

Coaching: It's Not All About the Game

Williams and Hodges (2005) outlined and challenged three "traditions" or misconceptions regarding coaching practices and the role of the coach in sports. The first "tradition" or misconception is that didactic demonstrations are the most efficient and effective way to convey how to attain a skill (Williams & Hodges, 2005). The second misconception is that good coaching is equated with incessant extrinsic/augmented feedback (Williams & Hodges, 2005). The "traditional" or mythical role of the coach is to provide feedback and the "traditional" role of the athlete is one that is always seeking external validation. The third misconception or "myth" is that coaching is "prescriptive" (Williams & Hodges, 2005) and that the right answers or correct information is "told to" the athlete in an unidirectional flow of knowledge--master to learner.

Williams and Hodges (2005) noted that it may be justified to seek a more balanced approach to coaching and the "flow" of information. Instead of viewing the coach as the source of knowledge, and learning emanating from the coach to the athlete (master to learner), Williams and Hodges (2005) noted that the athlete should become an active (as opposed to the traditional "passive") and engaged learner through a more guided approach in coaching that not only fosters self-exploration and development, but also problem-solving, decision-making, and putting back some of the responsibility of learning onto the athlete so that the dynamic between coach and athlete is more bidirectional instead of unidirectional.

However, coaching extends far beyond teaching skills and winning games. Chan and Mallett (2011) noted that "high-performance coaches lead and manage multiple human elements associated with enabling high-performance" (p. 315). Chan and Mallett (2011) noted that emotional intelligence and skills such as managing personalities, being able to motivate/inspire, conflict-management, and leadership skills not only to lead but bring the team together are equally important skills to possess in highly effective coaches. Emotional intelligence as defined by Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000) is the "ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them" (as cited by Chan & Mallett, 2011, p. 316). Chan and Mallett (2011) noted that emotional intelligence and being able to navigate and harness that "sense" is a valuable quality in leadership and that the "fundamental purpose of a high-performance coach is to lead and manage the production of high-performance" (p. 318).

References

Chan, J. T., & Mallett, C. J. (2011). The value of emotional intelligence for high performance coaching. *International Journal Of Sports Science & Coaching*, 6(3), 315-328.

Williams, A. M., & Hodges, N. J. (2005). Practice, instruction and skill acquisition in soccer: Challenging tradition. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 23(6), 637-650.