Editor's Preface

The academic literature is replete with theories, models, and guiding frameworks. Sport coaching literature is no exception. However, rarely is the curtain pulled back to reveal the forces and thought process that shaped the creation of these conceptual frameworks. Without a doubt John Lyle has been one of the most influential and prolific contributors to the discourse and evolution of the conceptual frameworks that inform sport coaching and coach education. It is for this reason that I eagerly accepted John's offer to write an Insights paper sharing his personal reflections on the creation and evolution of his conceptual frameworks in sport coaching. This type of 'looking back' exercise is extremely valuable for early career and seasoned educators alike. For those at the start of their journey, John's reflections will illustrate the value of following your passion and keeping the focus on 'the next best step'. One can never anticipate where the journey will lead, but good things always seem to come from pursuing your passion with relentless purpose and energy. For those approaching the end of their career, elements of John's story will surely resonate with their own journey. I am hopeful that by sharing John's journey it will stimulate others to engage in similar reflection. Perhaps this can become a regular Insights feature in ISCJ, serving both as an archive for the profession as well as stimulus for new discoveries and conceptual frameworks.

Abstract

This is a retrospective account of the development of a conceptual framework for sport coaching. The framework comprises an extensive and comprehensive set of constructs and relationships that form a basis for discourse and the conduct of research, education and development. The origins of the framework are identified, within an academic field of study that was under-theorised, under-resourced and displayed ill-defined concepts. The incremental development of the framework is situated within the understanding of coaching concepts at that time. Key features of this conceptual framework are described in detail and their insinuation into the literature illustrated. An analysis of later publications demonstrates how these concepts have been further elaborated in response to a maturing field of study. Attention is drawn to the sport coaching construct as a family of roles, identification of core functions, and the contextual particularity of coaching practice and expertise. The account concludes that key concepts have impacted policy documentation and the academic debate, and the framework has acted as a reference point for academic writing and research, although ore needs to be done to emphasise the importance of conceptual clarity, especially in research design and dissemination.

KEYWORDS: historical evolution; coaching domains; definitions; coaching concepts

Reflecting on the Development of a Conceptual Framework for Sport Coaching

When I began working in, and thinking about, coaching science in 1980, there were a number of limiting factors: no undergraduate or postgraduate courses, coach education was rudimentary in scale and sophistication, and the library shelves were devoid of dedicated peer-reviewed journals and UK textbooks. The development of a conceptual framework over time has helped to fill that vacuum and provided a foundation and reference point for the subsequent emergence of different strands of policy, coaching education, academic writing and research.

This paper is inevitably reflective of an academic journey over time, and therefore adopts a personal and historical narrative style. The starting point was my taking responsibility for a taught module on a post-experience Diploma programme in 1980. At that time, my thinking was not fully formed around a 'conceptual task', but it quickly became evident that this was required to underpin this nascent endeavour, and terminology associated with 'conceptual appreciation' was adopted (understood as a "network of interrelated concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon" (Jabareen, 2009, p. 51)). The origins of a conceptual framework for sport coaching were being generated in a field of study that was under-theorised and characterised by the use of ill-defined concepts. The purpose of the framework, therefore, albeit realised more fully at a subsequent stage, was to impose a degree of conceptual order that was more comprehensive and all-embracing than was available at that time. This was to involve establishing a conceptual language, a consensus on the interpretation of concepts, a means of illustrating and analysing concepts, and identifying interdependencies, in order to provide a more extensive and sophisticated basis for discourse and the conduct of research, education and development.

My academic perspective emerged through a distinctive, sometimes serendipitous, engagement with agents of personal development and with exposure to learning, education and training. A unique synthesis of sporting biography, dispositions (e.g. preferring to think in spatial and conceptual pictures) and academic opportunities enabled me to adopt a particular and singular approach to what I perceived, over time, to be deficiencies in understanding coaching behaviour and practice.

Origins

It is important to appreciate the academic context from which the conceptual agenda emerged. I was Course Leader of a Diploma in Sports Coaching course at Dunfermline College of Physical Education, Edinburgh, in 1980, which subsequently developed into the first Masters degree in this field in the UK. In the initial course design, and in all subsequent years of delivery, there was a primary module termed, '*Coaching Theory*'. Having assumed responsibility for delivering this module, I was left to consider what this should consist of, and what resources were available to support it. It appeared that coaching theory referred to 'something' that was not a specific 'ology', not sport-specific and not directly related to practice. There was some 'draw down' from teaching principles, and there were disciplines underpinning anatomy and physiology, skill acquisition, growth and development of children, and mental training. Coach education at the time dealt in a very superficial way with 'the role of the coach' and with coaching philosophies focused on child-centred approaches. The emphasis on craft delivery, modest scale and limited intellectual challenge raised doubts at that time about its 'level-ness' for degree-compatible development.

Furthermore, the literature available in the 1980s provided little support for the development of the subject matter. This consisted of North American texts focused largely on the management of high school/collegiate coaching roles (often combined with PE), with

some advice on pedagogical delivery and 'handling' of players (e.g. Gallon, 1981; Jones, Wells, Peters & Johnson, 1982); support materials from Canada and Australia that complemented coach education programmes that had begun to differentiate sport-specific from 'common theory' materials (Gowan & Thompson, 1986; Pyke, 1980); 'training theory' texts, in which exercise physiology provided an underpinning for training prescriptions and planning, and dominated the non-sport-specific coach education curriculum (Bompa, 1983; Dick, 1980); and some coaching-related research reported in journals, commonly psychology-based and related to coaches' behaviours or leadership in North American youth sport (e.g. Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Quarterman, 1980; Smith, Smoll & Curtis, 1979). There were no coaching-specific journals. Materials related to coaches (often concerned with personal characteristics and role) were published in, for example, *Research Quarterly*, *The Physical Educator*, and *The Journal of Sport Psychology*.

My background was that of a Physical Education teacher, with what would now be termed a 'sports studies/science' degree, who had been recruited into higher education largely as a 'teacher trainer'. I had a wide experience of performance sport, notably as a professional footballer and an international volleyball player. By 1980, I was coaching a very successful club volleyball team, and the Scotland National Men's volleyball team. I had also attended a number of coach education courses. Later reflection pointed to the influence that this background may have had in orientating me to high-performance team sport, the directive role of the coach, a competition imperative, and the significance of coaching during active competition.

A number of features of the existing materials acted as catalysts for the beginnings of a conceptual framework. Coach education paid little attention to coach behaviour or the 'how' of preparation or delivery. It was not clear what differentiated the coach from the PE teacher, as both were assumed to be engaged in teaching sport to young people. In addition,

my own experience as a coach had implanted a sense that coaches were coordinating or 'pulling together' a significant number of variables over an extended timescale and in a way that emphasised planning and progression. This suggested to me that this facet of expertise was essential but ill-defined, and coaching was more processual than episodic. The (often deliberate) obfuscation between PE and sport coaching, and the subsequent emphasis on 'episodic' (defined as 'one off' or short-term-focused) delivery, which was also evident in much of youth sport, was at odds with my own experience, and the subsequent emphasis on sport coaching as a process has been a continuing feature of my work since that time.

The initial 'contents list' for the coaching theory module reflected a number of themes: role, definitions, philosophy (approach), responsibilities, and sport-specific behaviours. These were rehearsed in an early publication (Lyle, 1981). My attempts to differentiate between management and intervention roles, to emphasise coordination, to reveal the assumption of a process, and to identify sport-specific roles were novel individually, let alone in combination. Sport coaching and the coaching process were treated as problematic constructs. A subsequent paper (Lyle, 1984), '*Towards a concept of coaching*', stressed the need for a non-sport-specific approach and an emphasis on the coaching process. The paper had a number of features that would later be elaborated, including recognition of a 'values position' and individual 'philosophies'. Boundary markers were identified – competition, duration, stability and empathy. Importantly, the definition of coaching included the phrase 'planned systematic programme' that would later stimulate debate in the field.

The paradigm paper circulated for the Commonwealth Conference in 1986 brought recognition for me and disseminated my ideas to the field (Lyle, 1986). The definition, boundary markers and reasons for the limited attention to 'coaching theory' were further developed. Significantly, this approach was acknowledged to be a 'narrow' conceptualisation

of sport coaching: this would subsequently lead to the development of further thinking about 'domains'. This was also an opportunity to introduce modelling and evaluation as problematic concerns. In the mid-1980s this was alien territory, as evidenced by the emphasis at the time on behavioural studies and sport-specific content.

A thesis for an MSc in social science research at the University of Stirling included an ideal model of the coaching process, and tested its aptness on coaches of national performers in three sports. The results were published in a book of conference proceedings (Lyle, 1992). The principal supervisor was a social research expert and this may have helped to 'ground' the work in non-sport-specific terms, and in mainstream academia. At this time there were relatively few 'coaching science academics'. It may be instructive that in the 1992 publication, the section dealing with coaching had two empirical papers out of ten, 70% of which had non-UK-based authors. The scale of the thesis allowed more scope to explore the boundary criteria and basic assumptions underlying a model of coaching. The model was based on Weber's 'ideal model' type (Albrow, 1990) and stressed the actions taken rationally and logically in constraint-free conditions. The purpose was to provide a template against which accounts of ('real') coaching practice could be compared. The model identified the centrality of goals set, and the importance of thresholds in managing decision taking. A key recognition point here was that the model would not be a representation 'of' coaching but 'for' coaching (see Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006 for a subsequent treatment). The inherent complexity in the process was acknowledged (somewhat ahead of its time) and Schön's (1983) work adduced as an explanation for apparently intuitive, non-systematic behaviour. This lens has now become an accepted theme in the current discourse (Gilbert & Côté, 2013; Martindale & Collins, 2015; Miles, 2011). Facets of this approach, especially conceptualising coaching as a largely cognitive phenomenon, would subsequently emerge as an interest in coaches' decision making.

A subsequent paper, *A conceptual appreciation of the coaching process*, was an opportunity to synthesise how these ideas were developing, and to incorporate themes emerging from the MSc thesis (Lyle, 1996). The paper included: a review of literature expanded to include coach behaviour and gender issues; greater attention to modelling; an extended 'episodic versus process' debate; and a distinction between the 'what' and 'how' of coaching (a key distinction in current conceptions of coach development). There was a defence of the serial, process nature of coaching, participation-performance differences, and expanded assumptions for model building. This thinking represented a challenge to the orthodoxy of coaching as a unitary phenomenon that dominated contemporary policy documents (e.g. Sports Council, 1991). Perhaps most importantly, the paper included the heading 'operationalisation', which explored intuitive decision making, used Schön's work to address the apparently intuitive capacity to reflect-in-action, and focused on the impact of mental planning models. The principal catalyst for this development was the inability of thinking at that time to identify the nature of the coach's expertise. The apparently intuitive nature of coaching behaviour had been used as an excuse for not delving further into its nature.

Development of a Conceptual Framework

A book chapter (Lyle, 1999) provided a conceptual vocabulary that secured wide circulation. What follows is a catalogue of issues and themes that were established in, what at the time was, the first UK 'textbook' in this field. These are provided as a marker for subsequent developments.

- An extended defence of coaching as a process, implying 'beyond delivery behaviour' (which had been the existing focus of coach education).

- Positioning conceptual frameworks as necessary for situating variations in practice. There was a debate at the time about whether or not there was a common or core element across sports. Both terms were used at that time; the implication being a more cost-effective education delivery across sports.

- An extended section on participation-performance coaching distinctions.

- The importance of role as a determinant of expertise requirements.

- Dropping 'systematic' from the earlier definitions presented.

- Introducing 'direct intervention' as a term to describe face-to-face coaching interventions. (This has only been partially successful; many writers continue to use 'coaching' as a noun to describe this specific behaviour.)

- The notion that coaching is an essentially cognitive activity. This was further developed in a parallel strand of academic study on decision making (e.g. Lyle, 2010; 2012). There is a substantial body of literature that now treats this assumption as a basic principle of coaching practice and behaviour (c.f. Abraham & Collins, 2011).

- The uses and limitations of models of coaching; in particular, the introduction of models 'of' and models 'for' coaching (see Cushion et al., 2006). Cushion and colleagues acknowledged this chapter as a source, but subsequent citations tend to refer to their work.

- A version of the ideal model was presented. The impact of this will be discussed later and at greater depth.

- There was a more substantial treatment of the 'uniqueness and complexity of each coaching process'. I will subsequently discuss criticism of some of my ideas as being too systematic, positivistic and linear.

- The operationalisation features presented in the chapter introduced mental models, cognitive matrices (schemata), intuitive decision making and contingency planning.

The textbook *Sports Coaching Concepts* (Lyle, 2002) is a focal point in the development of the conceptual framework. The arguments are more explicit and the application to sport coaching practice is more fully illustrated. At this stage in the paper, my objective is to highlight the key concepts around which the development of the conceptual framework is centred, and subsequently to demonstrate how further publications have elaborated on them. Although these are described individually, as might be expected in a framework, these elements are interdependent.

Coaching as a Process

The identification of the processual nature of coaching was largely in response to the episodic interpretation that permeated descriptions of participation coaching. I argued that coaching is serial, as there is a temporal and relational aspect, and aggregative, because of the incremental, multivariable and interdependent nature of its component parts. It is also possible to demonstrate its insinuation into coaching discourse, meaning that both academics and policy makers have adopted this terminology. Books such as that of Kidman and Hanrahan (2010), Gordon (2009) and articles such as that of Cushion (2007; 2010) acknowledge this characteristic. Most importantly, the ICCE (2013) policy and position statement also defines coaching as a process. However, it is the quiet assumption of its process nature that is most telling, as the literature now reflects this without feeling the need to say so (Abraham & Collins, 2011; Nash, 2015). Acknowledgement of 'performance' coaching with a concomitant emphasis on planning (Abraham et al., 2015) and the more recent adoption of 'nested goals' are *de facto* acknowledgements that coaching is a process. This has become a relatively uncontested notion as a result of clearer distinctions between sport coaching and episodic sport teaching. The insinuation of performance sport assumptions

into academic writing and the extended layered/nested concept have reinforced its process nature.

Definitions of Coaching

Defining coaching is less about a short pithy epithet and more about delimiting the scope of the term and the meanings attached. There has been a marked development in my thinking over time. Early definitions revolved around notions such as process, coordination, planning, systematic preparation, and improved competition performance. By 1996, attention had shifted to process, integrated, purposeful improvement, competitive sports performance, planning and coordination. By 2011, this had become improved sport performance, competition, preparation with a purpose, coordination, aggregation of behaviour and practice (Lyle, 2011b). A continuous thread focuses on process, coordination, improvement and competition performance.

The meaning attached to the term 'coaching' depends on the assumptions made by the author. My assumptions are clearly spelled out in Lyle (2002). Those writers who have a particular ideological stance and who wish to emphasise 'inclusivity' tend to define coaching in an all-embracing and more generalised way (e.g. ICCE, 2013). Latterly (Cushion & Lyle, 2017; Lyle, 11b), I have stressed the importance, and centrality, of the social space within which sport coaching is situated, emphasising the inadequacy of 'sport coaching' as a descriptor. It is best used as a 'family term' for a plethora of domain-specific leadership roles in sport. More recently, I have tried to encourage writers to use the term 'sport coaching' and not 'sports coaching'. This is an attempt to focus attention on the coaching element, and to imply the use of the term 'sport' to convey the social space and not specific sports as content. Although there are some encouraging signs, it is too early yet to evaluate progress. However, it was pleasing to see the ICCE (2013) policy and position statement using the term.

Coaching Domains

The emphasis on coaching domains (distinctive sporting milieus in which the environmental demands lead to a more or less coherent community of practice, with its attendant demands on the coach's expertise and practice) is a theme that has been most manifestly embraced by both the policy and academic communities. It has also shown considerable development and refinement over time, identifying distinctive practices, expertise and expectations in recognisable occupational and social spaces in sport where performance leadership is exercised. This now permeates the literature and is evident in the straightforward acknowledgement of the domain that provides the context for research (although this often has to be assumed from the role descriptor of the coach), the use of the term 'coaching domains' (e.g. Cassidy, 2010; Collins & Collins, 2012; Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne & Eubank, 2006; LeUnes 2007; Nash 2015; Trudel & Gilbert 2006,) and policy documents that have extended the notion of coaching domains (ICCE, 2013), notably the coach development model (North, 2009).

The differences between participation coaching and performance coaching were detailed in Lyle (2002). A further category (development coaching) was added, in which the characteristics of performance coaching are present but with a lesser engagement and emphasis on results. I felt that research populations and recommendations were rarely particularised, and the coach's practice was almost never described. In addition, I could see the impact of conceptual precursors such as process and role boundaries on the identification of domains (continued in the more recent proposal that sport coaching should be treated as an overarching 'family of roles').

I began to disseminate these ideas over the 10 years following the publication of *Sports Coaching Concepts* in lectures, coach development, and conference presentations, and developed a more detailed rationale. Lyle (2011b) provided an evidential basis for the arguments and incorporated embellishments from previous presentations. Many writers continue to use the participation-performance distinction as a convenient shorthand. Trudel and Gilbert (2006) identified their own categories but acknowledged my earlier contribution.

Models of the Coaching Process

A key contribution to the conceptual framework was the model of the coaching process first described in Lyle (1999) and elaborated in Lyle (2002). The contribution was important but the model has not been developed significantly since that time, although a subsequent publication (Lyle & Cushion, 2017) has an additional chapter on operationalising the coaching model. The model served its purpose in pointing out the value of modelling and further development of this type of ideal, all-embracing model would not be appropriate. Nevertheless, the impact, direct and indirect, on the field has been marked. First, the concept of models 'for' and 'of' the coaching process (also Cushion et al., 2006; Cushion, 2007) is an accepted reference point for the literature (Abraham & Collins, 2011). Second, the use of an ideal model has (mistakenly) been used as a metaphor for a 'linear' approach to coaching (Jones, 2006). The model was intended to stimulate debate. However, such an interpretation arises from not fully linking this type of model with the description of the inherent dynamic complexity of coaching in the text that accompanies the model. Third, the model appears to have been a catalyst for further developments in model building (e.g. Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006; Muir, Morgan, Abraham, & Morley, 2011). Abraham and Collins (2011) situate their model building as a mid-way point between models 'for' and 'of'.

The use of the term 'schematic' (Abraham et al., 2006) to label diagrammatic representations of coaching components, and modelling that is clearly intended to be a normative development tool (Abraham & Collins, 2011; Muir et al., 2011) point to the difficulties of modelling coaching practice. My current conviction is that attempts to model the process are inappropriate because of domain and role specificity, and the particularity of coaching practice. Future modelling is likely to be directed more specifically at operationalisation (socio-pedagogy) and coaches' decision making.

Coordination

This is an important but underdeveloped theme that has been much elaborated by others in the field (e.g. Jones & Wallace, 2005). In my original thinking, the combination of the process element with its multiple components suggested a cognitive coordination that distinguished episodic, short-term intervention from the more extended sport coaching process. This construct was insufficiently conceptualised, although in Lyle (2002) it was identified as a 'function area' termed 'strategic coordination and integration'. However, it was also identified as a regulating function, conceptualised as a 'control box', to acknowledge the role of apparently intuitive decision making and tacit knowledge in the micro-management of the process.

More importantly, my thinking became crystallised around the coach's reliance on experiential decision making and the implications for coaching expertise. Although this was presaged in Lyle (2002) as a 'complex series of professional shortcuts and decision making, dependent on tacit knowledge and routines', it had evolved from the coordination of the programme to the element of expertise that enables (indeed, requires) the coach to apply and adapt her/his expertise to particular contexts. Robyn Jones has been at the centre of a number

of publications describing this as 'orchestration' (e.g. Jones & Wallace, 2005) and has further elaborated a theoretical framework in subsequent papers.

Elaborating the Conceptual Framework

Lyle and Cushion (2010a) aimed to 'take stock' of developments in the field since 2002, bringing together key academics to provide a critical appreciation of coaching science at that time. Our engagement with the field identified a number of catalysts for the book. We felt that shortcomings in sport coaching research, identified in the concluding chapter of Lyle (2002), had not been addressed. In addition, a number of disciplinary schools had emerged but added only a partial understanding of coaching practice, and conceptual clarity was (still) missing from much of the literature.

Cushion and Lyle (2010) restated the case for a conceptual framework; this was important in the light of the substantial increase in the scale of publishing between 2002 and 2010. Although the evaluation therein appears negative by suggesting limited progress, much of the criticism is directed at the conduct of research. The failure to address conceptual issues affecting study samples and contexts, and the interpretation of research findings was identified as a major shortcoming. The chapter pointed to complementary writing on modelling and the social nature of coaching, while identifying limited development of ideas in domain specificity and how to reconcile the inherent 'messiness' of intention and action in context. The theme of 'systematic, planned process' continued to be used, supplemented by acknowledging the coach's need to manage intervention and interaction. It is important to note that in terms of the conceptual framework, we attempted to highlight a continuing debate about the balance between 'structured improvisation' (Chris' take on operationalising the coaching moment) and 'instrumental adaptation' (my conviction that the planning element is more central to the process). The difference between our perspectives is one of degree. I tend

to the view that coaches cope with (and routinise) the complexity but have a strong framework of goals and planning. I therefore rely on a decision making perspective and a cognitive organisation that enables the coach to manage the situation on a moment-to-moment basis. Chris adopts a social constructionist perspective and stresses the way that coaches manage the interaction (and associated meanings) between the actors. We acknowledge that our perspectives are not inimical, and each may address effectively a different set of practice-based issues.

Lyle and Cushion (2010b) was an opportunity to update some features of the conceptual framework, with an element of 'marking territory'. Although domains had entered the coaching policy and academic discourse, it had become important to strengthen the case by providing more elaboration and by linking it to other concepts. Identifying a generic core, in practice and context-dependent operationalisation, aligned with the potential for cross-domain expertise meant that the linkages between domains and expertise could be articulated more clearly. The section on the definition/scope of sport coaching was another profound move forward. The problem was stated as, "sport coaching is a catch-all and inevitably too imprecise a term; it is assumed to refer to all forms of 'coaching activity', but the differences outweigh the similarities" (p. 246). It was suggested that sport coaching was a 'family of roles'.

It was a conscious decision not to 'sit on the fence' but to state that coaching roles were not on a continuum and to reinforce what had been termed a 'narrow' view of sport coaching. This built on a consistent approach throughout the publications, while a defence of a bounded occupational role helped to clarify the issue of professionalisation, which was a contemporary debate (Taylor & Garratt, 2010a; 2010b). Although this may not seem impactful from a current perspective, much of coach education at that time was based on an assumption of a continuum of roles - adopting a 'bounded' view of sport coaching would

strengthen the case for a loose association of roles, but would inevitably reduce the scope of those to whom the definition of coach might apply. A new chapter in Lyle and Cushion (2017), on the professionalisation of sport coaching, argues that one of the factors that render professionalisation an unlikely and inappropriate goal is the failure to appreciate the important conceptual issues that the policy network has failed to address. These views are at odds with the 'inclusive definition approach' (e.g. ICCE, 2013; Crisfield, 2015) and highlight the tension between a conceptually-sound view versus a moral and politically-expedient perspective. The 'inclusive' argument would extend the 'reach' of sport coaching and underpin its social, leisure, health and educational significance. It is my view that this can be argued without compromising the conceptual integrity of the distinctive coaching roles.

Although domains had been introduced into the coaching discourse to establish a more valid context for education and development, I felt that the conceptual arguments needed to be evidenced. Data from workforce development planning had provided evidence of the distribution and characteristics of sport coaches across domains (Lyle, 2009; Lynn & Lyle, 2010), and the invitation to write a chapter in the *Routledge Handbook of Sports Development* (Lyle, 2011a) provided an opportunity to articulate these differences. The title of the chapter, *Sports development, sports coaching and domain specificity* indicates the direction taken. This contribution was less about coaching behaviour and more about the characteristics of the coaches and their 'coached populations' within the domains. The chapter can be seen as a further explication of domain differences, while emphasising the transitions between them as problematic.

The key section demonstrated the relationship between the coach's expertise and qualifications and the coached population in that domain. The integration of concepts is illustrated thus, "these domains have a particular configuration of participant aspirations, stages of development, levels of commitment, and delivery organisation that impact on the

coach's behaviour and practice. This becomes evident in the coach's leadership style, methods of communication, demands on technical knowledge, planning, goal setting and emphasis on competition" (p. 496). It is a consistent message – there is a need to attend to the concepts associated with role and boundaries.

Further thinking about boundaries, roles, definitions and so on, particularly in coach development workshops and lectures, signalled a need to consolidate this elaboration of the conceptual framework. This was achieved in the opening chapter of an updated version of *Coaching Children in Sport* (Lyle, 2011b). This is perhaps the best example of conceptual writing and demonstrates a continuing ambition to expand the intellectual 'reach' of the framework. The initial section on boundaries (linked to professionalisation) points to the limitations of adopting an 'any leadership role' approach, and the perils of 'assumption by named role'. The 'family of roles' notion is described, as is the 'social space' where coaching takes place. This was relatively new to the description of the conceptual framework, and was designed to facilitate the building of links between context, role and practice: "We have made it difficult to comprehend the 'social space' of sports coaching by accepting a multiplicity of divergent roles and assuming a strong relationship between them" (p. 9). The intention was to clarify the confusion engendered by failing to consider role, expertise, certification and practice within a contextually-bound social space.

This was also an opportunity to address a number of previously less-well-emphasised concepts. These included the differentiation of person and role, the distinction between value-led prescriptions for coaching practice (e.g. the 4 'c's model of Côté et al., 2010) and the essence of the coaching process, and the balance of uncertainty and stability – "between the relative complexity and untidiness of much of sports coaching with a dependence on an intervention management practice that requires continual adjustment, and the stability of a core process of planned intervention" (p. 8). It was necessary to point out that coaching

practice does not change because of the disciplinary lens adopted. It may be an irreconcilable issue that one perspective searches for uncertainty and contingency, and the other looks for coping strategies and stability.

The chapter summary provides a useful résumé of the main points of the framework, and evidence that the conceptual framework has progressed substantially over a period of time. The basic elements from Lyle (2002) had evolved to: a field of endeavour imbued with social meaning; a family of sport leadership roles; a core purpose of improving performance; preparation for organised forms of competition activity; defined in relation to technical leadership with an athlete/team, and a demonstrable capacity, a separation of core function and value-lead prescription, and the impact of social space on deployment, role and expertise.

Cushion and Lyle (2016) summarised the value of a conceptual framework and the need to attend to domain specificity, emphasising two perceived shortcomings: a failure to apply universally the conceptual framework, and to transmit research findings to coaches' education and practice, although we stressed the point that the development of the framework is not intended directly to impact on practitioners. The 'family of roles' concept is emphasised, stating that the use of the term sport coaching has reached 'such a level of genericism that it has become unhelpful'. Sport coaching was also described as a 'relationship' and not a set of behaviours. In a new development, we agreed on a compromise position – a layered set of three entities acting in concert: the social context, the context-specific and meaning-generating flow of delivery, and the planned and goal-directed direction of the coach. This was an attempt to reconcile the social, interpretivist and pragmatic perspectives with a 'nod' to the layering of the critical realist perspective (North, 2017).

Although not yet developed in full, reference was made to coaching being 'understandable only at the level of the particular'. This is a current approach that I have adopted (influenced by the work in teacher education of Hagger and McIntyre (2006)), and it

will have significant implications for expertise and research. The domain section reprised previous arguments, with the addition of 'role frames' derived from the coach's personal, educational and experiential circumstances. In the summary there is a restatement of the centrality of technical transmission (sport performance) in coaching practice. Despite it being criticised as simplistic, dehumanising and pedagogically unsound if over-emphasised, it is a core purpose in sport coaching. The need for accommodation, integration and coordination is also reinforced.

Overview

What follows is a brief evaluative overview of the development of the conceptual framework. It is perhaps inevitable that any retrospective account of a long-term academic journey has the potential to be viewed in the most favourable light. For this reason, there is value in acknowledging where progress has been less substantial.

There has been a gradual incorporation in my writing of a response to the 'dynamic complexity' notion and of the social component of sport coaching. I continue to believe that there is considerable value in searching for routine and regularity, as a partial explanation for the mechanisms through which coaches cope with this challenge. Criticism of the ideal model approach (positivistic, linear, deterministic, and simplistic) is overstated and disciplinary-bounded. However, I also feel that the model has limited value and I have not sought to develop it further. In addressing the 'coping strategies', I feel that there is more to be gained from attempting to model the 'operationalisation' mechanisms. The identification of coaching domains has been a successful theme, as have the process and definitional boundaries; these will be pursued as new ideas develop. The 'family of roles' concept needs to be emphasised, emphasising as it does the lack of homogeneity in coaching practice. The concept of 'coordination' as a form of 'meta expertise' has been slow to gain traction. This area of

research has been overtaken by the work of Robyn Jones and the 'cognitive tool box' of Abraham and Collins (2011), while my earlier reliance on Schön's work as a partial explanation has been adopted by many others.

A general overview of my position would stress the pre-eminence of context in understanding sport coaching practice. I have not attended to specific populations – individuals with a disability, genders, ethnic or religious groups – and the ways in which such a population-led context might impact coaching practice. I do think that there is merit in further examination of these populations in relation to coaching domains. This issue is redolent of those in the lead-up to the 2002 book, during which there was considerable debate about whether or not a 'core' process existed that was independent of context. I believe that there is a core purpose that gives meaning to the process. However, sport coaching practice can only be fully understood in terms of its domain, particularity and context. The genesis of ideas of 'layering' and 'nested goals' were reflected in my earlier writing, and the notion that 'coaching can only be understood in the particular' has a great resonance for me, and has implications for research and development activity.

My purpose over 20 years of deep intellectual engagement with the academic study of sport coaching has been to establish a consensual language and set of ideas that would fill the vacuum in coaching studies, address perceived shortcomings in the conduct and scope of research and dissemination of these ideas. There was also confusion in policymaking and an absence of a well-argued conceptual basis for coaching education and development. The origins of this work were also influenced by a desire to raise the esteem of practice and research in sport coaching. I believe that the conceptual ideas have helped to direct and guide what I would now consider to be a maturing academic field of study and more soundly-based education and development.

The period from 2002-2016 has been marked in the coaching science field by the emergence of a number of influential academics and several distinctive approaches to the study of sport coaching. The work of Robyn Jones and other 'social' writers (both in presenting coaching as a social and interpersonal phenomenon, but also a recognition of its dynamic complexity) influenced me to the extent that I felt the need to articulate my position more clearly (in definitions, for example), since I felt that the positions were not inimical. I have also been aware of work on orchestration, complexity and modelling but they have impacted my work on decision making rather than the conceptual framework. Professor Chris Cushion and I have collaborated on a number of occasions and share similar but distinctive perspectives on coaching. The impact here, along with a number of colleagues at Leeds Beckett University, has been a 'sharpening' of conceptual clarity as a result of debating various constructs. There have been two very specific sources that have recently been incorporated into my work. The first is an analysis of teacher education by Hagger and McIntyre (2006). This has provided some clarity on the question of the contextual nature of practice and the consequences of this 'particularity' for research.

The need to identify an epistemological position for conceptual development has led me very recently to consider a second source - pragmatics as a means of substantiating the need for a conceptual framework. Pragmatics emphasises constructive knowledge; that is, the practical consequences of a concept and the interplay between knowledge and action (Bacon, 2012; Morgan, 2014). This link between ideas and intentions and implications seems to provide an appropriate foundation for conceptual analysis. As an example, the question of coaching domains can be interpreted not as one of concept and ideology but of practice and intentions.

The further development of the concepts has inevitably been selective. This is partly to address those proposals that are considered contentious, those that have been highlighted

by others, and those that impact on policy matters. For example, the process nature of sport coaching has been reinforced by the assumptions inherent in performance sport practice and pedagogical practice and justifies less attention. Domain specificity has become recognised – again, by a 'quiet' recognition of generalisations about participation/community sport, talent development/academies, and high-performance sport communities. I have continued to write about the compass of sport coaching because the implications of broad and narrow definitions are very evident in contemporary coaching education structures and in the on-going professionalisation debate. A recent publication (Lyle & Cushion, 2017) has incorporated the arguments developed above and portrays them in a more detailed and comprehensive fashion than this summary permits.

Adoption of ideas in influential policy documents is a mark of their contribution. However, the original purpose was the creation of a conceptual framework and, therefore, the value of the contribution is perhaps best indicated by the pervasiveness of the language of that framework throughout academic discourse. As the field has grown, competing ontologies and epistemologies have emerged, and these have imposed differing interpretations on the 'message'. Insofar as the framework has been used as a reference point from which to highlight contentious issues (about linearity, narrowness of definition, centrality of innovation versus planning, and so on), it has acted as a catalyst for expressing doubts about existing 'wisdom' and identifying preferred courses of action.

I began this paper by stating that the purpose of my academic endeavour was to 'create the basis for a consensual language and set of ideas that would fill a vacuum in coaching studies'. While it would be impertinent to suggest that these publications alone, and their associated dissemination avenues, have filled this vacuum, the contribution is widespread (book sales, prominence in UG curricula, and insinuation into the academic discourse). Ideas about definitions, process, domains, modelling, and expertise have evolved,

been further developed and presented in a cohesive and coherent fashion, and have become

mainstays within academic, and to some extent, policy networks.

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