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Examining factors influencing the participation and self-management of U.S. collegiate
women's rowing coaches in professional development experiences

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Abstract

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This study examines the factors that influence the participation and self-management of U.S. intercollegiate athletic coaches in professional development experiences. The qualitative study is guided by theoretical considerations about self-directed adult learning as well as emerging concepts regarding the preparation of coaches for an increasingly complex and dynamic environment. The research uses grounded theory methodology to examine data from semi-structured interviews with 18 intercollegiate women's rowing coaches in Washington and Oregon. The major findings of the study are: (1) the coaching field lacks a defined career pathway, clearly-articulated professional competencies and rigorous professional development programs; (2) coaches are self-directed learners who manage their participation in learning opportunities to develop their professional competencies with little direct feedback or evaluation; (3) coaches expect to develop competencies through learning-by-doing, value in situ experiences, and depend to a great extent on informal learning experiences; (4) coaches at all collegiate levels and competition divisions describes criteria for successful job performance as a combination of positive student-athlete experiences and competitive success; and (5) an initial analysis of the mentor relationship dynamic reveals a tension between an education focus regarding the development of the apprentice coach's skill set and a performance focus prioritizing team performance results. As a result of this research, a new model emerged that highlights the centrality of the coach as a self-directed

learner, closely integrates position competencies with learning experiences, and examines external influences on the individual's participation in professional development activities. The research also identified areas of congruence with the current findings regarding coaching education for international high-performance coaches. Implementation of the recommendations resulting from this research have the potential to create a culture of learning throughout the full spectrum of coaching positions that entails a great deal more than self-directed individuals pursuing training in relative isolation. In addition, these findings along with subsequent research provide the opportunity to shape the design and implementation of professional development programs that coaches and administrators view as essential for improving the quality and effectiveness of coaching in the U.S. collegiate setting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures	iii
List of Tables	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Background and Description of U.S. Intercollegiate Coaching	3
Historical Origins of U.S. Intercollegiate Coaching	3
The Structure and Environment of the Athletics Departments	15
Trends in Preparing Coaches for the Collegiate Setting	26
The Influence of Sports' Governance Organizations	31
Research in Coaching Education: The U.S. Perspective	35
Research in Coaching Education: The International Perspective	38
Conclusion	44
Chapter 2: Conceptual Frameworks	48
Coaching: A Complex Activity in a Complex Environment	49
Coaches as Adult-Learners: A Constructivist Orientation	52
Coaches as Self-Directed Learners	58
Self-Determination Shaping Coaches' Actions	60
Initial Conceptual Frameworks	62
Chapter 3: Research Question and Methodology	69
Research Questions	69
Research Design	70
Selection of Research Participants	72
Data Analysis	78
Research Limitations	82
Summary	83
Chapter 4: Findings	84
Coaches' Views of the Career Pathway and Professional Competencies	84
External Influences on Coaches' Professional Development and Evaluation	91
Coaches as Self-Directed Learners	98
Types of Learning Experiences Coaches Access	103
Conclusion	108
Chapter 5: Emerging Propositions and Models	110
Emerging Propositions Regarding Coaches' Professional Development	110
A New Model to Describe Self-Direction and Influences on Coaches' Participation in Professional Development	114
Application of the Model to Entry-Level Coaches	117
Application of the Model to Assistant-Level Coaches	122
Application of the Model to Head-Level Coaches	126

Role Tension for Mentor-Coaches.....	131
Conclusion	137
Chapter 6: Implications and Conclusion.....	139
Implications for Coaches’ Expectations in Professional Development.....	139
Implications for Increasing Coaches’ Mentoring Effectiveness.....	142
Implications for Practice with Athletics Departments and Sport’s Governance Organizations.....	143
Limitations and Considerations Regarding the Research	145
Future Research	146
Conclusion	148
References.....	150
Appendix: Interview Protocol.....	165
Vita.....	170

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Number	Page
1. U.S. Collegiate Coaches' Foundation Experiences	63
2. Coaching Components in the U.S. Collegiate Environment.....	64
3. Semiotic Square for U.S. Collegiate Coaches	67
4. Coaches as Self-directed Learners with Potential Learning Experiences.....	67
5. NCAA Women's Rowing Coaching in Washington and Oregon Compared to Pool of Interviewed Coaches	76
6. Professional Competencies Grouped by Coaching Positions as Described by Coaches	91
7. External Influences on Professional Development and Evaluation as Described by Coaches	98
8. Self-Directed Learning Components Applicable to Coaches	103
9. Learning Experiences Described by Coaches	108
10. Self-Direction and Influences on Coaches' Professional Development	115
11. Self-Direction and Influences on Entry-Level Coaches' Professional Development	119
12. Self-Direction and Influences on Assistant-Level Coaches' Professional Development	123
13. Self-Direction and Influences on Head-Level Coaches' Professional Development	127
14. Semiotic Square for Coaching Mentors	134
15. Semiotic Chain Analysis for Coaching Mentors	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table Number	Page
1. Number of NCAA Women's Rowing Programs	73
2. Number of Coaches at NCAA Women's Rowing Programs in WA & OR	73

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DEDICATION

To Eleanor,
the woman I admire as a coach, cherish as a friend and love with all my heart,
thank you for your encouragement and support throughout this endeavor.

INTRODUCTION

Recent trends in U.S. collegiate coaching demographics and changes in the U.S. collegiate coaching environment indicate a need to examine how coaches prepare for these complex and demanding careers. Currently, there is not a well-defined professional development path for aspiring U.S. collegiate coaches. Little is known about the factors influencing collegiate coaches' decisions around their professional development, including the role of self-directed learning.

An examination of the literature on the history of intercollegiate coaching, coaching education, and the social-cultural context that drives our current approach to sports and coaching in the United States is revealing. First, the dependence on athletics to promote the university, combined with a growing expectation of the entertainment factor, has intensified the job responsibilities of today's coaches. The complexity of the coaching role has increased, including expectations that collegiate coaches achieve high levels of performance (winning) with their teams, maintain a focus on student-athlete development, and manage a program that steers clear of scandal or rule infractions. Second, this examination reveals an athletic department structure that looks less to formal education criteria when hiring new coaches than to network connections that highlight candidates groomed through apprentice-like experiences. Today's posted coaching requirements indicate minimal criteria related to academic or professional background, and evaluation feedback appears to consist primarily of markers indicating adherence to compliance regulations and, most significantly, a winning record. Third, my examination describes a profession without a regulatory body to manage overall intercollegiate

coaching quality or credentials. Without a clear professional track, or external pressure to engage in structured professional preparation, coaches are left to their own devices to determine what will benefit their professional development. Educational opportunities currently available for coaches primarily focus on sport technique and training, and do not address the broad scope of job responsibilities. Specific credentials are often not a requirement for obtaining or maintaining employment. And yet, in the face of this U.S. picture of coaching, there is an emerging international movement that has outlined the complex, multi-faceted role demanded of today's high-performance coaches and is beginning to identify how the effective preparation of coaches needs to integrate both formal and informal professional preparation tied to actual coaching activity.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the factors that influence the participation and self-management of U.S. collegiate coaches within their professional development. Ultimately, my purpose in examining these issues is to expand our understanding of how to refine the elements of professional development to provide enhanced opportunities for coaches to succeed in their career development, maximize learning to build professional competencies. It can be argued that, ultimately, coaches who have been well prepared are best positioned to build programs that enrich the student-athlete experience.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The following chapter will (1) highlight the historical origins of U.S. intercollegiate coaching, (2) describe the structure and environment of the athletics departments, (3) identify trends in preparing coaches for the collegiate setting, (4) outline the influence of sports' governance organizations, and (5) examine research in coaching education from the U.S. and international perspectives. With the goal of enhancing the student-athlete experience, I conclude that factors revealed in these areas point toward a need to examine how collegiate coaches view their opportunities for professional development and currently manage their career path. This understanding is crucial because of the unique nature of the intercollegiate athletics environment in which coaches operate and how the factors that create the professional career path they must navigate.

Historical Origins of U.S. Intercollegiate Coaching

With a steady increase every year, 421,000 student-athletes currently compete on 17,800 collegiate teams in the United States (NCAA, 2010). Based on statistics describing the 1,200 NCAA member schools gathered for diversity reports by Lapchick (2010) and Carpenter & Acosta (2010), there were an estimated 18,500 head coaches and 29,800 assistant coaches active in intercollegiate athletics during the 2009-10 academic year. This total does not include the large number of additional volunteer coaches or graduate assistants who work with many of the teams or coaches involved with the additional 350 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and 500 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) institutions.

Although the news frequently highlights stories of record-breaking salaries, most coaches are not in this upper echelon of fame or notoriety. While many U.S. collegiate coaches are now able to work full-time in this profession, there are still numerous programs with part-time coaches or those working full-time for a minimal stipend for the season. More common at the Division II or Division III level, but seemingly declining, are coaches who have positions that combine coaching duties with some administrative functions related to the general operations of the athletics department. No matter what their status in the institution, intercollegiate coaching at any level requires a balance of managing high-pressure demands and providing a valuable opportunity to student-athletes.

“Coaching a modern college athletic program is a demanding and intense profession. The rigors of recruiting, of coaching, of working with student-athletes, of handling the enormous public attention – particularly that from the press – and of adhering to the complex rules governing athletes and athletics are challenging. Coaching requires extraordinary commitment, long hours of work, and demanding travel schedules. It often brings frustration and disappointment. While the celebrity coaches in highly visible football and basketball programs are usually paid at astronomical levels,... For the majority of coaches in intercollegiate athletics, the real reward lies not in the income but rather in the enjoyment of working with talented student-athletes, of seeing their progress, and of watching them succeed, both on the field and in the classroom.” (Duderstadt, 2003, p.62)

While the level of pressure and the complexity of the positions reach new heights, today’s coaches in 4,352 degree-granting colleges and universities (NCES, 2010) emerge from a long history with origins in the nine Colonial Colleges chartered prior to the Revolutionary War. American intercollegiate athletics first appeared in the first Colonial Colleges in the late 1700's. Initial sports competition organized by the students themselves (football and rowing) had a solid hold by the mid 1800's. Frequently, the team

captain functioned as the primary leader whose “responsibilities were not dissimilar to those of a latter-day professional coach. The captain set up training procedures, organized practice, chose the starting line-up, and made important decisions during contest” (Smith, 1988, p.119). Students supported their activity through dues or in some cases fundraising drives. Soon enough, the students would collaborate with local businessmen to create commercial events to draw spectators and establish additional sources of revenue (Smith, 1988, Flowers, 2007).

In seeking an edge over their rivals, the students did not take long to seek outside expertise and advice. “After the Yale crew challenged Harvard to another race in 1864, it decided to hire a professional to train the men for the contest. William Wood, a New York City gymnastic and physical education instructor, became the first professional trainer for an American college team” (Smith, 1988, p.35). Not long after the initiation of competition, campus alumni became involved as spectators, financial supporters and sometimes served as coaches (Flowers, 2007). Coaches, either recruited from outside campus or returning alumni, operated under direct agreement with the students. In 1885, Walter Camp, an alumni advisor with Yale and later known as “The ‘Father of American Football’”, said that ‘neither the faculties nor other critics assisted in building the structure of college athletics. In fact, they put some obstacles in the way. It is a structure’, added Camp, ‘which students unaided have builded (sic), and with pride they point to their labor, and love it more dearly for its very difficulties’” (as quoted in Smith, 1983, p.152).

Very quickly there was concern expressed by the faculty and the administrators about the burgeoning athletics programs. Responding to violence or brutality on the playing field, students spending too much time away from class, participation by alumni

or professional athletes, and the employment of professional coaches, many institutions established faculty athletic committees to provide oversight and regulate the athletic activity (Smith, 1983). At the same time the students and alumni were becoming more interested in developments (e.g., facility enhancements, improved training programs, increased coaching support, and participation in commercial events) that could lead to increased public attention and improve their opportunities for victory on the playing field. They resented any efforts by campus administrators and faculty to impose restrictions or rules, but faced a losing battle, especially when there was an increase in questionable practices and incidents of serious injury, and even death, on the playing field.

The challenges for wresting control of athletics included the lack of a governing body on a regional or national level. (Flowers, 2007) “Each institution drew up its own athletic rules. Conflicts arose when the regulations of one college gave it an athletic advantage over another. Individual institutional athletic committees acting without some form of inter-institutional controls led to almost constant arguments over eligibility rules and conditions of competition, such as the choice of officials or the use of professional coaches” (Smith, 1983, p.154).

The initial athletic department, an offspring of the faculty advisory committees, was also designed as a regulator to try to control what some identified as a student activity fraught with violence and scandal. In contrast to the initial leadership in men’s athletics by the students themselves, women’s sports emerged (soon after women became part of the college setting in the late 1800’s) with a significantly different goal. On the men’s side athletics was accepted, or at least tolerated, as a means to build character and to strengthen the body and soul to prepare men for future success in their professional

careers and as leaders in society. Women's athletic programs were initially designed to prepare the female student to cope with the stresses of the academic environment. The women physical educators were the driving force in the philosophy and program development for women's athletics. It was a delicate balance and programs were curtailed if the athletics were perceived to compromise the delicate feminine physique or endanger the reproductive system. Although there was some competition in the form of intramural Play Days and competitive events between teams from different campuses occurring in some locations, the call from leaders, and the espoused goals of the programs, valued participation (in moderation, of course) over competition.

Concerns about securing funding and recruiting students rose as the number of colleges increased dramatically in response to the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862. "Athletics would come to be an important part of the success equation, providing visibility to attract students and public support" (Flowers 2007, p.129). With control of college athletics now on campus and under the leadership of a new entity, the "athletic department", senior administrators took seriously the new role of athletics in drawing public interest and support. "Presidents and university boards looked for a bridge that could link the 'high culture' of academia with the general public and attempted to rally an otherwise ambivalent public that often neither understood nor necessarily valued the academic mission of the university in its zeal to become 'vicarious' alumni and demonstrate hometown (or home state) pride. The 'Big Game' was to become mass entertainment..." (Flowers, 2007, p.129).

While early efforts to create an inter-institutional governance structure failed to reach consensus about whether collegiate athletics should remain under student control or

shift to institutional control, a number of meetings attempted to draft regulations to manage the growing issues. The concept of a professional coach was frequently on the agenda. In 1883, Dudley Sargent, a Harvard University physical education pioneer and member of Harvard's athletic committee, was charged with gathering opinions from various campuses regarding professional coaches (Smith, 1995). The consensus of the faculty members was that college teams should not employ professional coaches. Contributing to this attitude was concern around the class and social stigma resulting from the frequent link of many professional sports with the working class, and even more concerning, ties to gambling and other vices. Faculty members had concerns that these "rougher elements" would be working directly with, and influencing the development of the impressionable future leaders of business and society. Eventually, the campus committees overseeing the growing athletic activity established guidelines imposing restrictions pertaining to the employment of coaches and stressing a continued focus on "amateurism."

Many within the colleges had adopted the ideal that amateurism was important to preserve within the athletics arena. This concept of amateurism was derived from the British system of differentiating between recreational pursuits undertaken by upper class gentlemen and the paid, professional athletic contests frequently part of the working class culture. Smith points out that although this ideal was frequently espoused by the college administrators, "the attempt to place those ideals into a fiercely competitive, win-oriented, and less class-restrictive American society was to prove unsuccessful" (Smith, 1988, p. 144). This idea would be used to control both the involvement of the professional coaches and to regulate the participation of lower- and working-class young

men who were being recruited to play on the college teams with increasing frequency. The temporary or seasonal hiring of professional coaches was eventually banned, although there was an allowance for the alumni coach who might also have been retained as a temporary or seasonal employee or the coach who became a legitimate, full-time employee of the college.

Coaches for women's teams were the women physical education instructors who were able to teach sports skills and carefully monitor the experience to ensure that the exertion was not too extreme for what was deemed the delicate nervous systems of the women. Rules for the games were modified by these coaches to provide a "level playing field," minimize the dominance of a star player, and decrease any chance of overexertion or undue strain on the reproductive system. Basketball, a sport that quickly became the dominant activity in many women's athletic programs by the early 1900's, was modified to increase the participation (e.g., limiting the number of dribbles) and decrease the chance for domination by a stronger player (e.g., restricting movement of any individual player to half of the court). A clear philosophy was adopted that "women's sports should contribute the 'greatest good to the greatest number; not the greatest good to the smallest number...' (Hill, 1903, p.5)."

At the same time, the concept of the college gaining from glory on the athletic field resulted in the growing acceptance of athletics place within the institution and yielded to the pressure to allow professional coaches to work with the major men's teams. When Yale gained domination on the football gridiron in the late 1800's, Harvard's president, "overcame his doubts about the educational value of football and hired William Reid as a coach" (Guttman, 2004, p.144). Foreshadowing the practices of

today, the coach was paid 30% more than the institution's highest paid faculty member (Guttman, 2004). At the same time that the prestige of athletics was growing, the complexity of the athletics programs increased, with a more scientific approach to skill development and training regimens. Coaches also played a key role in the promotion of the "big games" within the community and developing a strong connection with an expanding group of athletic boosters. When the University of Chicago's President William Rainey Harper realized the impact of athletics on the image of his institution, "he hired Amos Alonzo Stagg to coach the team, gave him professorial status, and told him to put the fledgling university on the academic map. 'I want you to develop teams which we can send around the country and knock out all the colleges.' Stagg complied" (Guttman, 2004, p.144).

With a rash of injuries and fatalities, predominantly in the rapidly expanding sport of football, the 1905 season proved to be the driver in addressing inter-institutional control. With 18 players killed and another 159 seriously injured during the '05 season, some institutions actually dropped football, including Stanford, the University of California, Columbia, and the University of Chicago (Smith, 1998). The colleges finally came together under pressure from United States President Theodore Roosevelt and formed the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States. This organization would evolve into the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 1910 with a stated purpose of "the regulation and supervision of college athletics throughout the United States, in order that the athletic activities in the colleges and universities of the United States may be maintained on an ethical plane in keeping with the dignity and high purpose of education" (Spears, 1978, p.184). Women's athletics also were expanding and

became engrained in the structure of the colleges. The tight control of the physical education department continued and supported the broader philosophy about the role of education for women. “What Catherine E. D’Urso calls, ‘the ideology of educated motherhood’ led to the proliferation of college-level courses in domestic science and, simultaneously, to programs of physical activity designed to improve health while avoiding overexertion and the dreaded spectre of exercise-induced infertility” (Guttman, 1991, p.136).

Between the turn of the century and the late 1930’s, athletic coaches within the collegiate system for both the men and women’s teams were frequently part of the physical education system that was growing in both the interscholastic and intercollegiate settings. “As the strategy of the game became more important, the coach’s role – - as recruiter, game-planner, motivator, and publicist – - came to overshadow the player’s” (Guttman, 2004, p.146). During this period, coaches for both men and women were frequently involved with teaching in the institution’s recreation or physical education department. However, qualifications to hold these positions were not as defined as might be assumed. It appears that especially on the men’s side, a coach might receive a faculty appointment, but the criteria or requirements for these appointments were suspect. A 1925 report on intercollegiate athletics prepared by Dr. Howard J. Savage of the Carnegie Foundation questioned this practice.

“A development of recent years has been the appointment of coaches on college faculties...Appointment as a member of a faculty as contrasted with employment on a part-time or seasonal basis confers no mystical assurance that the work of any coach shall succeed in developing habits of honesty, uprightness, courage, or self-reliance among the young men entrusted to his care. Of all the field of higher education, physical education shows the largest number of members with the rank of professor who have only the bachelor’s

degree or no degree whatever. In short, faculty status of itself guarantees to the institution nothing whatsoever with respect to the ability and character of the coach” (Cowley, 1999, p.498-499).

Another part of Savage’s report lists the average salary of coaches at \$6,107, just under the dean’s average of \$6,409 and above both averages for professors at \$5,158 and the director of physical education at \$5,095 (Cowley, 1999). After a long career on the sidelines, coaches would frequently complete their careers serving as administrators within the athletics department at their institution, a practice that remains today, although to a lesser degree.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s areas of specialization began to emerge within the physical education curriculum (e.g., biomechanics, sport psychology, motor learning, sport sociology) especially in the non-teaching and non-coaching areas (Dieffenbach, 2010). In a close examination of these historical trends in the professional preparation of physical educators and coaches, Dieffenbach and Wayda (2010) identify the lack of specialized courses emerging in the area of coaching education as the start of a separation between physical education and athletics. They point towards the additional reinforcement for this divorce that arises from the low status of teacher education and the growing “dumb jock” image. The continued professionalization of teaching (requiring a teaching license following a prescribed regime of courses) and emerging areas related to the expanding scientific study of physical education (e.g., athletic training, sport psychology, and exercise physiology) would continue on a steady progression without a parallel system in the coaching dimension (Dieffenbach, 2010).

In 1971, the female physical educators formed the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), as a response to the growing power of the NCAA

(Guttman, 2004, Gems 2009). The unifying concern for the women was the inequity between the men's and women's college programs. Despite the majority group that continued to oppose competitive programs and hoped to lead reform throughout college athletics, the tide of change was too strong to hold back. Title IX of the Education Act of 1972 contributed to the growing population of women athletes and created a dramatic increase in the need for additional coaches. "The unintended consequence of the sudden increase in the number of women's teams created a demand that the pool of female educators was unable to meet. As the absolute number of female coaches, managers, and officials rose, the women's percentage fell. 'In 1972, 90 percent of those coaching in women's intercollegiate athletics were women. By 1987, only 50 percent were women'" (Guttman, 1991, p. 222). As women's athletics gained parity and prominence in many athletic departments, these new positions appealed to men just entering the coaching field.

As most coaching positions are no longer linked with physical education or recreation activity teaching duties, there is even less pressure to require academic preparation related to these areas of study. What has increased is the pressure to pay top dollar to hire a "winner." There is also a temptation to discount a lack of professional preparation on a candidate's resume or even compliance infractions in his or her past when an athletic director is filling a vacant position or attempting to retain a high profile coach. The growing entertainment and revenue dimensions of big-time college athletics (primarily in football and basketball) that strongly influence public perceptions have continued to shape how coaches are viewed. "Even more significant than the growth of television dollars was the way that college sporting events were increasingly viewed as

public entertainment, as commercial products, rather than as competitive events. Winning coaches and players rapidly assumed celebrity status, surrounded by their own cadre of fans and subject to all of the associated temptations and pressures of fame” (Dunderstadt, 2003, p.75-76).

Even for coaches at programs not in the media spotlight, the responsibilities have expanded and become much more complex in the last couple of decades. Staying engaged with the seemingly non-stop recruiting activities, navigating the complex compliance requirements, supporting fundraising efforts, developing relationships with boosters, managing their budget, and supervising assistant coaches are responsibilities in addition to those directly linked to practice sessions and game-time responsibilities. Additionally, some have recognized that today’s coaches are working with a population of athletes with different characteristics and expectations than those of the past (Mangan, 1995, Lombardo, 2010). “Athletes today are very different. They ask more questions and they’re more aware of their rights. Some of the old coaching methods won’t work with them” (Mangan, 1995, p.A36). With the NCAA, the university and the public watching closely, coaches are seen as responsible for supporting student-athletes who are on track to achieve academically, developing young people who will enter society as productive citizens of good character, and, of course, managing a team that wins on a consistent basis.

The previous survey provides a historical overview and highlights changes in the role of coaches and the increased scope of responsibilities in today’s working environment. Today’s U.S. collegiate coaches are engaged in positions that extend beyond the competencies related to physical education or related exercise science areas.

Coaching on the field and teaching activity classes have been more frequently replaced with the equivalent of managing a business and engaging in a variety of high profile activities to garner financial support for the team and, at times, the athletic department. Neither a centralized system for educating coaches nor a clear career path for those preparing to enter the profession currently exists. This lack of a clear and meaningful career path may reduce the effective preparation of coaches entering the profession and inhibit their ability to succeed once in the industry. Additionally, it increases the chance for situations to develop that produce scandals or conditions providing diminished experiences for the student-athletes.

The Structure and Environment of the Athletics Department

The second important aspect of today's collegiate coaching environment is the dynamic of the athletic department on college campuses and the role of governing bodies in directing the preparation of coaches. This structure may contribute to a situation in which the coach functions without supportive oversight. Athletic department senior administrators without a clear strategy to identify and evaluate coaching competencies may yield to the pressure of focusing predominately on the win column and the existing coaches' network to identify qualified candidates.

Athletics is a visible and powerful feature of many colleges and universities throughout the country. "The athletic department is often the largest unit on a college campus. As economic, social, and political agents in American higher education, athletic departments have become highly influential" (Putler, 1999, p.303). Writing frequently about athletics within higher education, Suggs provides a rich description of athletics as

the “front porch of the university” (Suggs, 2005, p. 9-10). This image acknowledges that for many people, connection and access to the university is through the sports events and programs they attend in person or follow through the media. While athletics have long been a part of college and university activities, “The marquee sports have evolved into the *key* point of reference to the university for many important audiences, an outcome that the university has fostered through its use of college sports in campus life and external relations” (Toma & Kezar, 1999, p. 81). As stated earlier, the desire to promote the university and increase community support was a driving force in the initial hiring of “professional coaches” to work with the athletic teams.

According to Gerdy (2002, pp.33-34), for more than 100 years, college presidents have espoused variations on the following justifications for athletics’ place on college campuses:

1. *Athletics generates revenue, visibility, and prestige for the university.*
2. *Athletics provides entertainment and serves a unifying function for an increasingly fragmented university community.*
3. *Athletics is educational (character building) for the students participating” (Gerdy, 2002, p.33-34).*

Whether these elements are actually true has long been debated, but they have significant impact on how athletic departments are situated within the broader campus environment. It appears that many athletic departments can be described, with a term proposed by organizational researcher Weick, as “loosely coupled” with the rest of campus. Weick’s use of the term loosely coupled was intended “to convey the image that coupled events are responsive, but that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness” (Weick, 1976, p. 28). The Athletic Director often reports directly to the University President or another high-level

administrator. Especially at major institutions with large athletic departments, the athletics unit may operate as an independent entity. Although the type and level of direct support varies, these departments may function as self-sustaining units and operate with a tremendous amount of autonomy in terms of facility operations, program operations, personnel, and development efforts, media relations and control of the student-athletes daily activities. They may also maintain administrative functions in-house rather than through centralized campus services. Students in the athletics program may receive medical, strength training and conditioning, computer lab resources, counseling services, and academic advising distinct from those provided to other students on campus. Even the physical isolation that may initially result from the need for space to develop athletics fields and stadia can compound the psychological distinction and be reinforced through language used to identify the various areas. For example, on the University of Washington campus, the academic territory is often referred to as “upper campus” reflecting the physical placement across a major boulevard and on the top of an adjacent plateau.

An area of concern within higher education is the increasing distinction between the academic and athletic dimensions of the institution. This loose coupling can allow for local adaptation, unique modifications, and even monetary efficiencies by allowing the athletic department to operate in its own interest and with a nimbleness sometimes lost in large bureaucratic institutions. Loose coupling provides an environment in which “one element can adjust to and modify a local unique contingency without affecting the whole system” (Weick, 1976, p. 32). The concept of self-determination as a characteristic is

evident in the fact that the athletic department is left to its own... as long as the program is not bringing negative attention to the University.

However, there are also potential dangers in this distancing of the athletic department from the main campus organization. It is possible that instead of functioning as a linked component within the higher education experience, the athletic department views itself in isolation. This may lead to a stated or implied mission distinct from that of the broader campus, one that may drift from the education focus and move closer to an environment which puts the highest priority on competitive success. The athletic department focused primarily on winning sports competition, and the measures to support that singular goal, can be in conflict with conditions supportive of academic success and development for the student-athlete. Adjusting academic entry requirements to bring in talented athletes, participating in the intercollegiate athletics arms race of facilities and coaches' salaries, excessive time demands for team practices and "optional" workouts, and missing classes to travel and prepare for competition are just a few of the pressures that run counter to a healthy, balanced academic setting.

On the other hand, the appeal and use of athletics events to attract donors and campus supporters cannot be underestimated. Access to good game tickets, invitations to events with high-profile coaches and athletes, and the tie to an institution with a national championship title are valuable incentives readily used by development staff within the athletic department and often throughout the campus community. "What is clear is that when universities view their athletic teams not only as a means of making money, but also the mechanism for improving the status of the entire institution, the pressure to win

grows very intense indeed. The single most likely outcome is that academic standards will be a major casualty of the process” (Bok, 2003, p. 51).

In discussing the need to better prepare coaches, one athletic conference commissioner describes the current lack of connection, “In many cases, a coach is hired on a Monday, shows up for work on Tuesday and is out recruiting the next day...these are some of the most visible people on campus, and yet often they have little understanding of the campus culture” (Mangan, 1995, p.A36). Eitzen (1997) summarized this dilemma, “The overarching contradiction is that we have organized a commercial entertainment activity within an educational environment. And in the process educational goals are compromised” (p.126).

Once a coach does obtain a position in an athletic department, he or she joins a sub-group of the athletic department that may also be isolated and functioning as yet another loosely-coupled unit of the organization. A part-time coach may work individually, not engaging with other coaches or department staff on a regular basis. In larger programs, coaches work primarily within their team of head, assistant, volunteer coaches and/or support staff. There is a significant amount of the local adaptation that Weick (1976) defines as one function of loose coupling, as the teams determine their plans for hiring coaching staffs, recruiting athletes, awarding scholarships, scheduling training activities, and organizing competition details.

This coaching group is often hired and fired through contractual agreements detailing the specific metrics for evaluation in the areas of team success, fundraising, adherence to compliance rules, and graduation rates. Sometimes these heavily-weighted metrics are related to winning titles, increased revenue generation, and preservation of

compliance eligibility rather than elements tied directly to the student-athlete experience. There is no doubt that the ability to manage a winning team (often defined as achievement at a specified level of performance within a defined timeframe) is the most significant element of this contract. Assistants and support staff contracts are frequently tied to the head coach, so their employment will end if the head coach departs. However, the mixed messages described earlier and the “weight” of a winning record versus achievements in other criteria listed in the contract (e.g., graduation rates, student-athlete satisfaction, adherence to compliance rules and protocols, etc.) may not be clearly defined in the contract, or it may be contradicted by the actual feedback and evaluation messages of the senior administrators.

At the same time, coaches may develop power and influence within the athletic department and beyond as a result of their visibility and proximity to the central activity of the athletic program. They are seen on the sidelines, in the media, front and center at special events, and working directly with the student-athletes on a regular basis. They have primary control over the success of the teams and thereby are in a position to contribute directly to the position of the department in the hierarchy of college winners. The level of this power can impact how they respond to direction and supervision from within the formal athletic department hierarchy. In some situations, the coaches are viewed as more powerful than the athletic director or even the college president. However, it is a double-edged sword as these high-profile individuals are also subject to intense media attention and public scrutiny for any missteps. One only need read the headlines to find examples of coaches who are fired, or resign, in the wake of scandal. Even so, however, many are hired by another campus looking to bring on the magic

ticket to a winning program. Upon hiring Rick Neuheisel, a former head coach who had been closely linked with infractions and questionable practices at two previous institutions, UCLA Athletic Director Guerrero explained his choice, “In the end it was all about 66 collegiate wins, a percentage that places him among the top active coaches in the country...” (ESPN, 2010). When asked about the wash of damages in Neuheisel’s past, Athletic Director Guerrero explained he had some concerns during the hiring process but, “I looked Rick in the eye, he looked me in the eye and we conveyed very clearly what our thoughts were,” Guerrero said. “This [the scandals] happened five to 10 years ago, and he said he is much wiser and more mature” (Seattle Times, 2004).

Findings by Barber and Eckrich (1998) investigating the evaluation of intercollegiate coaches confirmed that the concept of “loose coupling” discussed previously may also carry over to the evaluation process of the athletic department employees and intensify the conflict of roles that makes evaluation difficult in the best of situations. “The conflict between athletics as business and athletics as education may be at the crux of the ambiguity associated with evaluation. Based on these insights about athletics, the determination needs to be made regarding the role of coaches. Are they educators, merely supervisors in a business — or are they both?” (Barber, 1998, p.303).

Understanding the unique setting that collegiate coaches operate in today’s athletic departments points to a need to ensure that coaches are prepared with the requisite skills to be successful within the institution. Coaches in some programs will confront the potentially conflicting goals for high competitive achievement and creating a positive student-athlete experience. Coaches may be faced with a work environment that provides intense pressure and isolation within a loosely-coupled environment. The

institution in which a coach works may itself have a love-hate relationship with the athletics program and a mix of advocates and critics on campus. Identifying the training and preparation most helpful to assist coaches in navigating within their campus environment, especially beyond the boundaries of the athletic department is important to the coaches' broader success.

Concerns with the potential for scandal and recognition of the power of the institution's athletic image are compelling many university presidents to become increasingly involved in athletics. A tighter coupling of the athletic department with the rest of the campus is likely as a response to rein in the exploding growth of athletics, and to ensure damage control if the pressures to win create scandal. In describing the predicament of university presidents, Bok suggests "Many university presidents are probably not aware, and do not want to be aware, of the full effect of college sports on their own campus. But most feel at least some discomfort at having to maintain and defend a high-pressure athletic operation, with all the academic compromise it entails. Some would even agree silently with the verdict of a former president of the University of Michigan, who presided over one of the nation's most successful programs: 'The mad race for fame and profits through intercollegiate athletics is clearly a fool's quest'" (Bok, 2003, p. 51). While this tighter coupling may be instituted initially as a means of control and link athletics closer to the rest of campus, it will not eliminate the tensions that are certain to continue between the desire for competitiveness and the education and development of the whole person.

There are two additional issues within the intercollegiate coaching field that suggest a need to examine how coaches are entering the field and achieving success in

the profession: (1) the continued decrease in the number of women coaches and (2) the low percentage of coaches of color are two concerns highlighted by a number of studies and longitudinal reports. Both historical developments and current athletic department structural characteristics are likely factors in creating and maintaining these conditions.

During the consolidation of men's and women's departments that occurred during the late 1960's and into the 1980's, the men had an advantage in retaining their positions or using their professional network to find work at another institution. "Epstein (1970) identified several processes by which male-dominated professions limit the participation of women. Those processes include institutionalized channels of recruitment and protégé systems that are not easily available to women. One of the pressures that women confront when they enter a male-dominated occupation is the inability to obtain information through the 'good old boy' network (Harragon, 1977)" (as cited in Banks, 2000, p. 244). The same situation can be applied to men of color when there is recognition that the coaching profession is accurately described as a white male-dominated profession.

The number of women coaches and administrative leaders has continued to decline over the past 30 years. Women in senior positions in athletic departments have remained consistently low in number, holding only 7.8% of the head athletic director positions in 2009 (Lapchick, 2010). "Even though the number of women's teams are at an all time high, the representation of females among the coaching ranks of women's intercollegiate athletics is at an all time low" (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010, p.1). In a steady decline from 90% in 1972, only 42.6% of the current coaches for Division I women's teams are female. In a newer trend that is a concern with respect to career advancement in the future, the percentage of women assistant coaches for women's teams fell in all three

NCAA Divisions to less than 50% (Lapchick, 2010). Factors that appear to constrict the leadership opportunities for women include increased competitiveness for coaching positions as salaries and team support increases for women's sports (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010), increasing demands on head coaches resulting in more work-family conflict (Dixon & Bruening, 2007), decreasing job satisfaction as the pressure to win assumes a dominant position (Wilson, 2007), continued sexual prejudice and homophobia (Cunningham, 2007), and sex-role stereotypes that keep women limited in peripheral positions that limit their career development (Suggs, 2005).

Despite a significant percentage in the number of student-athletes of color, the number of administrators and coaches has lagged significantly behind. For example, Lapchick (2010) reported that in the 2009 season in Division I, II and III athletics 72.2% of the male student-athletes and 78.9% of the female student-athletes were white. For the same time period white coaches dominated the head coaching positions for both men's and women's sports within a range between 87.7% to 92.5% among all three divisions. The lack of non-white leaders extends throughout the institutions, with most people holding senior administrative positions in college sports still predominantly identified as white and male. On Division I campuses in 2007-08 (excluding the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) conferences), 94.2 percent of the presidents were white and, 90% percent of the athletic directors were white and 92.2% were male, 93.4% percent of the faculty athletics reps were white and 73% were male, and 100% of the conference commissioners were white and 87.8% were male (Lapchick, 2010). Race-identified positions as described by Banks (2000) appear consistent in the pattern of positions held by people of color within many athletic department departments. Racial

bias and a perceived lack of opportunity by potential candidates are additional factors that may result in fewer people of color in coaching and staff positions within athletics (Cunningham, 2007). Minimal efforts in recruiting minority candidates and token consideration during the hiring process have been highlighted frequently as other factors that have limited opportunities for non-white coaches ("Black Coaches and Administrators", 2007). A better understanding about the access to professional development opportunities and career progression may provide opportunities to shift these statistics and open the coaching field to a broader group of candidates.

Many of today's headline stories in collegiate athletics involve the high-profile programs of NCAA Division 1. These are often the programs identified in reports about eligibility infractions, inappropriate coach or student-athlete behavior, "excessive" expenditures for salaries and facilities, and questions regarding the amateur status of the top student-athletes. At the same time, the foundational elements of many of these issues are found across the spectrum of collegiate athletic divisions, sports, and competitive status. There is also a great deal of mobility of coaches between the various division levels and types of institutions. Therefore, it is important when examining coaching education to look across the scope of the collegiate scene and understand that we need to prepare coaches with the values, skills, and competencies that serve them in a variety of settings and under various levels of pressures and challenges. In any size program, in any sport, the overall goal does not change. Collegiate athletics has the potential to contribute to the development of student-athletes and enrich their higher education experience. This potential is only realized if we have coaching professionals prepared to lead the programs with development and enrichment as top priorities.

Trends in Preparing Coaches for the Collegiate Setting

In today's medium to large college athletic departments, administrative and operations staff members are often organized by functional areas (such as sports medicine, finance, facilities, events, sports performance, communications, marketing, development, and alumni relations). These staff members are frequently hired as professional or classified employees with more traditional job descriptions and employment practices similar to parallel staff in other campus units. Like those entering the coaching arena, student-athletes may secure an initial position after completing their athletic eligibility. They can learn the basics in this internship or entry-level position and eventually move up, or to another campus, into professional level positions. However, even for individuals hired from areas outside of athletics, with strong business backgrounds, there is a growing expectation that these new professionals will acquire a master's degree in sports management or business administration if they persist in the field. Many of the support roles within an athletic department, e.g., academic advisors, athletic trainers, nutritionists, sports psychologists, and strength and conditioning trainers have also become more professionalized with an expectation for advanced degrees or certifications. Many of the professionals working in these positions are also expected to attend workshops or earn continuing education credits to maintain their status. However, this shift toward a professionalization of the administrators and support staff does not appear to carryover to individuals in the coaching positions.

In 1981, Richardson extended a study from 1978, "Academic Status of Coaches in Higher Education". In examining questionnaire results similar to the 1978 study, Richardson affirmed a common expectation that athletics coaches were also teaching

physical education courses. Of the coaches that responded, 71% had a degree in physical education and another 14% had a degree in an education-related field. The study also showed that an average of 77% of the coaches had participated in undergraduate athletics (with a high of 89% among the Division I coaches). While Richardson concluded that preparation curriculum needed to consider both teaching and coaching skills, he implied that the most appropriate preparation would result from a physical education degree. However, it could be argued that the dramatic shift in job responsibilities and emergence of a high-performance focus within collegiate athletics since this time period makes the traditional physical education curriculum fall short.

Richardson also noted a trend mentioned previously regarding the shift in job responsibilities for today's college coaches. Specifically, Richardson indicated that the Division I coaches had a lighter teaching load and were less likely to have advanced degrees beyond their baccalaureate than their counterparts working at Division II or III institutions. Although additional studies were not identified that examined this shift, a review of almost 200 assistant and head coaching positions posted on the NCAA Marketplace website during a one month period in 2010 points toward an even greater shift away from teaching. The positions examined represented openings in all athletic divisions and in a multitude of sport disciplines.

In an examination of the job postings, 96% of the positions required a higher education degree, but only 8% indicated the degree should be in a major or area of study related to "physical education or a related field." While 73% of the postings required that candidates have experience coaching, 29% indicated that collegiate athletics participation and/or coaching were sufficient criteria for consideration. Only 1% of the job postings

detailed any sport-specific certification as a requirement. Interestingly, these requirements appear where the positions were also responsible for teaching in the physical education or recreation department. These findings are not surprising given the move of coaches from an academic position within the physical education department or other area of exercise science, to a role specific to the performance of an intercollegiate athletic department sports team.

While the job postings are detailing minimum requirements and it is likely that the coaches hired exceed these qualifications, the minimal criteria appear to reflect the absence of comprehensive or standardized coaching education criteria. To obtain more detail about a small group of coaches, I examined the published profiles of the 17 head coaches at a U.S. Division I college in the northwest. This revealed a pattern consistent with findings of other researchers (Richardson, 1981, Gould, 1990, Gilbert, 2006, 2009), who conducted formal studies of similar groups of coaches. All 17 coaches had participated as student-athletes within their sport at the collegiate level and 9 went on to play in the professional leagues or on the national team following their college eligibility. Fifteen of the 17 coaches had earned a bachelor's degree, only four in a field traditionally related to coaching (physical education-2, sports management-1, education-1). The other degrees were in a variety of subjects including communications, geography, history, English, film studies, psychology, biology, and criminal justice. The first athletic department position for 10 of the coaches was as a student-assistant or assistant-level coach at their alma mater. The coaches all had held at least one assistant coach position, and sometimes they had multiple assistant and head coaching positions at smaller colleges before being hired at the current institution. Six of the coaches had completed

graduate level coursework or a master's degree in a variety of subjects (physical education-1, sports administration-1, exercise physiology-1, education-3).

These cursory findings point toward a need for further research on what academic foundations may be perceived as valuable in the preparation for coaching during undergraduate study or when a part-time volunteer assistant arrives at the decision to pursue this career field. Is it possible that given the broad range of job responsibilities expected of today's coaches, a degree in business or management is viewed as applicable as a degree in education or exercise physiology? Does the interdisciplinary nature of today's college coaching positions allow for transferable skills from a number of academic disciplines? It is also possible that if individuals are not making a decision to enter the coaching profession until late in their college program, there are factors that persuade them to continue in their established courses of study rather than change majors, especially if there is not a major or academic discipline that seems particularly advantageous for the novice coach.

In an examination of U.S. high school and college coaches viewed as "successful," it was determined that they spent an average of 25 hours per year in coaching education clinics (Gilbert as cited in Jones, 2006). Not specific to intercollegiate athletics, but closely linked, Gould (1990) investigated the educational backgrounds and self-perceived needs of national-level U.S. coaches. In his introduction, Gould indicates that with no centralized system, "it is estimated that less than 30% of the coaches involved in U.S. school and university programs have formal coaching education, and the number is declining (American Coaching Effectiveness Program, 1987)" (Gould, 1990, p.332). By questioning 130 elite level coaches, Gould compiled data describing the

educational backgrounds and opinions regarding coaching education. Almost 80% of the coaches had earned a 4-year college degree, with 36% of the degrees in physical education or recreation. Coaches participated in a variety of activities to develop their coaching competencies, but a significant finding was how highly they valued experiential knowledge and informal education. "... coaches indicated that their coaching styles were most influenced by experience and by observing successful coaches, and least influenced by reading coaching books and journals or by taking courses" (Gould, 1990, p.341). Gould points to the need for well-developed apprenticeships and mentor programs to guide the experiential learning dimension. In a study investigating the critical factors related to women's abilities to attain coaching and administrative positions in college athletics, Danylchuk, Pastore and Inglis (1996) identified previous work experience as the most critical factor, stressing the need for opportunities to apprentice and work with mentors. Of interest was also the finding that coaches did not rate educational qualification among their top five factors. This was in contrast to college athletic administrators who ranked educational qualifications as more critical than the coaches, placing it third on their list of critical factors.

The lack of standard criteria expressed in job descriptions and the academic backgrounds of coaches at the sample institution may be a reflection of the various backgrounds that coaches arrive with when they enter the collegiate coaching scene or work their way up through the ranks through the youth sports system. The foundation of apprenticeship or on-the-job experience, building on previous experience as a competitor, appears to be the typical pedigree for today's collegiate coach. Given the previously described loosely coupled structure of the athletic department and the pressure for high

tallies in the win column and the distant application of current majors from the complex menu of coaching responsibilities, there does not appear to be any clear expectation or guidance from the athletic department senior administrators to require any specific formal preparation or encourage participation in continuing education once the coaches are working in their athletic departments.

The Influence of Sports' Governance Organizations

As formal coaching education criteria are not uniformly required by the athletic departments hiring college coaches, the related academic fields and sport's governance organizations are possible sources of authority for professional pathways or opportunities for formal preparation to pursue a coaching career. National and regional organizations, the NCAA and the regional athletics conferences, are entities within the collegiate athletics arena that have an impact on policy and often respond to one of the two sides of the collegiate sports coin. The first side reveals the positive influence of athletics and its link to a richer collegiate experience that carries into student-athletes' future successes. The NCAA drives a powerful media presence to sell the image of the student-athlete experience as a valuable part of the educational institution. Athletic conferences do the same, frequently running advertisements weaving together the academic achievements and athletic dominance of member institutions and student-athletes. The second side of the coin is linked to a regulatory and enforcement function directed at keeping a level playing field for the member institutions. Actions in this area attempt to address the criticism about an out of control arms race within college athletics that is resulting in astronomical coaching salaries, concerns about booster and agent influence, the pressure

to play loose with compliance regulations, and coaching practices that may seem questionable but are frequently downplayed in the quest for quick victories.

Closely linked to these two organizations (some say too closely), the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, an advocacy group seeking to reform college athletics, continues to develop reports and guidelines outlining various strategies for self-imposed reform by the colleges and universities to manage the athletics beast that many fear to be out of control. Their efforts also attempt to convince government officials that they do not need to impose reform legislation. As the regulatory body, the NCAA does administer self-study training and an online test for active collegiate coaches related to compliance and recruiting guidelines. Additionally, in 2010 the NCAA announced it would post an online database that shows the Academic Progress Rates (a rating system for student-athlete progress toward graduation) for Division I coaches in six sports, including football and basketball. A description of the project on the NCAA website indicates the intention of the NCAA Board is “to create a ‘lifetime APR’ for a coach that would follow the individual from job to job and be publicly available as an incentive for coaches and to better inform hiring decisions on campus” (Hosick, 2010). However, there are no minimal levels of education or training imposed by the NCAA on collegiate coaches.

Outside the formal governance structure of college athletics the Women’s Sport Foundation, the Black Coaches and Administrators organization, and the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport serve as watchdogs and highlight areas of concern. They have proven effective in attracting media attention to their “report cards” and summaries that document progress or the lack of progress in various dimensions of diversity and

access. Diversity concerns illustrate an organizational dynamic that will require more than just increasing the number of women and people of color working in the athletics department. “Once hired, this new workplace diversity must be effectively managed to foster an environment where minorities and women can achieve success. Just as minority student-athletes face particular challenges on an overwhelmingly white campus, minority and women coaches and administrators have needs that are unique in an environment that is dominated by white males” (Gerdy, 2002, p. 127). The role of coaches in these reform efforts is often highlighted, but primarily in terms of their need to avoid the excesses or temptations to circumvent the system.

A recent article in the Journal of Coaching Education, a publication of the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), highlights a new plan being implemented by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Coaching Education Department. “With a solid foundation and a staff passionate about giving their best to athletes and coaches at all levels, the USOC Coaches Education Department looks to the future by finally taking on the role that was prescribed for it 32 years ago by the United States Congress. Faced with challenges from the other nations that have well-funded and well-developed national coaching and athlete development programs, the USOC coaches education program proposes a new focus for its efforts in order to take advantage of the strengths and opportunities of America’s unique amateur sports system” (McCann, 2010, Pg.9). At the same time, the USOC staff and resources dedicated to coaching education have undergone a dramatic decrease over the last 15 years. The Journal of Coaching Education is closely affiliated with the USA Coaching Coalition, a small group representing the USOC, various higher education academic programs

affiliated with coaching education, and the National Governing Body (NGB) representatives from a number of different sports.

While there is a link with the NCAA, the USA Coaching Coalition does not appear to currently have credibility or influence to effect any change that might impact coaching education criteria or qualifications. With limited direct services targeting the top-level coaches and athletes, many of the USOC efforts are implemented through support services for the NGBs that manage national team activity and sport development efforts, including coaching education. Clinics or workshops are directed at high-performance elements of training or technique, application of emerging sport science developments, and are developed for the elite level athletes.

At the NGB level, coaching education programs do not follow a common structure or format and vary in terms of their credibility or acceptance even within their own sport community. Depending on the specific NGB, coaching education may be directed along a spectrum from elite athlete preparation for the highest level of competition and grassroots expansion, to youth or novice athletes. Similar to the USOC programs, many of these curricula focus on sport-specific skills related to training and technique, rather than the broad skills set unique to coaches in the college setting. Additionally, there does not appear to be a tight link between the coaching education opportunities provided by the NGBs and requirements listed by the college athletic department's job postings.

As an example, in the rowing community, the USRowing Coaching Education program was revitalized in the mid-1990's and re-formatted again 5 years later to incorporate the framework of the NASPE coaching standards. The curriculum was

designed to prepare a broad group from entry-level through mid-level coaches working with community learn-to-row programs, junior (scholastic) programs, collegiate teams, competitive adult clubs, and national level programs working with pre-elite and elite athletes. The program established a standardized curriculum for coaching workshops and introduced three levels of certification. Clinics and workshops targeting coaches at the top-level of the sport are frequently part of the NGB's annual convention with sessions conducted by national team coaches, international coaches, and USOC high-performance staff. An informal survey revealed reference to coaching certification as a requirement for many entry-level club and community club positions; however, certification does not appear as a required qualification for most college positions. Also, despite a formal certification processing system, USRowing does not maintain a database to track the number of coaches participating in the program, nor do they track what levels or types of programs certified coaches are working with once they complete their certification.

Research in Coaching Education: The U.S. Perspective

An initial look into the literature indicates that research about the preparation of U.S. collegiate coaches is minimal. There have been many studies about coaching styles or the impact of coaching practices on athletes, but these are primarily in the youth-sports arena. Specific to intercollegiate athletics, a few studies have investigated diversity issues within coaching, such as the low percentage of women and people of color in coaching, and the poor retention of women coaches (Acosta, 2008; Cunningham, 2005; Inglis, 2000; Moosbrugger, 2009; Vest 2007). Many articles in the literature are "how-tos," identifying strategies for improving a specific area within coaching, changing coaching

behaviors, or identifying effective traits of good coaches (DeMarco, 1997; Gilbert, 2005; Lombardo, 1999; Lough, 2001; Steinberg, 1999; Sullivan, 2003; Becker, 2009). A few studies investigated the interplay between the intercollegiate climate, job satisfaction, and leadership (Snyder, 1990; Scott, 1999; Chase, 2010). The inquiries that did examine professional development for intercollegiate coaching included the previously discussed study by Richardson's (1981) on academic preparation and Danylchuk's (1996) focus on critical factors related to job attainment. An additional researcher, Barber (1998), examined performance evaluation of coaches in light of the multi-dimensional nature of their positions. Although many of these studies concluded with the need for good preparation for coaches, especially within the unique environment of collegiate athletics, they did not address the overall professional development process.

A recent study by Dieffenbach and Wayda (2010) examined the coaching education system in the United States and focused on the distinction between athletic coaching and physical education teacher preparation. While not directly focused on the collegiate setting, the authors indicated that the field of athletic coaching within the United States has not developed with rigorous academic discipline and lacks the more clearly defined professional career development pattern of the physical education teacher programs and the other sport science fields. They also acknowledge that coaching currently encompasses a broad scope of activity from broad-based sport participation to competitive performance goals. The participants also span the developmental and interest spectrum (i.e., youth to adult, novice to elite athlete, recreational to high-performance goals). The examination of the state of coaching education predicts "a program that tries to be all things to all contexts following just one model of coaching is destined to fall

short at the expense of both the student and the profession” (Dieffenbach, 2010, p. 33). While identifying a growing number of programs offering degrees or certificate programs related to coaching, the authors also point out that these programs appear under a variety of academic areas (e.g., sport management, physical education, kinesiology, education, etc.) which leads to a curriculum that is far from standardized. They described the current state of athletic coaching (AC) education in contrast to physical education teacher education, “... there has been very little change in the number of opportunities at each level or in the scope of the academic preparation over the past decade. ...AC curricula, particularly within undergraduate programs, remain centered on general and entry-level coursework... Teaching certifications or credentials are recommended in association with many current AC programs, suggesting that the programs are designed to prepare coaches only within the scholastic model of sport” (Dieffenbach, 2010, p.30). While NASPE developed National Standards for Athletic Coaches in 2006, the standards appear more focused on entry and participation levels of sports (associated with the K-12 interscholastic and youth community programs) than the performance dimension more applicable to collegiate athletics.

In examining the constitution of “great coaching,” Becker (2009) reinforces the idea that our general societal view of what constitutes a great coach is based on two criteria: win/loss records and media attention. In her study, Becker examines the athlete’s perspective about what s/he has experienced with “great” college and elite level coaches and confirms the more complex nature of coaching that goes beyond a set of skills or behaviors, incorporating complex interactions between coaching attributes, the environment, relationships, the system, coaching actions, and influences. This shift in

how coaching is viewed was also noted in an examination of worldwide scholarship about coaching education programs during the period 1995-2009. McCullick (2009) revealed an increase in scholarship since 2005 and a new perspective that defines coaching as a complex and dynamic process that is influenced by the social/cultural environment in which it is situated.

Although research focused on the coaching education of collegiate coaches is limited, there does appear to be an emerging perspective that suggests we must change how we prepare coaches. McCullick concludes, “In the United States, most CEP [Coaching Education Programs] are in their infancy and require only basic skills and knowledge to obtain a youth coaching certification. These courses would benefit from findings regarding the design, content, process, and governance of CEPs being conducted around the globe” (McCullick, 2009, p.333). The general findings expressed by researchers taking a closer look at U.S. coaching education confirm shifts earlier described in the intercollegiate setting. The change in the role of coaches and the apparent insufficiency of the current coaching education curriculum reinforces the need for changes in how we prepare coaches. As collegiate coaches represent a large number of U.S. coaches and work in a unique environment, research that provides additional information about unique competency requirements and career development paths is important to identifying how the coaching education programs need to be modified.

Research in Coaching Education: The International Perspective

Recent growth in the demand for coaches at youth-level programs, pressure to achieve international athletic success on the Olympic and world stage events, and

increased concerns about the healthy lifestyles of the general population appear to be driving research and evaluation of the structure and effectiveness of the coaching education systems now underway on the international scene. Identification of important distinctions from the U.S. system and a brief historical overview of coaching in the international setting provide a useful backdrop to understand the current research agenda.

The international setting is distinct from the U.S. system, with lower-profile intercollegiate activity and, according to some researchers, a decreased level of pressure around success records (Lyle, 2002, Danylchuk, 2003). Most significantly, without the primary link to higher education institutions, the international setting avoids tensions inherent in the "student-athlete" designation carried by U.S. participants. Although athletic participation and sport competitions exist in many universities throughout the world, the U.S. system appears unique in the visibility the collegiate programs command and the role it plays in national team and elite athlete development. What does exist for countries other than the U.S. is a strong sports club system that provides a structure of progressive development for athletes from initial entry to elite levels of sport performance and more attention to the performance of national teams. The primary drivers in this system are the clubs themselves and national sports organizations, including the Olympic committees (Lyle, 2002; Woodman, 1993).

In many ways the early development of sport in these countries, especially the ideal of amateurism, was consistent with the United States sports scene of the early 1800's. It was in fact the English universities that influenced how athletics were viewed in public schools and universities in the U.S., with many of the earlier-described concerns about who participated in sports, who qualified as an amateur, and who served as coaches

taken directly from the British model. From the turn of the century to the 1950's, Lyle (2002) describes a period of stagnation for coaching education in the U.K. "Coaches continued to be either professional instructors or athletic trainers, but were not incorporated into the emerging club structures, which has a recreational ethos" (Lyle, p.6). What does evolve during this period, in a manner similar to the United States, is the tie of physical education and teacher/coaches within the school system. Lyle makes an interesting editorial comment regarding this link of the two, "... [it] can also be argued that the closeness between PE and coaching and the confusion of roles has not helped the coaching 'profession'. A sense that 'any generalist' could be a coach was heightened by the assumption that PE teachers could 'turn their hand' to many different sports. The truth was that they could, because this was about sport participation coaching which is not dissimilar at all from sports teaching" (Lyle, 2002, p.10). While filling a need for coaches, especially at the youth level, this did not result in a clear professional career path for those more interested in sport performance coaching, which defined a more intensive, committed program working toward competition goals. Important in these discussions is the delineation often defined as *participation coaching* and *performance coaching* (Lyle, 2002; ICCE, 2010)

Concern about falling behind on the national sports stage sparked a focus in Britain on the performance sport dimension. A frequent driving force in various countries at different times in their histories, beginning in the late 1940's and continuing through today a move was made to identify national-level coaches with increased efforts to provide more professional development experiences for coaches working with a variety of sports,. A strong influence starting during this period was the Eastern Block countries'

emphases on the application of the emerging coaching sciences, and a more formalized system of higher education and professionalization for sport coaches throughout the 1950's and 1960's (Woodman, 1993). As the nations established comprehensive national sports club systems, they also developed a number of higher education degree programs at universities specific to coaching. Other support areas of coaching science specialties arose to meet the need for a large number of full-time jobs that emerged in school, community and elite club programs (Riordan, 1980). Outside of the Soviet-influenced countries there was not the same level of professional status accorded to coaches, and many of the coaching education efforts appeared fragmented and under control of the various sports' governance organizations.

With the goal of top performances at the Olympics, a new focus of the U.K. National Coaching Foundation in the late 1980's was in contrast to the "traditional practice, autonomy and specificity of governing body practice, emphasis on technical and tactical content, and a minimum (in most cases) of supporting discipline knowledge" (Lyle, 2002, p.13). Similar efforts could also be found in Canada, New Zealand and Australia. These countries paralleled the U.K. goals of a more centralized coaching education system, enhancements to recruitment and licensing systems for coaches, and the development of a coaches' association. These countries also collaborated and were central in the establishment, in 1997, of the International Council for Coach Education (ICCE). The ICCE is a not-for-profit, international organization now representing over 30 countries with the mission of "promoting coaching as an internationally accepted profession. ICCE members seek to enhance the quality of coaching at every level of sport" (ICCE, 2010). This organization also makes frequent mention of the "emerging"

nature of the coaching profession in other documents such as their 2010 strategy platform, “Building the Coaching Community Across the Globe.” Writing about coaching as “an emerging profession” in 1991, Woodman predicts, “The movement of coaching toward professionalization is being assisted by the rapid growth of sport around the world, its growing impact on major areas of human activity, and the great number of people being employed in this new industry” (Woodman, 1993, p.7).

Recent research on the international level has been more extensive with several countries (e.g., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain) closely examining their coaching education programs and making significant changes to their nationally organized systems of coaching education, including specifically looking at the high performance sector. It is this area of research that has applicability to the type of activity U.S. coaches engage with in the higher education setting.

The international research reveals much about the emerging perspective regarding the complexity and varied roles of coaches (Jones, 2006, Gilbert, 2004, Cote, 1994, Cushion, 2007, Nash, 2009). In many ways it serves to recognize and explain the multiple paths that many successful and accomplished coaches have taken to reach their current positions, and highlights the frequent dismissal expressed by coaches about the formal coaching education strategies that have been previously implemented. Many of the more recent textbooks and articles outlining frameworks and fundamental coaching concepts by the international researchers have also confirmed the lack of respect that many coaches have for formal coaching education programs. In a case study on Canadian elite coaches, the coaches described participation in formal coaching education as a passive

experience and based on a faulty assumption that the simplistic classroom knowledge was easily applied to the complex coaching environment. (Werthner & Trudel, 2006).

“Although large-scale coach education programs, such as the Coaching Association of Canada’s National Coach Certification Program, the American Sport Education Program, and the Australian National Coach Accreditation Scheme, have been in place for decades, there is no study on the effect of these programs on the coaches’ behaviors or decision-making before, during, or after practices or games (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, being an exception). As a result, Cohen (1992) concluded, ‘there are governing bodies that certify coaches based on the successful completion of our program, but we don’t certify competency of coaches’ (p.25)” Werthner, 2006, p.201).

Some of this disconnect can be attributed to the inability of the curriculum to address the complex nature of coaching and therefore a lack of impact on the actual practice of coaching. Emerging in the latest work on coaching education is what can be defined as a “bottom up” approach to identifying the concepts and strategies that successful coaches are using, and acknowledging that this knowledge is frequently passed on in apprenticeship settings or through reflection on one’s own coaching practice (Cote, 1995, Cushion, 2003, Jones, 2006, Nash, 2009). Jones, et, al (2002) authored Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory by interviewing top performance coaches and drawing out both the common characteristics, and some of the variances, that can occur in successful coaching. Their introduction makes clear from the start, “We argue that the coaches’ stories cast doubt on the wisdom of viewing coaching, more simplistically, as a systematic, depersonalized set of standardized models and procedures; a trend which currently characterizes many coach education programmes” (Jones, 2002, p.1). The book uses the personal stories of the coaches, how they developed their skills sets and how their life stories shaped their own style of coaching. Yet the authors make it clear they are not willing to simply let these elements of the craft be simply

“defined as ‘intuition’ or the ‘art of coaching.’ They are able to tie many of the stories together, make connections with theoretical frameworks, and outline a new understanding of the best practices to apply in developing a coaching pedagogy, defining coaching roles, managing interactions with athletes, and understanding social power. In an analysis of the changing paradigm within the New Zealand national coaching curriculum, Cassidy and Kidman (2010) describe a similar change to an ongoing developmental process of continual learning rather than the attainment of a specific menu of education requirements. According to Cassidy and Kidman, “... there has been a move from an accredited and certified, standardized programme to an ongoing professional development process informed by an applied athlete-centred philosophy. Moreover, the CDF [Coaching Development Framework] emphasised coach learning and development (formally and informally) rather than focusing on coaches gaining qualifications...” (Cassidy, 2010, p.320).

Therefore, the international researchers, especially those in Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are leading a movement to recognize the complex, multi-faceted role demanded of today’s coaches. Additionally, examining the formal practices and the actual activities engaged in by coaches, they are making a strong case that the effective preparation of coaches needs to integrate both formal and informal professional preparation that is closely tied to actual coaching activity.

Conclusion

The current state of intercollegiate athletics and coaching education issues described here provide a strong case for a more extensive examination of what factors are

influencing the professional development activities of collegiate coaches. Although history shows various changes in the role and expectations around coaches involved at the collegiate level, there is no doubt that today's coaches are operating in an environment with increased role complexity, a driving expectation to create "winning teams", and new expectations from today's student-athlete. This high-pressure environment is certainly more profound at the larger programs competing in the major divisions of the college sports scene, but it appears to exist to a certain extent at all levels. Originally, programs to prepare intercollegiate coaches were grounded in the physical education discipline as collegiate coaches frequently taught the activity classes and recreation activities in addition to coaching one or more sports teams. These programs have often been tied to the national sports' governing bodies or sport associations with a broad focus on athletes and performance. Given the unique setting of intercollegiate athletics we must recognize the need to also develop management and leadership skills necessary for these professionals to be effective within the business environment of today's athletic department and to capably serve as educators for student-athletes. "We've always done a good job teaching coaches the X's and O's of the game...People are just beginning to realize that we need to do more to help them [coaches] become more effective teachers and educators" (Mangan, 1995, p. A35).

The historical development of coaches in the college setting has resulted in a profession that lacks a standardized inventory of coaching competencies, a consistent system of coaching education guidelines and/or credentials. There is not an overall regulatory organization driving certification requirements or continuing education expectations. Coaches are very much left to their own to identify how to prepare for entry

into the field and develop once they begin their careers. The lack of a clearly defined system of entry and weak support for persistence in the profession may contribute to the persistent trends of decreasing percentages of women coaches and coaches of color.

National and international researchers are reexamining the established coaching education programs and acknowledging that there is a complexity to the coaching process that requires a focus on coaching development as an ongoing endeavor. Further developed on the international stage, this call for a new approach to coaching education is situated firmly within active practice, dependent on meaningful engagement with mentors and network communities, and enhanced by active reflection on one's own coaching strategies (Jones, 2006, Cushion, 2003, Nash, 2006, Gilbert, 2005). Clearly there are unique factors related to the U.S. collegiate athletics system, including the tensions surrounding the role of the student-athlete and the high-profile nature of the competitive programs. However, it appears that many of the findings applicable to international high-performance coaches may be applicable to the population of U.S. collegiate coaches: the absence of clearly articulated career pathways; the self-directed nature of the coaches' professional development; the impact of winning records on promotion and retention; and sports performance competency demands given the comparable athlete pools.

Intercollegiate athletics involves large numbers of student-athletes. The factors and issues identified throughout this section point to a need to better understand what will benefit collegiate coaches in terms of professional preparation and continuing education. Due to the unique setting of collegiate athletics and the environment in which coaches are working, it is important that any new "program" be one that is easily accessible and results in immediate practical application. The coaching profession is in need of career

pathways and support to draw in and appropriately prepare those who will be working with our student-athletes during their higher education experience. Additionally, professional practices at this level have a trickle-down impact on youth sports and the incredible number of athletes participating in those programs.

To create the professional development components to meet these identified needs additional research is required in order to better understand the following factors: (1) what professional competencies are in highest demand for today's coaches who operate in a changed environment with new role expectations, (2) what professional development elements do coaches, who often self-direct their educational experiences, find valuable and meaningful, (3) how collegiate coaches are navigating their career paths in high-pressure settings with minimal job position security and (4) in what dimensions are coaches working at U.S. colleges similar to high-performance international coaches? These areas of understanding will enable professional development strategies to be advanced that are meaningful for today's coaching professions and implemented within the profession.

Finally, while improvement in the professional preparation of collegiate coaches is important for their career success, most importantly, coaches engaged in effective professional development activities will be better prepared to establish programs that enhance the experience and development of our student-athletes.

CHAPTER 2 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

To understand how U.S. intercollegiate coaches currently prepare for their careers and make decisions to participate in professional development, there are three major areas of research and theory that provided a useful foundation. First, current scholars who examine coaching education agree that there is a complexity of coaching that has not been considered in the past. This complexity is revealed in the role that today's coaches undertake and in the nature of the coaching process itself. Second, intercollegiate coaches are adult-learners and are frequently the managers in shaping their professional development experience. In the limited studies of U.S. collegiate coaches and the growing number focused on international elite-level coaches, coaches demonstrate clear choices in the types of learning experiences they believe are most effective in developing their competencies. Adult-learning theory and proposed models of learning experiences suggested a framework to identify and categorize those experiences selected by the coaches. Third, self-determination theories provided guidance for exploring the factors that influence the coach's participation in professional development activities. These theories assisted in organizing and articulating themes that emerged in my findings.

The goals of this chapter are to describe each of the three theoretical areas and identify how they provided frameworks useful in examining the influences that impact career progression and professional development activities of collegiate coaches. I believe the theories provided a good starting point to reveal the environment in which coaches must develop tools to effectively operate in their roles; describe how coaches as adult-learners tend to engage with learning experiences; and understand what elements

motivate and guide coaches as they self-direct their professional development. The integration of these elements into broad conceptual frameworks to describe the factors influencing coaches to participate in professional development learning experiences assisted in determining what areas to focus on within the research.

Coaching: A Complex Activity in a Complex Environment

As detailed previously, today's U.S. intercollegiate coaches are operating in an environment of increasing pressure. Expanding job descriptions require coaches to perform duties beyond a sports-skill teacher and competition strategist. Today's collegiate coaches are frequently under intense pressure to quickly build a "winning" team, coordinate ongoing recruiting activity, support increasing levels of fundraising, manage adherence to a complex system of compliance regulations, foster academic achievement and progress, and provide a rich student-athlete experience that meets the needs and expectations of today's young adult. Not only do these demands represent multiple pressures on the coach, they frequently create conflicting goals that the coach must negotiate (Barber, 1998; Moosbrugger, 2009; Dixon, 2010, Lombardo, 1999).

In addition to the job roles, there is a complexity in the competencies and processes of the coaching activity. In 1993, Woodman described coaching as "a science, an art, an emerging profession" (Woodman, 1993, p.1). One dimension of his statement is recognition of the need to incorporate the growing coaching sciences such as kinesiology, physiology, biomechanics, and psychology. The second dimension is a new concept - that the "art" of coaching is an ability to effectively mix coaching science with the variable, dynamic aspects of the human factors. Other scholars have built on this idea of

complexity (Cote, 1995, 2009; Abraham, 1998; Jones, 2003, 2005; McCullick, 2005; Cushion, 2006, 2007; Nash, 2006, Werthner, 2006; Mallet, 2009; Cassidy, 2010). In studying the career development of elite coaches, Nash and Collins state “coaching is a very complex and dynamic task, carried out in an ill-structured, constantly changing environment” (Nash, 2006,p.472). While current coaching education curriculum frequently identifies specific behaviors or best practices, multiple studies conclude that it does not equip a coach to make the adjustments and application in interactive situations that are continually shifting (Cote, 1995; Gilbert, 2004; Nash, 2006; Jones, 2006, Cassidy, 2010). The definition of the specific elements of complexity vary in coaching models proposed by scholars; however, they each (1) identify the technical skills being applied in changing environments and (2) recognize the impact of the relationships between coaches and/or athletes. “Our current understanding demonstrates that coaching is not something that is merely delivered, but is a dynamic social activity that vigorously engages coach and athlete [2,20]... Coaching then is a practical, social activity that has as its characteristics “multidimensionality, simultaneity, uncertainty, publicity and historicity”[16,p.255]” (Cushion, 2007, p.396).

Reinforcing this dynamic view of coaching, Cote and Gilbert (2009) define the variables in their coaching model as *coach’s knowledge*, *athlete’s outcomes*, and *coaching contexts*. In describing the interactions of these variables they state, “to be comprehensive, a definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise should integrate these three components by considering the interaction of a *coach’s knowledge* and *athlete’s outcomes* in specific *coaching contexts*” (Cote, 2009, p.309). The result of this new perspective is a call for coaching education to evolve from a positivistic curriculum

that is (1) grounded in an overly rationalistic approach and (2) based on the assumption that the coach functions in a static setting. The coach is recognized as a nimble adapter with a well-equipped toolbox of skills and strategies. The identification of what was needed in the toolbox and how the coaches obtained the various “tools” was conducted through a number of research studies examining the pathways and activities of coaches identified as experts or successes (Cote, 1994, 1995; Schinke, 1995; Abraham, 1998; Bloom, 2000; Jones, 2003; Dall ‘Alba, 2006; Nash, 2006; Erickson, 2007, 2008, Carter, 2009). Of significance is the discussion about the socio-cultural, or relationship, dimension of coaching. Cote and Gilbert (2009) discuss interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge as important elements of the coach’s knowledge; Lyle positions interpersonal skills previously not attended to in many coaching education programs as crucial for success in day-to-day coaching activities and “key in the coach’s adherence to a code of ethics” (Lyle, 2002, p.284). Jones, Armour and Potrac (2004) titled their book, *Sports Coaching Cultures* and used a quote from one of their expert coaches to affirm, “The art of coaching is recognising the situation, recognising the people and responding to the people you are working with... that’s the big thing, to handle people” (Jones, 2004, p.20). In the second edition of *Understanding Sports Coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice* (Cassidy, 2009), the authors explained that a new emphasis on “a socio-cultural pedagogic approach is imperative for understanding such a complex and dynamic activity as coaching, where, invariably, the whole is considerably greater than the sum of the constituent parts... it differs from the traditional approach to studying coaching from rationalistic subdisciplinary perspectives” (Cassidy, 2009, p.8).

Many of these research inquiries, especially those conducted by international researchers, examined high-performance coaches working with national teams or elite club programs. As I moved forward with the study, it was important to determine whether the U.S. collegiate coaches describe their coaching functions with a similar complexity when they reflected on the demands of their environment. It was also important to determine if the layered structure of the collegiate athletic setting (e.g., multiple divisions, public vs. private institutions, competitiveness of program) appeared to impact how the coaches view the complexity and the demands it places on their toolbox of skills.

Coaches as Adult-Learners: A Constructivist Orientation

Given the previously discussed perspective on the professional competencies required of an effective coach, scholars frequently make reference to the application of adult learning theory and the non-traditional methods that many of the “expert” coaches were using to acquire and develop these competencies. Adult-learning theory is an important foundation because coaches constitute a heterogeneous population of adult-learners involved in a broad mix of learning experiences. Given the complexity of the coaching field just outlined, it is even more important that we understand how coaches are navigating the process to become coaches and what considerations are important in their decisions around professional development. As described by McGivney (2004, p.33),

“...adults’ engagement with education and training tends to be intermittent and more varied. After an initial learning episode, an adult’s learning journey may come to a temporary halt or meander in any of several possible directions: upwards, to gain higher level skills and qualifications; sideways, continuing learning at the same level to deepen and consolidate knowledge or learn something new with the pressure of assessment; downwards, engaging

in learning at a lower level to further a particular interest or to enhance knowledge and skills; or a 'zigzag' direction, moving between lower and higher level learning programmes”.

Within adult-learning theory, a *constructivist orientation* frames learning as the construction of new knowledge based on what people already believe and understand from their previous learning experiences. “A constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience” (Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner, 2007, p.291). Experiential learning is at the core of the constructivist learning activities. Kolb (2005, p.194) describes a cycle in which the learner “touches all the bases – experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting – in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned.” Even the rhythm of the coaching season complements the constructivist framework’s learning cycle of *reflection – adaptation – experience* that is used to describe the progression of the coach through learning experiences. After examining how practical knowledge is gained by expert sailing coaches, Saury and Durand describe, “a ‘cognitive alchemy’ consisting of a flexible application of (social) rules, using deeply integrated past experiences, resolving (never total or optimal) contradictions or dilemmas at the moment they emerge, recognizing typical scenarios, and so forth (Saury & Durand, 1998, p.265 in Jones, 2003, p.227). The constructivist orientation appeared to be a good fit when looking at the experience of those involved with coaching and the type of learning activities they are often engaged with in athletics.

The majority of coaches have participated as athletes at some level and their initial knowledge and beliefs about coaching are formed from their experiences as athletes (Richardson, 1981; Gould, 1990; Schinke, 1995; Bloom, 2000; Gilbert, 2006,

2009). Once an individual decides to pursue coaching, he or she engages in a mix of experiences that build on this initial foundation of knowledge. Applying the constructivist orientation framework, there is an anticipated advantage for an athlete who spent time competing at a high level. These athletes frequently work with very experienced coaches and take a more active role in understanding and implementing a comprehensive training program. Therefore, one might expect that in transitioning to a coaching role the more seasoned athlete starts with a higher level of experience from which to build new knowledge as compared to a coach with limited time as an athlete or competition at a lower level. Although the constructivist orientation focuses on building meaning from the individual's experience, it does not view learning as an internal, isolated experience. The social constructivist view, with a foundation firmly in Vygotsky's work, stresses the concept that learning is socially mediated (Merriam, 2007; Driver, 1994). The learner is introduced to the culture of the community through other individuals and can talk about problems or issues common in their experiences. "Making meaning is thus a dialogic process involving persons-in-conversation, and learning is seen as the process by which individuals are introduced into a culture by more skilled members" (Driver, 1994, p.7).

This type of apprenticeship setting can provide valuable learning experiences within a supportive community that allows the development of new constructs of coaching knowledge and the practice of emerging skills through actual coaching activities. Within the coaching context, we see numerous examples where a novice coach works directly with athletes and as a member of the coaching team. Yet the valuable apprenticeship setting is not just any situation in which the coach can get experience working with athletes. Instead, a supportive apprenticeship environment also fosters

reflective activity. Described as *communities of practice*, individuals engage in discussion and activities around common problems or tasks. “As they work together, they not only learn from doing, they develop a shared sense of what has to happen to get the job done. They develop a common way of thinking and talking about their work... they eventually come to share a sort of mutual identity” (Stamps, 1997, p.36). Through this social interaction learners discover new interpretations or possibilities about their learning experience. For members of the coaching team, the community of practice may engage in dialogue about multiple topics including sport-specific training issues, working with the department’s administration, managing athletes, and handling competitive pressures. As Merriam (2007) says,

“What is shared by a community of practice – what makes it a community – is its practice. The concept of practice connotes doing, but not just doing in and of itself. It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do... practice is ultimately produced by its members through the negotiation of meaning” (p.293).

With the anticipated bonding within a community of practice, it is not surprising that when many coaches get a new position, they eventually hire other coaches or staff with whom they have worked. However, Culver (2008) indicated that the competitive nature of the coaching environment may push coaches toward a *network of practice*, characterized by some exchange of superficial information within a collective without meaningful reciprocity, i.e., without the ongoing, sustained interactions of a fully developed *community of practice*.

The constructivist framework also assists in identifying elements of collegiate coaches’ preparation. This framework allows for a rich mixture of *implicit learning*, *informal learning*, and *formal learning* experiences that substitute for the formal

education programs seen in many other professions. Examining the types of learning experiences coaches indicated valuable to their professional development, researchers noted a predominance of activity outside the formal coaching education system. While most coaches did participate in formal coaching education programs, many expressed dissatisfaction with the value or applicability of the content to enhance their coaching (Gould, 1990; Cote, 1995; Schinke, 1995; Bloom, 2000, Gilbert, 2005, 2009; Jones, 2006; Werthner, 2006). Coaches did frequently mention the value of previous athletic experience (Jones, 2003; Gilbert, 2009), mentors (Bloom, 1998, 2000; Cushion, 2003), observations of or discussions with other coaches (Gilbert, 2005; Reade, 2008; Carter, 2009), informal learning experiences (Bloom, 2000; Culver, 2008, Reade, 2008, Carter, 2009), and self-reflection (Cushion, 2003; Werthner, 2009) to develop their coaching competencies.

While there is not a single model used by researchers, many have sorted these various types of learning experiences into categories that use a continuum to describe the levels of guidance and structure characteristic of the learning experiences (Abraham, 1998; Jones, 2003; Erickson, 2008; Mallet, 2009; Werthner, 2006). Werthner (2006) proposed a new model of learning distinct from the previous concept of a linear learning model by describing “building a brick wall” (p.199). This model is based on the idea of the instructor transferring bricks of knowledge to the learner with a clear pattern that will be constructed. Werthner’s model describes a network of various learning situations and how the coach integrates new material. The two learning situations are *mediated situations* (coaching courses, formal mentoring, coaching conferences) and *unmediated situations* (discussions with other coaches, searching resource material, meetings with

athletes). Both of these situations provide the “material of learning” which is assimilated into the coach’s current understanding in the internal learning situation. The internal experience is consistent with the constructivist concept of allowing the coach to reconsider existing ideas and integrate new material into existing cognitive concepts. Another researcher in this area, Mallet (2009), continues to discriminate between mediated and unmediated situations but makes a finer distinction, describing three types of learning: *formal learning* “learning mediated or guided by some knowledgeable other” (p.327), *nonformal learning* “organized learning opportunities outside the formal educational system” (p.328), and *informal learning* “without the direct guidance of others during their day-to-day activities” (p.328). No matter the specific model or names for various types of learning experiences, the most important characteristic of these models is that the coach accesses a menu of learning activities that provides foundational knowledge and also allows for learning *in situ*. This mix of learning experiences prepares the coach for the messy complexity of the coaching profession. This complexity creates a paradox, as described by Jones,

“as our knowledge of the coaching process becomes increasingly sophisticated, the development can be viewed as both ‘exhilarating and daunting’ (Armour, 2004, p.109): exhilarating in respect of its undoubted insights, but problematic for coach education as the increased complexity makes straightforward ‘guides for practice’ very difficult to produce. Yet, as Armour states, in order that coaching be considered a profession, that complexity must be faced not ignored, and ways of grasping it must be found” (Jones, 2006, p.95).

These social constructivist concepts of learning theory had a strong impact on the design of my interview protocol. The interview questions were designed to draw out the various learning activities the coaches have participated in throughout their careers. My

assumption was that the various learning experiences build on each other and come from a broad range of types (formal, nonformal, informal). The questions encouraged recall of related experiences, even if the coach did not readily view them as “professional development.” In a similar manner, paying attention to how the coaches describe the presence of learning communities and mentors was important in revealing factors effective in facilitating and negotiating their meaning-making regarding knowledge about coaching.

In addition to understanding how coaches are obtaining and developing their knowledge, adult learning theory points to the need to recognize that adult learners may engage in these experiences outside of any structured learning environment. In these situations the adult learner is actually managing their decisions regarding participation in learning experiences. This is another element of the coaches' professional development that guided how I designed my research inquiry.

Coaches as Self-Directed Learners

The management function of one's learning is often described as *self-directed learning* in which “the learner chooses to assume the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating those learning experiences” (Caffarella, 1993, p.28).

Understanding how coaches take on this role is important, as it appears that coaches are frequently *self-directed* adult-learners who determine their own path to acquire entry-level skills and to expand their professional skills as they progress through their careers. In examining the choices made by coaches and how they view their career trajectory, it

was valuable to understand what factors are driving these decisions and how coaches weighed their participation in various professional development activities.

Within the decision-making related to self-directed learning, *identity* and *motivation* have potential as important factors in understanding how coaches (1) respond to a variety of influences (intrinsic and extrinsic), (2) consider whether professional development is valuable or meaningful to their coaching success, (3) identify and evaluate their professional competencies, needs, and interests, and (4) eventually decide whether to seek out and participate in specific learning experiences. Another aspect of identity may be revealed in whether coaches view themselves as “learners.” Research with adult workers returning to higher education suggests, “the admission of being in a state of learning can amount to an unsettling disclosure of lack of knowledge, especially to one’s organization and work colleagues. In such circumstances, according to Barnett, learning opportunities can be perceived by the individual as threatening” (Askham, 2008, p.89). Athletic coaches have an image of being the person in charge, i.e., the expert. The tensions and contradictions that Askham identified have implications for how the adult-learners discuss their experiences, make decisions about participation, and the infrastructure and support necessary for their success in the learning experience. Additionally, for some coaches, their experience as student-athletes (or perhaps framed for some more accurately as “athlete-students”) may have a dramatic impact on how they view the educational enterprise, overall, and whether they perceive value in a learning experience set within a formal educational setting. These are all important elements of identity in understanding how coaches are making decisions about participation in professional development. There are two additional theoretical frameworks of assistance

in analyzing considerations about the role of motivation in collegiate coaches' functioning as self-directed learners: Ryan and Deci's organismic integration theory and Garrison's model of self-directed learners.

Self-Determination Shaping Coaches' Actions

Ryan and Deci's (2000) continuum provides a theoretical framework that serves as a guide in considering how self-determination influences coaches' decisions to engage in professional development. Their framework provides an organizing structure for describing the range of extrinsic and intrinsic types of motivation. Their *organismic integration theory* (OIT), a sub-theory within their work on self-determination, provides a continuum for describing types of motivation by detailing, "the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the contextual factors that either promote or hinder internalization and integration of the regulation for these behaviors" (Ryan, 2000, p. 72). They describe a continuum that ranges from amotivation, where a person lacks the intention to participate, to a level of intrinsic motivation, characterized by the participant choosing to engage in the behavior for the inherent satisfaction of the act. This gradation of motivation is significant because there are multiple factors (i.e., environmental settings, personal goals, sociology-cultural expectations, mentor influence, etc.) that create considerable difference in how a coach is motivated. For example, a coach may express motivation to participate in a learning experience as a condition of employment versus a coach who identifies with a community of practice and recognizes that there is value in securing additional coaching skills. Preliminary results from research examining the reasons that mothers decided to serve as youth coaches (LaVoi, 2009) used the OIT

continuum to organize and describe the various motivations that influenced their decisions. This included factors that supported and encouraged the decision in addition to the barriers they faced in their participation. Ryan and Deci are careful to explain that they “are not suggesting that it is a developmental continuum in the sense that people must progress through each stage...Rather they can internalize a new behavioral regulation at any point along this continuum depending on both prior experiences and current situational factors” (Ryan, 2000, p.73). The continuum can assist in sorting and categorizing the influencing motivating factors and barriers recounted by the coaches making participation decisions about learning experiences.

Another model of adult learning theory useful in examining how coaches are managing their professional development decisions is Garrison’s comprehensive model to describe the self-directed learner (Garrison, 1997). This model describes initial engagement in professional development and identifies factors that affect persistence. Garrison integrates three elements within the learning process, “external management (contextual control), internal monitoring (cognitive responsibility), and motivational (entering and task) issues associated with learning in an educational environment... an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes” (Garrison, 1997, p.18). The model recognizes the complex and ongoing decisions made by adult-learners about participation in learning experiences. Garrison’s concepts of self-monitoring and self-regulation can link with the coaches’ individual management of their professional development activities. “The struggle for competence within a Vygotskian

perspective is all about the conflict of opposites — the headlines of success and the dread of failure — and their transcendence. Our learner must know the motivational dynamics of success and failure if she is to become an adaptive learner who maintains self-confidence and realistic self-appraisals” (McCaslin, 2004, p.270). This quote is applicable to the self-directed learner, specifically to collegiate coaches who are making decisions and choices about their professional competencies and how to best develop them. The model provides a framework to carefully examine what factors are motivating those who are purposeful regarding their professional development. This examination of motivation considers the initial decision to participate in learning and the secondary issue of being motivated to persist in the learning experience. Garrison’s model also explores how the self-directed learner monitors metacognitive issues and learning strategies. This “ensures that new and existing knowledge structures are integrated in a meaningful manner and learning goals are met” (Garrison, 1997, p.24). The model identifies “what learners do during the learning process,” specifically, how the learner is engaging in the social setting, uses resources, and collaborates with others to obtain effective and meaningful learning experiences. Garrison’s model provides guidance in understanding the management function of the activity: how the coaches seek out opportunities, make participation decisions, and evaluate the benefit of their professional development activities.

Initial Conceptual Frameworks

Using these theoretical concepts, I developed four initial conceptual frameworks to describe various dimensions relating to the professional development of collegiate

athletic coaches. The frameworks were useful in considering the complexity of intercollegiate coaching and the potential influencing factors motivating or inhibiting coaches from participating in professional development learning experiences. As the research study detailed in the next chapter shows these frameworks guided the formation of the protocol and assisted in determining the various areas of inquiry with the participants in order to produce a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced their professional development activity and career paths.

Figure 1: U.S. Collegiate Coaches' Foundation Experiences describes the combination of academic experience, athletic experience, and some initial exposure to coaching.

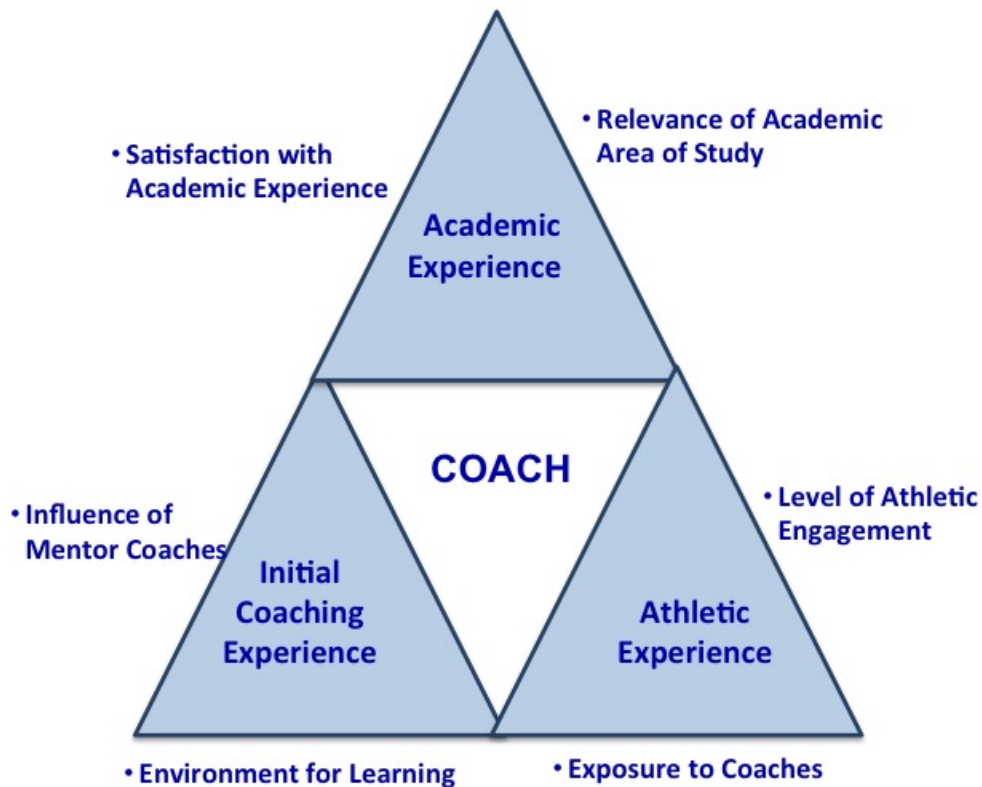


Figure 1: U.S. Collegiate Coaches' Foundation Experiences

Figure 2: Coaching Components in the U.S. Collegiate Environment illustrates the complexity of the coaches' role and multiple expectations placed on today's U.S. collegiate coaches. In this framework, while there are many roles that parallel those faced by national and international elite-level coaches, there are elements unique to the U.S. collegiate setting. These factors increase the complexity of the coaching role and also increase pressures and challenges in a number of identified areas.

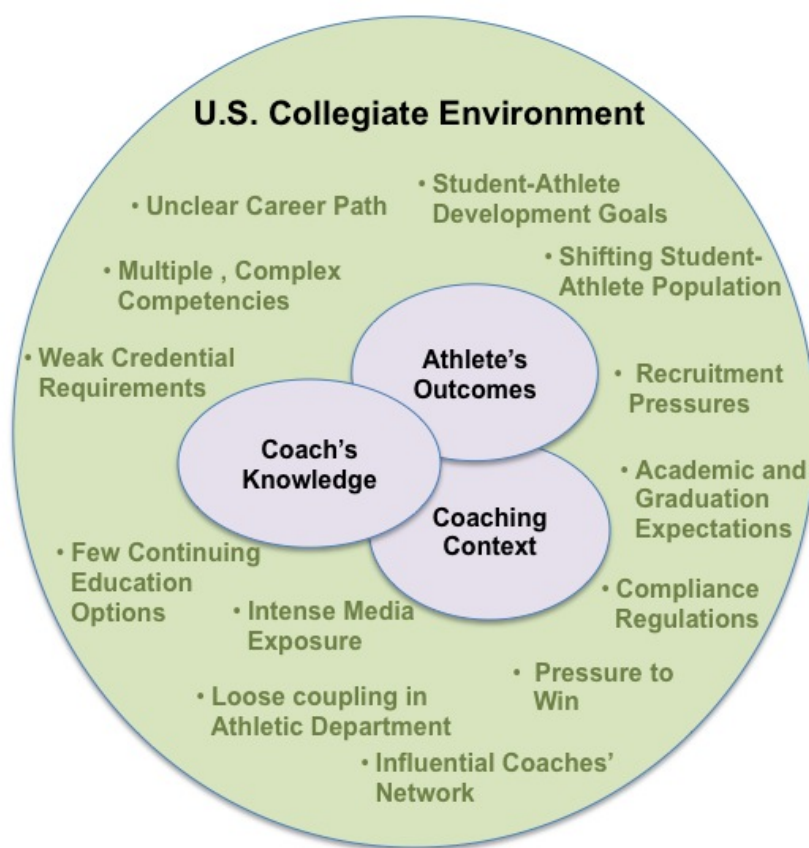


Figure 2: Coaching Components in the U.S. Collegiate Environment

Figure 3: Semiotic Square for U.S. Collegiate Coaches provides a third framework to illustrate the tensions inherent in the U.S. collegiate coaching role. This model begins with the opposition frequently described between a focus on student development (academic and/or personal development) and a focus on athletic goals (sports performance and/or competition achievement) in the collegiate setting. The term *student-athlete* acknowledges this tension, but nomenclature to articulate a similar dichotomy within the coaching role is not common. As described by Chandler (2003), "the semiotic square is intended to map the logical conjunctions and disjunctions relating key semantic features in a text" (Chandler, 2003, p.1). This semiotic square uses a combination of key roles, coaching stereotypes, and statements of philosophy to frame the conceptual network. The purpose of this analysis is not to suggest that a coach must choose between the two extremes, but to highlight the oppositions as a means to examine the more complex term: *Youth Development + Sport Performance* as exemplified by the often heralded coach, John Wooden. This framework may be useful in examining whether the coaches express elements of their experience that reveal or demonstrate this tension.

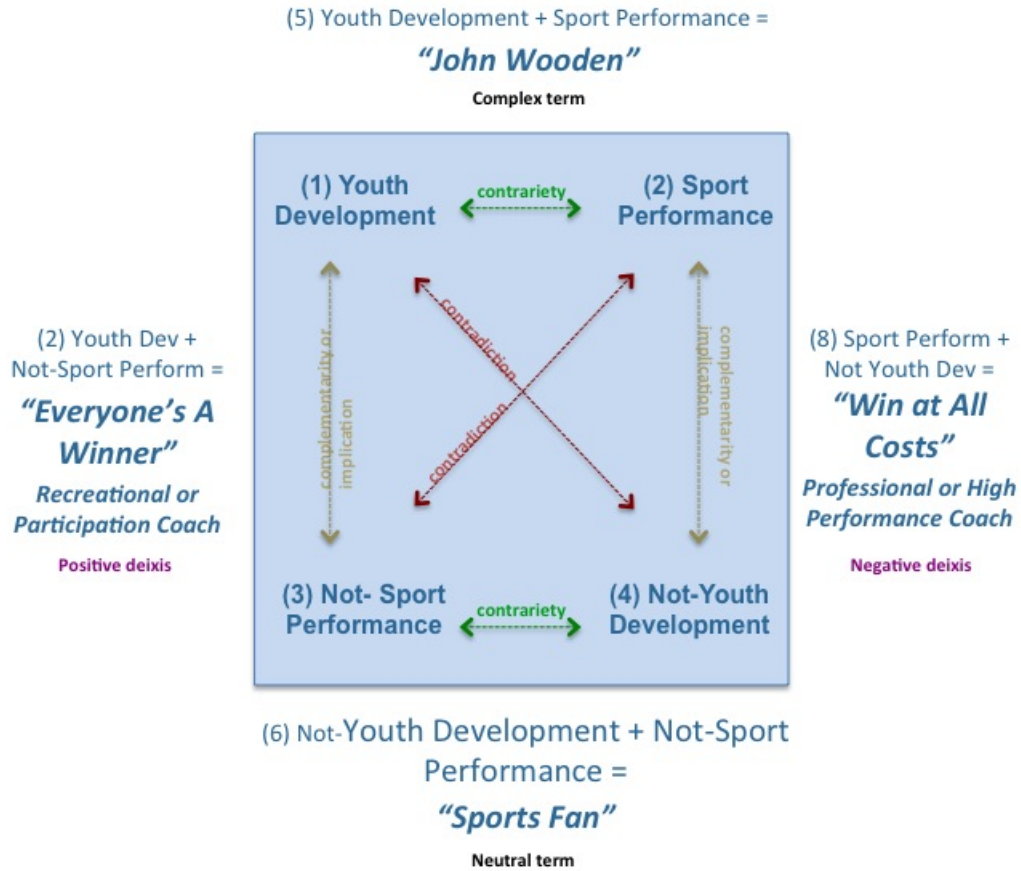


Figure 3: Semiotic Square for U.S. Collegiate Coaches

The next framework recognizes the coach as a self-directed adult learner, the primary manager for his or her professional development participation. Figure 4: Coaches as Self-directed Learners with Potential Learning Experiences show a broad range of learning activities categorized by the various types of learning defined by Mallet (2009): formal, nonformal, and informal. As a self-directed learner, the coach is shown surrounded by elements of self-directed learning (Ryan 2000, Garrison, 1997): identify, motivation, and management of learning. The figure is also designed to emphasize the

central need to embed the learning in the actual coaching activity - learning experienced *in situ*.

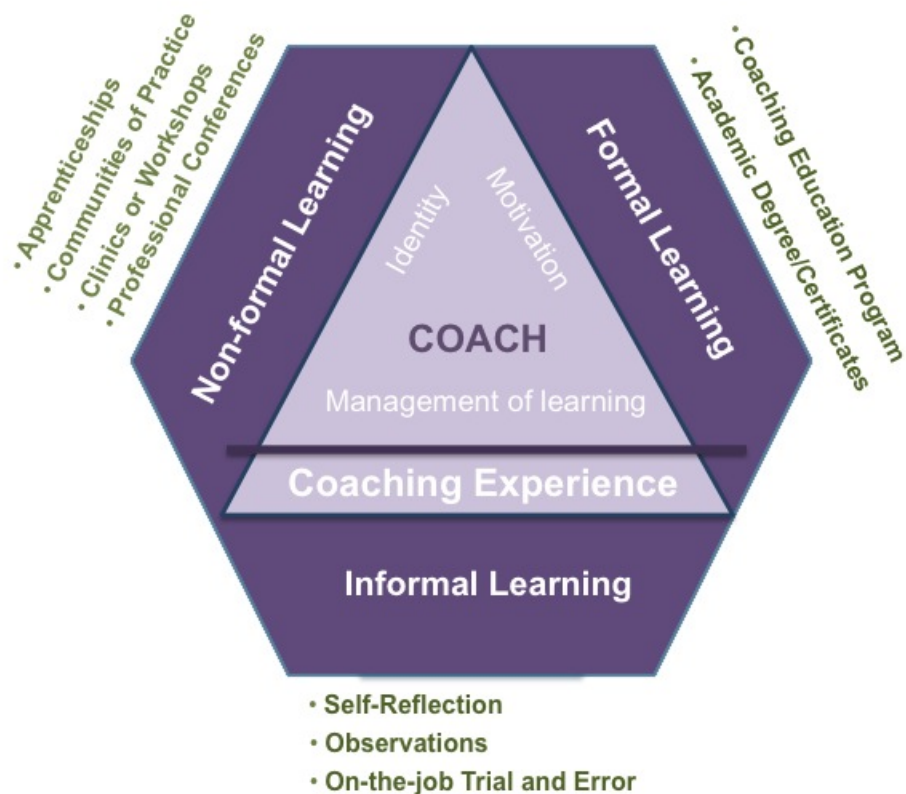


Figure 4: Coaches as Self-directed Learners with Potential Learning Experiences

The frameworks and models presented are grounded in research about the current state of the collegiate coaching profession, trends in coaching education, an understanding about adult learners, and the professional development of high-performance international coaches. They acknowledge the complexity of the collegiate coaching profession, unique pressures of the U.S. collegiate setting, and the significant role of the coach in determining if and where to seek out learning experiences for professional development. These initial frameworks provided guidance in developing the

protocol for the research study and analysis of the data derived through the interviews. As the research findings emerged, these frameworks were refined to more effectively describe and explain the significant factors that influence coaches' participation in learning experiences as part of their professional development.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

Only with a more thorough understanding of how coaches function in the U.S. collegiate environment can we develop a clear picture of how to enhance the effectiveness of professional development experiences for college coaches. This research is *a qualitative study examining the factors influencing the participation and self-management of U.S. collegiate women's rowing coaches in professional development experiences*. The qualitative methodology provided a valuable strategy in which to explore a complex and dynamic situation.

As explained in detail below, collegiate women's rowing coaches are a compelling group to study. Furthermore, these coaches arguably provide an opportunity to understand how the thinking around professional development might occur for coaches in a wider array of college sports. The research questions that the study explores include:

- *What influences and conditions motivate or deter U.S. collegiate women's rowing coaches' participation in professional development activities?*
- *What individuals or groups provide guidance and/or facilitate U.S. collegiate women's rowing coaches' participation in learning experiences? How is this guidance imparted?*
- *How do U.S. collegiate women's rowing coaches evaluate their performance and manage their career pathway and professional development?*

Based on a literature review regarding coaching education and adult learning theory, this research study is necessary because of the unique environment in which these coaching

professionals operate. While there are likely similarities to both U.S. youth coaching and high performance international coaching, the historical development and higher education setting create a unique environment for the U.S. collegiate coaches. At the outset of my research, it is expected that many themes will emerge that are consistent with factors identified by international researchers examining high-performance coaches.

Research Design

This study was designed to develop an initial framework to describe the professional development of collegiate coaches through the identification of influences on their decisions regarding participation in learning experiences and development of an understanding of how coaches viewed their progression along their career pathways. Qualitative methodology using grounded theory analysis was selected with a focus on understanding these phenomena from the coaches' perspective. Due to the many unknowns regarding the professional development of experience for collegiate coaches, it would have been difficult to construct an appropriate questionnaire or survey instrument. Additionally, the qualitative methodology fit with the constructivist perspective toward the coaches' learning and allowed rich dialogue in which to explore the coaches' experiences and discover what elements emerged as formative and meaningful.

Described by Creswell (2009), grounded theory analysis is "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants" (Creswell, 2009, p.13). As the literature review shows, there was not an existing conceptual framework that describes the influences acting on collegiate coaches in terms of their decisions to participate in various

professional development experiences. Such a framework, refined through future examinations of a broader pool of intercollegiate coaches from rowing and other sports, is likely to guide the development of appropriate and meaningful coaching education programs and activities. To this end, the grounded theory process will take into consideration what is known about adult learning, the historical development of coaching education in the U.S., the current environment of coaching within higher education institutions, and emerging ideas about preparation of high-performance coaches on the international level. Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe the development of theory with this research method as follows,

“At the heart of theorizing lies the interplay of making inductions (deriving concepts, their properties, and dimensions from data) and deductions (hypothesizing about the relationship between concepts; the relationships too are derived from data, but those data have been abstracted by the analyst to form concepts)” (Corbin, 2008, p.56).

A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix: Interview Protocol) was developed to explore how the coaches thought about the development of their professional competencies and influences on their decisions about participation in learning experiences. Questions appropriate for both assistant and head coaches asked about the types of learning experiences coaches participated in at various times throughout their careers; how coaches assessed the value of various types of learning experiences; what organizations, people, or situations provided motivation or barriers for their participation; the description of skills and abilities required for various types of coaching positions; the feedback or evaluation they received; how they assessed their own success; influences they exerted on coaches working under their direction; and their ideas about what was necessary for preparing future coaches.

Selection of Research Participants

As noted previously, the nearly 50,000 coaches among the 1,200 NCAA institutions in the collegiate setting represent an extremely broad and diverse population. As this study is an effort to derive an initial framework, I used a small participant pool that represented a cross-section within one sport – women’s rowing. This focus on women’s rowing coaches in the two states is justified for a number of reasons. In terms of my understanding of the field, this is a sports community in which I have a long history of involvement. My involvement includes experience as a coach and on the administrative level working directly in the area of coaching education. Described by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.250) as a *theoretical sensitivity*, this experience provided a richer understanding of the structure and growth of women’s rowing (especially in the Northwest region) and familiarity with the various types of learning experiences discussed by the rowing coaches; this understanding enhanced the effectiveness of my data analysis.

An NCAA sport since 1997, women’s rowing has experienced considerable growth in the last 20 years and seen a dramatic increase in the number of new programs and coaching opportunities (men’s rowing is not an NCAA sport). As listed in Table 1: Number of NCAA Women’s Rowing Programs, the latest NCAA Student-Athlete Participation Report (2010) listed 143 women’s rowing programs across the country with the following breakout among the three competitive divisions: 86 programs in Division I, 16 programs in Division II, and 41 programs in Division III (NCAA, 2010). Within Washington and Oregon there were 15 active women’s rowing programs: 5 programs in

NCAA Division I, 2 programs in NCAA Division II, and 4 programs in NCAA Division III.

	NCAA Division I	NCAA Division II	NCAA Division III	Total
United States	86	16	41	143
Washington & Oregon	4	2	4	15

Table 1: Number of NCAA Women's Rowing Programs

A focus on participants in Washington and Oregon allowed for convenience in scheduling the interviews and any necessary follow-up. Athletic department website data listed 40 potential study candidates among the 15 intercollegiate campuses that participate in NCAA rowing in these two states. Table 2: Number of Coaches at NCAA Women's Rowing Programs in Washington and Oregon summarizes the number of coaching positions of different types at the Washington and Oregon collegiate women's programs.

	NCAA Division I	NCAA Division II	NCAA Division III	Total
Total Coaches	20	6	14	40
Head Coaches	5	2	4	11
Assistant Coaches	9	2	7	18
Intern/Grad Assistants/Vols*	6	2	3	11

(*estimate as many programs do not list these coaches on their websites)

Table 2: Number of Coaches at NCAA Women's Rowing Programs in Washington and Oregon

This pool of coaches provided a broad mix of potential participants due to its combination of public and private institutions, programs from all three NCAA Divisions,

men and women, part-time and full-time coaching positions, and a broad range of ability from first year assistants to head coaches with over 25 years of coaching experience. In addition, this is a population of coaches that had at least some access to professional development activities provided by the sport's national governing body, USRowing. Based on my knowledge of entry into the career field, many of these coaches probably used traditional apprenticeship opportunities to enter the profession. Combined with the tradition of migration around the country during initial coaching experiences it was likely that these coaches had engaged in a representative pattern of access to coaching education experiences in comparison to others in the national sphere. Additionally, the sport of rowing has a strong presence internationally. There is some information flow throughout the international coaching community through publications, web resources and conferences.

Approval for the study was obtained from the University of Washington's Human Subjects Division of the Institutional Review Board. Letters of invitation and consent forms were mailed to all NCAA women's rowing assistant and head coaches in Washington and Oregon inviting them to participate in the study. Preliminary data from coaches' profiles on campus websites were used to compile background information about the participants. Follow-up by phone and email confirmed the participation of coaches in semi-structured interviews. Using a mix of purposeful and theoretical sampling an initial group of 5 participants was selected that reflected a mix of men and women at different coaching levels within various competition divisions. Thirteen additional participants were added to the participant pool as data analysis began to reveal themes suggesting valuable areas of further inquiry resulting in a final participant pool of 18 coaches in head or assistant positions.

Figure 5: Women's Rowing Coaches in WA and OR Compared to Interviewed Coaches compares characteristics of the final pool of the 18 coaches interviewed with the entire pool of women's rowing coaches in Washington and Oregon. The figure describing the participants by coaching positions illustrates an important descriptive category that emerged during the research. While coaches were identified formally as current head or assistant coaches within their institutions, there appeared to be significant variation in (1) the perspectives expressed by coaches with less than two years of experiences and (2) the experiences described by coaches as they described this early timeframe of the first and second years of their careers. From this point forward, three coaching positions are referred to when describing the coaches' experiences:

Head coaches - individuals with the head coach and/or program director title.

They frequently report directly to a senior athletic department administrator and have managerial and administrative oversight over at least the women's rowing program (program directors oversee both the women's and men's programs).

Coaches in this category had a wide range of experience from less than five years to more than 25 years. While many of these coaches at the NCAA Division I and II programs were full-time employees, the NCAA Division III positions were in a range from half-time to full-time.

Assistant coaches – individuals with assistant or associate coaching titles. They frequently report to the head women's program coach. Coaches in this category varied greatly in terms of employment status. The positions ranged from some almost at a volunteer level with a modest stipend to full-time positions with benefits. Many of these coaches were working on limited contracts tied to the

status of the head coaches. The individuals working as assistants ranged in experience from three to almost 15 years.

Entry-level coaches – individuals with assistant or associate coaching titles. These coaches were defined as working in their first or second year of collegiate coaching. As described previously, this distinction emerged from the interview data and was reinforced in the recollection of coaches about this early period in their career.

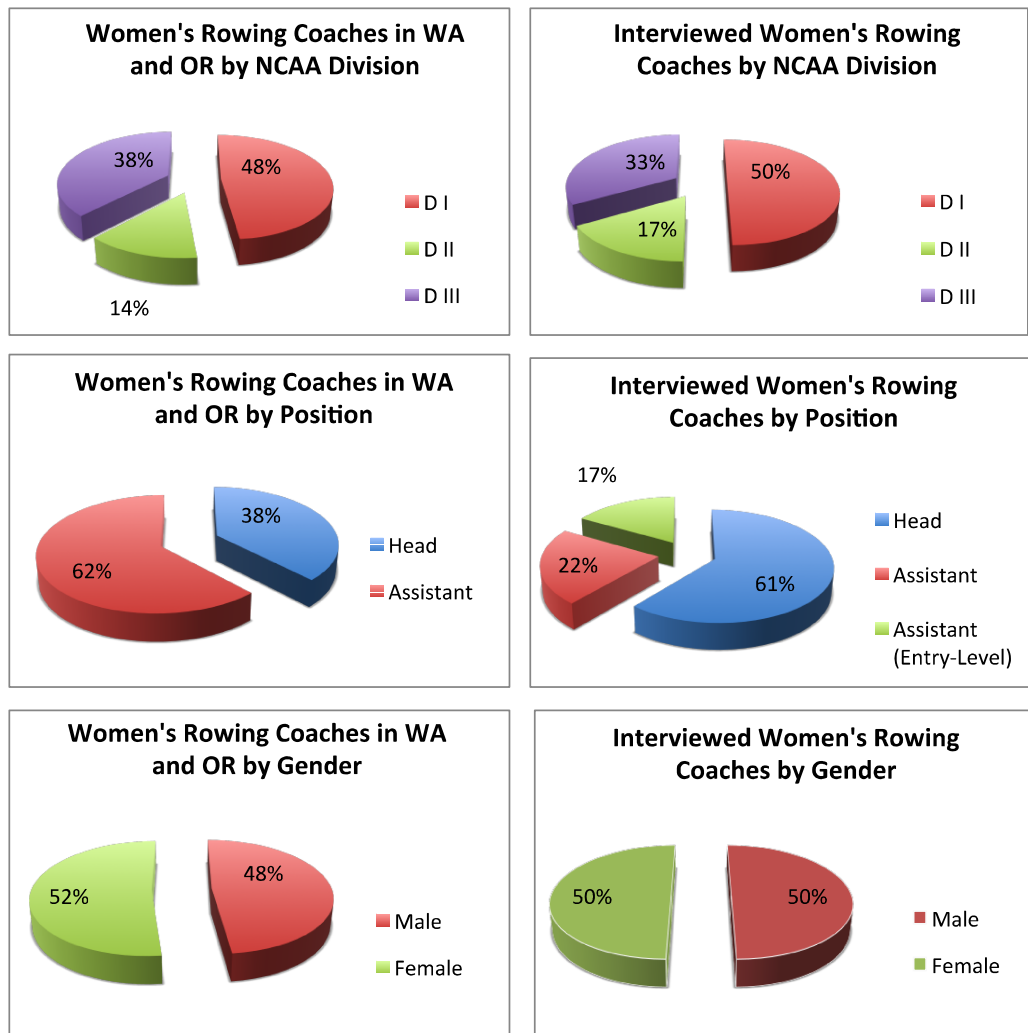


Figure 5: NCAA Women's Rowing Coaches in Washington and Oregon Compared to Interviewed Coaches

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with each coach. The introduction to the interview provided coaches with an overview of the research goals and also defined terms that were used in interview questions. These terms included:

Professional competencies – skills and abilities required for job responsibilities. This was clarified to include competencies required for “behind-the-megaphone” activity during practice and competition sessions as well as administrative and managerial activities.

Learning experiences – any activities, informal or formal, used by a coach to develop or expand professional competencies. Examples listed included: academic degrees, certification programs, apprenticeships, observations and/or discussions with other coaches, classes, workshops, books and articles, video analysis, and on-the-job learning.

Mentors – included anyone the coaches looked to for support, guidance, and/or feedback in their coaching position(s). Coaches being interviewed were also asked about their own “mentor role” when working with coaches under their supervision or direction.

The final version of the interview introduction and general questions is included in the Appendix: Interview Protocol. Memoing after interviews captured my observations and reflections of coaches’ responses throughout the interview sessions. The memos were effective in exploring emerging concepts and identifying similarities and contrasts among ideas expressed by the participants. The practice of reflecting on the interview session also provided an opportunity to examine issues relative to researcher subjectivity and the theoretical sensitivity

previously mentioned. The interview sessions were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts, biographical data from athletic department websites and my memoing notes comprised the research data for this study.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory methodology was selected because of its value in deriving and validating an initial process description in the absence of a clear theoretical framework. This methodology required an iterative process that allowed categories to be identified and concepts to emerge as additional data were added to the inventory. The grounded theory analysis consisted of initial coding of the interview data using concepts and categories suggested by the literature. The initial type of coding applied, *open coding*, enabled “breaking apart data and delineating concepts and categories to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin, 2008, p.198). Understanding the current state of coaching education in the U.S. and the findings of researchers examining the behavior of high-performance international coaches, I expected that these coaches in the U.S. intercollegiate system would describe a setting in which they operate as self-directed learners and maintain a significant level of latitude in making decisions about participating in learning experiences. The analysis was informed by grounded theory and yielded broad, initial categories such as listing of the professional skill sets the coaches anticipated and/or were required to master, professional competencies they felt confident in performing, descriptions of the ways they were influenced by mentor coaches, various types of learning experiences they participated in throughout their careers, specific barriers that inhibited their participation in learning experiences, methods for receiving feedback, criteria for evaluation, and elements used to

assess their own success. The initial categories were clarified and refined as the data were examined (and reexamined) for both similarities and differences. Existing data were also reexamined in light of new and/or shifting categories and concepts.

The initial coding and sorting of data was challenging due to the long narrative style of the coaches as they described the chronology of their coaching experience. Data from the initial five interviews were compiled into a preliminary report identifying emerging themes. At this time minor adjustments were made to the interview questions based on the coaches' response to the initial interview protocol. These changes focused the inquiry more directly on the coaches' views on, and participation in, professional development activities. An attempt was made to reduce or eliminate questions that elicited extensive narrative about the coaches' athletic careers, decisions to enter the coaching profession, and career timelines. Although this information was useful, the revised interview protocol enabled respondents to provide the most essential elements of those stories while focusing on specific areas identified in the conceptual frameworks.

The revised interview protocol also integrated Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) to extract examples of influences on the coaches' professional development activity. Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was initially defined by Flanagan (1954) as "a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving problems and developing broad psychological principles" (Flanagan, 1954, 327). The CIT technique is a good fit with the grounded theory methodology. In describing CIT, a researcher, Hughes, (2007) summarized its advantages, "CIT lends itself to exploratory research that seeks context-rich, first-hand perspectives on human activities and their significance...This

insight into real-life individual experiences assists the identification of broader patterns and understandings...” (Hughes, 2007, p.11). Hughes also mentions a cited disadvantage that was a valuable match for this study methodology, "On a conceptual level, CIT lacks the strong theoretical underpinning of some other qualitative methods such as phenomenography or participatory action research. However, this can be advantageous for studies that aim to develop a conceptual frame or follow a 'grounded' approach" (Hughes, 2007, p.11).

The adjusted questions focused on the identification of critical incidents to elicit examples from coaches of specific actions by institutions, mentors, and/or peer groups to provide additional data to group and categorize significant factors of influence. This shift was productive and appeared to enhance the coaches' ability to focus on specific interactions that influenced their participation in learning experiences without losing the detail in an overall narrative about their career. However, it was clear from the initial analysis that the coaches lacked clarity in describing the competencies or skill sets they required to perform their work. Coaches frequently described their ability to “learn-on-the-job” or “figure it out” as they faced with additional job duties. They almost exclusively used broad categorizations to describe functional areas of responsibility (e.g. coaching on the water versus office work). This tendency appeared related to a vague or absent articulation of job descriptions and career pathways, especially in connection with the development of specific professional skills or competencies.

As interviews continued and the analysis took shape the coding focus shifted from the *open coding* to *axial coding*. *Axial coding* involved “the act of relating concepts/categories to each other” (Corbin, 2008, p.198). This analysis involved the identification of additional

concepts and categories that emerge from the data. Key to this phase of the analysis was recognizing the corresponding career period that linked to the significantly different descriptions of activity and influences. These three periods were: entry-level coaching positions, assistant coaching positions, and head coaching positions. The data reinforced concepts revealed in the literature review about the environment (the loose coupling of the athletic department and the specialization of tasks for assistant coaches), tensions inherent within coaching (development versus performance goals), and a pragmatic approach of coaches to value those experiences that provide practical learning in a context of their current position. Additionally, there were identified types of barriers and motivators to participate in learning experiences and shifts in their involvement with professional communities or networks that appeared linked with levels of coaching positions. Most significant was listening again to how coaches described their experience as an apprentice-coach in contrast to their descriptions of activities they performed in a mentor-coach capacity. At times, the emerging themes led to the reexamination of previous interview data to more closely explore these new threads or relationships.

The ability to include relatively new coaches in the pool and many who were currently working at the assistant level provided validation of the descriptions head coaches shared as they reflected on their earlier experiences. There appeared to be general consistency in how most coaches described their early experiences in the profession as entry-level and/or assistant coaches.

As the data were analyzed and revisited after each interview, memoing proved valuable in considering how each subsequent interview challenged or supported the emerging ideas and themes. It was also helpful in examining unanticipated researcher bias regarding

two specific issues: (1) coaches' assumptions about mentoring relationship goals and (2) the complex understanding of the competencies required in head coaching positions. For both concepts, the questions and notes within the memos were significant in highlighting that the coaches were expressing ideas about these topics in contrast to the researcher's initial assumptions.

A final phase within the grounded theory methodology related to growing confidence that the number of interviews was sufficient for this initial inquiry. *Theoretical saturation* suggests that the process of acquiring data and conducting analysis should continue until "all categories are well developed...further data gathering and analysis add little new to the conceptualization, though variations can always be discovered" (Corbin, 2008, p.263). For this study, the number and mix of coaches provided adequate confirmation of themes identifying major influences for participation in professional development. Additionally, the coaches provided a fairly consistent description of their primary role in the management of their professional preparation and awareness of their career paths.

Research Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study was the restricted pool of participants. Another limitation of this research was the reliance on data only from interviews with rowing coaches themselves. The study design did not involve gathering additional data or talking with others working with the coaches. This limitation was not a major concern as the intention was to understand how the coaches perceived and responded to the various conditions that impacted their pursuit of professional development activities. However, it is important to acknowledge that statements about

how the coaches were evaluated, considerations of their professional competencies, and what opportunities were made available to them are understood solely from the self-reported data. This study was also limited by the broad scope of the inquiry. Due to the lack of a rich body of research in this subject area the interview protocol was designed to explore many facets of the coaches' professional development.

Summary

In summary, the concepts and theories described in the literature review provided a broad organizing structure for the themes that emerged from the interviews including an initial foundation consisting of elements from adult-learning theory and concepts regarding the impact motivation and role of self-management on adult-learners. Through the use of grounded theory methodology, an analysis of the data from a meaningful sample of intercollegiate women's rowing coaches allowed the development of themes that illuminate aspects of the coaches' self-directed learning and emergence of a more nuanced description of the coaches' experience as well as producing a more nuanced description of the coaches' experience as they made decisions about participation in professional development learning experiences. While themes emerged that appeared consistent across the pool of participants, this was an examination limited in depth by its goal of gaining an overall understanding of a very complex set of dynamics.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

An analysis of the research data reinforced many of the theoretical concepts related to a new view of coaching complexity and the perspective that collegiate coaches function as self-directed learners in a manner consistent with a constructivist orientation. The interview data also revealed a number of coaches' perspectives and practices that were not anticipated. There was consistency in the patterns and environments described by the coaches at the various stages of their careers, irrespective of the type and competitive status of their programs. Most surprisingly, the direct influence and guidance of mentor coaches was not as strong as anticipated, even during entry-level experiences. Overall, the findings provided an understanding of how coaches viewed the various influences and expectations associated with decision making around participation in specific learning experiences. The following chapter examines the emerging concepts and themes from the interviews that provide a richer understanding of the influences on the coaches participation within four significant areas: (1) coaches' views of the collegiate career pathway and professional competencies; (2) external influences on coaches' professional development and evaluation; (3) coaches as self-directed learners: a constructivist orientation; (4) types of learning experiences that coaches access. A series of quotations from the interviews are included to illustrate some of the ideas and provide a sampling of the coaches' perspectives. As the concepts and themes are described, illustrative quotes from coaches are included that emphasize key ideas.

Coaches' Views of the Career Pathway and Professional Competencies

This group of coaches described a career field similar to the multi-faceted, dynamic environment identified by previous researchers (Cote, 1995, 2009; Abraham, 1998; Jones, 2003,

2005; McCullick, 2005; Cushion, 2006, 2007; Nash, 2006; Werthner, 2006; Mallet, 2009; and Cassidy, 2010). The characteristics of the intercollegiate coaching field are in alignment with those referenced with high performance coaches: the absence of articulated career pathways; and the self-directed nature of the coaches' professional development. Despite the diversity of competitive divisions within intercollegiate rowing and the developmental status of the student-athletes, the similarities were still evident relative to the impact of winning records on promotion and retention.

Coaches also expressed recognition that their positions required attention to a socio-cultural or relationship dimension that contributed to this complexity and required a significant amount of attention. In agreement with the emerging international research with elite level athletes (Jones, 2004; Cassidy 2009) many coaches mentioned the need for strong leadership and communication skills to manage the personal interactions, team dynamics, and complex synergies of preparing athletes for competition. A few coaches also commented on the additional demands of working with student-athletes engaged in the variety developmental challenges that are part of the collegiate experience.

“And so now the team is much more of what I think of as a team. They're there, ready to be athletic.... I think helping to understand the stages of a person and each of those levels, so that you know what you're working with, and it might seem really obvious that a lot of it is - how do you handle motivating your athlete, and keeping them on track, keeping them balanced, understanding the whole person. Because in my opinion, in college, that's part of it.” (Head Coach)

Cote and Gilbert (2009) described the need for coaches to function as nimble adapters with a well-equipped toolbox of skills and strategies. The assistant and head coaches frequently mentioned the environment within the college as lacking strong administrative guidance and/or support, increasing pressure on their roles to oversee and manage a comprehensive program.

Within smaller athletic department settings a head coach often described him or herself as a jack-of-all-trades with complete responsibility for every aspect of the program. Within a larger department the head coach still described running a small business component with overall management responsibilities for a significant budget, operations planning, equipment/facility investment, and oversight of a large staff and student-athlete pool.

“...the informal side of things kind of got me along and then you get some intuitive abilities as well, which is based a little bit on your wisdom and things that you can do well, tend to do well. And then 10 years into it was when I pretty much hit that marker... for the first 8 years I was just trying to get it figured out. Because this position here, you're EVERYTHING! You do every lowest task you can imagine; you have no help. So you're just scrambling around. You are trying to raise money, you're trying to figure out all of those different functional areas... I just said, 'All right, that's it, I've got to get smart. I've got to get smart on this stuff'” (Head Coach)

When coaches were asked to identify professional competencies, they usually only mentioned skills required for direct coach training activity, on-the-water skills, such as rowing technique instruction, training program planning and implementation, development of team dynamics, and equipment maintenance. These competencies were the primary duties required for most entry-level coaches. Often, it was only when assistant and head coaches were specifically asked to think about administrative or office skills that they indicated other areas of responsibility such as human resources, budget management, compliance, alumni relations, fundraising, public relations, equipment acquisition, and travel and competition logistics. Once prompted, many coaches then expressed the significant time demands and challenges of these areas.

“I'm just saying that the more education that we can offer people doesn't mean that they're ever going to be the head coach... But guess what? They could be more prepared for that job... We are not preparing people for being head coaches. We don't – we aren't teaching – we aren't saying you need to know this much exercise physiology. You need to know this much biomechanics. You need

to know this much business law... you need to know this much marketing and promotions and you need to have these kinds of communication skills... But the world is emerging so fast – my ethic is if you're not continually advancing yourself, you're going backwards.” (Head Coach)

Although coaches expressed a high level of confidence about their ability to identify needs and respond effectively, they did not appear to possess a thorough understanding of their career pathway. The interviews revealed variation in how or whether coaches had considered a coaching career prior to entering their initial experience, frequently assisting their team at the conclusion of their own rowing career. Some coaches were invited to participate as a volunteer or graduate student assistant, but many others sought out an opportunity to remain linked the team and explore the coaching role.

“I really had never envisioned myself as a coach until...I started to realize I was not ready to leave rowing yet. So I kind of battled with that. I wasn't sure if it was me just being sentimental because of course every collegiate athlete probably has that or if I had a bit more of like nostalgia and like passion for the sport. But turned out that I think it was the right choice at the time...” (Head Coach)

When asked about what was required for future advancement, very few coaches could articulate how they would progress or provide a comprehensive understanding of the professional competencies required for the next level of responsibility. Similarly, coaches often expressed surprise or a lack of knowledge about how job responsibilities varied at different programs within different types of higher education institutions.

“... I'm not entirely sure. Do I want to be a Head Coach? Do I really know what being a Head Coach means? And do I know what a Head Coach means at this university versus that university? And do I know what a Director of Rowing at [a community program] would do? I know what this person does there and that person does there, but [in need to] see what fits for me in my phase in life.” (Assistant Coach)

Job responsibilities for entry-level coaches were predominantly working with a subgroup of the team during practice sessions. As many of these positions were volunteer or part-time,

there were few expectations for administrative or office-related duties. Mentors had a variety of approaches, but often mentioned the value of providing coaches with actual time in the coaching launch with their group of student-athletes. Entry-level coaches and coaches reflecting back to their first experiences were universal in describing an immediate immersion with little direct preparation.

“...every single time I’ve gone to coaching has been is like I’m just like given the keys and you go. And that’s how [this current position] was. It’s like, you’re given the keys and you go. . . you’re still tossing a lot of inexperienced, uneducated people into these positions that are guiding athletes. And that’s the nature of the beast!” (Assistant Coach)

With only two exceptions, coaches working in assistant and entry-level positions described direct involvement with recruiting activities. Aside from recruiting, these coaches identified one or two secondary areas of responsibility (e.g., compliance, alumni relations, equipment maintenance, travel logistics). The coaches frequently described these secondary areas as corresponding to the areas in which the head coaches needed extra support or demonstrated weaker skills. Some assistant coaches described being able to shadow the head coach as they took on these new responsibilities, but many were simply assigned the tasks and expected to learn by doing. Most coaches did progress from an entry-level volunteer position, to an assistant coach position, and eventually a head coaching position. Sometimes they moved to another program or a larger program during their assistant coaching phase. Frequently coaches described a rapid progression to a head coaching position, especially if there was a sudden vacancy.

“I don’t think the athletic director ever really knew what to do with rowing. He didn’t want to deal with finding a new coach. So I got the head coach job and sort of fell into it, and yeah, the rest is history. I don’t think when I started out coaching... it wasn’t: I’m going to do this for the rest of my life. It was: Here’s something to fill a couple of years and . . . Then suddenly I was the head coach at

the college go-round and we had some really good people, and it kind of took off from there.” (Head Coach)

It should also be noted that coaches’ career paths are not necessarily contained within intercollegiate athletics. Experiences in community, youth, and national team development and selection programs frequently serve as supplemental or tangential positions for many coaches. While these experiences provide additional opportunities to develop skills, they may further complicate the options and possibly create ineffective detours by removing coaches from the network of collegiate coaches. How these experiences are understood and/or valued may also be significant during the hiring process as they sometimes involved very different job demands from the standard characteristics of the collegiate setting.

The intercollegiate athletics environment is a complex setting with high demands placed on the coaches to manage their program within the loosely coupled athletic department. Interviews revealed that coaches early in their careers do not appear to have a comprehensive understanding of the full menu of skills and expectations necessary to be an effective head coaches. Many coaches recalled viewing generic, vague position descriptions during their hiring; but not one coach was able to provide a detailed job description. A number of head coaches had employment contracts with specified performance goals, but most acknowledged that their job responsibilities were much more extensive and broad than the areas detailed in the contract.

“I’m sure there is a job description out there and I’ve seen it, but it in no way encompasses or covers all of the little things that this job entails... Unfortunately, I feel like I am not able to spend as much time coaching, as I would like... Budget management is a big one. Fund-raising is huge. If we want to be bringing in new equipment, most of our equipment needs to come through fundraising dollars. Organizing travel logistics, staff development... Equipment maintenance, working on the boats, NCAA compliance sorts of things, just staff meetings. A lot of it is just not written, not applicable to

rowing, but you still have to be present with the University things that go on.”
(Head Coach)

Figure 6: Professional Competencies Grouped by Positions as Described by Coaches shows the various skills added to the coaches' required competencies as they progress to higher level coaching positions. Most coaches described a progression from an entry-level coach to an assistant level coach, and then to a head coaching position. The competencies listed emerged from the interviews and provide a descriptive summary of the items most frequently included for each coaching position. The competencies groupings shown by position are cumulative in nature. The assistant coach frequently carries out the tasks of the entry-level coach in addition to the new responsibilities listed. In the same manner, the head coach responsibilities include at least some dimension of the competencies listed for both the entry-level and assistant coaches. The position of the competencies on the horizontal dimension positioned on the right or left side of the circle, reflect their categorization as administrative or “office” competencies versus technical sport or “on-the-water” competencies. The shaded arrow reflects the shift this competency categorization from predominance of technical sports skills to those more administrative or managerial in nature. This shift clearly highlights the very limited initial exposure of the entry-level and assistant level coaches to many elements within the administrative skill set.

“But that first year, yeah, I was running the practices and go to the races and do the race day stuff, but nothing much beyond that... Well, probably the first thing that got added was recruiting. And in this case, the on-campus recruiting, we really didn't do, at the time at any rate, very much off-campus recruiting... And then I helped [the head coach] more and more with some of the administrative stuff although, again, he was still mostly doing the [planning].” (Assistant Coach)



Figure 6: Professional Competencies Grouped by Positions as Described by Coaches

External Influences on Coaches' Professional Development and Evaluation

The social-constructivist orientation is described as socially mediated (Merriam, 2007; Driver, 1994). Given the frequent entry into coaching through an apprenticeship and the interdependence among the program's rowing coaches, it was expected that coaches would develop a strong relationship within a community of practice. Although participants described a stronger network within the rowing community than with the broader group of sport coaches within their campus' athletic department, the actual influence of the group appeared muted. Based on the descriptions provided by the coaches it appeared that the rowing coaches would be accurately defined as a *network of practice* (Culver, 2008) where coaches exchange some

superficial information and engage in informal relationships. Time constraints within a department's rowing community and/or the competitive tension among peer coaches from other rowing programs were mentioned as contributors to this less intensive relationship in reference to peer rowing coaches.

Those interviewed reported that the sport's governance organization, USRowing, provided little influence over their decisions to participate in professional development. This organization was recognized as the source of the basic coaching certification program (and a few other learning experiences and resources), but the value placed on this certification program was limited. The influence of athletics department administrators and staff was minimal for entry-level and assistant coaches as their interaction was usually described as non-existent or infrequent. For other assistant coaches and many head coaches the influence was frequently described as an indirect hindrance due to a lack of willingness to provide financial support or require the money to come from fundraising efforts potentially used for equipment and program operations. The few head coaches who described a supportive department did not indicate there were any requirements or pressures for professional development activity.

One unexpected finding related to these relationships, was the moderate influence that mentors appeared to have on coaches' participation in any one or series of specific learning experiences. The most common incidents were mentors passing along information about an opportunity or providing some support (e.g., funding, scholarship recommendation, time away from work) to participate. Coaches did not describe a sense of pressure or expectation that they participate in any of the nonformal or formal coaching education activities. In fact, a few of the entry-level and assistant coaches maintained their interest in participation in spite of comments

from senior coaches that questioned the value and/or need for formal and nonformal learning experiences.

Influences were more indirect and frequently involved informal learning experiences such as the modeling of coaching skills, conversations about various coaching topics or challenges, guidance in terms of practice and training plan, and occasional ride-alongs in the coaching launch during practice sessions. Mentors were also able to provide networking connections, provide information about formal or non-formal learning experiences, and share resources such as articles, books, and videos.

“I think it's more just being available... He's not a big, let me teach you how to do this... it's the most non-conventional way I've ever been taught anything and it's more like, 'I'm going to set this example for you and it's not super complex but just kind of do what I do'. And he's never said that to me but that's the way it's worked. And it's worked pretty well and if I ever had a specific question, then definitely he's always there... I don't want to say tough love but I remember when I first started coaching... [it] was literally here's your launch; here's your boat. And I screwed up a lot and they never were mad at me. They were just, 'It happens!' and I was, 'Oh'. And in that way, I was able to form my own coaching style. But at the time, I was like, 'Help!'” (Assistant Coach)

Six of the coaches did reach out and identify additional mentors from the broader rowing community or occasionally from other areas such as business, sports administration, or athletic training. This type of relationship became more frequent when coaches were faced with taking responsibility for new administrative-related duties. Four coaches specifically sought out a rowing coach from another program to serve as a mentor. Two of these coaches had been involved in structured internships previously through their academic programs. These coaches described asking directly for support and the informal learning experiences they were not receiving from the coaches in their own programs. These mentors provided support through

activities such as discussions about current challenges, opportunities for observations, consultation sessions, and overall encouragement.

“...out of necessity, I’ve also found a mentor coach in [a community program coach]. And, you know, my experience working with him this spring and then over the summer and then, you know, getting hired for this job, and then feeling fairly inadequate for most everything I was asked to do... [I] kind of like latched onto him as quickly as I could...So I found a mentor coach which has been absolutely essential. But otherwise it’s been sort of trial by fire.” (Entry-level Coach)

Head coaches themselves identified very few mentors with whom they had ongoing interaction. Five of these coaches were involved in working with national team programs that brought together groups of highly skilled coaches. All described attending major national or international competition events where they participated in observation activities and informal interactions with more experienced coaches. Some head coaches did mention the value of hiring assistant coaches with different skills sets from their own (e.g., social media skills, knowledge about newer training systems, recruiting strategies from other programs).

“So other than [alma mater coach], no one else, you know, there’s no one here on this campus who I would go to. I wish there were. I really I had access to someone like my advisor at [graduate school] who I could go just chat, just have conversations. You know, we’re having this issue with this certain athlete or got these things going on with the team and she always had insights into and I just learned so much from those brief conversations and there’s no – there’s none of that going on here.” (Head Coach)

Although a number of coaches mentioned a formal evaluation process, few had actually received any regular performance reviews. Only two of the head coaches described a formal evaluation process that was tied directly to the performance measures in their job descriptions or contracts. Many coaches expressed disappointment that review activities rarely contained useful or meaningful feedback. Almost all of the head coaches expressed certainty that the feedback they provided to assistant coaches primarily through frequent, informal conversations was a

positive development activity. While entry-level and assistant coaches expressed confidence that they would be told if they were not meeting expectations for a specific job task, most described feedback as sporadic and not clearly articulated. Many expressed that this limited feedback was useful, but others indicated that regular feedback would provide a more comprehensive and clearer assessment of their skills and performance.

When asked how they thought the athletics department senior administrators evaluated their success, almost all the coaches listed competition performance, along with other priority criteria including budget management, recruiting success and roster management (maintaining a specified squad size). Frequently, the coaches felt that the competition expectations were based on maintaining a level of achievement consistent with previous years rather than pushing to reach a higher level or consider changes in conditions within the competitive field. Most expressed the belief that if they slipped below the expected achievement level their position would be in jeopardy.

“Success here is going to be first, based on having 40 or so women on the time. And you know, in the world of gender equity... a number of women on the team is always going to be part of the criteria. Success here, it’s kind of like it would nice if you have it, but as long as you just don’t reek, you know... And then really, how happy, you could put in any number of adjectives, the team members are is going to be a big thing, as well. So the two pieces of feedback I’ve gotten is that, you know, ‘Wow, we’re thrilled with how many people are on the team, and everybody seems really, really happy.’ And make sure you have 23 people at the championships. [laughs]” (Head Coach)

Secondary evaluation factors that coaches believed the athletics department used to evaluate their success included providing a positive student-athlete experience, academic performance of student-athletes, maintaining a safe record of activity, and meeting fundraising goals. For some programs, coaches felt that administrators would use any failures in these areas as justification to limit or cut financial support. Some coaches took an active role in advocating

with senior administrators about how they should assess their program's success. They believed this was necessary due to the administrator's lack of knowledge and understanding about the overall program.

"The only time things get out of hand is if my budget gets out of whack. Cause then it's like, "You need to come in my office. Now what's this about?". But I've been lucky, because once you start winning they just kind of... you know, "let's not get in the way...". And the other thing is they don't really understand the sport either." (Head Coach)

Most coaches defined success for themselves by mentioning both winning on the racecourse and providing a rich student-athlete experience. There appeared to be a balance they sought to maintain relative to their level of program competitiveness, expectations for the rowing program as defined by the athletics department, and their consideration of how the resources of the department created opportunities or constraints for the program's competitive potential.

"I think if the rowers leave with a positive experience, I've been successful. I personally, if I couldn't make a charge at the NCAA Championships at least every couple of years, I would get out of it, because that is a very clear measure of whether you're successful or not. And that is not one I shy away from. I'm a coach." (Head Coach)

"By the spirit of kids. By how well they respect each other, by their attitude. By the fact that I didn't have to talk to anybody about being late to practice or missing practice. To me, that tells me that they're having fun and . . . you know, it's not just fun. We're also moving a boat." (Head Coach)

Many Division II and III program coaches also mentioned institutional expectations to maintain strong support for the student-athlete's academic success in balance with competitive success. In almost every case, the coaches appeared to have a higher standard for success than they felt was placed upon them by the athletic department administration.

"When I first got this job, it was all about performance and it was all about we build this up and we – I want to win a national championship, not just go, but win. And that has become less and less a factor because I honestly feel that we are doing everything we can with what we have... I think again to sustain this kind of job, you have to find a balance between having high expectations of

yourself and continually improving and also understanding some of the limiting factors around you.” (Head Coach)

There were external influences exerted on the coaches from mentors, their professional communities, the athletics department, and, to a lesser extent, the sport’s governing body. However, these influences were not as direct as expected in shaping the professional development of the coaches. Coaches did not describe a sense of pressure or expectation about what professional development activities were viewed as important from any of these groups. Frequently, the influence of mentors and the professional communities created awareness about learning experiences, provided some direct instruction for specific skills, and offered intermittent feedback. Coaches expressed comfort in analyzing their level of success and certainty that their self-imposed expectations exceeded those set out by others.

Figure 7: External Influences on Professional Development and Evaluation as Described by Coaches summarizes the primary individual and organizational influences on coaches’ participation in learning activities. The diagram uses arrows to show the influences directed toward the coach regarding professional development participation. The arrow does not distinguish between influences motivating coaches to participate versus barriers or inhibitors to participation. The items listed for each external party detail the form and/or nature of the influence. Later in the application of the full model, the relative strengths of these various influences that emerged from the coaches’ descriptions are expressed by the size of the arrow.

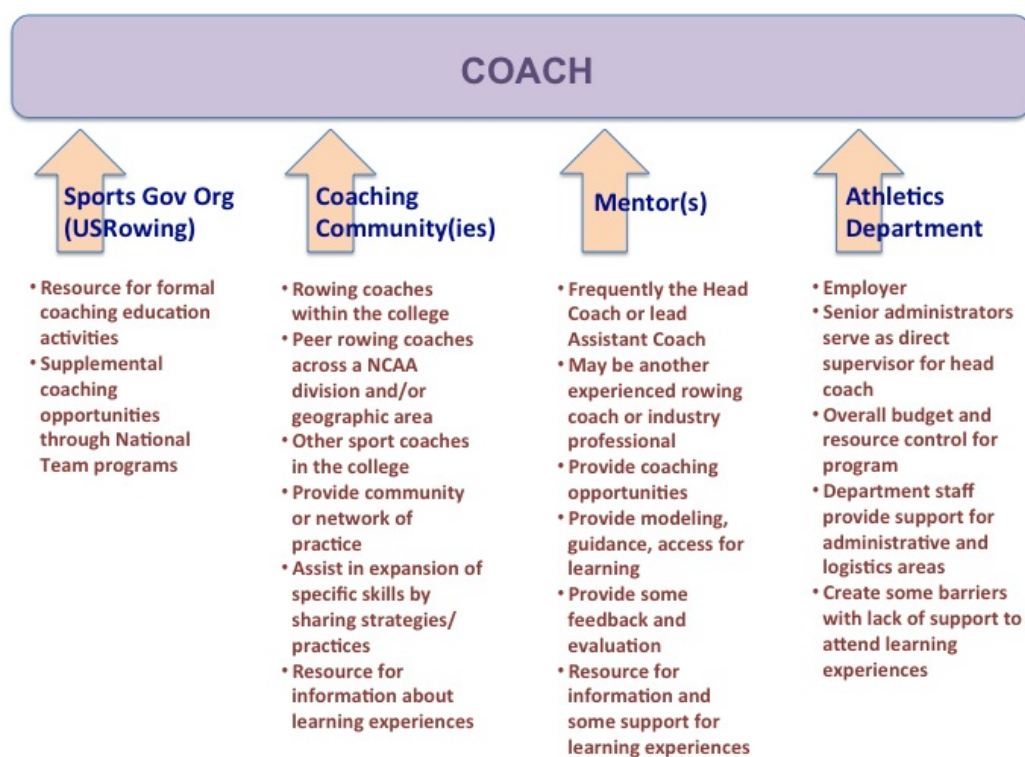


Figure 7: External Influences on Professional Development and Evaluation as Described by Coaches

Coaches as Self-directed Learners

Grounded in their own athletic experience and complemented by skills gained from their academic experience, coaches described their learning as a cumulative process in which they expected continued development of their skills and refinement of their abilities to function more effectively.

“I feel like that's, you know, speaking of professional development, a lot of the things I do, I feel like it's from my own experience. And so if there's something going on with the team and I feel like I need to start trying to answer, I try to set myself up in some sort of challenge like that that will help pull out some information and I draw on my own athletic experience all the time...” (Assistant Coach)

Reflections about their experience were described in both micro- and macro-cycles. These reflections ranged from learning how to be more effective in managing a budget to the overall reflection at the conclusion of a competitive season about their success in leading the program. Observations of other coaches' developmental paths were also mentioned and framed the coaches' expectations or understandings about career development. The idea of being able to adapt was also a consistent theme.

"I think it's important to do an honest assessment at the end of the year... It's a reflection and I'm the kind of person that will spew out seven pages of every single thing that went wrong all year. And then the list of things that went right [gestures to a short list]. And then in my mind I think about how we are going to approach it." (Head Coach)

Almost all of the coaches interviewed viewed themselves as continual learners and responsible for decisions about whether or not to participate in various learning experiences. Less experienced coaches were mildly influenced by suggestions or opinions of mentors and peer coaches. Coaches with greater levels of experience appeared even more self-directed and expressed a high level of selectivity in learning experiences. None of the coaches described any incidents in which they were directed or required to complete specific coaching education activities as a condition of their collegiate coaching status.

While Ryan and Deci's (2000) continuum model appeared to apply in identifying the coaches as residing closer to more internal loci of causality, the interviews within this study did not provide enough depth to delineate between the various regulation styles. Garrison's (1997) three-part model describing a self-directed learner provided a more useful framework to examine the elements guiding the coaches' engagement in the learning process. In terms of motivation, Garrison describes motivation related to (1) entering into learning based on valence and expectancy and (2) task motivation that maintains the learner persistence and active engagement.

Coaches did specify incidents that motivated them to participate in learning experiences; these included career transitions which involved new job responsibilities, failure or frustration in achieving a level of competency, and discussions with coaches about an issue or concept that highlighted a gap in their knowledge.

Related to task motivation, Garrison describes the ideal for a learner to have opportunities to share control and collaborate in the learning process. Coaches described their sense of control, but the situations did not appear to lend themselves to a high level of collaboration in the planning and implementation of the learning process. Overall as a group, the coaches described a decreasing level of motivation to participate in learning experiences as they gained coaching experience. This decrease appeared closely related to the coaches' increasing skepticism regarding the value of the formal and nonformal learning experiences (versus the informal learning they experience on-the-job).

“I got my Level I waived but did the Level II and Level III. So I did do that. But more it was just an experience; get as much experience as I could... Anything I could be involved in... So kind of try to expand my point of view, you experience doing different launch ride-a-longs. You talk to different coaches, see their approach to things or their philosophy. More than any formal education I did that. I tried to read a lot. You know different books and the idea of leadership psychology or coaching books.” (Head Coach)

In alignment with Garrison's concept of self-monitoring, coaches described various levels of metacognitive proficiency. The strength of self-monitoring was related to specific areas that appeared as weaknesses for this group of coaches: (1) ineffective feedback from others and (2) the lack of a clearly articulated curriculum to become a coach. The coaches newer to the field articulated a strong desire for additional direction and specific requirements to ensure they were making appropriate progress in their professional development.

The final dimension in Garrison's model is self-management, emanating from the concept that "the individual does not construct meaning in isolation from the shared world" (Garrison, 1997, p.23), a transactional balance between teacher and learner. This balance relates to (1) the ability and skill proficiencies of the learner and facilitator, (2) the range of learning resources and supports, and (3) interdependence of the learner with the norms and standards of the institution and subject. Although coaches described strong input and control about the activities they participated in, there appeared to be weaknesses in terms of the known resources and a lack of norms/standards, especially in terms of professional competencies or common preparation pathways. In some cases, although coaches were functioning on a team of coaches within an athletics department, they described a lack of opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions and activities where they could exchange perspectives and ideas to enhance their learning experiences.

"I don't have a curriculum and that's been the most frustrating thing for me. I can pull from booklets, books, U.S. Rowing online materials, but I don't find that's particularly helpful if I don't have someone helping me do it, and to put it into practice. So I don't have a curriculum to work with, and I don't have content." (Assistant Coach)

Using a constructivist orientation, the characteristics and behaviors of the coaches aligned with expectations regarding adult learners. Despite a broad range of academic backgrounds and levels of athletic achievement, coaches were able to identify their learning as grounded in the lessons and attributes they developed through these academic and athletic experiences. Although most coaches were not able to articulate a clear career pathway, there appeared to be a shared assumption that career success required continual learning and it was on their shoulders to manage. As coaches progressed in their careers, they appeared to have decreasing levels of motivation, especially related to formal and non-formal learning experiences. It was also clear

that there was not a strong influence from individuals or organizations such as the athletics department, sport's governance organization, or communities of practice. Mentor influence was somewhat stronger, but appeared to decrease as the coaches gained more experience. Finally, an examination of Garrison's concepts of self-monitoring and self-regulation management demonstrated that coaches exhibit a strong level of control and responsibility, but are not supported by effective feedback or clear curriculum resources and standards. Without effective feedback the coaches are not assisted in understanding if they are developing the required skills. Additionally, the coaches lack clear guidance about how to make decisions regarding curricular progressions or even the appropriateness unique learning experience. Figure 8: Self-Directed Learning Components Applicable to Coaches summarizes the characteristics of the coaches within Garrison's three-part model: motivation, self-monitoring, and self-management. The items listed to the side of each dimension provide overall summaries of the coaches' perspectives about these components that emerged from the interviews. In the later application of the full model, the variability regarding these components will be described for each of the coaching positions.

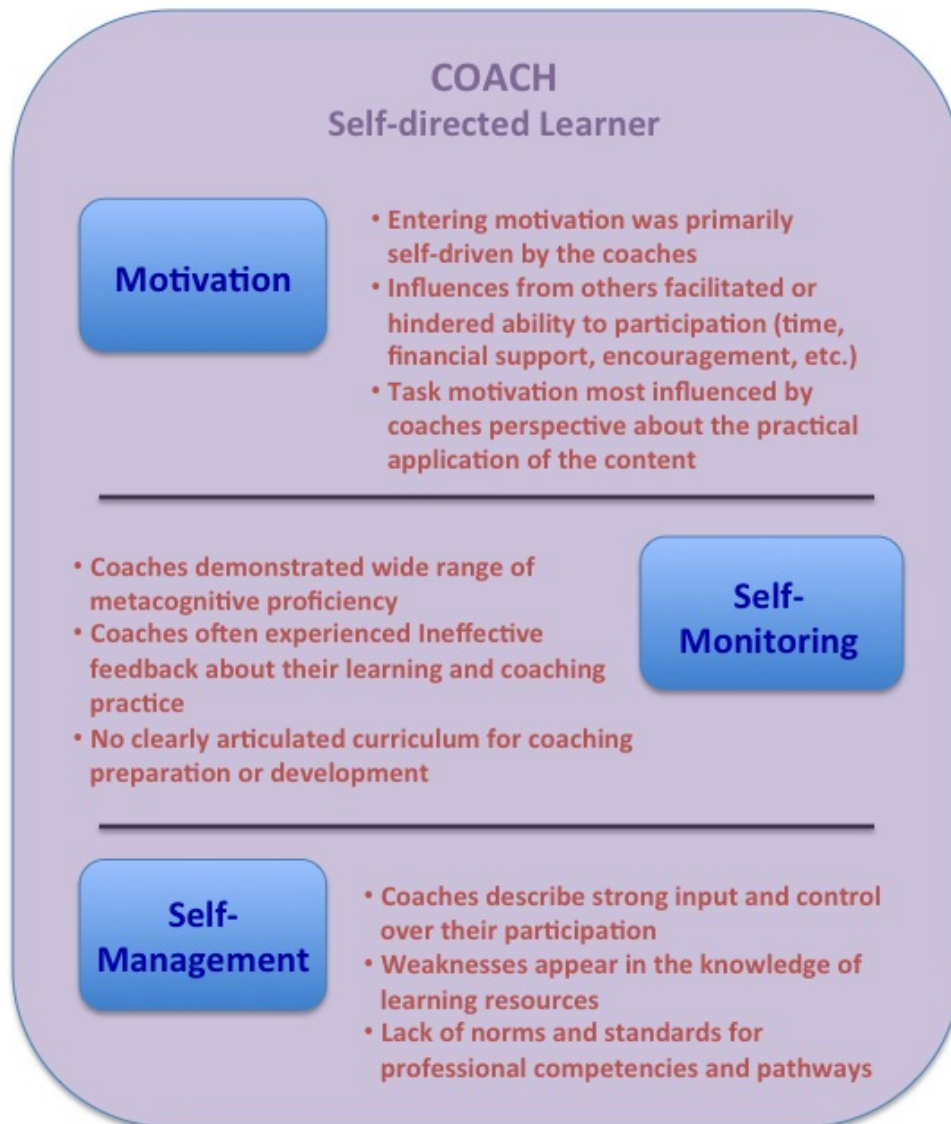


Figure 8: Self-Directed Learning Components Applicable to Coaches

Types of Learning Experiences Coaches Access

Consistent with the lack of formal coaching preparation described in the literature, many of the rowing coaches interviewed described a non-existent or weak pallet of skills prior to entering the coaching profession. Often this entry occurs via a volunteer or graduate-assistant position at the program they rowed with as a student-athlete. Frequently, their initial coaching

experience relied heavily on reflection about their own rowing experience and the practices they recalled from the coaches who worked with their teams. In examining these learning experiences, references are made to Mallet's (2009) three categories of learning: *formal learning* "learning mediated or guided by some knowledgeable other" (p.327), *nonformal learning* "organized learning opportunities outside the formal educational system" (p.328), and *informal learning* "without the direct guidance of others during their day-to-day activities" (p.328).

As discussed in prior sections, the most common learning experiences coaches described were informal lessons learned on the job. This appeared to be the expectation and most coaches exhibited confidence in their abilities to succeed under this approach. A variation of this learning extended to opportunities to coach with another team or program (often at a higher level of skill or involving athletes with a broader range of skills). The most valuable learning experiences were frequently characterized as a chance for practical application, learning *in situ*. These experiences included discussions with other coaches regarding specific scenarios or applications of new material.

"I think for lack of a better term, phrase, the master / apprentice relationship is absolutely critical. Shadowing someone...like an internship, basically. Doing exactly what they do all the time and seeing all the decisions that need to be made, and being a fly on the wall for all their meetings and figuring out, 'Oh, that's what coaching is,' . . . is really, really critical and helpful... For me, it's because I can be told a hundred times how something works. I don't actually believe it, until I do it. You can tell me how a clock works, but until I take it apart, I'm not going to believe you a hundred percent. So that's my personal learning . . . preferences." (Assistant Coach)

The informal learning experiences that coaches frequently engaged in throughout their careers were observations or ride-alongs. Ride-alongs involve going with a more experienced coach in their motor boat as they conduct a practice session. Similar to ride-alongs, other observations such as watching more experienced coaches as they conducted team meetings,

participated in the various activities at a competitive event, prepared paperwork or compliance reports, or interacted with other coaches and staff at events or meetings also provided valuable information. It can be argued that these experiences should be categorized as non-formal due to the presence of a “knowledgeable other”. However, the learner-coaches frequently initiated these experiences and they described the activity as an observation rather than a guided or facilitated experience led by the more experienced coach. These observations were at times even more indirect using videos or observations at major competition events with little direct interaction with the model coach.

“I don’t think [alma mater/head coach] ever verbally encouraged me to continue coaching. No, just as an athlete. No, he didn’t even get me to think about coaching. He’s a mentor because I observed him as an athlete for 4 years. So, you know there are things that he never even said to me directly that I hear from other people that he was saying about me that I think, ultimately, influenced some of the things I have done as a coach. You obviously observe people who have had success, and you see why they’re successful and you try and emulate the things you agree with and maybe try to manipulate (I don’t want to say manipulate) but you know alter some of the things that are enhanced in your way, put your fingerprints on the things you think could be improved.” (Head Coach)

Beginning level coaches often participated in the first certification levels of the USRowing coaching education program, a formal learning experience. A number of coaches attended the USRowing annual conference which offers a broad menu of educational sessions. Coaches mentioned a mix of other formal and non-formal events, some rowing specific and others focused on coaching, leadership, or education. Many described the content of most formal or nonformal learning experiences as too generic with low level content not strongly linked to practical application. They did value many of these experiences as opportunities to network with others and, for less experienced coaches, as enhancements to their resume when they applied for future positions. A few coaches expressed frustration at the lack of a rigorous, meaningful

coaching education program that could provide certification of an actual level of coaching competencies.

“I went to the U.S. Rowing, Coaching Education, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3. I didn’t get anything out of that. I would say for analysis, like it wasn’t very great for me. But what it did do was it got me into a social network of other coaches that are out there in the country. And it got me thinking about the next step in my coaching education.” (Assistant Coach)

Barriers to professional development described by coaches included a lack of awareness about opportunities, a lack of funding, and time constraints and conflicts with other responsibilities. Some less experienced coaches mentioned a feeling of intimidation or lack of confidence in contacting coaches about observing them. A few of the least experienced coaches also indicated that their head coach discouraged them from participating in formal learning experiences citing concerns about lack of funding. In addition to the previously listed concerns, head coaches occasionally expressed concerns about the value of a specific learning activity, based either on their assessment of the coach’s knowledge or understanding of the learning experience content. Some of the more experienced coaches struggled with burn out from the increased level of recruiting activity throughout the year, maintaining a work-life balance, and/or feeling overwhelmed with full-time responsibilities in a part-time position. These coaches expressed less interest in investing time and energy in professional development learning experiences.

“I have always been a push-forward thinker, create, go find the best mentors, read the best books, have good, you know, just be better, become better, and now I’m ready to prioritize other things in my life... But my mind has shifted away from that at this point, which makes me sad, because one of the things that we talked about a lot... We want women who have been coaching for a number of years to stay in coaching and it seems that many women have to decide or think they need to decide between having a family and continuing a coaching career or they simply can’t support themselves or family if they stay in coaching so it makes me sad.” (Head Coach)

Most coaches, especially those with less experience, could not articulate an extended list of formal and nonformal learning experiences available to them. Coaches averaged a list of only three to five learning experiences when asked to think of everything they considered or had heard about over the last 12 months. Further, for the events they were aware of, their expectations were low in terms of how valuable and applicable the content would be to their job duties.

The dependence on a variety of learning experiences (i.e., formal, nonformal, and informal) was expected with a group of self-directed, adult learners. Consistent within the group of coaches was a strong reliance on their ability to learn specific job responsibilities on the job and through self-study. The coaches frequently described many of the same deficiencies and frustrations as identified by previous researchers who investigated coaches involved in traditional formal and nonformal coaching education experiences (Gould, 1990; Cote, 1995; Schinke, 1995; Bloom, 2000, Gilbert, 2005, 2009; Jones, 2006; Werthner, 2006). While the coaches recognized areas of deficit and potential growth within their professional skill set, they could not readily identify applicable learning experiences and expressed frustration regarding the barriers they encountered in participating. In providing recommendations for the future, the coaches expressed a common theme that placed value on skills relating to leadership, communication, and learning *in situ*.

Figure 9: Types of Learning Experiences Described by Coaches shows a summary list of the learning experiences identified by the coaches sorted by Mallet's (2009) taxonomy of formal, nonformal and informal categories. This sorting highlights the predominance of learning experiences in the informal category. It should also be noted that the majority of experiences identified by the coaches are sport-specific in nature and frequently tied to the technical

competencies. As mentioned previously, most coaches were only able to identify three to five specific learning experiences. Those most frequently mentioned by the coaches are shown in bold text.

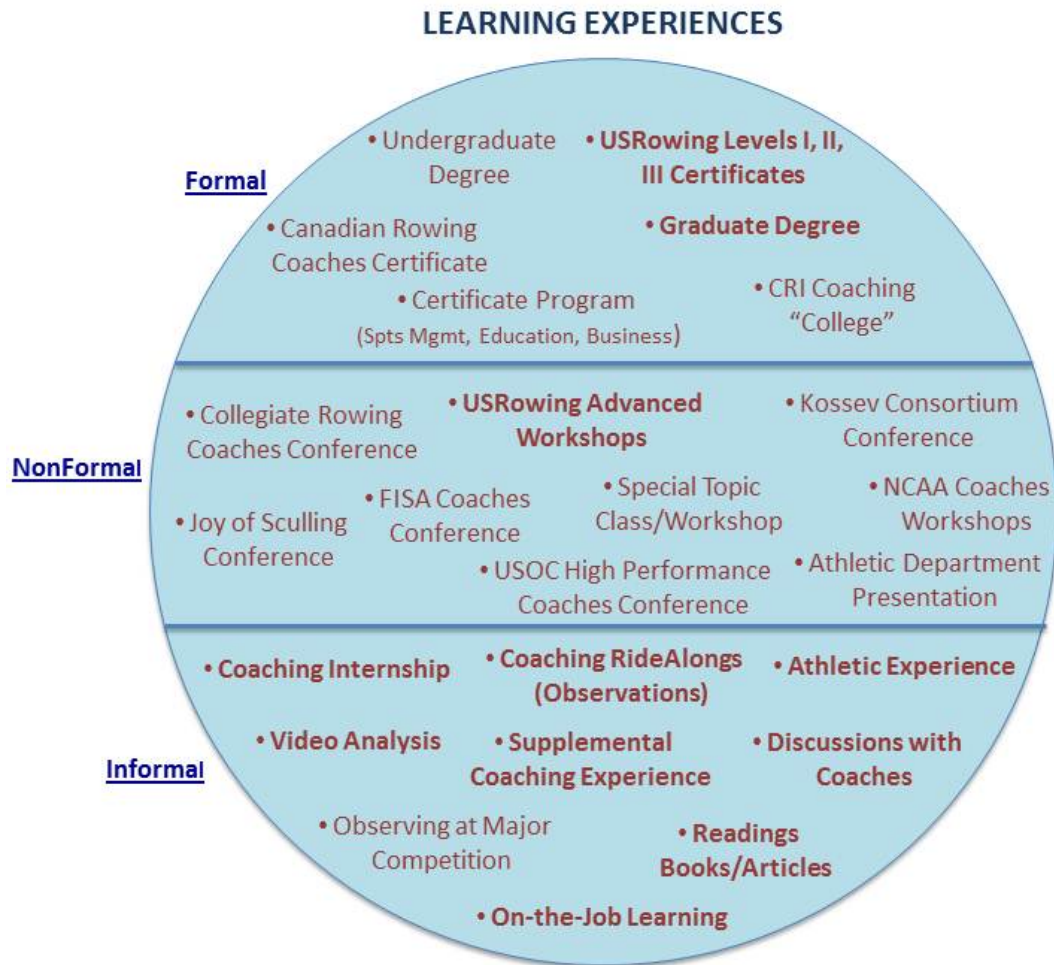


Figure 9: Types of Learning Experiences Described by Coaches

Conclusion

Emerging concepts and themes from the interviews provided a richer understanding of four significant areas: (1) coaches' views of the collegiate career path and professional competencies, (2) external influences on professional development and

evaluation, (3) coaches as self-directed learners, and (4) types of learning experiences the coaches access. The following chapter summarizes this understanding relative to the initial research questions and proposes a new model to examine the primary influences on coaches at various stages of their careers. In addition, the surprising tension revealed within the mentor role will be further examined and a proposition proposed to explain the impact on the apprentice coach.

CHAPTER 5 – EMERGING PROPOSITIONS AND MODELS

Emerging Propositions Regarding Coaches' Professional Development

The intent of this study is to gain a more thorough understanding of the factors influencing the participation and self-management of U.S. collegiate women's rowing coaches in professional development experiences. Interviews were conducted with a group of active coaches to explore a series of questions around their motivation to engage in professional development, sources of guidance in identifying and selecting learning experiences, and drivers regarding their evaluation and management of their career pathways. Analysis of the interview data points to the following emerging themes.

The lack of a clear, defined career pathway was almost universal. Most of the coaches described entrance into the coaching profession with little preparation and minimal forethought. Some coaches described being invited to assist with the team or responding to a desire to give back or remain connected after their own athletic career ended. The competency demands spanned a broad range of technical, administrative, managerial, and interpersonal areas. At the same time, coaches did not appear to have a complete understanding of what specific professional competencies were required for success as they advanced in coaching positions or moved from one NCAA competition division to another. The result of this lack of information manifested itself in coaches' descriptions of the need to quickly respond to a new set of job requirements and develop new competencies when a transition occurred. Coaches frequently mentioned the need for strong leadership, communication, and adaptation skills to operate in a dynamic and complex environment. However, very few of the coaches identified any type of formal

educational program or learning experience progression that represented a meaningful standard for career preparation.

Despite vague career pathways, coaches are self-directed learners who manage their participation in learning experiences to develop and expand their skills. Initially building heavily on their own athletic experiences, coaches engaged in the cyclic pattern of reflection-adaptation-experience that mirrors their work preparing athletes. Throughout their careers, coaches expressed confidence in their capacity to acquire new skills and exhibited a perspective that continued learning was a necessary method to increase their coaching effectiveness. Initially, mentors provided opportunities to engage in actual coaching activities and offered guidance in implementing training plans and directing competition activity. Of significant interest was the frequent lack of a clear developmental program facilitated by the mentors. Apprentice coaches described infrequent feedback and only moderate influence regarding participation in specific learning experiences or progression along their career path. While most coaches developed an informal network of practice with other coaches, interaction with athletics department staff and administrators was minimal during the early phases of their careers. As coaches progressed to lead positions, mentors became less influential and the impact of athletics department expectations increased dramatically. Coaches expressed frustration that this increase in responsibility brought greater interaction with the athletics department and a growing burden of administrative tasks (unrelated in their minds to program success), a need to fight for a fair share of department support and services, and/or the need to protect or shelter the program from a hostile or apathetic setting.

Although coaches viewed themselves as continual learners, the motivation to seek out formal and non-formal learning experiences appeared to ebb as coaches persisted in the field. Initial motivation to seek out learning experiences was high and coaches frequently made significant investments and sacrifices to work in entry-level positions and obtain exposure to experienced coaches. All coaches expressed a desire to identify learning experiences that provided content with strong practical application and an understanding of how to make necessary adaptations and adjustments as conditions changed. Once coaches were more established in the profession they expressed selectiveness, especially as they struggled with increased time pressures, burnout or questions about the value of some learning activities. It should be noted, however, that even the most experienced coaches still indicated a need to continue their professional development.

Coaches of every experience level highlighted the value of learning-by-doing, especially as a method to develop skills required for working directly with rowing teams during practices on the water. Frequently, the coaches expressed dissatisfaction with many formal and nonformal learning experiences due to the absence of a meaningful and/or practical connection to their coaching responsibilities. Without standardized coaching education content curriculum or specific coaching certification requirements, coaches often engaged in a mix of learning experiences based on the demands of their current job responsibilities. Coaches in early stages of their careers did not appear to have complete knowledge about what competencies would be required as they advanced in their careers or changed programs. Coaches later in their careers expressed interest in

creating greater efficiencies in how they completed job tasks and maintaining a connection with technical changes in the field.

Coaches at all levels and among all the competition divisions described criteria for success as a combination of a positive student-athlete experience and competitive success on the race course. Self-assessment appeared to be the most meaningful gauge for the coaches' determination of success. Coaches recognized other performance markers determined by the head coach and/or athletics department such as: loyalty and support to the mentor coaches' program structure, adherence to compliance and reporting requirements, attention to the athletics department's interest in recruitment and retention figures, and effective management of fiscal responsibilities potentially involving both budget monitoring and fundraising goals. These indicators, while recognized as meaningful and significant to job security, remained secondary to the coaches' overall self-evaluation of success.

Overall, the professional development of these intercollegiate rowing coaches is revealed as a self-directed activity. However, the coaches' lack of understanding the metacognitive components they are involved with and a weak support system to provide effective facilitation of their participation in learning experiences creates results that are less than ideal. Additionally, the nature of the current role and environment in which coaches work have become complex and dynamic, demanding highly adaptable skill sets and attention to the significant socio-cultural dimension of the coaching role. Although the coaches provided a fairly consistent description of the general issues and challenges they faced across the various institutional settings, there were changes in the degree to

which they were influenced to participate in learning experiences as coaches progressed in the field from entry-level, to assistant, to head coach positions.

A New Model to Describe Self-Direction and Influences on Coaches' Participation in Professional Development

As a result of this research, a new model emerged that provides an initial framework that integrates self-direction and influences that affect the participation of women's collegiate rowing coaches in professional development. Figure 10: Self-Direction and Influences on Coaches' Professional Development, illustrates how coaches direct their learning as they engage in actual coaching activities, select development activities, and respond to influences of individuals and organizations within their coaching environment.

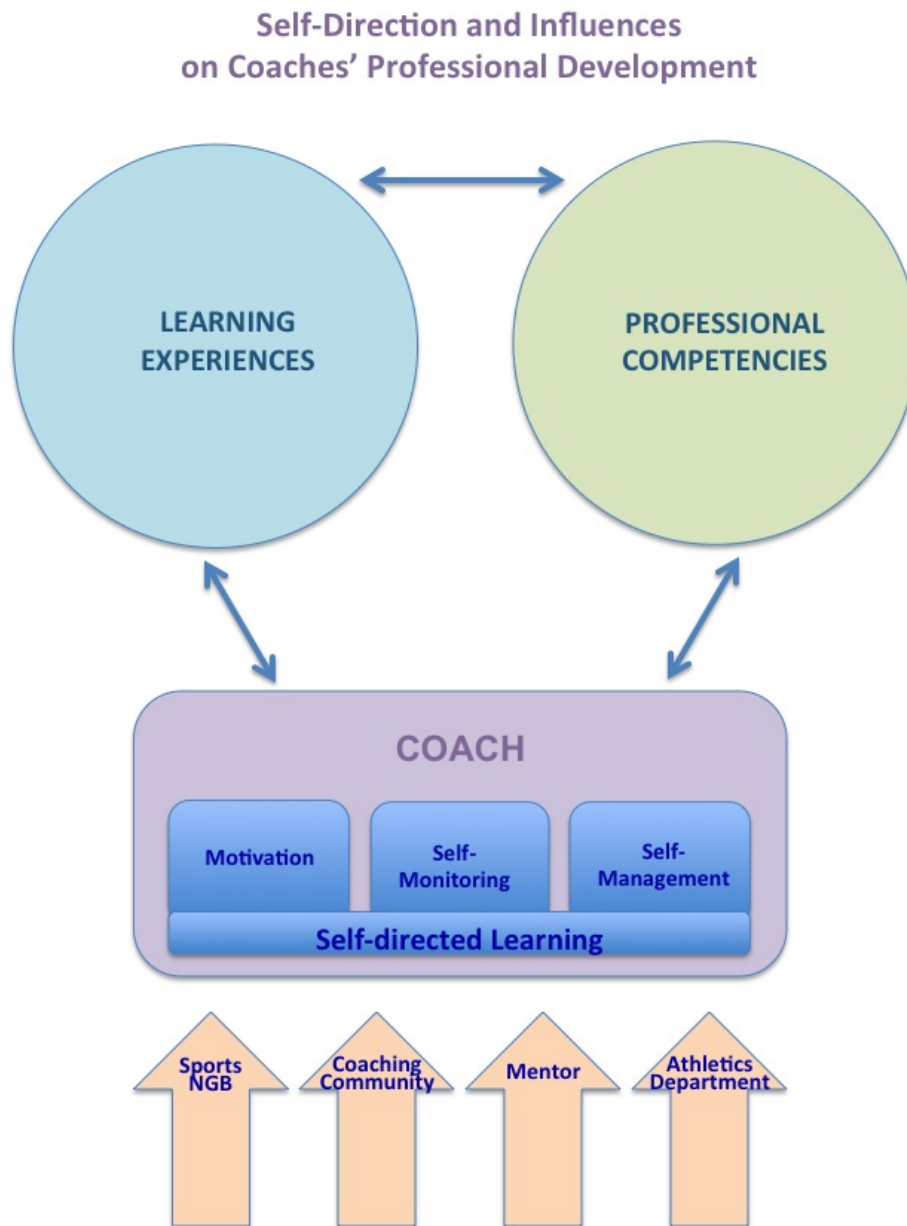


Figure 10: Self-Direction and Influences on Coaches' Professional Development

At the center of the model are the **coaches as self-directed learners**. They are engaged in an ongoing constructivist process of reflection and adaptation as they engage with various learning and workplace experiences. The coaches are making decisions

about how to develop professionally based on elements of self-directed learning specified by their internal level of motivation and dimensions of self-monitoring and self-management that guide them throughout the process. The coaches' conceptualization of required **professional competencies**, either for the current job or in anticipation of a future position, may serve as a motivator to pursue related learning experiences. As a self-directed learner, this awareness includes an understanding of how these competencies align with coaching positions at multiple levels, knowledge regarding the opportunities to participate in activities with exposure to the specific competencies, and understanding the importance of exposure to feedback and evaluation needed to assess competency-related strengths and weaknesses. The model also depicts the concept of the **types of learning experiences** coaches' access. These shown include a mixture of formal, nonformal and informal experiences without hierarchical organization or placement within a specific curriculum. Finally, the coaches are also responding to other individuals and organizations with direct and indirect roles in their development. These **external influences** include variable levels of impact from the sport's governance organization (USRowing), the coaching community, mentor(s), and the athletics department. As described through the interviews, knowledge of these resources, access to participation, and supports or deterrents regarding participation, coalesce to create a unique learning experience for a given coach. Thus, the model offers a better overall understanding of the key professional development influences that coaches experience at critical stages of their careers.

Employing this model, the three variations are used to summarize these characteristics described by coaches at the entry-level, assistant, and head coaching

stages of their professional development. Within the applied models, various elements are shown to be stronger or weaker influences by their size (e.g., the larger the arrow the greater the influence of the mentor versus the athletics department, and the motivation square for the entry-level coach is larger than for the head coach). Additionally, the professional competencies and the learning experiences are distinguished by their visibility. The models for the entry-level and assistant-level coaches have part of the professional competency circle shaded. This shading indicates that the coaches are unaware of what other competencies are tied to the other coaching positions. The assistant and entry-level coaches often described a lack of knowledge about the head coaches' specific job responsibilities. Similarly, many learning experiences do not appear for the less experienced coaches, showing their lack of awareness that the opportunities existed.

The profiles that follow each of the variations are presented as a narrative compilation of the elements that emerged from the interviews about the rowing coaches' environments, expectations, and opportunities at each stage. They highlight the unique features of their professional development at each of the three identified coaching positions: entry-level, assistant, and head.

Application of the Model to Entry-Level Coaches

Figure 11: Self-Direction and Influences on Entry-Level Coach's Participation in Professional Development describes the professional development influences and experiences of a coach in the first or second year of practice. Frequently the entry-level coach is limited to activity at the boathouse working directly with a sub-group of the

team. The professional competencies are limited and primarily involve technical tasks conducted with this sub-group during a practice session or at a competition event. Also limited are the types of learning experiences the coach is aware of and choosing to participate in during this phase. Although the coach's motivation is high to engage in learning there is a low level of knowledge regarding a career path and limited understanding regarding learning activities that are meaningful and/or accessible. The entry-level coach may also have limited metacognitive skills that may be further hindered by a lack of feedback and guidance from mentor coaches. The stronger influence of the mentor is manifested in the types of opportunities made available directly within the team activity and made accessible to via information or direct support for participation. The influence of the sports governing body is limited to interaction with coaching education resources. The coaches' network is slowly growing, first with the other rowing coaches in their own program and eventually through coaches from other campuses that are frequently seen at competition events. The entry-level coach is frequently not in direct contact with athletic department staff or other sport coaches, resulting in a lack of influence and limited knowledge about the operations of the athletics department.

Self-Direction and Influences on Entry-Level Coaches' Professional Development

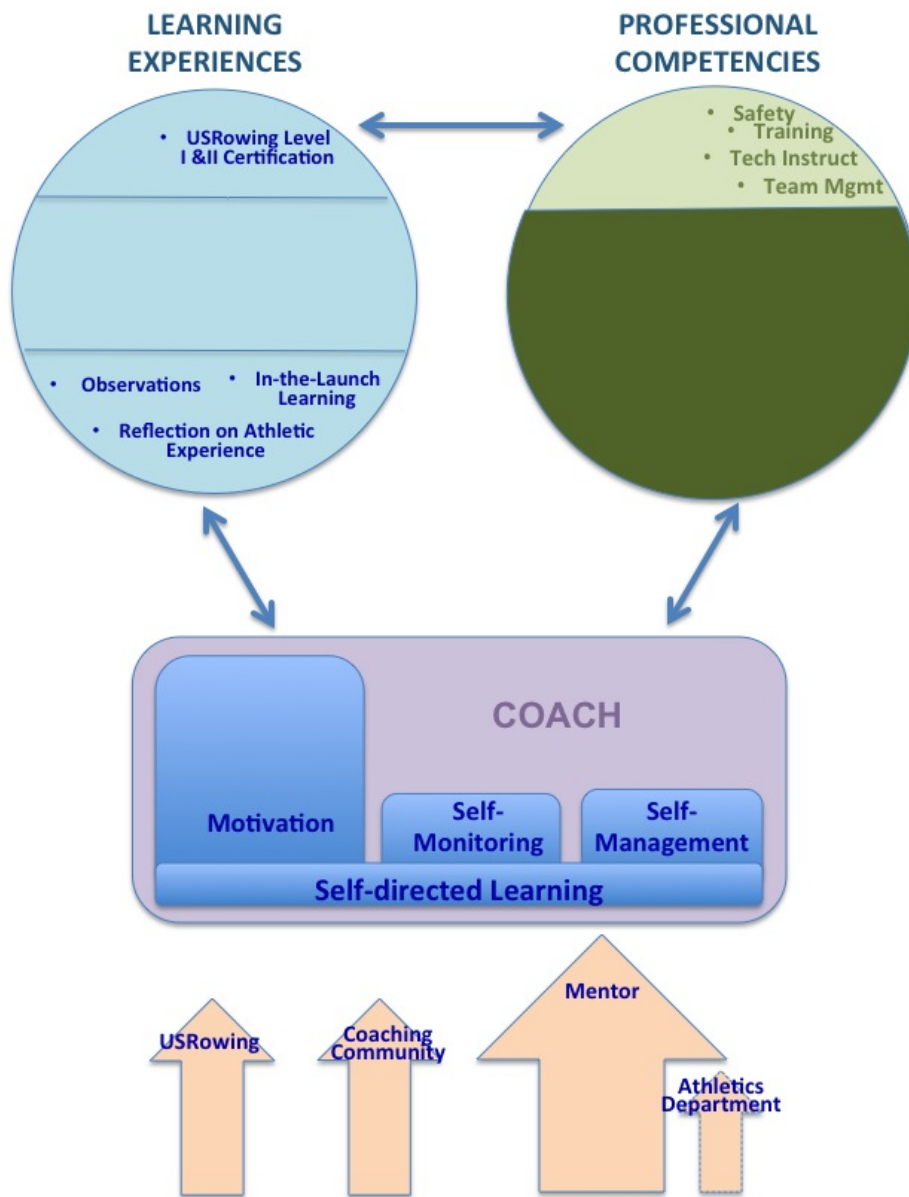


Figure 11: Self-Direction and Influences on Entry-Level Coach's Participation in Professional Development

Summative Profile: Entry-Level Coach

Entry: Nicole was willing to spend a year as a volunteer coaching intern after her eligibility ended because, “I wasn’t ready to leave. I loved rowing and was eager for a way to give back. I was not thinking about coaching as a long-term career, but this was a way to stay involved.” Nicole’s formal, liberal arts undergraduate education with a major in communications provided a basic foundation for critical thinking and communication. After four years as a student-athlete, she knew the program routine and was comfortable talking with the coaches. She spent one summer at a development camp and felt that experience provided her with a solid understanding of the rowing technique and training for competition.

Job Expectations: After a verbal agreement to help out with the novice squad, Nicole was given a quick orientation to the coaching launches and safety basics and then sent out on the water by the assistant coach to work with the group of least skilled athletes. She depended on her recollection of instructional phrases and drills from her own rowing experience. The assistant coach often provided general direction about the workout for the day and which athletes Nicole would work with at a given practice. Her duties were focused around the on-the-water practice with no significant responsibilities beyond these sessions. There was a very small stipend, so the head coach did not expect more time and was understanding of occasional conflicts with her other jobs. Nicole helped stage the home regattas and traveled with the team to local competition events.

Professional Development: Nicole had a couple of opportunities to ride along in the motorboat with the assistant coach before going out on her own. She also spent

time reflecting on her athletic experience and her former coaches. As Nicole considered these coaches, she identified individuals who served as good coaching role models and other practices that she did not want to emulate in her coaching. Once the season was underway, she only had an occasional ride-along, usually when the assistant coach combined the squads for a workout. During the ride-along she tried to ask a few questions and looked for new ideas to implement with her squad. She also listened closely when the assistant coach gave instruction to the entire squad before practice or during an off-the-water training session. She was not aware of many professional development opportunities, but did get a chance to attend a local coaching clinic that the head coach mentioned to her. The content was a review of the basics that she had already figured out or knew from her own rowing experience, but it was fun to meet a couple of other new coaches.

Feedback and Evaluation: The assistant coach was quick to let her know if she needed to address a concern with her management of the team on the water. Since she coached the less skilled student-athletes, there were not high expectations for performance. It was positive reinforcement that she was successfully teaching the proper fundamentals, but sometimes frustrating when one of her athletes moved up to join the assistant coach's squad.

Future Preparation: Coaching now seems intriguing, at least for the near future. Nicole was thinking about coaching for a community team over the summer to earn money and gain more experience. She knew the assistant coach and head coach spent time in the office, but she wasn't clear exactly what those duties entailed. Nicole thought

about shadowing the coaches to learn about rigging the boats and travel logistics for competition trips.

Application of the Model to Assistant-Level Coaches

Figure 12: Self-Direction and Influences on Assistant-Level Coaches'

Professional Development illustrates a coach who has extended competencies beyond the technical skills conducted at the boathouse. The assistant coach spends some time in the athletic department office and frequently takes on responsibilities with recruiting, compliance reporting and athlete advising. This individual has become more aware of learning experiences and is slowly exploring various types of activities. In terms of operating as a self-directed learner, motivation is still high and self-monitoring skills are increased due to increased experience with both self-reflection and external feedback. The assistant coach is more engaged with the coaching community at large and within the athletics department. Through participation in regional or national learning experiences and supplemental coaching activities, the assistant coach's network is extended and becomes broader across the NCAA Division and throughout the geographic region. The direct influence of the mentor has decreased slightly, but still provides significant access and opportunity to learning experiences in addition to role modeling.

Self-Direction and Influences on Assistant-Level Coaches' Professional Development

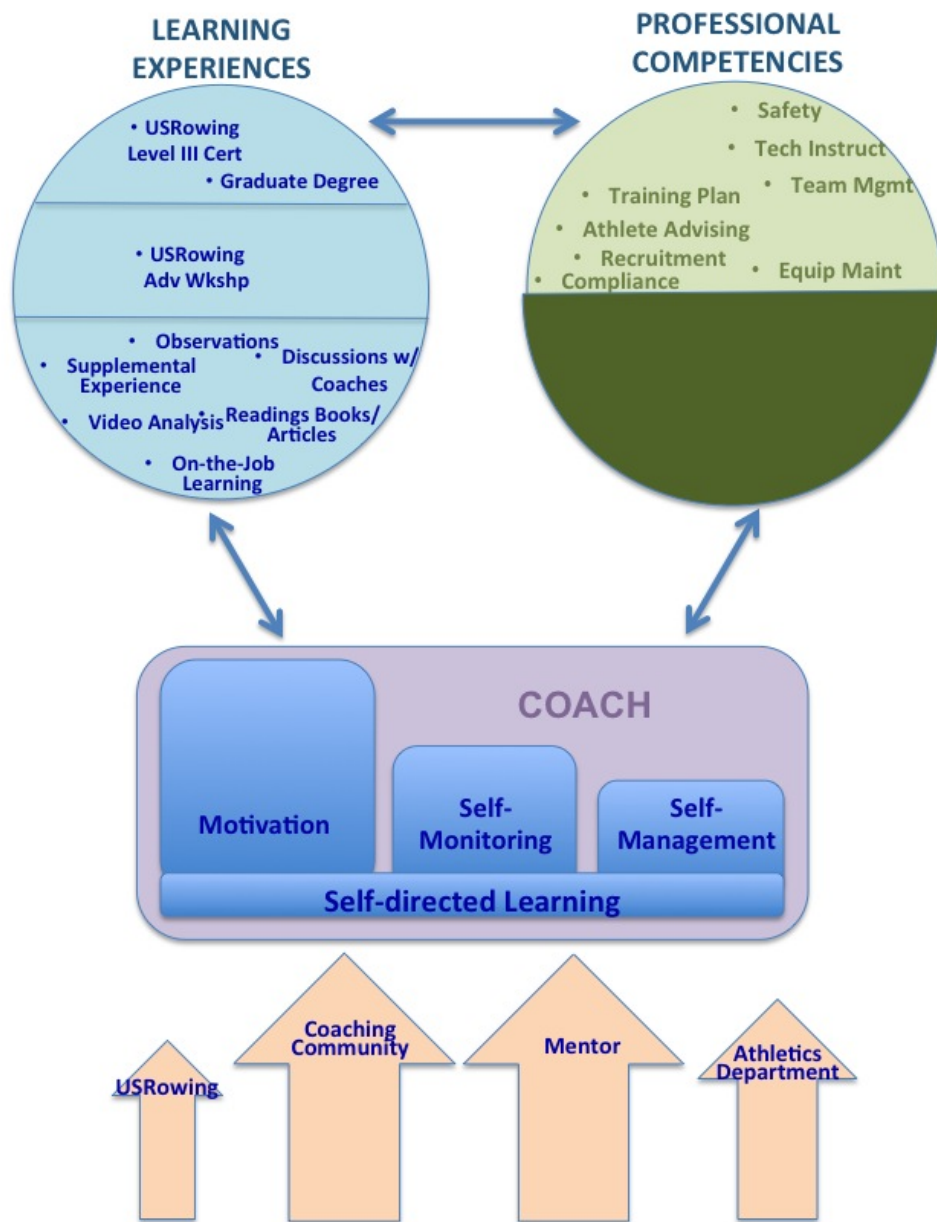


Figure 12: Self-Direction and Influences on Assistant-Level Coaches' Professional Development

Summative Profile: Assistant Coach

Entry: Steph spent time as a volunteer-intern for the last couple of years. She also worked during the summer as a coach for a community team and assisted at a camp the college head coach organized (both opportunities helped him earn some money and extend his experience). Steph was hired as an assistant coach at her alma mater.

Job Expectations: The position was described in a brief written description as “coach and manage the novice team, adhere to safety and compliance regulations and other duties as assigned.” The main topic of her hiring interview for the position and primary area of responsibility beyond the on-the-water coaching was execution of the recruitment plan. Steph was also responsible for planning and managing the training sessions and race preparation of her squad. The other job duties Steph clearly understood were to back up the head coach and provide support in a few of the areas that were not his strength (preparing the new online newsletter, keeping the coaching launches fueled, and meeting with athletes who were struggling with their academics).

Professional Development: Steph continued to expand her skills with additional summer coaching opportunities and ride-alongs with experienced coaches. She realized the recruiting activities provided a valuable opportunity to see experienced junior coaches in action. Through discussions with her head coach and peer-coach network, Steph became more aware of the USRowing coaching education program and occasional local events. Most of these events were a repeat of what she knew, but they seemed valuable for her resume. She was eager to attend the USRowing national conference (she heard it was good place to network) and hoped the head coach would provide some funding.

Readings and videos available online were helpful in obtaining a more in-depth understanding of various topics. Since the recruiting activity was a new challenge, Steph went to talk with the assistant volleyball coach who was known as a great recruiter. Steph also made a connection with one of the advisors in the student-athlete support area who was helpful in assisting with a couple of student-athletes who needed extra support.

Feedback and Evaluation: Input from the head coach consisted of casual conversations after practice to check in about the session or confirm what was happening with the recruitment plans. During the competition season there were scheduled meetings to discuss logistics in preparation for team travel. Steph also received a couple of specific comments in reference to items that he hadn't accomplished as per the head coach's expectations, but overall the head coach appeared satisfied with her job performance. Steph knew that his success depended on keeping the recruitment/retention numbers high and competition success with the novice squad. She had heard about the head coach's frustration with the athletics department bureaucracy and the amount of paperwork required to get things done, but had little direct contact with department administrators. Steph became well acquainted with other assistant coach at her program and the others at programs in the region. There were also alumni from her alma mater coaching at different campuses, so she had a chance to talk with them at many of the competition events.

Future Preparation: Steph had thought about possibly applying for an assistant coaching position at a bigger program or even becoming a head coach. Her confidence in her ability to manage the training program and prepare her team was solid. In order to further develop her skills around rowing technique instruction and workout design she

considered applying to coach over the summer with one of the national team squads. Steph was confident in her ability to handle the expanded duties required if she obtained a new position, although she was not able to detail what those competencies might entail.

Application of the Model to Head-Level Coaches

Figure 13: Self-Direction and Influences on Head-Level Coach's Participation in Professional Development describes the head coach who has oversight and management responsibilities for the entire program. The broad range of professional competencies is fully revealed. In reference to learning experiences, the coach is aware of many learning experiences, yet the participation is limited to only a few activities. Although the self-monitoring and self-management skills have increased, the level of motivation has decreased. This limitation is primarily due to selectiveness regarding the applicability and value of experiences as well as a sense of overload and possible burnout with the demands required throughout the year. The head coach is more likely to choose carefully a learning experience that is perceived as providing direct application to the coach's own program competitive success or enhancing the coach's ability to become more efficient in a specific administrative or managerial task. Most significantly, the head coach is influenced most by the athletics department. Direct influences of the sports governing organization and mentors have decreased. The coach has a broad network, especially within the NCAA Division the program competes in, but the interaction is more casual and sometimes restricted due to the competitive nature of the relationships. There are more contacts with other sport coaches in the home athletics department, but this

interaction is frequently incidental in nature unless there is a specific issue or problem that the coach is seeking input to solve.

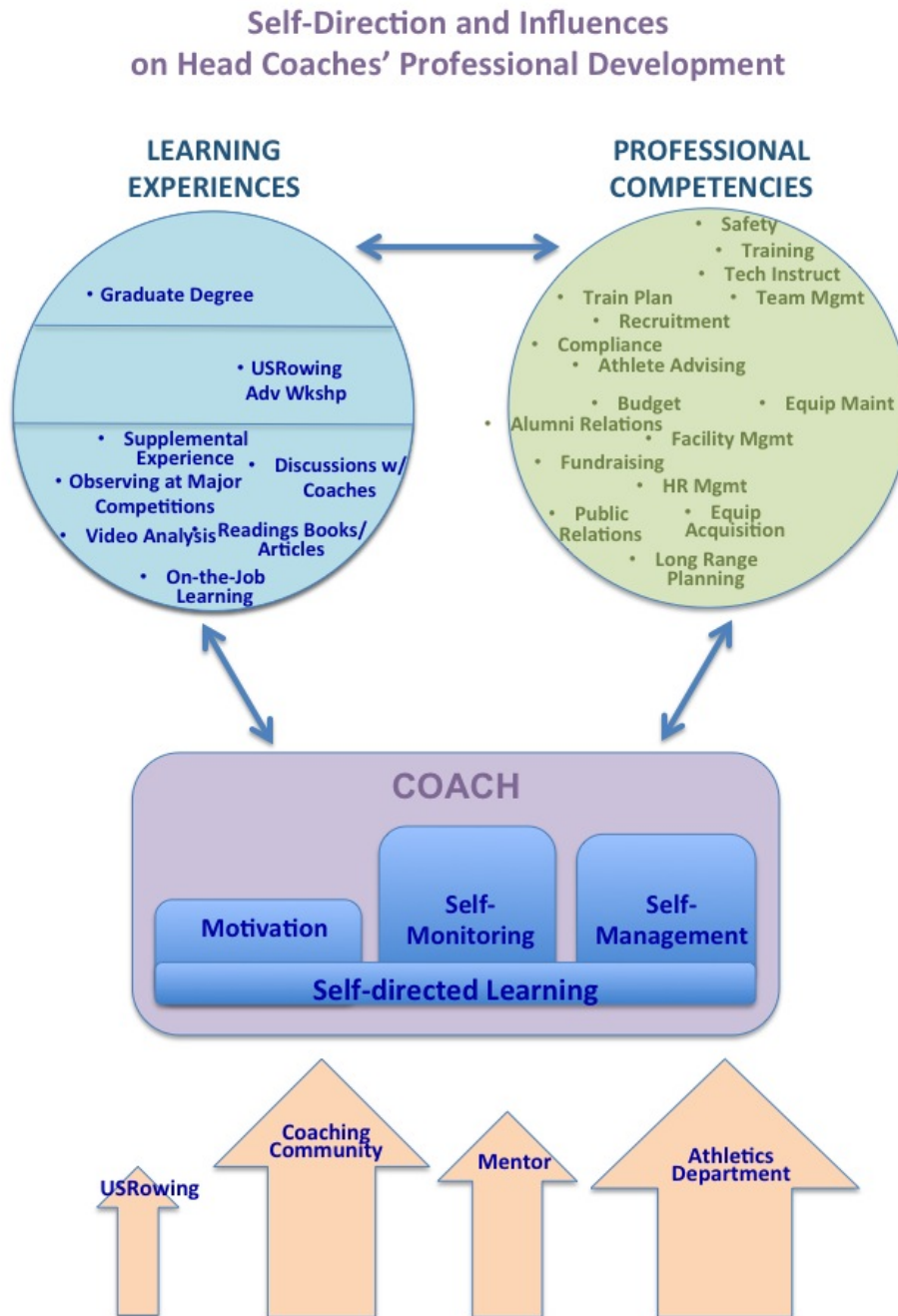


Figure 13: Self-Direction and Influences on Head-Level Coach's Participation in Professional Development

Summative Profile: Head Coach

Entry: After a successful period working as an assistant coach at his alma mater, Karl was hired as head coach for a slightly smaller program in his division. Karl was viewed as an established, young coach from a program with a solid tradition of success.

Job Expectations: The contract for the head coach position included generic language about managing the women's program. Specific performance incentives were included for graduation rates, fundraising goals, and competition performance. It was made clear that the administration expected her to recruit and maintain a large squad of athletes as an important element of their gender-equity balance in the university's athletics program. In addition to training and competition with the team, Karl's areas of responsibility included- management of the coaching staff, budgeting, equipment maintenance, fundraising, alumni relations, compliance, and long-term planning for the program. Karl recognized that there was relatively little oversight or understanding by the senior administrators regarding the rowing program. At times, this felt like a lack of support or interest. This situation required him to provide strong leadership in terms of the vision for those involved with the program and also serve as an advocate with department administrators.

Professional Development: Karl quickly recognized the breadth of the new areas of responsibility on her plate. He dove into action and her confidence was high that he could figure out what needed to be done. He was willing to reach out for advice if required. Karl learned when he could look to athletics department staff for support and

when it was easier to operate independently. The rowing staff he hired provided a complement to his skill strengths and in many ways he insulated them from the distraction of the athletics department activity. Due to the lack of proximity of their offices and focus on their individual programs, his connection with other sport coaches was not extensive and occurred primarily at coaches' staff meetings or department-wide functions. Relationships with peer coaches in the rowing community became more distant due to their locations, busy schedules, and a sense of competitiveness. Eventually, with a few exceptions, these relationships consisted of informal interactions at competition events. Karl continued to be involved in summer coaching opportunities with national team squads although there were years he chose to stay home. Although he was aware of the various opportunities from USRowing, the NCAA, the Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association and other sources, Karl became more selective about what conferences he attended. Even with low expectations for these events, the content was too often repetitive or not directly applicable to his program. It was often more valuable to spend time gaining exposure to elite level coaches and/or athletes. Self-study or the occasional conversation with peer coaches provided the most useful strategies for expanding his understanding of specific topics.

Feedback and Evaluation: Feedback from senior athletic department administrators was infrequent, unless a budget or athlete issue arose. The annual performance reviews consisted primarily of a self-evaluation with some incorporation of student-athlete feedback. During these reviews, Karl felt he provided updates and explanations to the administrator rather than received meaningful feedback. His own self-

imposed pressure about the team's performance was often the stronger driver for his performance. At the end of the academic year, Karl was reflective about areas he could improve and the aspects of his administrative duties he could perform more efficiently. For situations that were especially challenging he initiated a conversation to discuss the problem with a trusted mentor, athletics department expert, or another sport coach. Although they were often unfamiliar with rowing or the unique characteristics of his program, they were able to provide helpful ideas or engaged in useful discussions about the general concept driving the issue.

Future Preparation: Karl understood the need to continue learning and become more efficient with the multitude of tasks he was responsible for managing. He was beginning to struggle with isolation and burnout, so he chose to participate in experiences that would rejuvenate his love of the sport and allow him to network with other coaches he respects. Karl occasionally thought about applying for a position with a more competitive program, but hesitated at the thought of having to build a new program environment and learn how to operate in a new athletics department.

In summary, the new model and its application to the description of coaches in various positions was helpful in examining how coaches were influenced and guided in their thinking about professional development at various stages within their careers. This model may be useful in determining how to enhance the development of rowing coaches by highlighting gaps or specific opportunities for intervention. It also provides a framework to articulate the common career pathway and establish clearer expectations for the coaches. This model also provides a tool to compare the experience of rowing

coaches to coaches involved with other sports. After further investigations the comparisons of variations between coaches of different sports may assist in identifying common professional development needs, as well as areas that persist as unique characteristic of specific type(s) of sport

Role Tension for Mentor-Coaches

One element that was not anticipated, yet clearly impacts the role of the mentors in the professional development experience, was the interesting revelation regarding the role tensions for coaches functioning as mentors. Most coaches worked in an initial setting as an apprentice-coach. This relationship was often repeated later in their careers working under the direction or guidance of a more experienced coach at another program, national team camp, or community program. The mentors were crucial in providing the opportunities that gave coaches experience working with athletes at different skill levels or work in close proximity as the more experienced coach managed the team and implemented a training program. While these mentors were frequently the apprentice's direct supervisor in an employment setting, they could also be an internship supervisor, volunteer supervisor, or a coach with slightly more experience working at the same program. Most coaches also viewed themselves as serving in a mentoring role with the less experienced coaches in their programs. Assistant level coaches frequently worked with volunteers and graduate assistants, including the entry-level coaches previously described. However, the direct influence of the mentor-coaches in these relationships was described as less than expected and, quite frequently, a level of disappointment was expressed by the apprentice-coach or even the mentors themselves.

“But you know, it’s a really weird environment... So she [the head coach at previous job] never actually saw me coach. Right? And on the flipside, I

probably, you know, have seen her coach... a dozen times in nine years, because you know, she goes off in one direction with the crews that she's going to coach, and I go off in the direction with the crews I'm going to coach. And it's the same thing here with [his current assistant coach]. I think she had, once or twice, where she rode along with me and it was a great benefit to her. But how can she ride along with me? She has to coach, and how can I go and observe the practice that she's doing and give her feedback, good, bad or otherwise? Well, there's nobody to take out the crews that I'm supposed to coach." (Head Coach remembering experience as an Assistant Coach)

Looking closer at this relationship, the following characteristics were described by the coaches or became evident. Very few coaches described a structured development plan for the coaches they mentored. During the interviews, there were a number of experienced assistant and head coaches who described activities as influential or helpful in their own development that they later acknowledged were not a regular part of their repertoire of mentoring activities. Some mentors expressed frustration or disappointment during the interview that they had not provided more developmental activities or support for the coaches they mentored. These mentors mentioned time constraints, hesitancy to require a greater time commitment from part-time coaches, and the thought that the best learning occurred if coaches were simply allowed to engage in coaching activity.

"I think of myself as almost a poor mentor because the people that I would like to mentor have responsibilities and I send them out by themselves in a coach boat every day. So, how much am I mentoring them? Cause how I learned was spending a whole summer sitting in a coach boat with [an experienced coach]. So, it limits the ability to mentor and they get all excited if, on Tuesdays we have a lot of kids that miss because they have class, so sometimes we will be down a boat, and they are like, 'Can we ride with you?'. I'm like, 'Yeah, sure, no problem.'" (Head Coach)

Another interesting characteristic was the expectations expressed by the head coaches regarding the apprentice coaches. Some head coaches described their attention to limiting job responsibilities or modifying the conditions to allow the entry-level or

assistant coach to progressively develop their skills; others expressed expectations with more emphasis on performance related goals.

“We have coaches' meetings twice a week for an hour and it's like we meet as a staff and try to talk openly about those things and then I try to meet with them each individually... So I try to just keep their conversation flowing and just watching their faces too, ... If they come off the water and they're fired up, well, they had a good time and probably we should send them out to have some more fun. And if they came off and were overwhelmed, then how about we ride together in a launch tomorrow and, you know, I'll do a little more of the coaching... I never want to just throw them out there and throw them to the wolves...” (Head Coach)

“So when I talk to my assistant coaches, you have two responsibilities. Number one, the kids that you have to work with, they have to learn really well. They have to learn how to row. They have to learn the traditions...they have to be the very best students that they can and the other part of it is recruiting is 365 days a year, you know, 24 hours a day...” (Head Coach)

Based on the themes that emerged from the coaches' discussions about the mentor-apprentice relationship, there appeared to be tension between (1) a priority on the development of the apprentice coach relative to coaching skill acquisition and (2) a priority on the performance of the apprentice coach relative to the performance success of the program. Similar to the use of the semiotic square to explore the coach's focus on youth development versus sport performance, a semiotic square and semiotic chain analysis were used as tools to explore this tension. This exploration is not an attempt to identify or select the preferred role of the mentor, but to highlight through a more nuanced examination that extends beyond an either/or dichotomy. The exercise of creating the square begins with two terms that form the opposition (the contrary relationship). For the Coaching Mentors, this opposition is described by the terms (Position 1) Educator-Coach and (Position 2) Performance-Coach. The semiotic framework next uses negatives of the oppositions (Positions 3 and 4 in the square) and then metaterms (Positions 5-8) that are created through combinations of the initial four terms. This analysis of the coaching

mentor finished with an attempt to identify examples of the concepts revealed by the terms and consider how they might exist in reality. Figure 14: Semiotic Square for Coaching Mentors depicts the mapping of the conjunctions and disjunctions to frame the concept and highlight the perceptions and roles that could be ascribed to mentors at various positions within this framework. With this exercise in semantics in mind, the descriptions of the coaches in roles as apprentices and/or mentors expressed during the interviews were reconsidered.

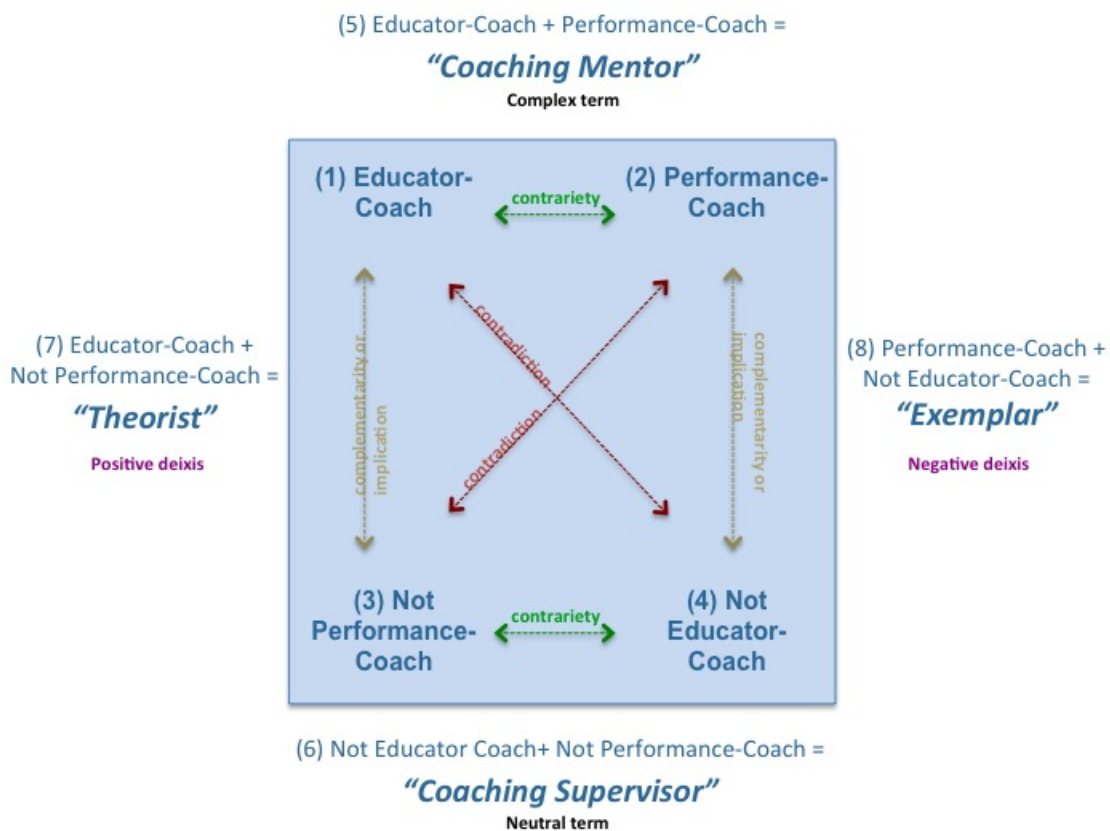


Figure 14: Semiotic Square for Coaching Mentors

There did not appear to be any consistent place or incentive for development of normative practices about the professional development of new coaches via effective mentoring. Only a couple of coaches spoke of previous training regarding mentor-apprentice relationships

(such as an aspect of a teacher preparation program). It is likely that most coaches developed their mentoring skills during their own experiences as apprentices.

Many coaches described an ideal or expectation that mentors would offer support and activities in alignment with an educator-coach perspective. However, the mentors often described activities that were closer to those resulting from a performance-coach perspective. As mentor coaches discussed their mentoring philosophy, intentions and actual practices, it appeared that a shift from the educator-coach dimension toward the performance-coach may have increased when the mentor experienced additional pressures regarding competition performance, an overwhelming sense of too many job responsibilities, budget constraints, and/or coaching burnout.

To organize these emerging perceptions and mentoring practices a semiotic chain was developed as another analytic tool. Figure 15: Semiotic Chain Analysis for Coaching Mentors provides a series of contrasting characteristics based on the coaches' descriptions of mentoring activities, their assumptions about role expectations, and apprentice-coach competencies they appeared to value.

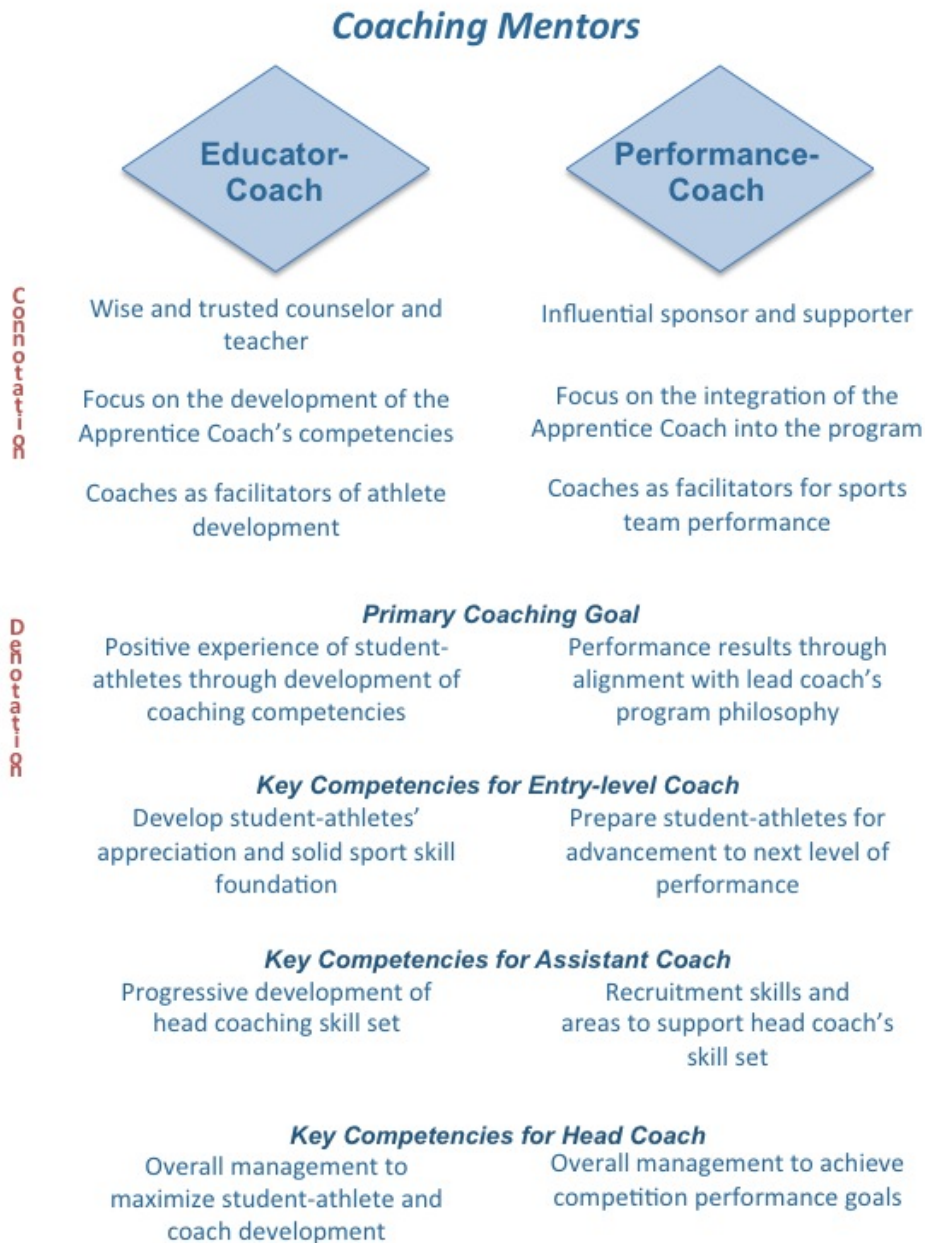


Figure 15: Semiotic Chain Analysis for Coaching Mentors

Once again, the semiotic analysis is not an attempt to create an either/or set of descriptors. Instead the analysis is useful in developing a more thorough understanding of potential shifts in expectations and priorities within the mentor relationship. If the

apprentice and mentor are working from extremes of the oppositional spectrum, there may be a greater potential for conflict or frustration. Understanding the potential for tension in the situation may assist communication and guide adjustments during the mentoring relationship to create an environment leading toward mutual benefit and satisfaction. The most valuable apprentice-mentor relationship is likely one in which the development of the apprentice coach is enabling practices that are enhancing team performance.

Conclusion

Based on the new model described in this chapter and the proposition regarding tensions that may result in ineffective mentoring practices, there appear to be characteristics unique to the professional development of intercollegiate rowing coaches. The mentor-apprentice relationship is an important and central dimension of coaches' professional development, especially during the early stages of their careers. Although the mentors did not explicitly direct apprentice-coaches' participation in specific professional learning experiences, the structure and opportunities they made available were a significant dimension of the apprentices' development. An unexpected research finding was the variation in how the mentors provided this opportunity, support, and defined expectations of the apprentice-coaches. An initial analysis of the mentor relationship dynamic reveals a tension between an education-focus regarding the development of the apprentice's skill set and a performance-focus prioritizing team performance results.

These analyses may be helpful in determining the professional development strategies to teach new coaches to maximize the effectiveness of their learning experiences, including the characteristics of developmental-focused apprenticeship approaches, and how to better prepare coaches to function as coaching mentors. The following chapter outlines implications for enhancing professional development both through systemic changes and targeted practices that can be implemented immediately to improve the preparation of current and future collegiate rowing coaches.

CHAPTER 6 – IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications for Coaches' Engagement in Professional Development

An important result of this research is the alignment between the research findings with expectations regarding self-directed adult learners and recent research involving professional development among international high performance coaches. Also of significance is the consistency of the coaches' descriptions of their professional development despite variations in their experiences and program types. As a tool for guiding more effective professional development for collegiate rowing coaches, the initial model reveals weaknesses and opportunities for increased impact throughout the process.

The centrality of the coach, operating as a self-directed learner, within the professional development process is a key dimension of the dynamics revealed by this research. Without reason to believe hiring requirements will become more formalized or closely directed from the athletics departments, sport's governance bodies, or senior coaches in the field, improvements in coaching preparation should focus primarily on the coaches themselves. Preparing coaches to better manage their overall professional development and develop into effective consumers of learning experiences would be a good starting point.

Since coaches are dependent to a large degree on learning through on the job activities and informal experiences, it may be useful to strengthen their metacognitive proficiencies. With vague professional development pathways, sporadic feedback regarding performance, and informal networks of practice, coaches are not well

supported or guided in their learning situations. Their environment for building meaning from experiences is conducted in relative isolation. Assisting coaches in strategies to create a stronger environment to enhance their learning may have a positive impact that reaches well beyond the individual coach. Stronger communities of practice and future mentors with better understandings of supportive learning environments will provide a higher level of professional development overall.

With additional clarification about their potential career pathways coaches could make informed choices about how to assess and seek out learning experiences to construct a well-rounded toolkit of professional skills. A series of formal and nonformal experiences could be created to match the specific needs of coaches at the various developmental levels:

- Presentations on characteristics of the coaching profession, common paths of career progression, and opportunities for learning experiences could guide student-athletes as they consider exploring the coaching profession. These student-athletes could be encouraged to shadow coaches or assist with camps and summer events.
- Clinics for entry-level coaches could be designed to provide strategies for maximizing their apprenticeship positions and provide a venue for reinforcing basic coaching education content with an opportunity to receive direct feedback about their implementation of coaching skills (e.g., skill instruction, technique analysis, communication regarding correction/motivation)

- Workshops for assistant coaches could provide career planning information about various types of program structures, detail common job responsibilities required of head coaches, facilitate the assessment of professional competency strengths and weaknesses, and encourage sharing strategies for specific areas such as recruiting, team dynamics, and technical instruction for higher skilled athletes.
- Seminars with a focus on providing new information from industry experts might appeal to head coaches. A seminar structure could allow coaches to prepare with self-study, hear a presentation from an expert, and facilitate interaction to explore how the new information applies to their athletes and program setting. Each seminar could cover two to three topics selected to mix the performance dimension of coaching, content areas tied to administrative and managerial duties, and effective mentoring strategies.

One consideration for these workshops is to develop a curriculum and structure that allows for applicability to broader groups of sport coaches. While it is important to provide learning experiences with direct practical application, a number of topics would be appropriate for coaches from various sports. These include topics such as recruiting, teaching pedagogy, team dynamics, nutrition, compliance, and alumni relations.

Workshops with a mix of coaches also provide opportunities for coaches to develop networks and discover functional areas where they can share challenges and strategies for success.

Implications for Increasing Coaches' Mentoring Effectiveness

Implications for the development of mentors represent a second area of consideration in the overall professional development of coaches. The structure of the collegiate sport programs provides a likely continuation of the current apprenticeship model for coaches entering and progressing through the early stages of their careers. However, the research illustrates a lack of preparation or resources to coaches as they begin serving as mentors to less experienced coaches. An important realization is that this mentoring function may begin almost immediately as the entry-level coach begins to work with student-assistants or volunteers with the program. In contrast to mentoring situations in law, medicine, and K/12 education, a unique feature of this mentoring relationship is the lack of structure and regulation regarding the professional competencies the apprentice is working toward. One area of similarity may be graduate assistant position within higher education; although entry-level coaches are often referred to as graduate assistants, in many situations, the name does not always reflect status as a graduate student or connection to a specific field of study related to coaching. One might make an argument that faculty mentors experience a similar tension between a focus on their graduate assistants' development and assistance with faculty members' research and teaching duties.

Increased awareness and training about characteristics of good mentoring practices applicable to the coaching setting could result in positive impact on the relationship. During more than one interview the questions about practice appeared to trigger immediate consideration by mentor coaches regarding their own mentoring practices. These coaches identified specific areas where they could create a richer

experience for coaches working in their programs and expressed their ideas about how this might be quickly implemented, such as increased opportunities for ride-alongs during practice, shadowing with additional administrative tasks, and inclusion in department meetings. Another implication involves the need for easy-to-use tools to encourage and support strong mentoring activities (e.g., feedback forms, job description templates, evaluation templates, networking and resources listings). With the busy schedules, numerous responsibilities, and numerous pressing priorities, mentor coaches are unlikely to invest extended time and energy in preparing for their mentoring responsibilities. However, resources available on demand to mentors and easy to integrate within their program structures and practices may be viewed as a win-win opportunity for supporting the development of their coaching staff, enhancing their own work efficiency and program operations, and growing talent in the sector.

Implications for Practice with Athletics Departments and Sport's Governance

Organizations

The model shows that the influence of the athletics department and the sport's governance organization are limited, however, there are implications that address unique points of influence between the organization and the coach. The following recommendations highlight easy-to-implement strategies that can have an immediate impact on the professional development of coaches.

Athletics Departments

- Create detailed job descriptions that accurately describe the job duties and related skills for all coaching positions.

- Facilitate seminars for coaches from various sports to share effective practices in areas such as recruiting, compliance, alumni relations, and team dynamics.
- Consider the impact of office and workspace proximity on professional relationships among coaches and with athletics department staff.
- Conduct meaningful performance evaluations for head coaches and provide evaluation resources head coaches can use to assess assistant and entry-level coach performance.
- Provide information sessions and basic skills workshops for student-athletes interested in exploring coaching careers.

USRowing and other coaching education programs

- Facilitate discussions at coaching education events for collegiate coaches to engage in discussions about practical applications of coaching content.
- Provide information sessions for student-athletes and community coaches interested in a collegiate coaching career.
- Provide and promote more learning experiences at a regional level, especially for assistant coaches, to decrease the time and money investment required for participation.
- Include collegiate-specific content supplements in all levels of the coaching education curriculum.

Limitations and Considerations Regarding the Research

As detailed in Chapter 3 detailing the research methodology, most significant limitation of this study is the restricted pool of participants. In only examining coaches involved with women's rowing from Oregon and Washington, the claim of applicability to coaches of other sports, and even from other geographic areas, is limited. Additionally, the broad scope of the research provides only preliminary considerations for this very complex set of dynamics.

The research findings may be most applicable to other collegiate rowing coaches and perhaps to others involved in collegiate athletics with non-revenue or commonly designated Olympic-sports programs. Similar findings would be expected with other Olympic sports that have any of the following characteristics:

- Sport with a history of apprentice-based coaching development;
- Programs with squad-based coaching structures (i.e., various sub-groups practicing independently with different coaches);
- Programs loosely coupled with the athletics department – this may include programs that operate at a physical distance from the main hub of athletics activity and programs not considered high priority for the department;
- Sports lacking a clearly identified coaching education program applicable to the collegiate setting.

Future Research

After conducting this research and considering the emerging themes regarding the methods by which collegiate women's rowing coaches are navigating their career development and career pathways, a number of questions arise for future inquiry.

Applicability to other collegiate coaching populations

- Do the primary influences described by these coaches match those experienced by a broader pool of rowing coaches?
- Can the model be effective in examining and comparing the dynamics among the broader pool of rowing coaches as well as collegiate coaches involved with other sports?
- What refinements are required for the model to be more effective in describing the experience of broader groups of coaches?

Self-directed learning

- How can coaches be better prepared to manage their professional development and become more effective self-directed learners, especially in terms of their self-monitoring and self-management?
- Are there meaningful incentives to develop these metacognitive skills when they may not be immediately perceived, and therefore not valued, as improving their coaching skills?
- What coaching education curriculum design would provide more effective learning for coaches integrating learning on-the-job with a foundation of content knowledge and skills?

- Do the professional competencies required at various levels (i.e., entry-level coaches, assistant coaches, and head coaches) align with competencies required for coaches of different sports?

Career pathway and professional competency linkage

- How are coaches' understandings of career pathways and required professional competencies related? For example, is the lack of an articulated set of professional competencies a contributing factor or a product of an undefined career pathway?
- How would a clearly articulated career pathway impact coaches' decisions about participating in learning experiences?
- What are the coaching-related professional competencies tied directly to achieving goals unique to the student-athlete population?
- What professional competencies are required for success in managing an athletic program within a higher education institution?

Mentor-apprentice relationships

- Do the mentorship philosophies in the broader collegiate setting correspond to the tension in collegiate coaching regarding student-athlete development/education and sport performance?
- Are the characteristics described by the mentor and apprentice coaches consistent with the experiences of other sport coaches in similar relationships?
- How does the mentor tension identified in this study correspond to the findings of other research examining mentoring (e.g., exploring common

needs between graduate assistant/teaching assistant mentoring experiences and those of coaching apprentices)?

Ties of initial findings to specific demographic groups

- While this study included coaches with a mix of experience and variety of positions, further studies could look more closely at how coaches in specific demographic groups might be impacted as they enter the coaching career field and advance through the process of professional development.

Conclusion

This study provides a solid foundation from which to continue an exploration of professional development among a broader group of U.S. collegiate coaches. The findings highlight the importance of providing guidance to coaches who are operating to a great extent as self-directed learners and in specific areas of influence provided by mentors, coaching communities, sport's governance organizations, and athletic departments. The research identified areas of congruence with the current findings regarding coaching education for international high-performance coaches.

Given the importance of developing intercollegiate coaches with a deep understanding of the complexities within today's coaching, more attention is needed to assess who is coaching and how they have been prepared to serve the broad educational outcomes of the intercollegiate athletic experience.

Recent trends in intercollegiate coaching include increasing pressure on coaches to quickly establish and maintain a winning program, the growing tension between the high pressure to win and the expectation to provide a positive athlete experience,

declining numbers of women coaches over the past thirty-plus years, and continuing low percentages of coaches of color, especially in head coaching positions. These trends indicate a need for a close examination of how coaches prepare for these careers and the possibility that better professional development experiences could assist in addressing the changing challenges to success for coaches.

The overall goal is to identify how professional development can be designed to better engage coaches in order to improve their effectiveness in the intercollegiate setting. Professional development is happening in some cases despite the lack of attention, norms, and standards, however, the ability to increase effective practices should not be ignored. Some of the immediate recommendations resulting from this research may be implemented to improve the professional development of all collegiate coaches. Eventually, the findings of this study and subsequent research could shape the design and implementation of professional development programs that coaches and administrators view as essential for improving the quality and effectiveness of coaching in the U.S. collegiate setting.

The expectation over time is to create a culture of learning throughout the full spectrum of coaching positions that entails a great deal more than self-directed individuals pursuing training in relative isolation. Building on the initial motivation and enthusiasm already demonstrated by entry-level coaches, we are challenged to develop a more robust, guided and synergistic community of practice. This enriched environment will enable coaches to efficiently pursue the professional development activities necessary to build the professional competencies necessary to function effectively within the intercollegiate athletics environment.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Introduction:

My broad area of interest is professional development for collegiate coaches. I am interviewing a number of women's rowing coaches to gain an understanding of how they manage their career development, and to identify what types of professional development activities they view as contributing to their advancement and success.

As you are well aware, coaches enter the profession at the intercollegiate level with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. These may include formal or informal preparation for coaching and the related job responsibilities that collegiate coaches are assigned. Professional competencies or skills that are required for coaches may include teaching sport technique and developing training programs, administrative duties (such as purchasing and maintaining equipment, budgeting, compliance), management duties (such as hiring and evaluating staff, fundraising, media relations, and long-range planning for facilities, and expertise in other areas such as coordinating recruiting efforts, student development or sport psychology. Coaches can gain these competencies through many avenues: degrees and certifications, apprenticeships, attendance in classes or workshops, and/or self-study on the job. Throughout the interview I will refer to "learning experiences" or "professional development experiences". These terms could include any formal or informal types of activities that you believe enhanced your coaching skills or competencies.

Through these interviews with you and others, I hope to learn more about (1) what influences motivate or deter you from participating in various learning experiences, (2) what individuals and/or groups provide guidance and/or facilitate your professional development, and (3) how you make decisions and manage your professional development activities and career.

Career Summary

1. From your professional bio, I understand that you (*summary of major coaching positions and activities*)

- Is there anything else you would add to this summary?

Initial Preparation and Experience

2. To what extent was your formal educational background helpful in preparing you for coaching?
3. To what extent was your athletic experience helpful in preparing you for coaching?
4. What were the primary skills and abilities required of you during this coaching position? Were these provided in a written job description?
5. Describe any learning experiences you participated in as you entered the coaching field?

Participation in Professional Development

6. Think of a time you were motivated to improve or expand your coaching skills. What specific incident or situation motivated you to consider this activity?
 - How did you decide what type of professional development to engage in?
 - Did you end up participating?
 - What steps or actions did you take to arrange your participation?
 - If yes, did you find it valuable? If no, do you have any regrets?
7. Describe a time your athletic department provided professional development or an opportunity to participate in a learning experience?
 - What type of opportunity was provided?
 - Did the department offer these opportunities regularly?
 - Did you participate in the experience?
 - If yes, did you find it valuable? If no, do you have any regrets?
8. Think of a time when an administrator or staff member of the athletic department motivated you to participate in any other type of learning experience.
 - What motivation did he or she provide?
 - What type of learning experience was encouraged?
 - Did you find the learning experience helpful?

9. Describe a time when an administrator or staff member of the athletic department hindered your participation, directly or indirectly, in a learning experience?
- What was the action hindered your participation?
 - How was this communicated?
 - Did you participate in the learning experience despite the hindrance?
 - If so, did you find the learning experience helpful? If no, do you have any regrets?
10. Think of an individual you would describe as a coaching mentor. Describe a time when this mentor encouraged you to participate in a learning experience?
- What was this person's relationship to you?
 - What motivation did the mentor provide?
 - What type of learning experience was encouraged?
 - Did you find the learning experience helpful?
11. Think again of this individual or other mentors you have been influenced by. Describe a time when this mentor discouraged, directly or indirectly, from participating in a learning experience?
- What did the mentor do that discouraged you?
 - Did you participate in the learning experience despite their input?
 - If so, did you find the learning experience helpful? If no, do you have any regrets?

Repeat Q6a-f as needed with interactions (with the coach's self-motivation, influence of athletic department administrators and/or a mentor) for another phase (earlier or more recently) in the coach's vita. For example, "Is this similar to more recent experiences with an athletic department administrator?"

Coaching Community

12. Think of a group of coaches that you view as a peer-network or professional community?
- When did you become engaged in this community?

- What type of activities do you participate in with this group?
13. Think of a time this group influenced your decision to participate in a learning experience?
- How did this influence get communicated?
 - What type of learning experience was encouraged?
 - Did you participate in the learning experience despite their input?
 - If so, did you find the learning experience helpful? If no, do you have any regrets?

Evaluation

14. What feedback or evaluation have you received during your time working as a coach?
- Who provided this feedback?
 - How was the feedback communicated?
 - What criteria or standards do you think were used in the formulation of this feedback?
15. How do you assess your own job performance?
- What area(s) did you have a high level of confidence in your ability?
 - What area(s) did you assess you needed to strengthen?
16. After identifying an area you needed to strengthen, describe a specific learning experience you considered engaging in?
- Did you participate in the identified learning experience?
 - If not, what was the barrier or deterrent?
 - If so, did you find the experience productive? If not, can you identify why it was not productive?

Professional Development Learning Experience Opportunities

17. Think about learning experiences you've heard about in the last 12 months. Please list these experiences and who they were offered by.
- Which, if any, of these experiences did you participate in?

- Which did you find to be the most valuable? Why?
 - Which did you find to be the least effective? Why?
18. What additional or enhanced professional skills and/or abilities do you think would be most valuable for increasing the future success of your career?
- What type of learning experiences do you believe would be most effective to develop those skills?
 - Describe any other conditions or constraints that keep you from participating in additional professional development experiences?

Wrap-up

19. As you think about preparing future coaches, what do you consider the most important consideration in facilitating their professional development?
- Why would you consider that the most important?
20. Are there any other thoughts you think would be helpful in my research?

VITA

Sara L. Lopez was born and raised in Los Angeles, California but now calls Seattle, Washington home. At Pacific Lutheran University she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education, majoring in Physical Education with minors in Health and Special Education. Having participated in the rowing program at Pacific Lutheran University, she began coaching in 1983 and currently leads Conibear Rowing Club in Seattle. Sara pursued an extensive career in sports management, including a leadership role at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games' rowing competition. Sara served as a Program Manager at the University of Washington with DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology), an outreach program for students with disabilities who are preparing for higher education. During this time she also earned a Master of Education degree at the UW College of Education. Beginning in 2005 Sara played a key role in planning and launching the Intercollegiate Athletic Leadership (IAL) M.Ed. program and currently serves as a lecturer and program director. Sara also co-directs the UW's Center for Leadership in Athletics. The Center's mission is to develop effective leaders and leadership practices that maximize the positive impact of athletics within the educational setting. In 2012 she earned a doctorate at the University of Washington in the College of Education's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program.