Value Creation Across the Coach Developer Landscape

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Our work with LoPs and the VCF

- The FA: Professional Learning in Landscapes of Practice (PLLP)
- UK Sport: Coach Leader Programme
- UK Coaching: Aspire, Strive
- British Rowing: Coach Learning and Knowledgeability

Coach Learning
Our work with LoPs and the VCF
The plan for today’s session…

• Explain how we are using the Value Creation Framework (VCF), Landscapes of Practice (LoP) and boundary interactions to better understand coach and Coach Developer learning
• Report the findings from the exploration into two non-formal professional learning programmes
• Make recommendations for curriculum/programme designers charged with helping coaches and/or Coach Developers to learn
A social theory of learning: Some key concepts

- What is our experience?
- What are we doing?
- Who are we becoming?
- Where do we belong?

Community
Identity
Practice
Meaning
Three phases of Wenger-ian theory
Communities of Practice (CoPs)

• “A group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis”

(Wenger et al. 2002: 4)

• Considerable support in the literature as a useful concept
  (e.g. Bertram & Gilbert, 2011; Culver and Trudel 2006, 2008; Garner and Hill, 2017; Stoszkowski and Collins, 2014)

• Some policy-level prominence
  • Coaching in an Active Nation: The Coaching Plan for England 2017-2021
    (Sport England, 2016)
  • International Sport Coaching Framework
    (International Council for Coaching Excellence, 2012)
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE?

WE DO STUFF TOGETHER BECAUSE WE WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

I LOVE BEING WITH OTHERS WHO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE I WANT TO MAKE...

... AND WHO APPRECIATE MY UNCERTAINTY.

I GET IDEAS, TOOLS, TIPS, FRIENDSHIPS...

TAKING THIS BACK TO OTHERS WHO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

... AND SEE THE EFFECT

AND TAKE THEM BACK AND PUT THEM TO USE.
A social theory of learning

• Learning cannot be designed…

• “…one can attempt to institutionalise a CoP, but the CoP will slip through the cracks and remain distinct from the institution”

(Wenger, 1999: 225)
Criticism of the CoP concept

- Rigour of the underpinning theory
  (Mallett, 2010)

- Fails to deal with power relations relating to the internal operations of the groups
  (Fuller et al., 2005)

- Insufficient consideration of the individual
  (Mallett, 2010)

- Yet to address why social, cultural, material and institutional resources are developed
  (Bertram, Culver and Gilbert, 2017)
A illustration of a Landscape of Practice for a Coach Developer
Landscapes of Practice (LoPs)

• Learning is not merely acquisition of knowledge

• Knowledgeability constitutes the becoming of a professional who inhabits their LoP

• The professional’s identity is a dynamic construction illustrative of the contested journey through their unique LoP
KNOWLEDGEABILITY

NEGOTIATING KNOWING IN A COMPLEX LANDSCAPE
NEGOTIATING IDENTITY...

- Professional Body
- Training
- Research Discipline 1
- Regulatory Body
- Research Discipline 2
- Workplace
- Client
- Colleagues
Boundaries

• Crucial aspects of living in a LoP
  • Boundary crossing
  • Boundary encounters

• Boundaries as learning assets
  • Boundary encounters to generate new insights
  • Rejection of the assumption of unproblematic application of knowledge
Boundary encounters as dialogical learning mechanisms

1) Identification
   • Previous conceptions of distinction being called into question before being renegotiated
     • Characteristic processes: Othering, legitimating coexistence

2) 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

3) Reflection
   • The generation of something new by considering alternative perspectives;
     • Characteristic processes: Perspective making, perspective taking

4) 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

(Akkerman and Bakker, 2011)
SOCIAL LEARNING SPACE

CARING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ENGAGING UNCERTAINTY

PAYING ATTENTION

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
The Value Creation Framework
(Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2019)
## The programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Programme 1</th>
<th>Programme 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort</strong></td>
<td>9 (3 females, 6 males) ‘Early stage’ Coach Developers (8 sports)</td>
<td>20 (7 female, 13 male) High-level talent development coaches (13 sports)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding, programme design and delivery</td>
<td>Centrally-funded; Non-governmental organization</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment/selection</td>
<td>NGB support/nomination + interview</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>1 or 2-day workshops</td>
<td>2-day workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further support</strong></td>
<td>Senior Coach Developer</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
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Methods

- Individual interviews
  - 35-122 minutes

- Programme 1
  - 9 Coach Developers

- Programme 2
  - 14 Coaches

- Five-stage thematic coding analysis
  - (Robson and McCartan, 2016)
Results (for today)

• Programme 1
  • 1 mini case study to illustrate VCF
• Programme 2
  • Four major categories
    • Confidence, openness and authenticity
    • Sense making
    • Reflection and mentoring
    • Reconceptualizing and reframing
Immediate

"Antony had put me in touch with Jemma and said, “You guys, I’ve spoken to both of you independently. You sound like you’ve got similar challenges in your environments. It might be worth you having a monthly catch up,” and we have done that, and we will continue to do that, but had he had not recognised the similarities and bridged that gap, we probably wouldn’t have. We wouldn’t have reached out to each other."
Confidence, openness and authenticity

"Prior to the programme I would have felt confident in certain environments. I would have felt confident working with my athletes. I would have felt reasonably confident working with my athlete in conjunction with a service provider. I would have felt confident being directly engaged with several other coaches of a similar level. Then that confidence began to be questioned, and even more so when I went to [the programme] and engaged with some of these other coaches of a different level. That led to me questioning my purpose."

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

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

Identification: Legitimating coexistence

1. Multiple contexts: athletes, peers, service providers, 'Olympic' coaches
2. Knowledgeability – complex claim to competence which may be accepted or rejected
“You've got to be open to it. I know some coaches who would like to go on [the programme], but they're not ready for it. At that point, they don't yet have their own coaching personality. You're still trying to be like everyone else. If you've only been coaching for two or three years, then you're probably not ready for it. You've got to be ready to be really deeply challenged, and to be able to articulate things. If you're working from the appearance of being a very good and proficient coach, but underneath your stomach is churning because you've seen other coaches do it or read about it, don't go ahead yet because you'll get found out. You can hide nothing on that programme, you get stripped down and rebuilt.”

Karen, archery coach

Confidence, openness and authenticity

To what extent do we understand the readiness of learners to engage with our programmes?

1. The degree of openness
2. Moving beyond replication of ‘Gold Standard’
“One of the things that I find with knowledge is how you take pieces of knowledge and integrate and make it your own. Through this process I was able to take knowledge and think about how to implement it. In the end I created a pyramid philosophy with lots of pieces but integrated in a way that made sense for me that underpinned what I did with my players and didn’t have been able to have that foundational link [the programme] allowed me to bring a lot of stuff together and a foundation on I was going, and that’s actually been huge.”

(Sabina, hockey coach)

Sense making

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

1. Making sense of boundary interactions to influence ‘home’ context
“Somebody described it [my coaching practice] as ‘fluffy’. It’s interesting how some of this stuff is called fluffy because if you go back and look at the charter, you talk about happy people and happy players. So how do you do it then? What does it look like? It looks like people enjoying themselves, expressing themselves and having been there and done that, and I know the journey that a group of people and you connect and grow. It’s magical, and that’s probably been the journey these [my] players have had this year” (Sabina, hockey coach)

Sense making

How do I deal with this threat to my coaching identity?

Identification: Routinisation

Do we give learners the freedom to interpret information in a way which is starkly different to our own belief?

1. Sabina’s ‘fluffy’ practice has become her normal operating procedure
2. Renegotiation of ‘old’ knowledge into new practices

1. Sabina’s ‘fluffy’ practice has become her normal operating procedure
2. Renegotiation of ‘old’ knowledge into new practices
“What Jane [mentor] did for me was show the qualities you have as an individual are exactly what you need to have as a coach; you can’t separate those. They are massive advantages to you and your athletes. Don’t shelve them, don’t ignore them. Start embracing who you are as a person and use them. That’s just impactful from the perspective that someone wanted to understand you and understands that you as a person is probably better equipped to coach so start embracing who you are and approaches. She identified some of the things I was fearful of, and that’s why I brought up so much around the vulnerability aspect in the presentation [last day of the programme]. It’s all things that I was aware of but was hiding from people that I didn’t want to share about my coaching and my approach, and Jane just smashed that wall down. Reluctantly, initially”

(Spencer, golf coach)

Reflection and mentoring

Do I want to open myself up to this?

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

1. Deeply personal learning support
2. Tackling ‘fearful’ topics / vulnerability

Reflection: Perspective taking and perspective making
Reconceptualising and reframing

“We [with Silas] both went off and completely changed our academies round on the basis of it. We both have a passion for peer-learning, we were both into peer learning. So, we set everything up and we got really excited about. It was the first time we ever worked with someone from another sport; brilliant! I really would like to do more of that. I need to find a way to make that happen for myself.”

(Karen, archery coach)

1. Value of cross-sport learning

Do we sufficiently extend our learners’ professional networks?

Transformation: Recognising a shared problem space
“Being able to relate to others from the programme has been a positive thing. I generally only work with males and there are very few female coaches in [my region]. There are very few sailing coaches. Also, I don’t know any other female coaches that have kids. So being able to speak to other coaches in the programme has been great. There is a group there that I will stay in contact with, and we have done between workshops and challenge one another now and again … Sitting down with another rugby coach who’s a mum of two and hearing the challenges she has been through, and we have done between workshops and challenge one another now and again. Sitting down with another rugby coach who’s a mum of two and hearing the challenges she has been through …”

(Lorna, sailing coach)

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

Reconceptualising and reframing

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

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

Transformation: Continuous joint work at the boundary
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 and Coach Developers perceived value across most cycles of the VCF
  • Immediate, potential and applied most evident
• 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 and Senior Coach Developers 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?