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Editorial

In the *Leading Article*, Paul Miller provides something of a manifesto for the use of discursive psychology (DP) in sports coaching. In a *Commentary*, Jonathan Potter, co-author of the seminal text *Discourse and Social Psychology* [1], states that Miller's article "does an important service by highlighting some of the ways that DP might contribute specifically to sports coaching, as well as setting the development of DP in a relevant theoretical and analytic context, particularly in relation to conversation analysis and ethnomethodology" (p. 631).

DP is concerned with "action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly," "talk and texts [i.e., discourse] as parts of practice," and the "primacy of the social and relational nature of human life" [2, p. 81]. The three major strands of DP are: "i) respecification and critique of psychological topics and explanations; ii) investigations of how everyday psychological categories are used in discourse; and iii) studies of how psychological business (motives and intentions, prejudices, reliability of memory and perception, etc.) is handled and managed in talk and text, without having to be overtly labelled as such" [3, p. 259].

DP is based on the premise that "[s]ocial and cognitive phenomena can be represented discursively" and "[t]here is a powerful and well-established vocabulary already in the vernacular of all cultures for the description of psychological phenomena" [4, p. 5]:

> Rather than starting from the principle that folk theory is an inaccurate and inconsistent theory of mind that needs to be replaced by the superior technical vocabulary of experimental psychology or cognitive science…, we investigate how it works in discourse. … The folk psychology thesaurus has its own reality as the actual terms used by people to perform the actions done in and through everyday discourse. As such, it is amenable to empirical study. [3, p. 263]

DP is one of a number of 'alternative' approaches in social psychology which are concerned with the "management of meaning within normative frameworks" [4, p. 13]:

> Psychological phenomena, such as the display of emotions, the solving of problems, the recollection of past events and the anticipation of the future, are discursive acts, meaningful performances by skilled human actors. While the phenomena are collective, the abilities required to bring them into being are personal. The evolving patterns of episodes in which psychological phenomena are brought into being are expressions of locally valid norms, conventions and customs. Psychology is the scientific study of meaning making and management, and the skills necessary to accomplish it. … This ties in with Wittgenstein's [5, 143-241] focus on 'language games', practices in which meanings are made and managed, and 'grammars', representations of the explicit, but more usually implicit conventions, customs and local standards of correctness with which our actions are surrounded. [4, p. 4-6]

Reflecting recent developments in DP, Miller focuses on the use of conversation analysis; i.e., the analysis of transcribed recordings of everyday talk in terms of the social actions

performed by its participants and how these actions are organised sequentially within turn-taking [2, p. 76; 3, p. 257]. Miller emphasises that DP is concerned with the actions (e.g., inspiring, explaining, blaming) that words accomplish in social realms (p. 618), and his article has 'coaching talk' as the major focus. However, Potter argues:

> Coaching talk is certainly important; yet, one of the powerful resources made available by sequential analysis is that it explicates the normative organization of interaction. Such an organization allows us to understand both vocal and non-vocal actions. (p. 631)

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