More Results

CATEGORIZATION - VAMPIRES AND WOLVES

Following contact, the first author completed open ended interviews with PoCs, enquiring about each 'participant' coach's demographics, his attitude towards and inclination for innovation in coaching, his approach to CPD, and other aspects of his practice (collected for another study). It was

as the conversations took place and through subsequent analysis of these qualitative data that the labels for the two emerging sub-species occurred to the first author. For clarity, we will use these terms from now on. We saw the coaches as falling into two categories, with the split apparent in their self-schemata, thinking and reported behavior. We termed the first category as *Vampires* – these coaches seemed to see themselves as superior and as working in ways so different that they were ‘a race apart’. Confident and self-focused, these coaches would quite literally ‘suck the life’ out of people whose actions were seen as getting in the way. This categorization was informed by comments from PoC as exemplified below.

An individual sport PoC described a coach as follows:

“He’s been around a long time, and has seen a lot of change, but never seems to have endorsed any of it and kept himself to himself. Charming to your face.....very critical, almost destructive behind your back.”

Or another from the same sport:

“X knows one hell of a lot about XXXXXX and is someone everybody would listen to. He’s so negative though; always telling anyone who will listen why we can’t win or what such and such is doing wrong. I don’t think he listens too much”.

A team sport coach was described as someone who:

“...sucks the life out of any initiative...he prevaricates, gives you twenty excuses why he can’t stay with the program, and all the time you know he’s just doing what he has always done”.

By contrast, the *Wolves*, although equally driven and uncompromising, were voracious in their search for and assimilation of any idea, technique or person who they felt would provide an edge. Often working in tight knit groups (packs?), membership of which spanned national and even sport divides, wolves often worked collaboratively to develop their practice. Similarly, this categorization was informed by comments from PoC as exemplified below:

A Team Coach was described as:

“A total pain in the a**e! If something’s happening and his team isn’t part of it, the phone glows red hot. He simply grinds you down until his guys are getting a piece of the new action”.

For the individual PoC, one of his coaches was slightly more positive:

“I must get an email from X at least once a week...he’s read something somewhere and is on to me asking my opinion, where we can get it, etc. I know he does this with some of the other coaches in his region as well”.

In many respects, the two categories appeared to say some very similar things. For our PoC participants, however, the coaches' actions were often louder than their words. A PoC from an individual sport summed up this difference succinctly:

All these guys talk a lot about the necessity to 'never stop learning' and make a lot of noise about CPD budgets and the like. Only some carry this through however....they will all attend what we put on but I know that only some of them go out and look for more. In fact, it's those guys who really get stuck in on CPD days; they are open with their comments while the others just sit and look down their noses....they're really miserable b*****s!

As a second stage of analysis, and given the deductive nature of developing the above definition of coach categorization, actual coach categorization was completed blind by the third author. Equipped with a definition as shown above, she placed each coach in one of the two categories, or in an 'undifferentiated' box when the information supplied was insufficiently clear. Judgments were made against pen portraits of each coach, which were generated by the first author on the basis of PoC comments and subsequently confirmed by PoCs (still unaware of the classification) as providing a true representation of the individual described: this latter confirmation offering 'member checking' of the derived descriptive data. This led to 9 coaches being labeled Vampires and 6 Coaches labeled Wolves, the remaining 4 coaches were undifferentiated.

Differentiation - behavioral differences

On the basis of this, we then compared six behavioral constructs, using the PoC's records as the data source. The differences are summarized in Table 1. The last two rows describe a difference appropriate for only the individual sports – cell numbers are shown in bold.

TABLE I
Differences in behavior and outcome between categories

Construct	Vampires Median (Range)	Wolves Median (Range)
Non-compulsory CPD days attended last year	1 (0 – 3)	4 (2 – 9)
Number of specialists used as part of the support team	2 (0 – 4)	4 (2 – 6)
Known mentoring relationships with other coaches	2 (0 – 7)	5 (3 – 9)
CPD applications made in the last three years	1 (0 – 4)	4 (2 – 7)
Number of European/World/Olympic medalists coached (6V to 6W)	2 (1 – 4)	3 (1 – 4)
Of which coached for over five years	1 (0 – 2)	3 (0 – 4)

Reflecting on Table 1 it becomes obvious, in this sample at least, that behavioral differences between types of coach exist, emanating perhaps from attitudes toward professional development. Furthermore this evidence lends further behavioral qualitative data to our interpretations. As suggested earlier by the PoC, self-presentational issues (what the coaches want people to think of them; Leary, 1992; Leary & Tangney, 2003) might obfuscate this but, in the end, some individuals seem less than keen to get involved with, or even hold a positive view of, developmental programs.

Additional probing of the data reveals that the distribution of vampires to wolves may differ sport to sport. The two individual sports had differing numbers of types of coach, the first with a count of 5 Vampires to 3 Wolves, the second 1 Vampire to 3 Wolves. Results from the two individual sports display a differential finding on the median number mentoring relationships with other coaches with a Median of 2 for the first sport and a Median of 6 in the second. We see the engagement in mentoring relationships as an important cultural contributory construct for the development and evolution of high ability in coaching.

Discussion

The point of this study is not to suggest that one category of coach is nicer, more popular or even (in absolute terms) more effective than the other. In these respects, the most highly esteemed (in terms of people expressing a desire to learn from him) was an arch Vampire, some of the Wolves were extremely unpopular with their peers (and, in two cases, their athletes) and two Vampires (as opposed to one Wolf) were the 'winning-est' in terms of individual medalists. All the sample were (by PoC report) driven, confident (at least overtly) and committed. The point is that, on the basis of these preliminary data, there seem to be some systematic differences between coaches in their receptiveness to development, their openness to innovation, and their willingness to learn from, and perhaps even work with, their peers and other specialists. Whether this is actually due to the processes suggested by Entwistle and Peterson (2004) and Lipshitz, et al., (2001) must await further enquiry but coaches are human (even Vampires and Wolves!) so it seems a testable hypothesis to follow through.

There are some corroborating ideas in the literature. Consider, for example, the vampires' tendency to avoid reflection and 'just know' what to do! Interestingly in this regard, Schön (1991) proposes that:

Many practitioners, locked into a view of themselves as technical experts, find nothing in the world of practice to occasion reflection... For them, uncer-

tainty is a threat; its admission is a sign of weakness. Others, more inclined toward and adept at reflection-in-action, nevertheless feel profoundly uneasy because they cannot say what they know how to do, cannot justify its quality or rigor. (p. 69)

It seems like there is evidence for the existence of a strong tendency for individuals ‘not to think’; vampirism may be more common than we think.

EXPLOITING THESE IDEAS – A TWIN TRACK APPROACH

We see a number of ways in which these ideas can be further investigated and, if supported, employed to good effect. In an attempt to kick start debate, we offer one such potential thrust. Whatever the reason or history underlying its existence, and possibly more common incidence in some cultural settings and sports than others, the social pressure to learn must be engendered then fully exploited. In short, some sports will require a definite and deliberate culture change if more general progress in coach development is to be made.

Setting the Strategy

Since organizational and social/culture change takes time, agreeing on long term strategy is obviously important but getting the right people to agree and agreeing the tangible outcomes (even if they might seem intangible) is more so (Burke, 2011).

Why should sport governing bodies buy into long term formal coach development plans (which probably cost more!) when informal, serendipitous and idiosyncratic methods seemed to have worked in the past? This is a question that is difficult to answer in the absence of long-term impact evidence in formal coaching development. In the absence of evidence an *argument of logic* becomes crucial with two offered by Abraham, Muir and Morgan (2010):

A question arises therefore, how important is formal coach education in the development of coaching expertise? Evidence would suggest not very important, however, just because it hasn't been so far doesn't mean that it couldn't be. Indeed, evidence from well-established professions such as law, medicine and teaching displays that formal, extended and rigorous learning is fundamental to the achievement of licenses to practice. As an emerging profession therefore, it would be unusual for coaching to not have a formal, extended rigorous developmental process. (p. 44)

They go on to say:

There is an obvious irony appearing, whereby expert coaches are developing their athletes through a systematic and structured process, yet their own development has generally been un-coordinated, serendipitous and experiential in nature. (p. 44)

While such arguments of logic do create a basis to work from, they can sound a little academic, which is why it is useful that there are examples of changes occurring at both national and sport levels. For example, UK Sport has developed a coaching unit with specific remit to develop future Olympic coaches using a long-term developmental method (more of this later) and to capture the expertise of current coaches. Furthermore, a number of sports, (e.g., Cricket and Rugby League) have actively engaged in the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate Level 4 programme, which has a remit to develop coaches to a level that equates to a postgraduate level of thinking and professional competence. We know that both Cricket and Rugby League would attest to the positive returns accruing from these programmes, albeit that firmer impact evaluation data are required.

Even here, however, the rewards of more deliberate coach development methods may not be tangible enough for organizational buy in. Ultimately the most tangible outcome will be in the form of athlete success: medals, world placing, league placing, talent pool depth, number of talented athletes making transition against agreed benchmarks. Consequently, linking somewhat intangible arguments of logic with identified best practice *and* tangible outcomes is a crucial part of the strategic change process.

Creating the Culture

It is at this level that we suggest that a twin track approach to development can be taken to the professional development of vampires and wolves. The first track that we offer focuses on creating a culture where the goal must be to develop wolves. In their recent report on national and international best practice in coach development, Abraham et al. (2010) used the development of professional (relativistic) coaches as a benchmark for the selection of reviewed practice. This report outlined a number of typical characteristics of effective development. These included:

- Creating courses that work towards developing higher order skills and competences such as:
 - integrative planning, delivery and reflection processes, and;
 - mental models to drive naturalistic decision making.

- Recruiting coach developers capable of creating and selling an evidence based message that is challenging of coaches' practice while offering tangible practical guidelines.
- Developing learning programmes that are relevant to the motivational (i.e. self determination), cognitive (i.e. required knowledge relevant to the role of the coach) and metacognitive (i.e. the development from dualism to relativism) needs and wants of the coach.
- Using assessment, teaching and learning approaches that encourage the transfer of knowledge into practice such as:
 - Problem based learning;
 - Case studies;
 - Employer engagement;
 - Working with coaches from other sports;
 - Work based learning;
 - Assessments *for* learning as opposed to *of* learning, and;
 - Critical communities of practice developed and encouraged over time (i.e. not forced).
- Engaging in mentored practice with mentors who understand the goals of high level coaching and its development and the process that coaches will have to go/are going through. Ideally these mentors should not be attached to formal assessment methods to ensure a neutral stance.
- Developing systems that reward professional development, especially if it is development that works to the overall goals of the coaching programme – i.e. the tangible goals established.

Applying all of the approaches to coaching development in a coordinated fashion would meet the needs of emerging wolves. It could even prevent the development of vampires by encouraging and cajoling those finding the relativistic approach to coaching difficult and longing for more dualistic approaches, to stay with the journey. Interestingly, while all of these approaches were apparent in the best practices reviewed by Abraham et al., it is worth noting that there was no one development system apparent that employed *all* of these characteristics. We would suggest that this is because, even though good/best practice exists, it has so far lacked either a systematic approach to its development and/or the resources to support it. As such, there remains room for improvements to be made in coach development using a well-resourced and systematic approach.

However, it is unrealistic to expect that everyone will accept this approach. It is also unrealistic to expect every coach to even engage with this approach, yet some of these coaches may go on to become high achieving

vampires. In fact, there are probably vampires who are already in the system and wield considerable political power. So how can vampires be developed? We offer two suggestions to deal with this situation.

The first would be to create a climate of sharing best practice. Our data would suggest that vampires are happy to take good ideas (albeit they may not usually acknowledge the source) where the application is 'obvious' and better than their current practice, even if they don't really understand the intricacies of the idea. If all coaches (wolves, vampires and humans) are encouraged/invited/expected to share and explore practice then reputations are put on the line and expectations/impressions consequently formed or reformed. Furthermore, those who respond positively to critical forums benefit by being exposed to conditions likely to encourage deep reflection.

The second suggestion would be to recognise the qualities possessed by vampires and engage them to everyone's benefit. For example, vampires who have recognised skills in dealing with 'problem athletes' could have athletes whose issues align with the problem solving procedures of these coaches assigned to them for specified periods of time.

If this all sounds a little Machiavellian then that probably reflects the political realities we expose here and which have been recognised elsewhere (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 2009). Our suggestion is that it is better to be up front and plan for these realities than merely react to them when they exceed some critical level; by which time the goal is damage limitation rather than culture change and development.

Conclusion

The business literature offers important lessons on the efficacious operation of 'culture change from within' (Butcher & Clarke, 2008; Clarke & Meldrum, 1999). The crucial and, for a change, useful employment of politics here is particularly noteworthy, especially against the wave of antipathy which characterizes most coaches' overt reaction to involvement in macropolitics, especially as concerned with NGBs. The contention of Butcher and Clarke is that 'rational' development is just not enough in today's environment. However logical, face-valid and/or worthy an agenda is, its implementation must be accompanied by a well thought through and consistently executed, parallel political intervention. Buy-in and overt support from senior management is an essential feature of this change process; media driven 'selling' of the message so social pressures build towards greater praise for wolf-like behavior is another useful and important component. When used

together as part of a coherent plan, attitudes (or at least overt behaviors) can change quite quickly with very interesting results.

Put simply, if the systems *only* reinforce success then dualist approaches can be seen to work so long as the dualistic coach is charismatic enough to attract enough talented athletes with whom such limited procedures will work. Furthermore, a reputation will be maintained despite the ruined chances of those athletes who didn't fit the procedures. However, if increased success rate through broader and deeper talent pools, leading to developed and sustained success is required, then more considered relative approaches to coaching will be necessary and rewarded as such, *especially* if 'success' is elusive for a time.

In any case, the potential benefits of socially induced change seem substantial and, once again, further research is indicated into this fruitful line for promoting change. The current UK situation is in stark contrast with the openness apparent in other sports/countries. In Dutch football, for example, an 'open door' policy exists between clubs for coaches to attend each other's training sessions. Senior coaches regularly provide lectures to their peers as part of a national quality circle approach which would hold some positive benefits for the xenophobic British! We look forward to the debate, and even greater emphasis on genuinely making a difference which will, we hope, be one consequence of this stimulus paper.

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