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Re-Drawing the Boundaries; Are Sports 'Outliers' In or Out When Creating, Accessing and Evaluating Knowledge in Coaching?

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Abstract

Creating, accessing and evaluating a body of knowledge on coaching entails a set of complementary challenges. Identifying the boundaries, and what is to be included or excluded, is one focal issue. A 'common process' approach provides one way to approach this drawing and potential re-drawing of boundaries. The extent to which a common process approach can both establish and help cross boundaries is described, with reference to one area of coaching literature, coaching 'outliers' in sports. The adoption of a common process approach to creating, accessing and evaluating useful knowledge on coaching is a promising one.

Keywords

Knowledge, Outliers, Sports, Coaching

Introduction

The growth and application of the concept of coaching as a method of supporting individual and team development and change in diverse domains has been well documented (Jarvis 2005). This is reflected in the increase of books, literature and study of coaching which crosses traditional boundaries. The concept of coaching is now considered in both established areas of practice with some well defined boundaries (Lyle & Lynn 2005, ScUK 2008) and in newer contexts with much less well defined boundaries. The volume and range of cross boundary literature available is striking (Zeus & Skiffington 2003, Whitmore 2005, Hawkins & Smith 2006, Clutterbuck & Megginson 2007). Exampls, ideas and reference is made, alongside the core areas of sport and workplace learning to leadership development (Smilansky 2007), sales (Rich 1998) counselling (Arnaud 2003), training (Veale & Wachtel 1996, de Haan & Burger], business (Clegg et al 2005), organisation development (Skiffington & Zeus 2005) and in 'life' through 'life-coaching (Grant 2003). One prominent development, an area of particular interest to us has been literature on executive coaching (Baum 1992, Kilburg 1996, Hale 2000, Anderson 2002, Berglas 2002, Chapman et al 2003, Joo 2005, Lowman 2005).

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This crossing of boundaries reflects the growing belief that excellence in performance in areas established and new can be secured by an adoption and inclusion of (Irwin et al 2004, Luecke 2004, Brockbank & McGill 2006, Donkin 2007, Goldmsith & Lyons 2006). Accompanying this there has been growing research and practical interest in identifying what works and where, drawing on knowledge and evidence from across the domains in which coaching now occurs (Peltier 2001, Vall'ee & Bloom 2005, Fillery-Travis & Lane 2006). Our cross boundary knowledge about coaching, embraces experience in fields including elite sporting performance, professional development and gaining professional qualifications, dealing with emotional distress, and transformational leadership/organisation development. Like all cross boundary initiatives, this is a complex field.

The need for boundary crossing, useful knowledge in coaching is evident but it is also brings with it new challenges. As tutors for a postgraduate programme for executive coaches over the last few years we have sought to provide useful knowledge for our learners, drawing on diverse domain of theory and practice. Some of these boundaries have proven to be more challenging to engage with than others, surprisingly including learning from the lessons of 'outliers' in sports. 'Outliers' is a term coined by Gladwell (2008) to define people who have achieved remarkable success. Outliers in sports are those who have achieved remarkable success in their sports. Drawing on useful knowledge from this domain, exploring cases and themes and the coach-performer relationships these entail, usually splits our group of students into positive and negative camps. Some are excited and engaged by the knowledge and insights to be found from exploring the lessons of champions and coaching in sports. Others are sceptical or even strongly opposed to this as a source of useful knowledge transferable to their particular domain of practice, which is executive and leadership development. The split is not easy to explain simply as a reflection of differences between those engaged and interested in sports and those unengaged or disinterested in sport. It represented a challenge to us to better explain what useful knowledge around coaching is.

A similar situation existed in the development of the field of psychotherapy, (Wampold 2001). For some time there was a contest among multiple and competing schools of theory and practice rather than an exchange of useful knowledge. A concern with more systematic and useful knowledge led to an identification of three paths to enabling useful knowledge. First, useful knowledge could be enabled through theoretical integration; bringing together diverse theoretical approaches and developing a grand unified theory. The prospects for this were poor in psychotherapy, as no single theory had the potential of providing the core of such a grand unified theory of human thinking, feeling and behaviour; not when Wampold was analysing the field or now.

Second there was potential for useful knowledge through the recognition and acceptance of 'technical eclecticism'. Without adopting any unifying theory, or advancing one theory as demonstrably better than all others, therapists could, and should, pragmatically draw on a range of methods and technique. This would allow for, so to speak, a truce among theories, a continuing pluralism of theories, with the focus rather on sharing and exchange of methods in practice.

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The third option was to establish a common process framework. For Wampold (op cit) in the therapeutic context this involved identifying the underlying 'process' that could be identified as being common to evidently diverse approaches to therapy. As quantitative evidence from met-analysis of therapy outcomes showed that variation in therapist impact was attributable in a significant way to a common process, shared across approaches and techniques in use rather than the characteristics of a specific approach/technique in itself, this made sense in the therapeutic context.

It is this last approach, a common process framework, that is the one we believe it is also appropriate now to consider for useful knowledge in coaching. There are signs that such an approach is already emerging in the field of coaching (Grant & Cavanagh 2007 , Passmore & Gibbes 2007, Bennett 2006).

The Common Process Model

Processes description and analysis is about exploring an activity in terms of both what is done and how it is done. A common process is then a model of what is done and how it is done. This is the meaning of process in the Stober & Grant (2006) model, which we will adopt in this article. With a process perspective the 'what' of the process being investigated is to be considered as having essentially the same features across contexts; it is a constant. It is the 'how' a process is done that is likely to vary between instances; for example, in different organizations or domains. With coaching, across boundaries, the 'what' aspect of the process can be taken to be similar; in preparing athletes to compete, leaders to develop their careers, individuals to change an aspect of their lifestyle, and so on. Stober & Grant identified a 7 factor, transtheoretical, framework for the common process, with the following characteristics :

- An explicit outcome or goal that both parties, coach and client, are collaboratively working towards;
- A sensible rationale or explanation for how coaching as a process fits the clients needs and situation;
- A procedure or set of steps that is consistent with the rationale and requires both the client's and the coach's active participation;
- A meaningful relationship between the client and the coach such that the client believes the coach is there to help and will work in the clients best interest;
- A collaborative working alliance in which the coach's explicit role is to expand the client's development, maintaining challenge and facilitating change;
- The client's ability and willingness to change; and
- The coach's ability and readiness to help the client create change, recognising and dealing with often personally poignant issues

The question of how this is done will vary within boundaries, or contexts, and with individuals. We recognise that recent studies suggest that these common process features are not themselves yet well understood (Cushion 2007). Without at this point assuming that the reader will indeed agree with what we are seeking to explore in general, that a similar process may underpin effective coaching in all contexts, we propose that this is a valid way of operationalising what might be involved in a common process.

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The context in which we apply the Stober & Grant common process framework, to explore and evaluate its use in coaching knowledge exchange, is learning from the lessons of outliers in sports. This is chosen as a particular domain as it represents a domain with a considerable history and, in our experience, the potential to strongly divide people as to its relevance and impact for useful knowledge about coaching generally. Our experiences in teaching coaching and attending conferences on coaching suggest that considering the 'lessons of champions' divides people in their views of the validity and generalisability of knowledge associated with them. Accordingly exploring them has the potential to bring the abstract issues of useful knowledge exchange and the value of the common process framework to life.

Literature On Outliers And Coaching

The widely understood and recognised role of the coach in the world of sport creates a common sense appreciation of coaches and coaching for outliers in sport Sportscoach 2008a, Sportscoach 2008b, Lyle & Lynn op cit). While some individual champions may in fact play and perform without coaching (tennis players are one obvious examples), an element of coaching support is the norm; coaching is an integral feature of outliers in sporting contexts and lives. That examples of outliers in sport who have been coached are often included and prominent in discussions that crosses domains has been recognised for some time (Kanter 2004) and is recently exemplified by the popular writing about successful people (Gladwell op cit). Gladwell's cases of 'outliers', exceptionally successful people, includes many sporting examples, including ice hockey and American football, alongside musicians and business leaders.

Champions and the coaches of champions are acclaimed and examined as exemplars of success in their sporting field and beyond. They are popular as speakers on topics and matters outside their sport, with autobiographies which can be bestsellers (Ferguson 1999, MacPherson 2004, Woodward 2005). Salaries for successful coaches in these contexts are substantial, reflecting the challenges and the (at times) precarious nature of their tenure. Some coaches of sports outliers, most often teams, are of course 'celebrities'; for example in soccer Mourinho, Benitez and Wenger are better known than some of their players in soccer's English Premiership.

Yet the great majority of coaches, including many who have had a significant impact on champions, remain relatively anonymous and obscure. The majority of coaches in sport, in or away from the limelight, are facing change and need to adapt to operate in a complex, multi-skill, multi-task environment (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac 2008). In sport coaching has been a paid form of employment for some time. Though experience in a sport and talent in coaching were usually the prerequisites of a career in coaching there have been moves towards becoming more of a profession, with qualifications and licensing of coaches, and national policy drivers in sport making this more of a priority, according to the (scUK op cit).

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There is 'face validity' for other domains with people acting as coaches to learn from the experience of coaching outliers in sports, the publicly acclaimed and the less well known. To date this knowledge about coaching is transferred, if at all, in an ad hoc way, in forms such as Gladwell's 'outliers (op cit). Evidence of the extemporised knowledge development from sport and champions has been present in the coaching literature from Gallwey (1997) on tennis, and Whitmore (op cit) on performance coaching. Useful knowledge from the sports outliers is rarely appropriated more systematically in the wider coaching literature (Weinberg & McDermott 2002, D'Abate et al 2003). And more scholarly reviews of the kinds of lessons that can be transferred from skills in sports and sports coaching to other areas (Kellet, 1999; Liu et al, 1998) are few in number and not widely cited.

What the literature lacks the field of practice illustrates more strongly; the transfer of knowledge from outliers in sports is supported by the many examples of people with outlier credentials and experience and coaching to other contexts (Jones, 2002;,Jones et al, 2004). Former Olympic champion Adrian Moorhouse (Jones & Morrhouse 2007) through his work with 'Lane 4', provides an example of this. The assumption that an 'individual performer' and a 'team' isomorphism exists among sports and other domains, business especially, is the foundation of such practical examples of knowledge exchange mediated by key individuals. The transparency and immediacy of results in being a champion in sport makes it a powerful domain in which knowledge and evidence related to more general coaching for success can be found.

The appeal of the sports outliers context for providing knowledge about coaching is mitigated by considering how the boundaries and rules of the game and competition in sports contexts are delineated in comparison with other contexts. This is significant as an assumption, or appreciation and acceptance, of a similarity between the sports context and other contexts is a condition of reviewing and including knowledge from coaching in sports and champions in wider professional coaching knowledge exchange. The characteristics of the coaching context for champions in sport include:

* Performance events are (relatively) brief and self-contained, with the outcomes of choices and actions clear. Races, matches and competitions are well bounded;

* Feedback is relatively immediate for the participants- what is happening in the race, game or event is known throughout the performance;

* Much coaching occurs during practice sessions, in advance of and as part of preparation for a specific game, match or event; and

* In some circumstances coaches are responsible for designing a strategy that players implement; the coach is then also an expert guiding them in the game and 'calling the shots'.

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The case for knowledge exchange from coaching outliers in sports coaching, with these characteristics, generalised to other contexts is contested where the isomorphism of context is questioned (Peterson & Little 2005). Performance in other contexts, such as in business or 'life', may be seen to occur in circumstances which are far from those encountered by champions succeeding in sport. If the contexts are not alike, then coaching practice are not likely to be valid for others to learn from. It is often emphasised, for example, that to become a champion in sports contexts performers are making sacrifices, and they perform under conditions of high pressure. Outliers are putting in long hours of practice, Gladwell estimates 10,000 hours practice to become an outlier as benchmark, and sustaining high levels of discipline and commitment. These are not aspects of performance shared with, for instance, managers and employees in a workforce. Talent management systems in organisations generally include only a small group in the pool of talent to be coached for progression to higher roles, though many more in a organisation may be provided coaching support. There is potentially a case for supporting the small group for progression as if they were like champions in sport. Even this can be questioned though. Jowett (2005, 2007) notes that there can be aggressive, antagonistic and hostile attitudes involved in a champion performers identity, that help performers cope with the demands of sport; but can have negative repercussions in other contexts. Importing such attitudes and identities into other contexts and relationship, because the coaching methods, values and practices associated with them are generalised, is then a potential risk. The aspiration to share knowledge about coaching may then need to be limited or indeed be considered potentially distorting and damaging. The general features of sport cited [see Table 1] are then not only perceived to be absent from other contexts but may actually be contrasted with other domains. Realistically some organisational performance management contexts may at some times may share these context characteristics, while others will not.

Context Characteristics	Sport Coaching Context and Outliers
Boundaries and rules	Clearly delineated
Conditions	Brief and self contained performance
Outcomes	Effect of actions and decisions are very evident
Feedback	Available during practice
Coach Offers	Expert designing strategy, providing answers

Table 1; Sports Contexts for Coaching, Based on Contexts and Characteristics in Peterson & Little, (2005)

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These contextual issues are the core of concerns about the use of lessons from coaching of outliers in sport as a contributor to useful knowledge in coaching. There are others. Gender issues are one. Role models for outliers in sports coaching are typically male. This reflects that the outliers, the high performing sports performers and teams, and their coaches from among the most popular, high profile, who are widely supported and televised sporting contexts, including football in its various forms, basketball, cricket, baseball, are predominantly, if not exclusively, male. This is evident in their prominence in company and product advertising and other campaigns. The successes of female teams in these sports, and individual women, and the achievements of female teams in other sports are not so much overlooked as overshadowed by the common and continuing prominence of male stars, teams and coaches (Cashmore 2003). Popular culture reflects this; among the many cinematic representations of sports and coaching there are many examples of male teams and male coaches, but only rare, even exceptional, examples of female teams or coaches. For every 'Bend it Like Beckham' (a film about a young girl success in soccer there are several on similar themes about boys and men.

Tiger Woods in golf, Thierry Henry in soccer and Roger Federer in tennis, have been used in prominent global advertising campaigns, not solely because of the products they endorse but as archetypal examples of champions. The risks of this, seen in the controversies surrounding Woods and Henry, who have arguably now become more associated with negative images of what being an outlier might entail, do not change the fact that male champions make for strong global 'brands'. There are of course equivalent female champions and role models in golf, football and tennis, but their presence, and those involved in coaching them, is less marked. These would include Annika Sorenstam in golf, Mia Hamm in soccer, and Venus and Serena Williams in tennis. As familiarity and affinity with champions in sports is affected by social change and equal opportunity advances, this may change.

Finally learning from the coaching of champions in sports, as McLean et al (2005) suggest, may be popular irrespective of the isomorphism of the context, the parallels between success in sports and elsewhere, but because the cases and stories around it are simply more exciting and 'fun' than the cases and stories associated with other contexts of human development and change, such as counselling relationships or business leadership.

And there are questions about the exciting and fun aspects of sports and champions in sports context which may be seen as distorting our understanding of human development and the relations required, including coaching, to support development. One is about the extent to which the performance needed to reach the peaks requires a kind of 'arrested development' among those able and willing to make this their lives. A recent example is the above mentioned example of the revelations regarding Tiger Woods. In other contexts much human development is concerned with improving self knowledge and 'soft' behaviours, to help people make their way along the 'lowlands' as mature adults interacting with other mature adults- not cultivating the persona and characteristics required to compete and succeed as champions in games. Smith (2008) appreciates and captures this critically, and sympathetically, in his insightful reviews of the general appeal of sports for its players and fans.

Through sports performers, fans, and others associated with the sport, including coaches, can play out parts of their lives which are frustrated or constrained in day-to-day adult existence. Some of the characteristics of this are clearly positive, allowing and empowering healthy, innocent enjoyment and

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uninhibited exuberance. Other aspects may be less positive. These may be about problems that attend the aspiration to succeed, such as the abuse of drugs. Or they may simply be that for non-sport fans there are connotations of escapism in making so much of a game.

"Sport enables people to walk out of day to day life and into a different sphere. Sport, seen from that perspective is like a stage- a parallel universe towards which a huge number of people flee from the frustrations of normal living…Some people are better at 'performing'- whether it is football or singing- than they are at just 'normal' living. The stage brings out the best in them." (Smith op cit, pp 112-113)

The appeal of learning about and replicating the lessons of champions, including how they are coached, may be strong in fans of sport. They understand and value the 'parallel universe'. For others importing the coaching context and relationship in sport can look like another way of associating with this parallel universe, yet this has no strong connection to contexts where the challenges of 'normal living' are the focus.

Common Process Boundaries Applied?

So can we extract useful knowledge from outliers in sports about coaching, or is it at distorting metaphor which offers a source of entertaining examples of coaching but actually distorts our understanding of coaching in other contexts? A common process can be used to systematically consider useful knowledge and answer this question. The 7 factor, transtheoretical, framework, proposed by Stober & Grant above, is used. The working hypothesis here is that any domain with coaching relations that demonstrates a fit with such a common process can be seen to provide knowledge which others can use. If a domain does not fit with all these factors then lessons from coaching in it are less likely to be useful in knowledge exchange.

In what follows it is assumed that for outliers in sports coaching is a relationship that may be experienced in a variety of forms; from coaching as a kind of participation in the sport itself, as leader, teacher, and instructor, to specialist and intensive performance support from a set of contributing experts. It may range from being a specific 'hands on' intervention, to being part of the long term planning for a game or event; and from control of the training environment to targeted interventions. The depth and form of interpersonal relationship can also vary, from close and prolonged to more focused access of technical knowledge at key points. Motives for the coachee will also vary, with different levels of interest, commitment, skill and perceived rewards for being a coachee.

We proceed then to consider the seven characteristics of a common process in coaching, the 'how' of coaching, taking each in turn, exploring the extent to which these are present in the coaching of outliers in sport.

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The Seven Process Aspects And Outliers In Sport

Process 1: An explicit outcome or goal that both parties, coach and client, are collaboratively working towards.

Are there explicit outcomes or goals that both parties are collaboratively working towards? Outcomes and goals in champions in sporting contexts may be thought to be pretty self-evident; to attain levels of performance to be part of the elite and to win, to be the champion. To reach and be in the elite level itself takes talent and significant effort and discipline, as well as opportunity (financial, social support, access to good coaching and facilities). For elite performers the goal may be competing and winning at the highest levels; with the records, the medals, trophies and rewards that come with that. Yet at this level for both performers and coaches, there may also be other concerns, not least as most of those aspiring to champion status never attain it. They participate but do not achieve the champion's status and rewards.

Butler (1996) argues it is recognised that for truly collaborative relations there is a need to quantify perceptions, and for the coach and performer to share perspectives on performance. It is important to do this of course to define areas to coach, set priorities, target goals, and evaluate coaching. If this is done it is possible to increase awareness, to understand the others perspective, train towards goals and analyse performances. The coach and performer both define what is involved in 'desirable' performance and these perceptions are then shared.

Sharing subjective perceptions of what 'desirable' means can enable a dialogue and agreed focus that is as important as an objective stipulation of 'perfect' performance. Together coach and coachee can both identify strengths and weaknesses, areas of desired change in the long term and short term, and monitor this to re-rate the performer. They will both be able to understand what qualities matter, strengths and weaknesses, what to achieve and what the performer agrees to aim for. All this is premised on the standards required for becoming champions.

Process 2: A sensible rationale or explanation for how coaching as a process fits the client's needs and situation.

Are the client needs of champions in sports such that a sensible rationale and explanation for coaching is necessary and explicit? At the champions level the differences between successful performers are often significantly small, given that levels of technical skill can be very similar; so meeting client needs can be perceived as making a big difference. The rationale for a coach to lead sportspeople along a path that takes them to the highest possible peak, that of being champions, in the top levels of competition requires them to do so by inspiring the sportsperson to make continual improvement, and providing instruction and feedback to enhance and fine tune technical skill for improved performance. Doing that means significantly impacting on individuals, teams and performance over multiple seasons. For other aspiring champions the needs may be more around improving their personal best and sustaining elite performance.

It may be expected that a rationale grounded in 'normal science' should provide the structure to sports coaching. That is, the evidence ought to show there are needs which a coach does indeed fulfill, and

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this is a cause of success as a champion. Short & Short [60] suggest a rationale exists in terms of roles, and that the coach-athlete relationship has five defined roles. These are the roles of being a teacher, organiser, competitor, learner, and friend/mentor. Butler's (op cit) focus is on performance profiling for the athlete developing what he called the 4 C's; collaboration; confidence, control (emotional), commitment, and concentration.

This rationale for coaching can help identify where needs may exist, and reinforce the view that the rationale for coaching is not simply a mechanistic exercise in 'doing' specific things well. Complexity, uncertainty and contextual factors interact to render such a focus not just misleading but positively distorting. These more complex rationales for collaboration are also embedded in debates about what coach education in sports should include (Irwin et al op cit).

Process 3: A procedure or set of steps that is consistent with the rationale and requires both the client's and the coach's active participation.

Diverse procedures and steps evidently exist in the routines that are adopted by coaches working with performers, centred on practice in the sport and preparation for events. These will include procedures for [Irwin et al op cit]:

- Teaching the fundamentals closely and carefully is critical, and a coach is concerned with providing feedback on mastering the rudiments and practicing them;

- Developing drive, discipline and determination; coaches and performers are focus and 'dream' driven;

- Visualization and mental rehearsal;

- Learn from experience: performers may lose more than they win, and will need to reflect on and be able to learn from that with coaches; and

- Establishing honesty, trust, and communication on the part of the coach and coachee.

A central issues here is that among all forms of coaching 'sports coaching' is seen as involving the application of science. Physical capacities and development, performance improvement, outcomes, and related concerns such as nutrition, are all tangible and measurable. The net effect is that coaching may seem to require only the passive participation of the coachee; the coach knows best and the coachee can be directed. If development is at least in part an 'art' it will entail more non-directive interaction, and require more active coachee participation in the relationship. The emphasise on an 'ideal type' hard and scientific relationship is arguably seen in coach education which entails the presentation of coaching as a logical set of 'episodes' that are isolated for analysis and re-assembled later as McDonald & Tinning (1995) noted. The implication for coaches is that they are to be regarded as "merely technicians engaged in the transfer of knowledge" in a process that is not problematic as long as the coach follows an appropriate systematic 'model'. McDonald and Tinning argue that if coach development courses are too focused on this, and scientific methods rather than the 'art of coaching', then the value and challenge of coaching is being missed.

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Process 4: A meaningful relationship between the client and the coach such that the client believes the coach is there to help and will work in the client's best interest

Jowett & Jones (2005) define a meaningful coach-athlete relationship as one that entails closeness, commitment, and complementarity. They expand on these as aspects of a meaningful relationship:

- Closeness: interpersonal feelings of trust, respect, and appreciation;

- Commitment: interpersonal thoughts and intentions that aim to maintain the relationship over time ; and

- Complementarity: interpersonal behaviours of cooperation, such as responsiveness, easiness, and friendliness.

The original Jowett 3C model has been developed further to include 'Co-orientation' as well (Jowett 2007b, Jowett 2007c). The range of potentially 'meaningful relationships' defining or re-defining the coachee's best interest vary with career stages. Beginning a career, advancing through the ranks and then ending a career all present challenges. What the spur to perform means as a career begins, peaks and comes to its later phases may be assumed to raise challenges for both the sports person and the coach. Ending a career, for example, to return to 'reality' may be as challenging as commencing it was, for not the coachee and the coach. Discontent may be assuaged by achievement, but not necessarily, and coaches, more than anyone else, may be aware of that. 'Well adjusted' people might conclude their careers sensibly where high achievers can struggle to adapt. More recent sport coaching models examining the dynamics of coach-athlete interaction, (Poczwardowski et al 2002, Mageau & Vallerand 2003) and adopt a more comprehensive, multi-factorial approach, broadly akin to an evidence-based coaching model approach.

Process 5: A collaborative working alliance in which the coach's explicit role is to expand the client's development, maintaining challenge and facilitating change.

The term working alliance is one borrowed from therapy, and is used in that sense here- variation in the kind of relationship which a client expects and will respond to.

Coaching as maintaining challenge and facilitating change are integral to champions in sports . They seek and respect performance and self-improvement, not just realising their 'natural' super-talent. Indeed the 'super talented' may have things too easy too early – juvenile tennis stars are often cited in this regard. Coaches who work with those that have experienced, or allow for, small formative defeats can help prepare for subsequent lasting victory. Coaches' 'working alliances' may need to be with either the naturally talented and precious young performers aspiring to be champions or with the many late developers, stubborn survivors, and consistent over-performers who also become champions.

The working alliance in either case will address the challenge and change to improve competition performance which combine aspects of core sporting values and 'inner game', or psychological, insights. This is appropriate either for an alliance for planned, co-ordinated and integrated programmes of preparation for competition with champions over years or an alliance for development involving a range of partial/complete and less/more sophisticated interventions.

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For Thompson (2003) the rise of 'double goal' and positive coaching is relevant here. Double goal coaching promotes a primary goal of trying to win and a secondary goal of teaching life lessons through sport; to try harder, stick at it longer, and be the best they can be. The catalysts for debate would also include exploring cultural differences, for instance between North American and European sports coaching practices in these areas. In the former context much knowledge exchange is seen in the writings of those who are contemporary successful coaches while in the latter context it is more often ex-champions themselves who are the main voices in knowledge exchange about coaching.

Process 6: The client's ability and willingness to change.

The issue here is that coaching entails identifying change yet successful sports performers usually have a degree of self-certainty in their own capacities and indeed destiny. They can be, or need to be, convinced that greatness is their due; that the big stage is their stage. Such self-belief can become arrogance, and potentially interfere with changing. Their willingness to work on and concentrate on change, with a coach and channel their talents may be affected by this. Such self-certainty can mean that champions 'play by different rules', in what they do and how they do it [Smith op cit].

A coach's role in supporting an ability to change is complex too. The management of learning, including coaching, can be structured in ways that assume or result in performer's dependence on experts. An unintended consequence may be that performers mistrust themselves and their natural learning process (Gallwey op cit). If education and training methods, including coaching, are based on passively acquiring what Gallwey terms 'do-instructions'. Learners are to be told to 'do' this, and 'do' that. This is couched in terms of the needs of either mastering conceptual or practical aspects based the activity and the learner as a blank slate. However, learners have their own natural, innate, learning process; they can learn much without instruction from experience. Gallwey's critique is that coaching through 'do-instructions' interferes with the natural mode of learning be neutralized. Coaching that reflects this focus on the coach being in control, adopting a strict work ethic, a clear process, and precise system in the name of change may increase 'interference' rather than support improvements in performance. The alternative is to support the ability to change through helping the performer examine how they play, searchingly, seeking mastery to enhance self expression and success. Change comes through the interaction of being both highly trained through instruction and feedback and developing an instinctual, cooperative subconscious. The implication is that coaching to support loving the game/sport can also be significant.

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Process 7: The coach's ability and readiness to help the client create change, recognising and dealing with often personally poignant issues.

There are no bigger or more public stages than those occupied by champions in sports. The outcomes, success and failure, as they happen in real time, are there for all to see. The stories of a few key team members, captains, or some of the more well known names in a sport may find their way into the public domain. These tell something of the changes have been encountered to enable performers to be able to reach the biggest stages. The exceptions are those where a performer attains great success and does not reveal and share, personal and poignant issues faced and overcome to succeed; psychological and developmental problems, illness and personal tragedy, addictions and setbacks. These often similar journeys through difficulty and development are ones negotiated with and alongside the coach. The coaches will have had their own take on these, and also their own personal and poignant issues, as coaches. While the coaches story will never be as in demand as the story of the champion their voice is one from which other coaches may learn.

In sport for many the personal and poignant experience may be not becoming a champion. It means trying very hard and not getting the outcome desired; as most do not win the medals and trophies. While coaching is a relationship in which there is scope for working on performer fears and anxieties, disappointments or failure it may conclude without success. Learning to accommodate pressures and attain angst-free play, and keep a sense of perspective, is a challenge for the performer and the coach not only in preparation for competing but also in its aftermath. Both champions and coaches face and have to work through issues of career stages and how these impact on the relationship. In this context the 'softer' skills of coaches identified above become more prominent, particularly being emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

Conclusion

As coaching is assuming growing importance in diverse contexts knowledge exchange around coaching and across contexts is possible but challenge. There are strengths and weaknesses in ways of approaching systematic knowledge exchange, from theoretical integration to technical eclecticism and the common process approach. The strength of the common process approach is its scope for offering something more systematic than technical eclecticism, but less abstract and academic than theoretical integration. And for providing a way of engaging both realists and constructivists academic traditions.

Adopting a common process approach, looking at 'how' it is done, and using it to consider coaching in the context of champions in sports, we identify areas of theory and practice which are shared between the model and the particular domain. The common process approach does appear to relate to and make sense of the 'how' of coaching in the champions in sports context. And the reverse holds as well; coaching in the champions in sport context, on the limited evidence from literature used here, does connect with and can be made sense of using a common process model. Other's can learn from exploring lessons from champions in sport.

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The limitation, both of this review and more generally of adopting a common process framework too, is most evidently that the significance of contextual differences are underplayed. These contextual differences, understanding 'what' is done when coaching is used in specific contexts, is set aside and that can mean that the value of knowledge exchange is limited. Without also understanding, describing and analysing 'what' is done when coaching is being used the accounts of 'how' it is done can appear thin and abstract. In this case that criticism would apply to our account of champions in sport. The sports context, and the development of champions, can be considered just too different from other contexts in which coaching is used to provide useful knowledge in general about coaching. That might seem very ironic to some, but is a valid conclusion if contextual differences, including the boundedness of sports performance and the discipline needed to become a champion, are not perceived to exist in other domains where coaching can be used.

Can a framework like this common process model enable a picture to emerge from the jigsaw of experiences in a range of domains, so that connections and lines of theory (and research) as well as connections to aspects of practice can be made available to wider audiences than they otherwise would reach ?

The framework offered here for knowledge exchange is one option, a glimpse rather than a comprehensive review of what is possible. We do, tentatively, conclude that a common process framework can assist in the exchange of knowledge from champions in sports, and the coaching they experience, through a common process model; an explicit outcome or goal, rationale or explanation, active participation , meaningful relationship, maintaining challenge and facilitating change, ability and willingness to change, and dealing with often personally poignant issues.

There are also limitations of the specific model used here. First, are these common process factors the right ones? It appears to us that the first three factors in this common process framework can be perceived as more 'context' informed. That is knowledge about these may be more grounded in their particular domain of origin, the 'what' is being done through coaching. This would mean that knowledge about coaching related to goals, rationales and procedures will be distinctive regarding developing champions, or executive development and so on. The 4th common process factor looks in this review to be the key, the 'pivotal' factor. This is, to recap: "A meaningful relationship between the client and the coach such that the client believes the coach is there to help and will work in the client's best interest". The previous process factors enable it and the subsequent process factors express it.

The 'meaningful relationship' may be the most fruitful aspect to explore in knowledge exchange about coaching. And it may be the area of process that requires further elaboration. Whether the other factors, 4-7, are distinctive enough, or overlapping is a further concern. What the champions in sports review offers for knowledge exchange about coaching in the final three process factors also seems to us to be less contextual. Indeed knowledge exchange about challenge and change can extend beyond domains in which coaching occurs to other, non- coaching, contexts and dyads: in any relationship, such as management, consulting, leadership, teaching, supervision and so on.

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Second, the model used here implies that the coaching process IS the coach-athlete relationship. While the coach-athlete relationship can be at the core of developing champions in sports coaching it is only an element of the total coaching process. Coaching happens within a formal relationship, but what a coach does isn't always within that formal role and others can play a part thought they are not seen to be formal coaches.

The extent to which knowledge exchange is to be only concerned with domains of coaching practice which share all these aspects of common process is also an issue. The approach entailed here is that a domain in which coaching is used should include all these 7 factors to be considered a contributor to common knowledge construction. This restricts review and analysis to including knowledge from broadly similar relationships. The alternative would be to include also lessons from domains where only one or a limited set of these common process features are found is possible. However the insight that may provide is offset by the complications of the different kinds of relations involved. For example, in friendships people may be able and ready to help others create change and deal with poignant issues; but studies of friendship would not provide relevant knowledge to help us understand coaching relations. The evolution of quantitative methods and theory for studying dyadic relationships , as discussed by Card et al [68] may eventually allow an even broader set of domains to be drawn on in knowledge exchange, but at this point we confine the review to coaching contexts; these are numerous and complex enough to be going on with.

In conclusion, we have presented a common process framework and its use to illustrate that seeking more systematically to combine diverse and growing contributions to knowledge about coaching is both possible and problematic. The further development of a common process approach would entail more systematically and more widely reviewing champions in sport and other contexts, in the way we have illustrated here. Better knowledge exchange is an opportunity to advance better coaching practice, though the best way to approach that has yet to be effectively determined and developed. This review of a model of a common process is an opening of the debate, not the definitive solution.

In advancing a common process approach we are acknowledging that views on identifying useful knowledge are grounded in more than superficial differences of personal attitude. They are grounded in basic differences, between 'academic tribes', the term used by Becher & Trowler (2001) and what counts as normal science in the diverse territories of researchers and practitioners concerned with coaching. What we encounter are the challenges of mediating among a plurality of academic tribes sharing a concern in coaching, discussed by Gibb & Hill (2006). More systematic knowledge exchange in coaching is about more than sharing some cases and studies across boundaries. It is about engaging academic tribes, identities, and boundaries, in the form of realism and constructivism. Realists assume that a single, stable reality can be presumed; and knowledge about that single, stable reality can be identified in any situation or research question. Constructivists, alternatively, assume that knowledge emerges from recognising and exploring a range of different 'voices' on the issue at hand.
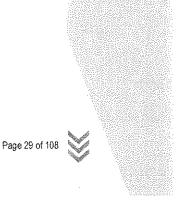
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A common process approach potentially allows for each of these to be respected. For realists the common process provides a stable, agreed paradigm to adopt. For constructivists a common process framework allows different voices, and critical views, to be recognized, across boundaries. Recognising and transcending boundaries, respecting these differences between realists and constructivists, is the tension properly at the heart of successful knowledge development in coaching.

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