

# Sports Coaching, Professional Learning and Boundary Crossing

Dr Don Vinson, Victoria Huckle and Dr Andy Cale

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**University  
of Worcester**

# Objectives

- \* Explain how we are using the Value Creation Framework (VCF), Landscapes of Practice (LoP) and boundary interactions to better understand coach and learning
- \* Report the findings from the exploration into a non-formal professional learning programme
- \* Make recommendations for cross-sport curriculum/programme designers

# Boundary encounters as dialogical learning mechanisms

(Akkerman and Bakker, 2011)

- \* I) Identification
  - \* Previous conceptions of distinction being called into question before being renegotiated
  - \* Characteristic processes:
    - \* Othering, legitimating coexistence
- \* II) Coordination
  - \* Practices within two or more sites remaining distinct but where attempts are made to harmonise efforts for mutual benefit
  - \* Characteristic processes:
    - \* Communicative connection, efforts of translation, increasing boundary permeability, routinisation
- \* III) Reflection
  - \* The generation of something new by considering alternative perspectives;
  - \* Characteristic processes:
    - \* Perspective making, perspective taking
- \* IV) Transformation
  - \* Meaningful changes in practice through proactive work, usually between multiple practitioners.
  - \* Characteristic processes:
    - \* Confrontation, recognising shared problem space, hybridisation, crystallisation, maintaining uniqueness of intersecting practices, continuous joint work at the boundary

# The Programme

	Programme
Cohort	20 (7 female, 13 male) High-level talent development coaches (13 sports)
Funding, programme design and delivery	Centrally-funded; Non-governmental organisation
Recruitment/selection	NGB support/nomination + interview
Duration	18 months
Format	7 x 2-day workshops
Further support	Mentor

# Methods and results

- \* Individual interviews (35-75 minutes)
- \* 14 Coaches
  - \* Seven female; seven male
  - \* Eleven sports
    - \* gymnastics, swimming, hockey, snow sports, archery, table tennis, golf, taekwondo, badminton, rugby union and sailing
- \* Five-stage thematic coding analysis
- \* Results - four major categories
  - \* Reconceptualising and reframing
  - \* Confidence, openness and authenticity
  - \* Sense making
  - \* Reflection and mentoring

(Robson and McCartan, 2016)

# Reconceptualising and reframing

“Here I can find people who are solving problems like mine”

Transformation:  
Continuous joint work at the boundary

1. Immediate value
2. Ongoing dialogue
3. Negotiating and re-negotiating multiple roles (and their interaction)
4. Clear understanding of the boundaries involved

Do we give sufficient attention to ‘other’ roles which clearly influence learner’s professional identity and practice?

# Reconceptualising and reframing

Transformation:  
Recognising a  
shared problem  
space

1. Applied and enabling value  
of cross-sport learning

Do we sufficiently  
extend our learners'  
professional  
networks?

# Confidence, Openness and Identity

Should I be  
here? Do I  
deserve to be  
here?

Identification:  
Legitimizing  
coexistence

“Prior to the programme I would have felt

1. Immediate and transformative value
2. Multiple contexts: athletes, peers, service providers, ‘Olympic’ coaches
3. Knowledgeability – complex claim to competence which may be accepted or rejected

...would have felt reasonably confident in conjunction with a service... confident working with my peers... coaches delivering workshops... coaches... that... (g coach)

Do we give sufficient consideration to the complex dynamic of how our learners’ construct their professional identity?

# Sense making

Coordination:  
Efforts of  
translation

1. Applied value
2. Making sense of boundary interactions to influence 'home' context

“One of the things that I find with knowledge integration and making sense of the knowledge and then about how to integrate a pyramid of my philosophy with the knowledge but integrated in a way that made that undermined what I did with my knowledge. I couldn't think [ ] and put [ ] to show that I knew the direct meaning of their interactions?”

To what extent do we allow the learners on our programmes to negotiate the bespoke meaning of their interactions?

# Reflection in mentoring

Do I want to open myself up to this?

Reflection:  
Perspective taking and perspective making

1. Transformative value
2. Deeply personal learning support
3. Tackling 'fearful' topics / vulnerability

To what extent do we genuinely care about our learners to offer this level of in-depth, personal, support?

# Conclusions

- \* Theoretical considerations:
  - \* The LoP framework addresses some of the previous criticisms of the CoP concept (individual learning journeys and recognition of highly politicised environments)
  - \* The VCF helps us to understand the range of value learner's perceive from their programme
  - \* Appreciating the different dialogical learning mechanisms helps us to understand more profoundly each individual's unique negotiation of competence

# Conclusions

- \* Programme-related thoughts:
  - \* Coaches perceived value across most cycles of the VCF
    - \* Immediate, potential and applied most common
    - \* Transformative most powerful
  - \* Both cross-sport and intra-sport learning support was shown to be valuable
  - \* Invested mentoring/support/brokering – through the perspective of individual's LoP was highly effective
  - \* Strong interpersonal relationships, openness and trust remain important

# Recommendations

- \* Programmes should look to expand their reach to enable learners to access a broader range of stakeholders in their landscape
- \* Support functions such as mentors should overtly help coaches to build their professional networks (strategic and enabling value)
- \* Longer-term evaluation is required to better understand how such programmes influence the learning of practitioners
- \* Greater consideration should be given as to how to evidence realised value (both programme design and evaluation)
- \* Programmes should focus less on the content of workshops and more on aiding the learner's negotiation of meaning

# Thank you!

Any questions?



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