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**SITUATING LEARNING: (RE)EXAMINING THE NOTION OF  
APPRENTICESHIP IN COACH EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

The last two decades has seen a proliferation in the provision of, and importance attached to, coach education in many Western countries [1]. Pivotal to many coach education programmes is the notion of apprenticeship [2,3,4]. Increasingly, mentoring is being positioned as a possible tool for enhancing coach education and consequently professional expertise [5]. However, there is a paucity of empirical data on interventions in, and evaluations of, coach education programmes. In their recent evaluation of a coach education programme Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie [6] conclude that the situated learning literature could provide coach educators with a generative platform for the (re)examinationof apprenticeships and mentoring in a coach education context. This paper consequently discusses the merits of using situated learning theory [7] and the associated concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) [8] to stimulate discussion on developing new understandings of the practices of apprenticeship and mentoring in coach education.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is a position/advocacy paper that seeks to advance contemporary thinking related to apprenticeship models and mentoring in coach education. In doing so our aims are two fold, first, to provide a brief overview of literature relating to coach education, apprenticeship and mentoring. Our second aim is to consider situated learning and communities of practice. In doing so, we (re)examine the notion of apprenticeship through the lens of situated learning and communities of practice and discuss its potential application to coaching and coach education.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

It is appropriate to talk first about how a literature search was conducted. We say this because the take on coaching and coach education in this paper is very much informed by social models of practice rather than bio-physical models. As a consequence we were guided by research and theorizing that advocate a social model of coaching which given its limited volume meant that there was some drawing from educational theory and research. We do not apologize for this but would add that such work was used to *inform* rather than form our thinking and as such some of the more esoteric vernacular from educational research and theory was avoided. Given that learning is a central focus to the paper, research on social models of learning was reviewed but only a modest comparison has been made with cognitive models and this occurs in the last section of the paper. Finally the work on mentoring and apprenticeships was drawn from a range of fields including coaching and coach education research however again

the limited literature base meant that research in other areas of work were included to inform our thinking

### **Coach education**

There has been substantial growth in the provision of, and importance attached to, coach education in many Western countries in particular, but there is also an emerging interest in the developing world [1,9]. Yet this growth in interest has not resulted in a corresponding increase in research activity. Much of the focus of the existing coach education literature has been on coach development and learning [5,1,9,10,11,12], coaching behavior and coach effectiveness training in the context of youth sports [13,14,15] and the problems associated with the privileging of technical, tactical, and bio-scientific knowledges that have been characteristic features of much coach education provision [16,17,18,19]. While this scholarship has provided valuable insights into some aspects of coach education, it underlines the absence of research addressing a range of topics such as the development of coach education curricula, the structures for coach learning, coaches' learning processes and coach certification [20].

It has been suggested that certification procedures in becoming a coach are wholly inadequate [3, 4, 21, 23) satisfying neither recreational nor elite coaches. In addition, research [9] suggests that a great store is placed on the experiential learning gained from a coach's playing days and from the actual experiences in coaching (i.e., learning 'on the job'). This then begs the question - what purpose does coach education serve? Yet, according to Lyle [9] the "importance of education and training cannot be overstated" (p.275) since the occupational future of any professional area of work is contingent upon

good formal qualification processes as a means of quality assurance. In some senses the increased desirability of coaching *qualifications* (a slippery term at best) looks like a need for respectability tied to the ever increasing need to ‘audit’ personnel – as Power [24] suggests we are now part of an ‘audit society’ where the need to account for, and measure, everything in terms of performance, and verify ‘output’ is regarded as part of day to day life and as such has become normalized [25]. However, Lyle [9] acknowledges that not all occupational learning (even though coaching is not an occupation for all those who do it) is acquired in a formal way. Experience he says plays an important role in ‘becoming’ a coach, a point allude to later. Yet arguably, experience in and of itself is too limited to fulfill the occupational requirements of any practice, consequently the more formal inductions and processes of development are critical given that education and training can accelerate and complement informal learning thereby increasing the level of adaptability and mobility within an occupation [9]. A problem with this suggestion is matching the requirements of coach education programs with the practices, needs and previous experience of the coaches who enroll in the programmes.

### **Apprenticeship**

In contemporary coach education, observations of so-called expert coaches continue to be a foundation from which coaches develop their practice and develop coaching philosophies [2,3,4]. This is sometimes referred to as ‘craft’ knowledge [26]. Yet the emphasis on the notion of developing the ‘craft’ here may be limiting particularly with regard to the professionalisation of coaching and the development of a professional community. Nonetheless, apprenticeships and apprenticeship models have a particular

meaning in common parlance. The old industrial image of a young (usually) boy being apprenticed to trade is pervasive. In education, we have long been aware of the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ a term first coined by Dan Lortie [27]. What Lortie was talking about was how those who choose to become teachers have a long experience (often in excess of 15,000 hours) to call upon which they gained in their time as learners in 10 or 12 years of schooling (at least within most western democracies). The same could be said of those who go into coaching – the experience (i.e. their playing career) of many coaches is likely to be powerful ... though not necessarily effective.

Richard Tinning [28] tells the fictional yet plausible tale of a young girl who, on watching her mother prepare a roast turkey, asks why she has cut off the legs and placed them alongside the narrower part of the bird in the roasting dish. The mother says that she has always done this because this is how *her* mother did it. The girl’s natural curiosity gets the better of her and she asks her grandmother why the turkey is prepared in this way. With a knowing smile, the grandmother describes how, when she was a young mother, she did not have a roasting dish that was big enough to fit the entire turkey so she had to cut the legs off and place them elsewhere to ensure it would all fit. The story may appear trite in the context of coaching, but Tinning’s [28] point is that what stands for knowledge or accepted conventional practice is often ‘passed on’ unhindered and without critique. Given the dynamics of sport the dangers of adopting such an unreflective approach to learning how to coach are readily apparent. As one of us has argued elsewhere, the risks associated with adopting an unreflective apprenticeship model in coaching is that it can “promote the production of robotic practitioners who

accept without question the manner and mode of their mentors” which may result in coaches measuring “good practice” by “the extent to which it solves the immediate problem at hand [or] gets coaches ‘through the session’ without major disruptions” [29 p.14].

In addition the apprenticeship model can produce learning situations where the mentee might focus mainly on technical aspects of the work and neglect or ignore the underpinning or tacit rationales that inform particular practices [28, 30]. Despite there being concerns about the unreflective adoption of the apprenticeship model, Jones, Armour and Potrac [31] describe how Steve Harrison, the English Premier League coach was an avid observer and listener of other coaches and although Harrison was not ‘apprenticed’ to coaching in any conventional sense of the word, his characteristics were reminiscent of apprentices who watch, listen and learn as a way of acquiring their professional knowledge. This resonates with Lortie’s [27] notion of the apprenticeship of observation and what Shulman [32] calls the ‘wisdom of practice.’ Jones et al further highlight how Harrison, identified learning from others (specifically Steve Coppell and Graham Taylor) as being fundamental to his development as an elite level coach, describing Coppell as a significant *mentor*. Trudel and Gilbert [33] note that an “informal apprenticeship seems to be typical of most sport coaches” because to be successful an elite or development coach has to have had, on average, accumulated over 4,600 hours as athletes. They also noted that in the last decade, mentoring has often been suggested as a way to improve coach education. The call for mentoring to be a credible form of coach education has grown louder as increasingly the interview data gained from



coaches has emphasised the “how much they have learned watching and/or working with a coach they respected and admired” [33]. A point we will return to later in the paper.

### **Mentoring**

John Carruthers [34] points to how the story of Mentor from Greek mythology resonates with what we understand today about the role of mentors, a word that has become popularized in the commercial world and increasingly in sports coaching. Carruthers describes how Mentor, a faithful companion to Odysseus was to remain behind in Ithaca at the time of the Trojan wars to take charge of the royal household. Specifically, Mentor was required to look after, or more accurately raise Odysseus’ son Telemachus – hence the traditional roles of fatherhood fell to Mentor as well as that of teacher, confidante, counselor, adviser and so on. There is more to this story but this brief snapshot shows how the word mentor has been drawn into the common lexicon to represent a particular position with regard to teaching and learning. Quite naturally, modern definitions of mentor are likely to vary from this classical tale but the differences are probably more likely to be peripheral [34]. From a modern perspective and drawing on the world of work, mentoring appears to be about the professional development of a protégé (from the French, *to protect*) but can also be about the professional and *personal* development of a protégé.

For many in the world of sport coaching, we suggest that it is the latter of these that has become the most important. If this is indeed the case then coaches in sport are more likely to be *life mentors* to both their athletes but also and importantly to their assistant

and support coaches. Of course this does not always follow because as athletes and coaches move on in their careers their mentors are also likely to change. However during the period when the dyad between athlete and coach exists the idea of life coach is probably closer to what goes on. The coupling of athlete and coach and assistant coach and head coach is not always by choice. In fact it has been suggested that “finding a mentor was often the case of being at the right place at the right time. With a bit of luck and personal persistence, novice coaches were able to find a mentor with whom they shared their passion for their sport and for coaching” [Bloom et al in 33]. Regardless of how they are chosen the mentor and mentee relationship can evolve into a very generative relationship especially if, as Zey [35] contends, the mentor and protégé are able to mutually choose each other. We recognise that this is not always possible as mentoring arrangements are often the product of a higher authority (e.g., a board of governors). Even so, it would appear to be prudent in at least attempting to match the mentor and protégé for compatibility for the best results [34, 36].

What seems to be absent from the literature is the notion of coach as mentor and assistant coach (say) as mentee. There is little mention of a mentor/mentee professional relationship within any level of coaching which would suggest that such arrangements are less formal at best and non-existent at worst. In any event when such arrangements do come into existence it seems to be a matter of serendipity rather than any intentional action. As a consequence it is difficult to determine how a head coach deals with the expectations that they take on in a mentoring role because of the paucity of research in mentoring in the coach education literature specifically and in coaching more generally.

Nonetheless, it has been noted that coaches still appear to develop the basis of their practice and coaching philosophies from the observation of “expert” coaches [2, 3].

When, at the International Coach Education Conference in 1999, the Australian Coaching Council convened a meeting for the Mentoring Reference Group a number of key elements related to an effective mentoring program were highlighted including: mentoring is a two way process; it has mutual benefit for professional development; there is often more than one mentor and; that in any mentoring situation the focus should be on the mentee. In addition there was a push for mentorship to be underpinned by components of the apprenticeship model [37]. Yet as alluded to above the apprenticeship model is not without its critics. Trudel and Gilbert [33] pose the very salient question – “Can a formalized and structured mentoring program, where mentors are selected, accredited and to a certain extent imposed on coaches, be effective?” The challenge we face in coaching and coach education is to find ways of utilizing the positive aspects of the apprenticeship and mentoring while being cognizant of their weakness as well as having it informed by current educational/adult learning research. In the subsequent section of this paper we consider situated learning and communities of practice and conclude by (re)examining the notion of apprenticeship through these lenses and discuss its potential application to coaching and coach education.

## **SITUATED LEARNING**

When the terms apprenticeship and apprentice are discussed there is often an implicit understanding that there is a ‘master’/expert/mentor to which the apprentice is associated.

Lave and Wenger [7] contend that the term apprentice has, and we would argue still is, synonymous with situated learning. Yet Lave and Wenger point out that while the term ‘apprentice’ is relatively common, a rigorous scholarly understanding of it is not clear. In an attempt to (in their words) ‘rescue’ the notion of apprenticeship they began to explore the meaning of situated learning. In the process of doing so they argue that situated learning is “more encompassing in intent than conventional notions of ‘learning *in situ*’ or ‘learning by doing’ (p.31) which warranted ‘situatedness’ being characterized as a theoretical perspective. When attempting to theorise ‘situatedness’ they came to an understanding that learning was inseparable to social practice and indeed integral to it. Moreover, they understood ‘situatedness’ to be a concept that recognise all activity as being situated. Specifically, ‘situatedness’ was underpinned by a comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than passively receiving information on or about the world

A term Lave and Wenger [7] used to describe “engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent” (p.35) is legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). Lave and Wenger describe LPP as a “way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice” (p.29). For Lave and Wenger this is a way to describe how newcomers become part of a community of practice and how in doing so they become a full participant (or at least as full as possible) in a socio-cultural practice. Lave and Wenger [7] point out that LPP is “an analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning....[and that] learning through LPP takes place no matter what

educational form provides a context for learning, or whether there is any intentional form at all” (p.40). While the concept of LPP draws our attention to that idea that learners do indeed participate in communities of practitioners in varying degrees Lave and Wenger [7] admit that in their 1991 work the concept of community of practice is “left largely as an intuitive notion”...that “requires a more rigorous treatment” (p.42).

## **COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

The idea of Communities of Practice (CoP) is not really new. Groups have always met informally and to some extent learned from each other. The learning that occurs can range from (depending on the nature of the group) high tech design issues to the best way to sooth a distressed baby. What is common though is that as the group spends more time together they become bound by the value in learning together, develop satisfaction through shared understanding and develop common knowledge about practices and approaches to problems [see 39 for a more detailed description]. As Wenger et al suggest the group may even develop a sense of identity.

The potential for CoP as a principle of learning in coaching is profound. As Wenger et al [39] say “[t]he knowledge of experts is an accumulation of experience – a kind of ‘residue’ of their actions, thinking and conversations – that remains a dynamic part of their ongoing experience” (p.9). In describing knowledge, they argue that CoP do not objectify knowledge, rather they “make it an integral part of their activities and interactions, and they serve as a living repository for that knowledge” (p.9). What also comes across from the Wenger et al’s analysis, and what appears to fit with the coaching paradigm, is the idea of a structural model. It is unreasonable to suggest that

all CoP are identical, that would be absurd, however Wenger et al argue that there are similar structural elements common to all CoPs. These are a *domain* of knowledge, a *community* of people, and the shared *practices*. The domain includes both common ground (of what is known) and a common identity (by being co-joined in the knowledge) and becomes legitimised through the shared practices of the membership, a consequence of which is that it is ascribed a *value*. This *value* provides a motivation for the members to continue to participate. The *community* then is the social fabric of learning. The learning under these circumstances is a social process and as such it demands trust, respect and commitment. The *practices* are the frameworks, tools, mechanisms, even language that the members use to further develop, implement and to evaluate their domain. This Wenger et al argue is what enables the CoPs to form *knowledge structures*.

In attempting to expand the orthodox understanding of apprenticeship Wenger [8] made identity and CoP the focus of his analysis. This was because he felt that learning was a transformative experience or as he preferred to term it an ‘experience of identity.’ So learning for Wenger was not just about an accumulation of skills and information but more about ‘becoming.’ Not surprisingly then the primary focus of Wenger’s [8] social theory of learning is “on learning as social participation” (p.4) within the *practices* of communities as well as constructing *identities* in relation to these communities.

Wenger’s [8] theory is framed by two key components, theories of social practice and theories of identity which he argues underpin learning within communities. Theories of

*social practice* he suggests “address the production and reproduction” (p.13) of our everyday activity, with a focus on how “groups organize and coordinate their activities, mutual relationships, and interpretations of the world” (p.13). Theories of *identity* are concerned with how a person becomes socially formed as a consequence of participation, this includes the “cultural interpretation of the body, and the creation and use of markers of membership such as rites of passage and social categories” (p.13). He goes on to contend that the process of learning in a community is a “vehicle for the evolution of practices and the inclusion of newcomers while also (and through the same process) the vehicle for the development and transformation of identities” (p.13). However, for learning to be the vehicle, the community has to have some coherence and here Wenger suggests this requires three dimensions to be present, namely the participants have to be *mutually engaged in a joint enterprise* in which they have is a *shared repertoire*.

### **Communities of Practice in Operation**

The coaching literature is beginning to show these dimensions in operation, perhaps not everywhere but significantly the elite coaches interviewed by Jones et al [3] showed a remarkable incidence of these dimensions in the descriptions of their learning. Cassidy, Potrac and Allen, [40] highlight how these dimensions affect players’ interpretations of practices and relationships. For example it is apparent how interpretations of belonging differ between those who are more centrally located within the community and those who are on the periphery [7]. Furthermore, the players’ sense of belonging appears to be central to their desire and motivation to learn, develop and perform.

In the research of Jones, Armour and Potrac [3] it is apparent that all of the elite high performing coaches talked about the value of learning from others. Steve Harrison, the English Premier League football coach even suggested that it was possible to learn from everyone. What is also interesting is that all the coaches recognised their social role as being important to their instructional role. The coaching role was seen as much broader in scope with the notion of 'care' being important. Research has also shown that coaches perceive formal and informal conversations with other coaches to be as valuable to their professional development, if not more so, than the purely theoretical and cognitive knowledge delivered by coach educators as a part of formal coach education schemes [6, 41, 31, 4]. Such a situation may be attributed to the fact that such conversations are often grounded in the everyday realities of coaching and, as such, are more focused on practical solutions to the professional problems and issues that coaches have to contend with within their respective coaching environments [31].

Cassidy, Jones and McKenzie [6] suggest that in contrast to the instructor led format of much existing coach education provision in New Zealand, their CoDe program represented, to a certain extent, a coaching community of practice. For example, the coaches participating in the CoDe program were a group of people who shared a common concern, set of problems, and passion about a topic, and who sought to deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis [39]. Similar to the findings of Culver and Trudel [42] the coaches participating in the CoDe program considered that they had benefited from the round table discussions, yet they did voice the need for the



facilitators to exert some control over the direction and length of the discussions if they were to be of optimal value. Such a notion is in keeping with the work of Wenger et al. [39], who contended, “the most important factor in a community’s success is the vitality of its leadership” (p. 80). Cassidy et al (in press) conclude that the “value coaches attached to their interactions with each other during the CoDe program supports the benefit of utilizing a situated view of learning in the design and delivery of coach education interventions.” Using this and similar findings [42, 43] could provide coach educators with a platform for the (re)examination of apprenticeships and mentoring. Moreover, “viewing learning as a situated activity could support the development of curricula that focuses on the learner and learning rather than primarily on instruction and the instructor” and provide some legitimacy for “the learners to be viewed as a significant data source” [6].

Trudel and Gilbert [33] point out that coaches, particularly elite level coaches tend “proceed from athletes to assistant coaches, where they may spend five or more years. This process may be referred to as an example of legitimate peripheral participation, which, as described above, is about the relations between old-timers and newcomers, identities, artifacts activities, and communities of knowledge and practice. This resonates with Dan Lortie’s [27] idea of an apprenticeship of observation to which we have already alluded. The engagement of the assistant coach with the head coach however should not be limited to the former observing the latter and waiting for the expert to share parts of his/her knowledge. If learning is considered to take place in a participatory framework

and not in an individual mind then it is “by virtue of their membership in the community” that coaches (assistant and head) and athletes “can play their roles” [8, p. 100].

There is a growing case being made for coach education provision to prepare coaches to recognize and deal with the social nature of the coaching environment as well as being willing and able to view coaching as a learning process and not simply a doing process. It also points to the desirability for apprenticeship models which use a mentoring approach to be structured around Wenger’s [8] dimensions of communities of practice so that coaches, assistant coaches and the athletes work is structured in ways that enable them to be mutually engaged, feel part of a joint enterprise and develop a shared repertoire.

### **Implications of using communities of practice to energise the notion of apprenticeship in coach education**

If the concept of Community of Practice is to become an organizing principle of coach education then we feel that there are two key issues which come to the fore, namely designing programmes *for* learning and valuing the way coach education is implicated in identity construction of coaches and athletes.

#### Designs for learning.

According to Wenger [8] learning “cannot be designed” (p.225). Rather, learning occurs as a consequence of, and “happens, design or no design” (p.225). Nonetheless, he does argue that learning can be designed *for*, that is learning can be brought about by facilitating the conditions in which it can occur. In a sense this suggests that whilst the technical components of coaching

(technique, strategy, tactics etc) may be well suited to ‘transfer’ in a formal coach certification program, it is unlikely that such programs can actually teach anyone how to coach – this can only occur in the coaching setting and by participating in the community where coaching ‘work’ has to be undertaken. Some existing coach education practices are designed *for* learning, albeit implicitly, and consequently facilitate conditions in which learning can occur. For example, participating in a community of practice with the support of a mentor (or more than one) should be seen as an integral part of a coach education process.

To explicitly design *for* learning coach educators may consider drawing on some of the key features of Wenger’s [8] design framework for learning or what he calls his ‘architecture’ within a social theory of learning. He feels that future learning has to be organized around plans, procedures, schedules and curricula but at the same time he feels that less is more. What is more, that learning is more about the response to design rather than the result of it. The dynamic structures of sport, and the notion that it is a form of situated practice, means that the learning context is a changeable environment – if players in a game produce a novel move then learning how to defend against such a move has to be situated in the here and now – learning is reflexive, therefore so must be coaching. When using the ‘transfer’ model prevalent \ in some expert coach-novice coach arrangement this is not easy to achieve. Hence learning and the relationship between the newcomers and old-timers cannot be about the division of the labour. Rather the relationship of a mentor and mentee has to be about the participation within a community in which the mentee increases their level of participation by moving inexorably toward the centre. As this happens, the self identity of the mentee and mentor will also be affected.

### Identity

It is the notion of ‘becoming’ a coach which is central to the learning ‘how’ to be a coach and the process of ‘becoming’ can be seen to sit at the articulation of practice and identity [8]. For example, Butt, Burr and Epting [44] argue that the notion of becoming can be seen as a form of self-discovery, which they regard as “a common and vital part of the individual experience” (p.39). Butt et al [44] confirmed that within the post-modern context, essentialist accounts of the person, i.e., ‘the coach’, must be discounted in favour of more relativist views. In clarifying their position, Butt et al argued for a conciliatory position that “calls for a view of the person who can critically read and differentially take up discourses dependent upon the personal significations with which these connect” (p.52). Such a model of the person they argued “sees us as constituted in social practices and language, and yet selecting between positions offered in a way that provides us with a sense of personal integrity” (p.52).

This is unimportant for our position in-so-far as it emphasises that ‘becoming’ occurs at the nexus of ‘membership’ and the social practices inherent within membership and human agency – the capacity to make choices as a member. In coaching and coach education we suggest that idea of membership is crucial, being part of the coaching community enables the participation as a social practice but also facilitates the negotiation required for that participation. In the case of Steve Harrison [see 3] whilst he learned from those he considered to be mentors, he increasingly participated in the community heralded by his migration towards the centre. In doing so, his capacity for choice and decision making increased. Interestingly however, both he and the former

English national Football (soccer) coach, Graham Taylor both talk about how the learning never stops [see 3]. If the learning never stops, it is not unreasonable to suggest that neither does the ‘becoming’, it is always under negotiation as part community participation.

### **SOME FINAL COMMENTS**

We acknowledge that it may not be immediately apparent how an apprenticeship and mentoring model within a CoP framework can happen. There are all sorts of power differentials within coaching structures that appear to be widely dispersed. The head coach of an organization/club/team may appear to be immensely powerful and in the case of American college football this is abundantly clear even to the lay observer. However, when the assessment of a coach is by results (only) then the power of the coach is more tenuous and the locus of power shifts to the employing body. This may seem somewhat removed from the case we are making here. Yet, it shows that coaching, like sport, is contestable and may appear to be at odds with the idea of a ‘community’ and the principle of coach learning that we advocate. However our view is that this should not deter the field in terms of practice, theorizing coach learning or research. Cassidy et al. [6] has shown in the New Zealand context that coaches do like to talk and share, hence regular coach meetings with the emphasis on social learning might be part of a coach education process where reflection, idea sharing and support in the form of informal mentoring could happen. If the contested nature of coaching mitigates against this then the communities of practice may need to be smaller and exist within clubs and organizations where a head coach and mentee coaches can learn from each other through

mutual sharing and reflection. This situation we believe can also have a more formal arrangement for mentoring based on mutual choice, something the literature suggests is desirable. Reflection may have the appearance of being no more than navel gazing, rather out of place in the cut-throat world of high performance sport. However, nearly every profession now talks about the reflective practitioner. Maybe such sessions should be expected (rather than mandated) as part of a coach education model within organizations to encourage a sense of community, after all improved sporting performance is the real goal and better informed coaches one assumes can help to achieve this.

We are mindful that any group that appears to have a common purpose may well in fact limit its achievement by imposing artificial boundaries around what can be considered conventional practice; these kinds of limits are commonplace in teaching for example. However, Wenger's [8] definition and description of CoPs are underpinned by a constructivist form of learning that acknowledges the life worlds of the participants and focuses on human practice and identity. This is fundamentally different from the cognitive strategies of information processing with its emphasis on memory, attention, and perception to develop mental representations. Hence we feel that the emphasis on a social theory of learning whereby the engagement in a social practice is the central process by which learning takes place is a more fruitful way to think about how coaches can come to 'know'. Moreover, this tends to add weight to the position that coach education needs to be based around the social practice in question which means that any accreditation process would need to place the situated learning in coaching at the centre

of the process rather than be an ‘add-on’ requirement. Inevitably this means a rethinking of how coach learning is assessed for the purposes of accreditation. A simple pen and paper test which itself is based in cognitive psychology and a coach log seem to be somewhat inadequate in a social learning theory model. It seems to us that the role of the mentor and the nature of the apprenticeship would become far more important factors in a situated learning context. This is beyond the scope of this paper but is flagged here as an issue that will require greater consideration.

If our (re)examination of the notion of apprenticeship in coach education is to be generative then it makes sense to consider the articulations between designing *for* learning and identity. It seems reasonable to suggest that learning *for* is fundamental for community participation and that participation, in the form of being mentored in an apprenticeship arrangement, is a key process in the sense of ‘becoming’. We feel that without these foci, becoming a coach (in other words learning how to be one) is somehow disassociated from the day to day realities of what coaches are called upon to do. This disassociation can in turn lessen the authenticity of the learning.

Drawing from the case we have constructed here then, we believe that the apprenticeship and mentoring arrangements within such communities must be founded on mutual choice where the aim is not simply to ‘pass on’ the ‘tricks of the trade’ but rather to assist all involved in the relationship ‘become’ fuller members of the coaching community. This ‘becoming’ moves beyond technical understanding and competence and is more about a sense of ‘being’ in the world. To ‘be’ in the world of coaching means being part of one

community which in turn seeks to be part of a larger learning community. The mutuality of such arrangements cannot be overstated and as such we advocate the concepts discussed in this paper inform coach education programs and are written into curriculum design as a device to not only ultimately improve the standard of coaching at all levels but improve the standards of sport and conditions in which sport learning can take place.



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