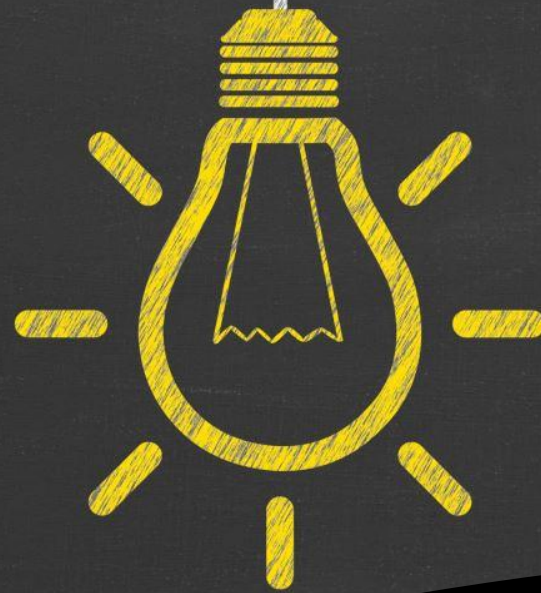


## **Towards a concept of Performance Literacy:**

***- equipping young people  
for a lifetime engagement  
in sport***



# Evolution of our thinking

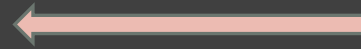
- Complementary but very different starting perspectives and research approaches
- Converging lines of thinking stemming from research and reflection
- Building on physical literacy concepts

## Thinking Up & Down a continuum

Physical Literacy & Youth  
Coaching Initiatives



?



Alternative perspectives on seeking  
excellence

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'PERFORMANCE LITERACY'

Physical literacy can be described as

“a disposition to capitalize on our human embodied capability, wherein the individual has: the **motivation, confidence**, physical **competence, knowledge** and **understanding to value** and **take responsibility** for **maintaining purposeful physical pursuits/activities** throughout the life course.

Performance literacy can be described as

“a disposition to capitalize on our human embodied capability, wherein the individual has: the **motivation, confidence**, physical **competence, knowledge** and **understanding to value** and **take responsibility** for **pursuing excellence in whatever task faces them** throughout the life course.

# Policy, Narratives & People

Policy based on 'instrumental rationality'. We use the language of economics and industry to describe talent development processes.

Dominance of the performance narrative over other competing narratives – the tacit silencing of alternate 'voices' (Douglas & Carless, 16; Ronkainen & Ryba, 19)

Narrowing and foreclosing of identity (Brewer & Pettipas, '17)

80% of young athletes experience senior transition as a 'crisis' (Stambulova '17)

Burnout: 30% burnout symptoms 15yrs; 30% high burnout symptoms at end secondary (Sorkilla et al. '17 & '19)

Negative impacts – 50% experience reduced elite aspirations and a loss of joy in the sport (Skrubbeltrang et al. '18)

Tacit pressure to struggle & strive (Skrubbeltrang, et al '16)

Lack of empowerment (Ronkainen et al '18)

Our coaching approaches are failing the vast majority of athletes in talent programmes in terms of the athlete's holistic development as a person.

# Alternative Perspectives ... ?

## Aggerholm (2015) – *Existential Perspectives*

'Elite-Bildung' – the active process of developing your 'being'

'Freedom-Agency-Habits-Excellence'

## Sennett (2008) - *Craftsmanship*

Craft – an enduring human trait to do good work for its own sake and be enriched by the experience

'Intelligent hand' – mind-body interaction

'Questioning' as a way of being

Practice & competition as narrative not simple repetition

Positively engaging resistance and ambiguity

Seeking excellence for its own sake

Personal expression

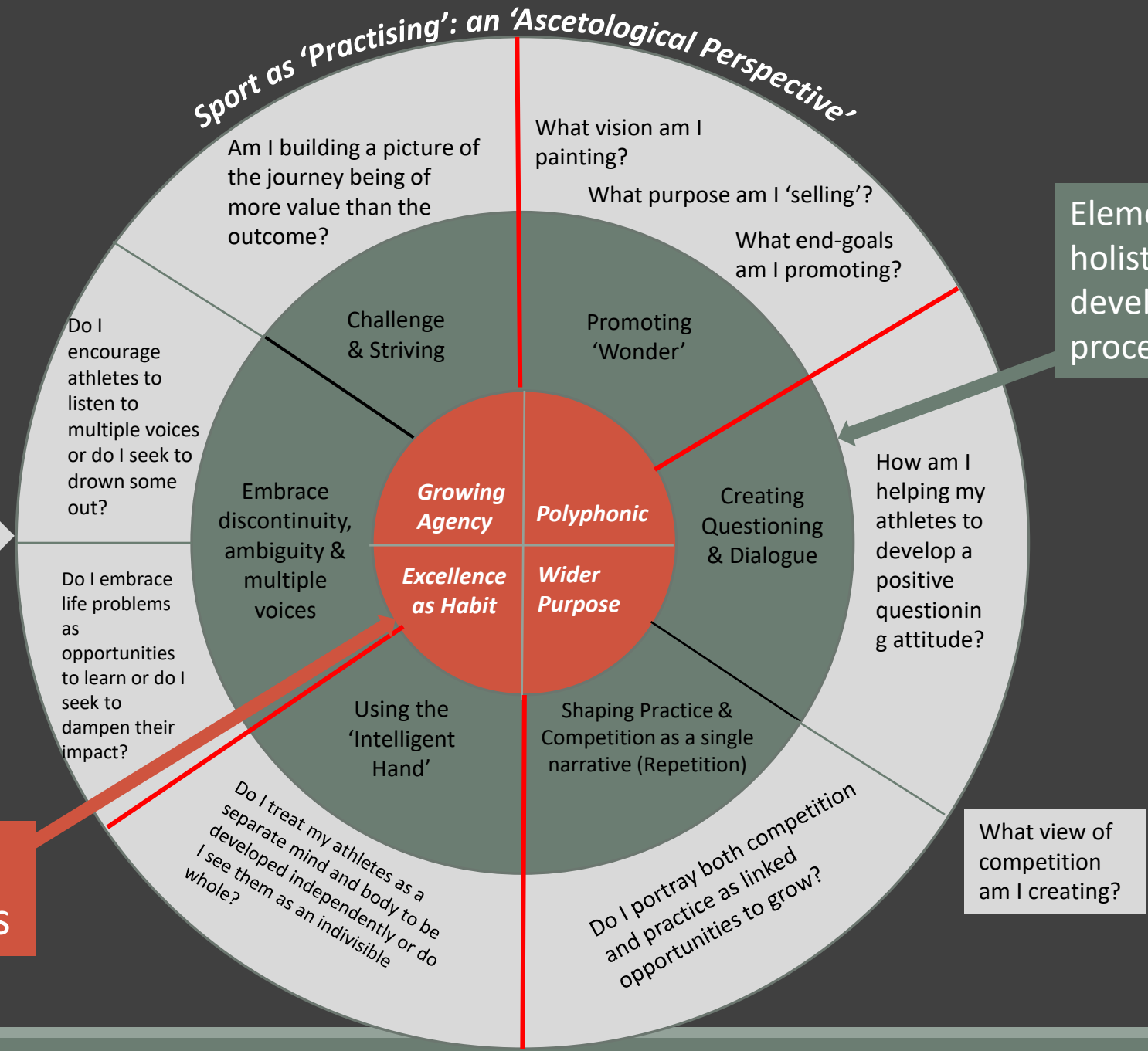
Grounded in community

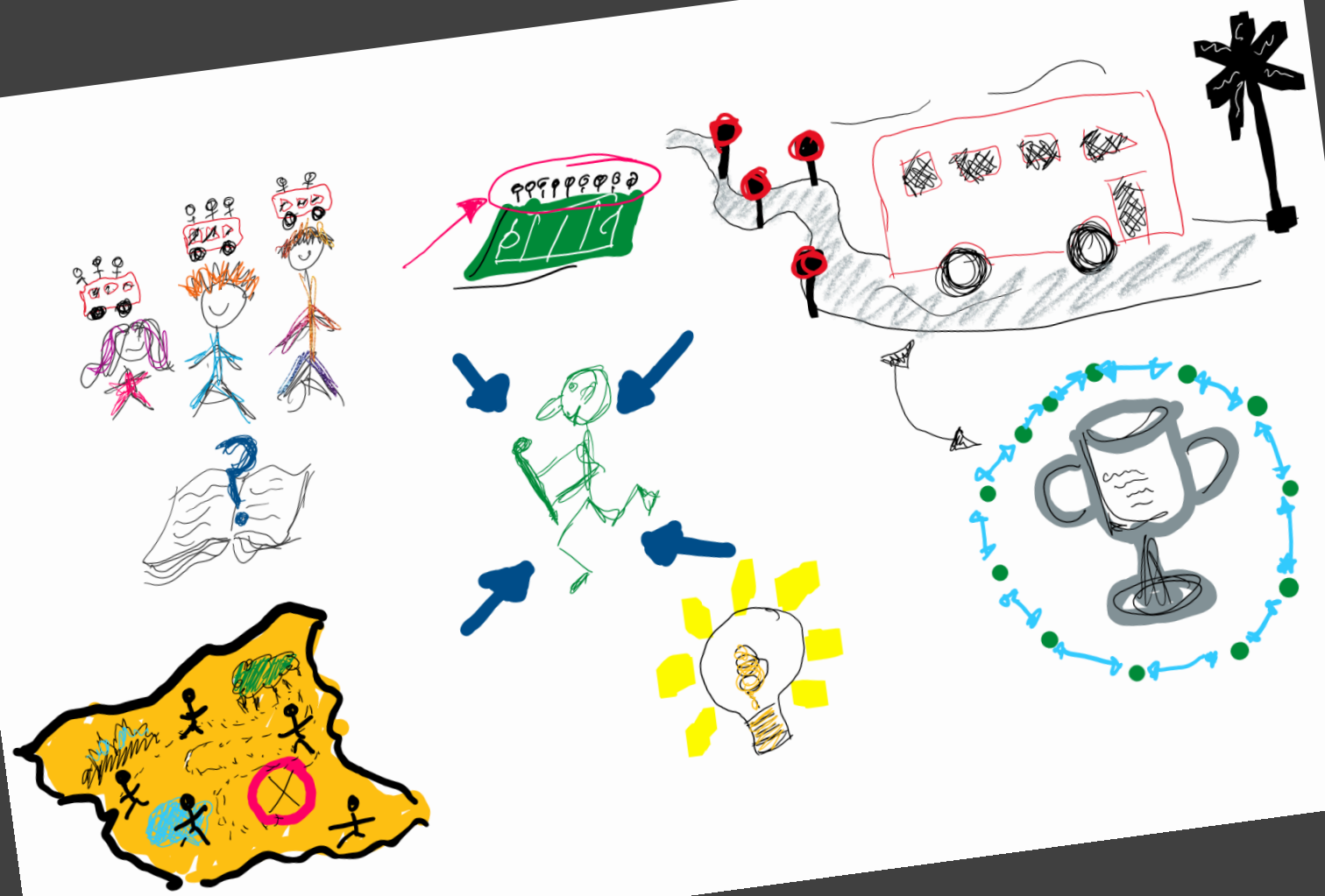
# Holistic perspective on the structure of meaningful talent coaching

Critical coaching questions

Athlete Attributes

Elements in a holistic talent development process

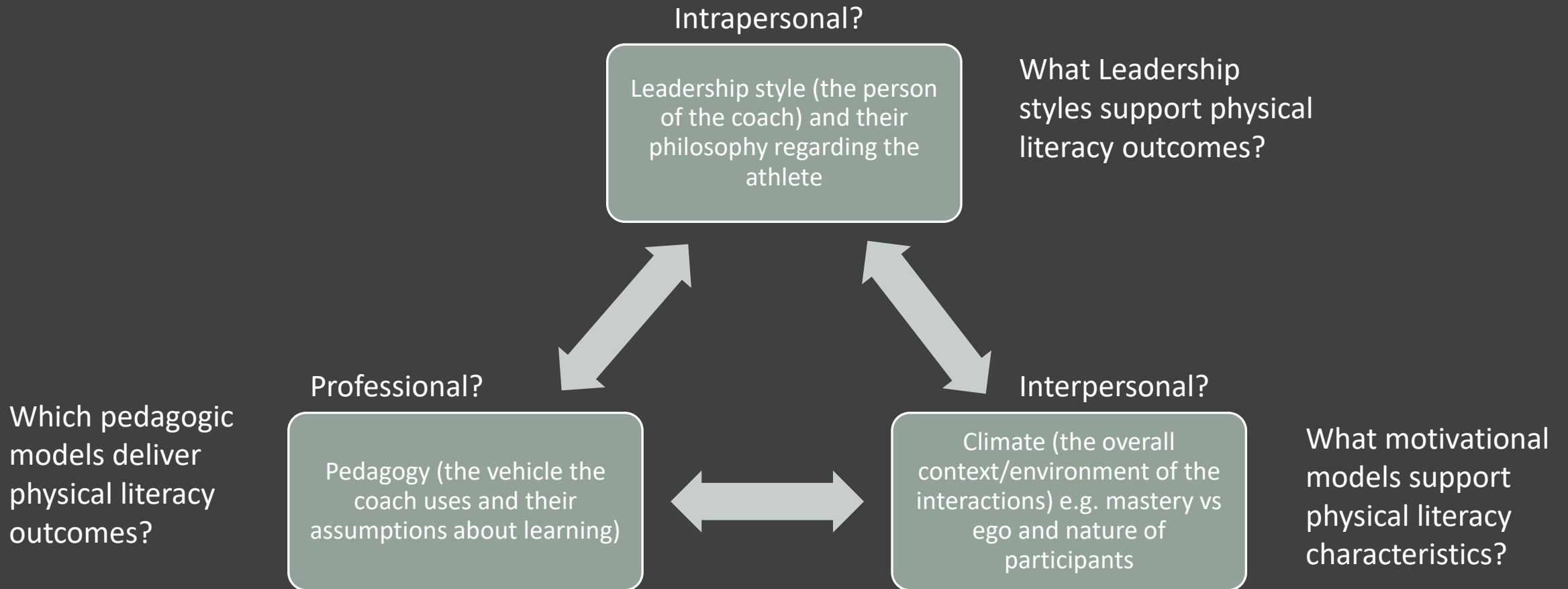




### Key Impacts on Practice:

- Individualised consideration at the centre (their motivation, experiences, autonomy, relationships, competence)
- Joining the dots – especially around competition
- Recognising the journey and flexibility at key points
- Develop the narrative with significant others
- Recognise proximity to end goal and the discovery of treasure
- Theoretically stretch and underpin
- Focus on creative, personal problem solving – concepts not skills

Sports teaching/coaching is complex (Jones, 2006), chaotic (Bowes and Jones, 2006), multifaceted (Turnnidge and Cote, 2017)





# Summary

The current philosophies underpinning talent programmes stem from an instrumentally rationale perspective

Current approaches to coaching talented athletes can leave many with negative experiences that can be detrimental to their personal development and well-being

If we are prepared to re-think 'why' we engage in talent development we can develop programmes that develop the whole person rather than just the athlete.

We believe that the concept of '*Performance Literacy*' can be developed to direct coaching interventions that;-

- *Lead to more holistic talent programmes that provide better learning & life development opportunities for young athletes*
- *Sustain a clear focus on the qualities, skills and knowledge required to produce excellence in performance*