

APPLICATION OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN SPORT

ROBIN D. CHISHOLM

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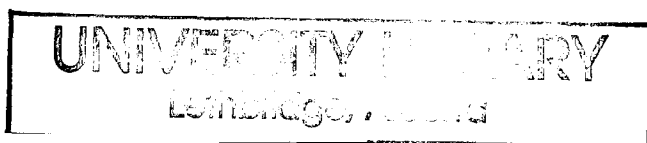
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Dedication

To my family, Shannon, Gavin, Alec, Leigh and Rob

To the F.P. Walshe Flyers Rugby Teams,

WCCHS Cobras Boys Volleyball Team,

Claresholm Troopers Soccer Team

Abstract

This study examines the possibility of uniting a teaching and coaching perspective of child-centered education through youth sports. The practical nature of sports enables the athlete to gain knowledge through experience. The pragmatism of learning through discovery, with practical results, reflects a progressive education philosophy. The literature supports the notion that effectual sports education is facilitated by coaches through flexibility, fairness, positive thinking, caring, and fun. Coaching philosophy was examined using a survey that was distributed to youth coaches in southern Alberta. Coaches' consideration of the future of the athlete, in terms of health and well being, skill acquisition, and development of life-long attributes, develops people who may become moral and accomplished citizens.

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Chapter One. Introduction

Premise

My experiences and observations as a participant, a coach and a teacher have led me to believe that sports are an area where students can develop their individual identities and confidence in their abilities and limitations. They can learn to care about others and realize the equal importance of their needs and aspirations. Involvement in sports can be an effective and rewarding process, making people better able to realize their potential and take an active role in their lives and therefore society. All people are potential athletes at some level and have the right to be involved in sport as much as they are able.

Introduction

It would be incongruous to develop child-centered methodology for the classroom and then to abandon that philosophy after school, by shifting the primary focus from the child to the sport and its perceived goals. A sport-only philosophy denies the disparity and importance of the children involved. They may have differences in confidence, motivation, social circumstances, or abilities. These differences need to be identified so that the program can become more individualized, resulting in all of the children reaching a common goal. Coaching is complex because it requires the melding of individual goals with group goals. Each child and each team develops its own personality and therefore its own unique set of challenges and rewards.

The principles of progressive education as a pragmatic process are based on a child-centered philosophy. Sports activities provide an arena for growth and development that has life-long application. Can a “successful” sports program be based upon a child-centered philosophy?

There are three main sections to this paper: theory, research and discussion. The theory section is based on a literature review of progressive education, the importance of athletics, and the application of progressive education ideals through coaching. The research section focuses on a survey of coaches, designed to ascertain whether they believe it is important and possible to treat the student as an individual as well as an athlete. The discussion section examines the realities of applying progressive education theory through coaching.

Background

The key aim of this paper is to unite a teaching and a coaching perspective of child-centered education through the medium of youth sports. I have enjoyed teaching junior and senior high students Art, Biology, Chemistry and English. I have coached volleyball, basketball, badminton, track and field and soccer. I have had the good fortune to shadow two consummate coaches in volleyball and rugby. School sports, fastball at a provincial level, long distance running, including a marathon, and varsity and international level hockey have provided me, as an athlete, with a variety of challenges and experiences.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

Relevance of Progressive Education Philosophy

At the turn of the 21st century the pragmatic philosophy of North American Progressive Education, developed at the turn of the 20th century, is still relevant. There are interesting parallels. The world still seems to be more a place of turmoil and unrest than a place of peaceful cooperation. The foundation of North American society has been and continues to be questioned through a re-examination of values and beliefs. Education is still struggling to find its focus while under attack from a range of interest groups. Today's child also needs to be prepared for the future, but that future, as it always has been, is uncertain.

The quest of educators is essentially unchanged. We aim to fulfill Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in order to realize our students' and society's definition of happiness. The scheme for ensuring human survival is education, which has become a formal and aggressive tool of preparation for the next generation. "Pragmatism, with origins in the work of Peirce (1984) and James (1907), is a philosophy of knowledge construction that emphasizes practical solutions..." (Giacobbi, Poczwardowski, & Hagar, 2005, p. 19). A pragmatic approach, such as that utilized by philosophers and educators John Dewey and William Kilpatrick during the late 1800s to the early 1900s, utilizes a methodology that results in the desired outcome. In a progressive education system, the process is as important as the result, because "Pragmatists deny there is a single reality... pragmatists opt for methods and theories that are more useful to us within specific contexts" (Giacobbi et al., p. 20).

Dewey and Kilpatrick's work was, as they both insisted it must be, in a constant state of growth and renewal, since knowledge, experience and interaction contribute to the purpose and needs of education. Their proposals are still applicable to generating our educational methods. According to Giacobbi et al. (2005), "pragmatism was an attempt to provide practical solutions to contemporary problems experienced by people and society" (p. 20). The importance of the individual and his needs cannot be denied. Survival of a society and its culture is ensured by the strength and flexibility of the individual, since the world is in a constant state of change. Knowledge through experience is developed through the interests of the student and the practicality of societal demands.

The 21st century, like the 20th century, has brought similar yet unique challenges for the educator and the student. Movement of people from rural to urban centers is still occurring, and more diverse groups are immigrating. Technological change continues to occur rapidly, but more in terms of information and speed than in mechanical terms. The world is both bigger and smaller as it becomes a more global civilization. Society, in the form of parents and governments, is questioning priorities and values, while trying to maintain democracy. The eternal search for happiness and the meaning of life continues. Meaning, in progressive educational terms, denotes understanding, which only occurs when a student is interested enough to become involved in an identification process of a concept or an event. Dewey (1938) pointed out, "The problem for progressive education is: What is the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization *within* experience?" (p. 20). As pragmatic educators, we can work towards solving this problem by coming to terms with both our own and our students' beliefs and interests as we work

together in the learning process. Butler (2006) describes five value orientations, defined by Jewett, Bain and Ennis (1995):

Disciplinary Mastery. Value is placed upon mastery of subject matter.

Self-actualization. Values perceiving, behaving and becoming...emphasis on thinking, reflecting on performance, setting goals and making personal decisions...major importance placed upon the development of process skills that will nurture individual development such as thinking, reflection, self-evaluation and goal setting... Evaluation is based upon self-understanding and individual growth, rather than comparison to others.

Social reconstruction. Values efforts to build bridges between what is and what might be. Inequities are made clear, and strategies are offered to deal with them. The ideal learner considers him or herself to be less important than the larger society to which s/he belongs. Learners are encouraged to think of themselves as agents of change.

Learning process. Values how learners learn as much as it values that they learn... important that learners learn the process and problem-solving skills they will need to cope.

Ecological integration. Encourages learners to ask and examine critical questions... sees the self as an integral component of an ecosphere, who responds to her/his environment and thus determines the nature of his/her universe.... learners develop a holistic perspective. (p. 247)

Philosophy of Progressive Education

Progressive education does not provide a prescribed template for a teaching model. As Dewey (1938) cautioned, “Mankind likes to think in terms of extreme opposites” (p. 17). If it is true that “there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experiences and education” (Dewey, p. 20), then it may also be true that a progressive educational philosophy should not become static and traditional, as the experiences of the individual and society change. Creswell (2003, p. 12, cited in Giacobbi et al., 2005) describes how pragmatism stays current if it will “use pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem” (p. 23). Dewey provided a working criterion: “The problem for progressive education is: What is the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization within experience?” (p. 20). Kantor (1978) explains the focus: “No idea was more central to progressive thought than the concept that education should meet the individual needs of the child” (p. 178).

Consideration of the whole child comprises all facets of development: moral, rational, emotional and physical. Moral education implies a set of ethics that is agreed upon as a way of conducting oneself in relation to others and therefore to society. The world of sports is both segregated with its own set of rules and integrated in the greater context of society with rules that indicate how life should be lived. Both point toward a sense of a right way and a wrong way to conduct oneself and to treat others. Child-centered education does not mean that the individual learns in isolation: “Learning involves not only conscious but also non-conscious perception and understandings that are embodied through taking part in social life” (Bourdieu, 1977, quoted in Light, 2006, p. 157).

Child-centered education includes caring about the student beyond the subject matter and the classroom. Caring provides education with some expediency. “Students who perceive their teachers as caring report enjoying school and being motivated to learn” (Larson, 2006, p. 338). Caring in the school provides students an opportunity to learn how to develop relationships. As Larson notes, “Noddings (1984) suggests that caring is an interactive, relational process between teachers and students that involves the components of engrossment, action and reciprocity” (p. 338). It is a methodology that suggests life skills. Larson describes caring behavior in detail:

More specific behaviors include helping with academic work, encouraging success and positive feelings, providing good subject content, providing fun and humor, counseling, being interested in all students/fair, avoiding harshness, listening, managing the class well; showing respect, encouraging improvement, planning a fun activity, valuing individuality; and praising, providing a safe environment. (p. 338)

Larson cautions that “An abuse of power is not caring teaching” (p. 339).

The Student as an Individual

Progressive education is equated with child-centered education, so “It is reasonable to expect the school to encourage the development of independent interests, intellectual, esthetic, or practical, on the part of its students” (Kilpatrick, 1933, p. 163). It makes good sense to assume that a student who is interested and involved in the education process will be more apt to learn the concepts and processes being studied. “Effective and meaningful learning involves learning ‘how to do’ practices through participating in them” (Light, 2006, p. 158). People are especially interested in those

things that apply to them. Why should students be any different? It becomes the complex task of the teacher to assess what the students are interested in. What are their past experiences, and what experiences will help them to understand the world so that they can more fully develop their personalities and talents?

The classroom is representative of the changes in the fabric of the community. Movement, begun 100 years ago during the industrial revolution, from the rural to urban centers continues, while a variation of urban to rural movement exists in terms of acreages and satellite communities. Immigration provides an even wider variety of cultures than in the past. Kilpatrick (1933) wrote that, "Every teacher of children will want to get an accurate understanding of the particular influences at work in his community as well as understanding of the whole civilization and culture of which he is a part" (p. 114). Butler (2006) noted, "It is especially important to pay close attention to the culture in which learning takes place, since, by definition, the notion of democracy applies to individuals as they operate within community" (p. 255). Teachers become learners with their pupils as they work together to understand each other's needs and worldviews. Together, they can build a foundation of attitude, ideas and knowledge.

Stressing the social nature of learning also implies far more than saying that other people are involved. The concept of situated learning implies comprehensive understandings involving the whole person and the world within which they live as they engage in 'activity with and in the world.' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, quoted in Light, 2006, p. 157)

The Student and Society

Dewey and Kilpatrick had to make sense out of the changes wrought by the industrial revolution. “The factory culture” that resulted from industrialization required “fit populations, which could compete with other nations not only on the battlefield, but also on the production line” so that “gymnastics systems” were developed that provided “physical education for the masses” with “effective drills and fitness regimens” that separated education of the mind and the body (Butler, 2006, p. 249). Physical education mirrored the classroom in that it was regimented, static and ignored the needs and wishes of the individual student. Progressive education created “a shift towards individual development...learning ...in natural play, as discussed and supported by Dewey, Laban, Bunner, Margaret Ellis, Rousseau and Gutek” (Butler, p. 250).

Culture provides us with a way of making sense and adapting the world (Pai & Adler, 2001). Culture is not static, and tradition is important to a student’s identity, so it becomes necessary to teach students to maintain their individual identity, their cultural identity and their global identity. As Kilpatrick (1933) noted, “The school to-day faces a new task. It must find its place in the scheme for social reconstruction which is needed to lift society from its present chaotic state” (p. 160). Our society could still be described as a “chaotic state.”

Movement of people may provide some of the chaos, but perhaps this is balanced by communication technologies. Wireless devices enable us to maintain a form of closeness with people, but they also result in a faster-paced lifestyle by enabling us to multi-task our careers, interests and families. Immediate communication adds a dimension that requires immediate involvement and response. The epitome of

instantaneous and specific communication is the World Wide Web. The concept of a global world has become more valid. News is more widely distributed and demands an immediacy of action that defies traditional diplomacy. The basis of our western society, democracy, is challenged in new ways as we struggle to provide our students with a definition that they can assimilate. It is interesting to consider, in a society that relies on immediate gratification, that Dewey believed that “democracy requires that we often postpone immediate and personal pleasure in pursuit of long-term and common goals” (Covaleskie, 1994, p. 181). We could exemplify patience by allowing our students opportunities to reflect and consider, in our pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Group work and projects that provide discussion, experience and awareness may lead to skills and knowledge that make it easier for students make sense of their immediate world, and to apply those abilities and thoughts to the greater global world. As Dewey (1919) pointed out, “A possibility of continuing progress is opened by the fact that in learning one act, methods are developed good for use in other situations” (p. 95).

The Student Learns Through Experience

In our drive to understand the world, we have let ourselves become immersed in a plethora of facts, because knowledge can be justified and measured through the substantiation of empirical science. Inductive reasoning can be appealing in that we seem to have attained knowledge that we are reasonably confident is true. Standardized exams, while negating the importance of a child-centered education in the quest for equivalence (which is not within the scope of this paper), seem to embody a fact-based traditional education system. Students who are regurgitating facts and displaying limited

competency in problem solving are unlikely, according to progressive education thought, to be truly knowledgeable.

Dewey (1919) described knowledge in these terms: “It is essentially the ability to learn from experience; the power to retain from one experience something which is of avail in coping with the difficulties of a later situation” (p. 95). Perhaps some of the importance accorded to more traditional subjects such as science and math could be applied to extra-curricular activities such as sport. Butler (2006) points out that “Pre-service physical educators scored higher on the ‘nurturing’ perspective than those preparing to teach in sciences, mathematics or the life sciences, emphasizing a concern for individual growth” (p. 249). Sports venues provide an ideal laboratory for an assimilation of human interaction and condition, with its attendant successes and failures. The democratic basis of a progressive education philosophy is provided in athletics, according to Lawson, who asks, “For what are sport, exercise, play, and physical education about, and for, if not human freedom?” (p. 158).

Progressive Education and Youth Sports

A progressive educational philosophy focuses on the whole child and his/her whole world. As Light (2006) notes, “This involves more than knowing about the world; it involves being in the world” (p. 170). It combines an individualistic philosophy by considering the requirements for the development of a happy individual and a market-driven reality of the necessity of a productive individual. Tyler (1949, quoted in Butler, 2006) makes this point:

The subjective values that teachers bring to the experience of games education and the way in which these help define the ability of learners, are shaped by the

understanding of the teacher with regard to what is the nature of a good life and a good society. (p. 246)

Sports address the societal aspect of education, as Light (2006) describes: “The learner engages in performance through co-participation with others and meaningful learning is dependent upon the ability to perform tasks rather than learning in instructional settings that are removed from actual practice and performance” (p. 158).

Progressive education philosophy affords a continuous process from classroom to gymnasium, with sports providing a perfect opportunity to focus on the individual student. Larson (2006) argues:

No discipline other than physical education specifically addresses physical goals. The pursuit of these goals creates an environment unlike any other in the school since the content of physical education (motor skills, sports and games) requires students to elicit overt, public behavior, which can provide inherent opportunities for teacher-student interaction. (p. 348)

Sports Education is Unique

Sports education encompasses the whole child in a very special way: “It involves not just the mind but also the whole person. It involves bodies, senses, emotions and thoughts” (Light, 2006, p. 170). The sports environment is one in which individuals learn to work together and learn to recognize that other people may have similar problems and feelings. Larson and Silverman (2005) note the importance of interaction in sports education:

Given the high degree of interaction that can occur between physical education teachers and students, the contention that caring occurs during interpersonal

interactions and interpersonal interaction between teachers and students is at the core of the teaching/learning enterprise. (p. 177)

It is difficult to employ a teacher-directed methodology in physical education. There is always some level of interaction with teachers and students that produces learning experiences about self and others. “Grounded in the content of human movement, sports and games that require the execution of overt behavior, interactive instances with students can be innumerable” (Larson & Silverman, 2005, p. 189). Although it is more difficult for students to avoid interaction in such a setting, the degree of involvement and execution of skills does depend to a great degree on the teacher. Furthermore, Larson and Silverman point out that “Physical education is featured by the potential for a high degree of interaction between teachers and students..., and the nature of interaction from teachers is a powerful influence on students’ positive and negative feelings toward participation” (p. 177). These researchers interviewed physical education teachers who were widely considered to be caring and successful in their classes and in curricular coaching. They found that “the teachers similarly believe that physical activity/physical education makes a difference in the lives of youth” (p. 183).

Sports Education is Pragmatic

“We understand the inherent value of games intuitively,” according to Butler (2006, p. 246). Since children naturally play, play is assumed to be a part of the developmental process. Lawson’s (1998) description of the importance of play, as quoted by Butler (2006), reveals a progressive environment:

Play forms and play communities are both democratic and educative. The play and related associations of people become educative communities, i.e., planned

and unplanned, formal and informal networks that facilitate the learning, healthy development and well-being of individuals and families. Play and play communities are sites for the co-production of social cultural capital. They are centerpieces of civil society. (p. 252)

Knowledge about how society functions is gained through sports education:

“Situated learning involves comprehensive understandings of the world in which the learner lives,” according to Light (2006, p. 170). Light emphasizes the transition to the real world: “They see learning as a way of being in the social world and not just knowing about it” (p. 157). Desired behaviors become a part of who the student is. For Conroy and Coatsworth (2006), “Internalization is widely viewed as a developmental process by which an individual accepts, transforms, and integrates values and behaviors of others into their own behavioral repertoire and sense of self – essentially substituting external regulation with internal regulation” (p. 134).

Sports Education is Inclusive

Children are searching for their own identity – a sense of how they perceive themselves, and how others perceive them -- which will determine how they are able to interact with society. For Light (2006), “Accepting that learning is a complex, multi-faceted and ongoing lifelong process allows us to see how learning and the formation of person identity are tightly interrelated” (p. 159). The intrinsic and extrinsic customs of culture have begun their effect, as have the open and hidden aspects of curriculum. Children are in the peculiar position of trying to fit in with the norm, while also standing out as individuals who are different and special. Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, and Jones (2005) explain:

Adolescents have a clear need to belong and many of them join organized groups in order to gain peer acceptance and a sense of identity.... Sports may provide individuals with a place where they can develop their skills and a sense of initiative, but may also provide them a status that satisfies their need to have a defined place within a group that is highly valued by their peers. (p. 68)

The Importance of Youth Sports

The Right to Play

All children have the right to play. Formal schooling often takes up much a child's day, so it is important for physical education and extra-curricular sports to provide time for play. Excerpts from the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 1386 (XIV) of 20 November, 1959) make it clear that play and recreation are a necessary facet of a child's life. The document also discusses the rights of the child to education of the whole self. Principle 1 does not discuss whether one child is more able than another, or more deserving than another; instead it explains that all children are equally deserving:

The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family. (p. 195)

Principle 2 describes the development of the whole child:

The child should enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally,

morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration. (p. 196)

Principle 4 supports the role of play in the child's development. Sports activities may help to fulfill that function: "The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services" (p. 196). Principle 6 does not support a negative and therefore demeaning coaching philosophy; on the contrary, "The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding" (p. 196). Principle 7 also emphasizes the importance of play and recreation:

He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility and to become a useful member of society.... The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right. (p. 196)

I believe that sports can fulfill this mandate by helping to develop children's individuality and sense of teamwork.

The principles discussed above speak to the rights of each individual child, not just those who have more perceived talent or ability. All aspects of the child's education are given equal weight. Lawson (2005), in a discussion of sport, exercise and physical education, notes that "Although conventional sport contributes to well-being, mass exercise and forms of play make the biggest contribution" (p. 141).

The Question of Ability

The focus of school sports should not be exclusively on those children who are considered to be talented. Whisenant (2005) makes this argument:

Lessons learned regarding teamwork, self-discipline and self-efficacy provide the justification for the investment made by communities in school-sponsored athletics. However, those lessons should not be an entitlement granted only to the most skilled athletes, who tend to get the most playing time and may be less likely to drop out of sports. All students participating in interscholastic athletics should be provided with an environment that fosters fairness, and makes playing sports an enjoyable activity. (p. 354)

The concept of ability, or talent, does not lend itself to easy definition, as Wright and Burrows (2006) discuss: “‘Ability’ is clearly not a neutral term; how it is understood, however, has important consequences for what happens in physical education and contributes to differentiating effects for young people in relation to gender, race and social class” (p. 202). Ability has been considered to be an inborn quality. However, as Bailey and Morley (2006) note, “New models recognize that ability takes many forms” (p. 213). “Performance in most sporting activities seems far less genetically constrained. So, whilst descriptions of the ‘natural footballer’ or ‘born dancer’ are probably convenient phrases for sports commentators, they are less useful as a basis for talent development” (p. 219).

Li (2006) discusses various definitions of ability: “An entity ability conception reflects a view that ability is fixed and cannot be changed through effort, and an incremental ability conception reflects a view that ability is a malleable attribute and can

be changed through effort” (p. 299). Li further discusses the factors that determine how ability is affected: “An incremental conception of ability is positively related to many adaptive motivational responses such as higher levels of self-efficacy and greater effort and persistence in the face of difficulty or challenge” (p. 299). Bailey and Morley (2006) explain the interface of perceived performance on ability: “Individual development is the result of an interaction between inherited abilities, social and cultural learning... and it is this interaction of process that undermines simplistic correlations of ability and performance” (p. 213).

Performance and ability are affected by factors outside the athlete’s control: “Current performance can be a poor indicator of ability, since it is mediated through a host of other influences, such as training, support, parental investment and societal values (Bailey & Morley, 2006, p. 213). The term ‘ability’ does not denote inborn talent, and it does not lend itself to a single comprehensive definition. Bailey and Morley formed a provisional list that summarizes the abilities to be developed in physical education:

- Psychomotor ability (which is revealed through movement and the physical performance of skills)
- Interpersonal ability (which is exhibited in social contexts, and is the basis of leadership, teamwork and similar concepts)
- Intrapersonal ability (which underpins an individual’s capacity for self-control, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence)
- Cognitive ability (which is shown in tactical settings, as well as knowledge and understanding of central physical educational concepts)

- Creative ability (which is evidenced when learners respond to challenges and tasks with fluency, originality and sensitivity to problems). (p. 215)

This list, which breaks down the types of abilities exhibited in sports, provides a more workable definition of what ability means in terms of athletic assessment. Wright and Burrows (2006) acknowledge our multicultural education system with a caution: “The danger is always that the attributes associated with physical ability will be those most often associated with hegemonic forms of white masculinity” (p. 202).

Coaches, parents and potential athletes should be aware that sports are not just for a talented few. “Many people seem to hold an implicit theory that talented individuals are qualitatively different than the rest of the population appearing to make extraordinary achievement without the hard work and effort required by others” (Howe, 2001). Shermer (2001) calls this the ‘Amadeus Myth,’ which he defines as “the belief that genius and original creations are produced by mysterious mental miracles limited to a special few” (p. 263) (Bailey & Morley, 2006, p. 219). Children who are considered to be less talented should be made aware of the hard work it takes to become a successful athlete.

Understanding the need for hard work to achieve success means understanding that it is not possible for them to succeed. As Perkins (1981, cited in Bailey & Morley, 2006) claimed, the fact that certain individuals seem to acquire skills at a faster rate than others is often explained by their sustained but unobserved practice (p. 219). The focus in sports education, as in all education, should be on the inclusion of as many children as possible. As Lawson (2005) maintains, “The current system of sport and physical education is too selective and limited” (p. 142).

The Individual and Society

The right to play, cited in UN Principles 4 and 7, applies to all children. Therefore racial ideology should not determine who is included in sporting activities. Race Logic is a form of classification that is based on a system of purportedly inferior and superior characteristics that determine who will do well in certain sports (Coakley & Donnelly, 2004). It is essentially a convenient method of exclusion or of ignorance that can be overcome through inclusion in sports, as Coakley and Donnelly express:

Cultural beliefs about race and ethnicity influence social relationships and the organization of social life. Sports not only reflect this influence, but also are sites, and may even be tools, whereby people challenge or reproduce dominant beliefs and forms of racial and ethnic relations in a society. (p. 256)

The Sports arena/field can be a safe place in which people can learn to understand and accept cultures different from their own. Lawson (2005) notes that, “When diverse people are connected through play, they produce strong, social networks” (p. 141). One of the athletes in the study by Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) described his experience of working with other people who had, in some cases, only the sport in common: “A lot of us [teammates] are from different backgrounds and then we come together and we all became friends and family for this one common goal, and we could kind of accept the differences amongst the 25 of us” (p. 307).

Taylor and Doherty (2005) describe additional benefits: “Inclusive leisure and recreation participation can be a positive experience and assist with identity formation and social inclusion” (p. 212). They surveyed ESL (English as a Second Language) high school students in three schools in Ontario to determine their participation in sports.

These were students who were working to fit into a new and different culture, while trying to maintain their own culture. As Taylor and Doherty point out, “Many individuals, particularly those we characterize as visible and/or ethnic minorities, often have to contend with multiple barriers that act together to restrict access to education, social, cultural and economic opportunities” (p. 211). Understanding people with different backgrounds and cultures is easier if commonality and understanding can be established. These students described five distinctive benefits of participating: (1) affective/emotional benefits, (2) social/friends, (3) physical/health, (4) learning English, and (5) learning Canadian culture. Sports can provide people with a more equal playing field, since shared effort leads to a unique form of companionship. As Taylor and Doherty note, “In the interviews, fun and other affective responses (e.g. feel good, feel happy) and being physical and healthy were reiterated as the top reasons for getting involved, along with playing with friends and socializing” (p. 222). The overall response from the students was positive, as evidenced by this student’s comment: “I like soccer, ...I play basketball too...we play there with other kids, immigrants, Canadian kids, any kinds of kids. I have fun, lots of fun” (p. 223). The students’ transition to a comfort level was largely attributed to the teachers and coaches, who were often mentioned in a positive way. Through their support and assistance, they encouraged student participation.

Multiculturalism and Globalism

Lawson (2005) relates the concept of individual capability to a larger world-view: “In short, if you are worried about globalization, then empowerment-orientated, community development via the social work of SEPE (sport, exercise and physical

education) programs is a viable, important alternative” (p. 157). Lawson believes that physical education, if well delivered, can make a difference in the individual, in the community, and in a global society. According to Lawson, SEPE professionals design and deliver practices, programs, and policies that make five main contributions to sustainable and integrated social and economic development:

- They may produce and reinforce *social networks*.
- They may contribute to the development of *collective identities*.
- They may improve *human health*, and at the same time they may create *health-enhancing environments*.
- They may improve *well-being*.
- They may contribute to *human capital development*. (p. 138)

A positive experience with the opportunity for growth and success creates a happier and healthier individual who is more able to adapt and survive and contribute to society.

Health and Well-Being

The contribution of physical exercise to good health and well-being is unequivocal, according to Conroy and Coatsworth (2006):

The United States Surgeon General (USDHHS, 1996) and the American College of Sports Medicine (2000) advocate regular physical activity to stimulate physiological adaptation and reduce or prevent health problems (e.g., obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other chronic diseases). Physical activity also has been associated with antidepressant and anxiolytic effects. (p. 129).

The benefits are not only physical: “While involved in sports, youth report considerably higher levels of concentration and enjoyment than they do in other common daily

activities such as school, watching television, or spending time with friends (p. 129).

Conroy and Coatsworth also discuss long-term effects in terms of the individual and society: “Organized sport participation in adolescence is also associated with enhanced future occupational outcomes and reduced social isolation” (p. 129).

It seems that the importance of physical education should require that all youth take part at some level, but Rikard and Banville (2006) found that is not the case: “More than a third of young people in grades 9-12 do not regularly engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity” (p. 387).

McHale, Vinden, Bush, Richer, Shaw, and Smith (2005) performed a study of middle school children to determine if extra-curricular sports make a difference in self-esteem, delinquent activity and drug use. They explain that, “Concerned communities throughout the United States have been searching for effective strategies to keep young adolescents meaningfully occupied during times when they would otherwise not be monitored” (p.119). Sports allow children to be involved in activities with some risk, while also affording some protection: “The right kind of sport experience can provide a psychologically safe environment where people are willing to take risks and to learn from their mistakes” (Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 68). The confidence that results from these small accomplishments enables the student to approach other problems with more self-assurance. According to McHale et al., “Overall, children involved with organized team sports during the previous year reported higher levels of self-esteem than did children who had not been involved in sports” (p. 126). Children who are active in a positive and constructive way, rather than being a burden to society, are being educated to contribute to society by being a part of it: “Overall, children who had taken part in team sports

during the previous year were judged by PE teachers to be more socially competent” (p. 128). McHale et al. considered the notion that athletes can be overconfident and in fact let the aggressiveness they need within their sport spill over into everyday behaviors. However, they found that “sport-involved children as a group were no more likely to be rated as aggressive than were their nonsporting counterparts” (p. 128).

Lawson (2005) discusses the long-term benefits of sport education:

Educational sport merits special emphasis because it serves adults and elders who may ‘take up’ competitive sport later in their lives. Competitive races that attract millions of participants around the world, many of whom did not become committed to running races until later in their lives, comprise an obvious example. (p. 153)

Lawson also cautions against placing an inordinate amount of emphasis on ‘elite’ sports: “Pro-olympic sport poses a major problem when it is the only alternative; and when other alternatives that encourage health and well-being across the lifespan are dwarfed and thwarted by it” (p. 152). Instead, the focus ought to be on helping as many people as possible to engage in activity, according to Lawson: “Although conventional sport contributes to well-being, mass exercise and forms of play make the biggest contribution” (p. 141). It is wrong try to convince all students that only elite-level objectives are worthwhile, if the goal is to create healthy, confident people. Lawson explains:

SEPE professionals often superimpose elite values and goals. For example, “Whatever your performance standard is today, it’s not good enough: you must do more tomorrow.” No wonder elite sport and its operations often fail with everyday people. (p. 143)

People respond to success. If an event is beneficial, they are more likely to engage in it. Small children delight in what they are able to do with their bodies; they enjoy exercise and pushing themselves to new limits, but that does not mean that they all need to reach for the same goals and limit. As Lawson (2005) argues, “Countless students don’t want to become athletes. All have bodies. All need to be healthy and to enjoy well-being” (p. 153). Sports educators need to recognize the differences and adjust their programs and objectives: “Many fail to understand that, for many people, the goal is to exercise as little as possible, i.e., just enough to achieve health and wellbeing benefits” (p. 143). Lawson adds, “Here is the crux of the matter. Everyone wants to be healthy and enjoy well-being, but not everyone wants to compete, struggle, sacrifice, enjoy the sweet tastes of victory, and endure the agony of defeat” (p. 143). It is possible and necessary to teach all students to push themselves and to learn new skills without aiming for elite levels. Petitpas et al. (2005) explain:

Participation in sport provides young people with a wonderful forum in which to test and develop their skills, to learn how to overcome setbacks and roadblocks to goal attainment, and to gain immediate feedback concerning their progress toward achieving identified outcomes. (p. 68).

The benefits of sports education go beyond the skills learned in a sport or the fitness level reached by the student.

Life-Long Attributes

The skills and attitudes that children have acquired and maintain as adults are life-long attributes. Educational objectives are designed to create positive situations where

students are able to develop those attributes deemed positive by society. Petitpas et al. (2005) express this caution:

Sport can provide a wonderful forum for youth to learn about themselves and to acquire skills that can assist them throughout life, or it can create a negative environment that may have a detrimental effect on participants' self-esteem, confidence, and physical self-efficacy. (p. 76)

Progressive education philosophy promotes learning about self and the world through experience, the foundation of physical education:

There is considerable support for the notion that youth sport participants in task-orientated or mastery climates are most likely to display a strong work ethic, persist in the face of failures or disappointments, and commit the time and effort necessary to foster intrinsic motivation and the development of life skills.

(Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 65)

The lessons learned during the activities in the sports environment are those that may be applied later in life. As Petitpas et al. note, "Several program developers have argued that the best way to foster skill acquisition is to integrate sport and life skill instruction seamlessly rather than attempt to teach these topics separately" (p. 70).

It is important that teachers believe that the lessons learned in sports have a greater consequence than those learned in the context of the lesson or activity. Individual growth is evident in students both as people and as athletes. As athletes learn to relate to their teammates, they also are learning to relate to people they work with in other walks of life: "I feel comfortable a lot more than other people do working in groups just because I've worked in one a lot.... I have the ability to have a perspective in life.... I can multi-

task. I know how to budget my time” (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006, p. 308). Wright and Burrows (2006), in a survey of physical education (and coaches), found that the teachers firmly believed in the enduring benefit of sports education. Learning to work as a team is an ability that also enables the student to contribute to society:

It teaches them the benefits of relying on other people, of making that long term commitment and gives them the ability to compete in an enjoyable atmosphere where the emphasis is on being competitive but it’s not on [winning at all] costs and attitude as well. So I think they can take a little bit more values and benefits out of it once they actually leave the school environment. (p. 284)

Critical thinking and problem solving transfer to the classroom, according to Wright and Burrows (2006):

It’s an important part of learning and it just gives students another way of thinking and a new angle of thinking.... it’s about thinking on the spot. It’s about understanding patterns and predicting what’s going to happen, anticipation and all those sorts of things come into PE and I think...with their transforming learning that it’s one of the things that they’re trying to actually integrate into the academia side. (p. 284)

The authors add that, while learning to cope with new challenges is a lasting skill, “the skill development in sport is going to help them in everything. Learning to do something from scratch -- you have to do that a lot of times throughout your life” (p. 285). The lessons learned within the sport context are lasting: “Clearly what these teachers are describing as outcomes of physical education are in some way ‘embodied capacities’ to productively participate in society” (p. 286).

Confidence, which enables a child to more readily approach novel tasks, can be developed through sports education, according to Larson and Silverman (2005): “As it pertains to student learning, the teachers collectively feel strongly that physical education develops and sustains positive self-esteem and promotes important living skills (e.g. responsibility), as well as motor skills” (p. 185). Learning to excel in a sport requires a lot of effort – physical, emotional and mental. Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) undertook a study that examined 8 Division I collegiate athletes who were considered to be successful within and outside of their sport. They interviewed the athletes, coaches and parents and found that, “The athletes were affected greatly by the adverse situations they dealt with and felt that sport had taught them lessons to deal with adversity and with life” (p. 301). They also found that elite athletes have some attributes in common:

Successful Olympians were characterized by the ability to cope with and control anxiety, sport intelligence, confidence, coachability, mental toughness/resiliency, the ability to focus and block out distractions, high levels of dispositional hope, optimism, the ability to set and achieve goals, competitiveness, a hard-work ethic, and adaptive perfectionism. (p. 292)

Attributes learned in this context are behaviors that become a part of the athlete’s persona, according to Morgan and Giacobbi (2006):

The lessons learned from early sport participation and success are predicted to facilitate the development of crucial psychological skills (e.g., time management, coping skills, responsibility, working with a variety of people, leadership) and develop the athlete’s strengths as a person. (p. 304)

The situational learning that takes place in athletics provides practice for later: “The participants realized that they were able to learn many lessons from participation in sports and felt that the lessons would carry over into other aspects of their lives, including academics and their future career” (p. 304). This education, of self, did not occur after the athletes reached their elite status; as the study revealed, “Athletes experienced early athletic success while they began to develop important psychological skills and characteristics such as motivation, coping skills, competitiveness, and self-regulatory skills” (p. 304). The attributes that were the most important are those that can also apply to non-elite athletes: “The most often mentioned characteristics that allowed athletes to be successful were competitiveness, drive, determination, heart, intelligence, focus, being positive, and being easy going” (p. 311). One athlete in this study explained that he had learned more than the technique and skills required for his sport: “It [track] showed me to be responsible...it showed me a good work ethic” (p. 304). Another offered this explanation: “The best thing I’ve gained is the strength of character... It’s not just about your development as a player... It’s your development as a person” (p. 308). A positive learning environment is not necessarily a ‘soft’ environment. This study focused on elite athletes who had pushed themselves to reach a world-class criterion. “Adversity was interpreted as a positive life lesson for the participants” (p. 309). The study questioned how these young people were able to learn and develop to such a high level. The athletes felt that unconditional support from their parents, coaches, and teammates was an important factor in their development.

The Importance of Coaching

Coaching is Teaching

Application of a progressive educational philosophy in sports is accomplished through the coach, as it is accomplished in the classroom through the teacher. Coaching is a specialized form of teaching that takes place in a setting that provides immediate experience through action and response on a physical, mental and emotional level for the coach and the athlete. The classroom and the sports arena both provide action and reaction, with the student dependent upon the coach or teacher for evidence of a positive completion of a task. Teachers and coaches both work to enable students to develop their confidence and skills so they are able to act on their own. As Jones and Wallace (2005) note, “Expert coaches...do indeed act as orchestrators by coaching unobtrusively and flexibly, whilst paying attention to detailed tasks” (p. 131).

The requirements for a teacher and a coach are comparable: “If dynamic, imaginative, and thoughtful coaches are to be developed, those responsible must give careful consideration to content, structure, delivery, and desirable outcomes” (Nelson & Cushion, 2006, p. 175). Students spend an inordinate amount of their day at school; consequently, as noted in Petitpas et al. (2005), “It is not surprising that teachers and coaches are the two groups of people who are most frequently identified by youth as having the strongest nonparental influence on their actions and beliefs” (p. 69). Sports provide coaches and athletes a special and reciprocal opportunity to understand the attitude, strengths and weaknesses of each other. The relationship developed between coach and athlete continues into the classroom, where the fact that students know them as coaches as well as teachers creates “avenues for interaction” (Larson & Silverman, 2005,

p. 188). Discipline is largely a result of rapport with the students. A more caring and tolerant classroom can result from learning to know each other as individuals. For example, Larson and Silverman (2005) commented, "Each of the teachers also spoke about the opportunity for interaction that moving from one teaching location to another provides" (p. 187).

Coaches are responsible for the actions of the athletes in their care, and for the results of their actions. "Coaching is a tough job, as everyone who has tried it can attest. Goals are inherently challenging, variables within the coaching process are many and dynamic, and intended outcomes can never be a foregone conclusion" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 119). The attitude and abilities that a student brings to a sport vary, as do the group dynamics, causing the coach to change and adapt on a continual basis. Jones and Wallace (2005) comment, "Coaching expertise requires flexible adaptation to constraints, as the actual task of a coach cannot be totally defined or specified in advance" (p. 123). The sports environment involves a number of factors, physical structures, opposing athletes, fans, school and community expectations, that are not within the control of the coach. "Research indicates the coaching context to be complex, dynamic and constantly in a state of flux" (p. 122). There are particular skills to be learned within each sport and each coach has some precise expectations, but the coach also allows for random factors. As Jones and Wallace (2005) comment, "McGeechan [elite Scottish rugby team coach] likened it to giving his players 'roots and wings': roots in the security of a set structure, and the confidence to improvise on creative wings" (p. 120).

Learning by example is effective. Teachers learn how to teach partly from their experiences as students; coaches learn how to coach from their experience as athletes.

Larson and Silverman (2005) explain:

In large part this was due to their personal biography – the positive physical activity experiences they had while growing up and the role models they encountered – and their recognition of how this contributed to their development of positive self-esteem and feeling of self-worth, and their subsequent interest in ensuring that those in their charge could garner the same benefits. (p. 188)

Coaching is more than knowing the intricacies of a sport and having a desire for the athlete to succeed. Petitpas et al. (2005) comment, “There is considerable empirical support for the type of learning environment that is most conducive to fostering self-esteem, persistence, and skill development in young athletes” (p. 65). Coaching is not an isolated behavior. A coach is as much a part of a team as an athlete is, but has the power to create an effective learning environment by using all the resources available:

The difference between whether sports build character or character disorders has less to do with the playing of the sport and more to do with the philosophy of the sport organization, quality of coaching, nature of parental involvement, and participants’ individual experiences and resources. (Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 63).

The Role of the Coach

The importance of coaching cannot be exaggerated.

First, coaches are viewed as “experts” by young athletes and this role can carry considerable influence (Bochner & Insko, 1966). Second, within the context of

sport, coaches typically have more direct interactions with kids than do other influential adults such as parents. (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006, p. 130)

Coaches, like teachers, bring their own belief system to the learning environment: “Coach behaviors are influenced by individual differences in coaches, the coaches’ perceptions of athletes’ attitudes, and situational factors” (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006, p. 131). Coaching is a personal process in which the coach has the power and ability to decide on what and who is important in any given situation. “The official goals of coaching would therefore appear to be the goals of coaches – and any of their charges who choose to align themselves with these goals” (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 125). Some behaviors have been found to be more effective in teaching through sports. “Youths’ liking for their sport was associated with (a) high levels of coaches’ instructional behaviors, (b) high levels of coaches’ supportive behaviors, and (c) low levels of coaches keeping control and offering general encouragement” (Smith et al., 1978, quoted in Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006, p. 131).

Coaches, like teachers, are leaders. They exhibit the desired performance in terms of physical skills and in behaviors. Males, Kerr, Thatcher, and Bellew (2006) explain:

It has been argued in reversal theory terms ... that a motivationally flexible or versatile leadership style, where a leader or coach moves easily between different state combinations in response to the needs of the situation and the state combinations of the people or athletes being led, is the most effective leadership style” (p. 286).

Coaches teach by working as a team with others who have an interest in the athletes. For example, Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) found that “It was suggested that the

interaction of factors (i.e., practice, psychological skills, influence of family and coaches) over a long period of time allowed these athletes to develop their talent” (p. 296). A progressive education environment is about learning through performance. “Coaches and parents who focus on effort, self-improvements, and intrinsic motivation create a task-orientated or mastery climate” (Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 65). Coaches teach by the examples they exhibit to their athletes, and youth begin to adopt as their own, the behaviors, values, and beliefs that their coaches model (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006). Child-centered education involves taking the time to understand the athlete so that learning can take place. As Rikard and Banville (2006) point out, “In physical education, gaining insight into student beliefs is a critical source for understanding their attitudes and their interests and involvement toward the curriculum (p. 386).

Coaches and teachers are important as people in the lives of their athletes, no matter what their age or level of play. “Coaches appeared to play an increasingly important role as athletes grew older...sometimes the coach resembled a parental/older sibling figure... He took me under his wing like a father figure” (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006, p. 306). One athlete describes a situation where his sports education is focused on the whole person: “He teaches you about basketball but he teaches you a lot about life too” (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006, p.307). Trust occupies an area beyond respect, between two people. The concept implies that both parties have concern for each other’s best interests, and will do their best to avoid actions that will demean the other. Listening to athletes’ ideas shows respect for them as individuals. Rikard and Banville (2006) point out that, “When student suggestions are implemented by their teachers, collaboration occurs and contributes toward improving student attitudes toward physical education and

their motivation to participate” (p. 397). Achieving goals that may seem impossible creates a unique relationship between athlete and coach. The time spent with athletes creates special bonds. For example, in Morgan and Giacobbi (2006), “Dennis [an athlete] felt that his relationship with his college coach was similar to a father/son relationship” (p. 303). Physical education is not just about short-term performance in a given sport. It is important that coaching results in athletes who will continue to be involved in life-long activity: “Teachers must battle sedentary lifestyle habits by instilling in students the value and desire to be active” (p. 398).

Athletics are a means, not an end. Successful athletes, with their coaches’ support, incorporate their sports into their lives. Coaches alone do not produce great athletes, since “Positive growth is not likely to occur unless individuals are surrounded with external supports and a caring community system” (Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 69). Although Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) found that parents were still very involved as a support system, even with older athletes, they also found that “Teammates provided a family type atmosphere for the athletes during college” (p. 303). The team approach to producing effectual athletes is emphasized again and again; for example, “Goals were achieved when the athletes strengthened their coping skills through observation of coaches, teammates, and parents” (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006, p. 308).

Effective Coaching

Coaches bring their own experiences, knowledge, attitudes and personality to the sports arena. Coaches are also individuals who have their strengths and weaknesses. Different coaches connect with different athletes and different teams. There are, however, some aspects that create a more effective coach, one who inspires his or her athletes’

enjoyment while they strive to reach for their potential. Coaching style should vary with the players who are involved, because they are individuals with different abilities, needs and personalities; hence it is important to individualize teaching, exercise, and coaching practices (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). The effective coach's athletes develop positive life-long attributes and stay involved in some aspect of sports. As Lawson (2005) explains, "Educational sport merits special emphasis for another reason, one that is directly connected to an important indicator of well-being and fosters sustainable development" (p. 153). Such coaches are positive, caring and fair. They share their sense of enjoyment, of fun, with their athletes. In Larson and Silverman's (2005) study, "Each spoke of loving to teach physical education and considering it their (professional) calling, holding physical education in high regard, having fun teaching, and seeking to create an inclusive and engaging class environment" (p. 183).

Effective coaches use the athletes' support system, such as family and community. Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) note, for example, "the importance of encouragement and support among family and extended family in the lives of world-class rugby players" (p. 297). Such coaches set an example of the attitudes and behaviors they want their athletes to exhibit. Petitpas et al. (2005) note that "It is the quality and density of the social interactions and relationships formed with caring adult mentors that is mostly likely to lead to development of positive assets and characteristics (p. 69). Such coaches are confident enough to allow their athletes room to make mistakes and to learn through a discovery process. Jones and Wallace (2005) write that, "In his study of the practice of top-level Norwegian soccer coaches, Potrac found that 'silence' was a heavily used discrete behavior. Far from being a case of passive practice, however, this was

justified as allowing players to focus on the exercise and its objectives: in essence, allowing the game to be the teacher” (p. 130). Good coaches appreciate the efforts of their athletes and are not afraid to give specific encouragements, as Jones and Wallace (2005) describe:

In addition to structuring the wider process, coaching unobtrusively involves taking players aside to offer advice, thereby consciously developing positive and ‘respectful’ working relationships at both individual and collective levels. Indeed, the creation of such relationships is considered crucial for on-field success. (p. 131).

Positive Thinking

Negative reinforcement-based coaching reduces the number of children who will aspire to be athletes in that sport by impacting their level of commitment. As Whisenant (2005) point out, “A lack of positive reinforcement or conflicts with the coaches can create an environment whereby the sport is no longer fun, leading the student athletes to drop out” (p. 351). Children who learn within a safe environment will gain in confidence. Life skills, such as intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, can to be learned in a positive coaching atmosphere. Rikard and Banville (2006) explain:

Fitness-based activities are essential to the purpose of physical education but we must abandon militaristic teaching strategies of the past and replace them with positive motivation and encouragement coupled with activities that match adolescents need for physical exertion and play. (p. 397)

A positive coach is not a weak coach. Children are involved in the sport, generally, because they want to learn. Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) note that “Youths’

evaluations of coaches were linked with high levels of instructiveness and supportiveness and a low level of punishment (p. 131). Some children are drawn to a sport because exposure, of themselves or others, has been positive – they feel good about the experience, or they have been encouraged with the potential reward of personal and public success. According to Rikard and Banville (2006), “The theory of reasoned intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) supports the belief that people tend to engage in a behavior that they evaluate as positive and when others view it similarly” (p. 397). If these requirements are not met, they simply leave. Whisenant (2005) describes such a situation:

When the perceptions of student athletes regarding the treatment they receive from their coaches, the decisions made by their coaches, and the method used by coaches to make their decisions – may create an antagonistic environment whereby the fun of participation is diminished. When their enjoyment diminishes, there is an increased likelihood that the athlete will drop out of the sport. (p. 344)

The attitude of the coach influences, by example, the attitude of the players. As Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) note, “Additionally, positive changes in attitudes (towards coaches and sport) and the self have been observed in boys who played for more reinforcing, encouraging, and autonomy supportive and less critical coaches” (p. 130). Coaches have to consider what behaviors they want their players to exhibit as athletes, as people and as adults.

The lessons learned in this case study, from this group of experienced, international level athletes, can be applied to sports at a less elite level. Males et al. (2006) investigated the psychological experiences of elite athletes in a team that failed.

They found that “unrealistic expectations, poor team motivation, a negative coaching style, and faulty team process around game performance played an important role in the failure of this team” (p. 275). Individual discouragement and failure resulted in team failure, which resulted in the development of self-centered behavior by the players. The authors explained, “Therefore, athletes’ motivational and emotional responses to success or failure need to be considered in the wider context of their team’s real and perceived ability, expectations, and functioning at competition” (p. 276). The coach laid the foundation for negative behavior by ignoring the individual needs of his players, admitting that he was more authoritarian and more “technical” than the team’s previous coaches. Collaboration and respect through interaction were not in evidence. Players are generally involved in a sport because they enjoy it and want to play. Players who do not receive ‘fair’ time need to know and understand why. Males et al. note that the coach had not communicated with players about how player substitutions would be managed. The authors observed the negative behavior of the coach and his unintended results:

It became clear that his coaching style often involved shouted critical feedback at players during training and competition, where he often appeared angry. There was little positive or descriptive feedback, and decisions or comments were rarely explained or discussed with players. This might be summed up as a coercive, authoritarian style, representative of the “autocratic style” of coaching leadership described by Chelladurai (e.g., 1993), or the “command style” of coaching described by Martens (2004). Dictatorial coaches who use the autocratic or command style make all the decisions, and players are expected to comply without any form of shared decision making. In this case, the coach had not the

time, or seemingly the willingness, to develop the closeness (liking, trust, and respect), co-orientation (shared beliefs and values), or open channels of communication and complementarity (cooperative interaction) that have been found to be important factors in effective relationships between coach and athletes (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003), and he showed little sign of trying to do so. (p. 285)

Males et al. (2006) interviewed the players to discover their point of view on why they lost games they were expected to win. The players made these comments: "I think he [the coach] plays more on the negative role than the positive and that, I think, is more discouraging for the team"; "People were just going through the motions to keep the coach quiet"; "Like sometimes on court he won't be giving positive influence...At this stage I have to try and switch it off, but if you switch off to him and ignore him he gets even more annoyed" (p. 285). The captain was discouraged by his teammates' giving up, but he was particularly upset, since he felt motivated and had the most experience, with how he seemed unable to keep himself in the game. A young person in a similar setting would have less experience and ability to handle such a situation.

Caring Behavior

Caring is a positive force that causes people to 'do the right thing' to help an individual succeed. There are two echelons in sports, as in society -- caring for the individual, the athlete, and caring for the whole, the team. Caring behavior is not a secondary aspect of physical education, as this teacher made clear: "It is my job to care for the students from the moment they walk in to the moment they leave" (Larson & Silverman, 2005, p. 184).

Coaches, whether or not they hold a teaching certificate, are teachers. If athletes are to do their best, then coaches ought to set the example by doing their best. Larson and Silverman (2005) summarize: “These sentiments also constitute criteria determining one’s teaching quality, since being caring, fostering good relationships with students, having students’ best interest at heart and being sensitive to their needs are hallmarks of good teaching (p. 176). A coach who cares about the athlete, as well as the successful execution of the sport, need not be weak to show caring behavior: “In terms of what physical education students deem to be caring teaching behavior, a little seems to go a long way towards promoting positive experience, fostering learning and affirming students” (Larson, 2006, p. 348). Caring behavior is not passive. It requires energy and focus. Larson and Silverman (2005) argue that, “To create a caring relationship, as the one caring, the teacher must respond to the student, the one cared for, with engrossment and motivational displacement” (p. 175). In a study of effective physical education teachers, Larson and Silverman found a commonality: “the teachers share a common interest in broadening relationships with students, and feel physical education is conducive to doing so” (p. 183).

Larson (2006) named three sub-categories of caring behaviors -- recognize me, help me learn, and trust/respect me -- that enable an effective coach to teach in a child-centered manner. Caring involves seeing and acknowledging an athlete’s effort or accomplishments, no matter how small. Such caring is specifically exemplified in teachers’ actions that “recognize, respect and notice some aspect of students’ individuality or learning progress, and foster learning achievement” (p. 347). It is essential, in able to care about an athlete, to get to know what type of person the athlete

is. Larson and Silverman (2005) note, “Teachers who conduct their work from a caring perspective often make it a priority to foster interpersonal relationships with their students” (p. 175). Athletes know what makes them play their best. For example, “It was very important to the athletes in the current study that coaches were positive, emphasized hard work, and showed care and compassion for them on and off the field as both athletes and people” (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006, p. 310). If the coach cares enough to worry about the athlete, this removes negative emotions from the player so that he or she can concentrate on the task at hand. As Larson notes, ‘It matters whether or not students like their teachers and teachers like their students. It matters to the teachers and it matters to the students’ (p. 339).

Confidence shown by the coach is reflected in the athlete, according to Larson and Silverman (2005): “Considered in terms of interaction from teachers, caring has the potential to influence positively the well being of students because consistent interaction can foster self-esteem, self confidence and trust through emotional bonds formed” (p. 176). A higher level of self-confidence enables the athlete to make a greater effort in trying new behaviors and skills. Students who feel comfortable and confident in an environment will have enhanced learning. According to Garn and Cothran (2006), “Teachers should provide a supportive and warm environment because of the sizable impact they have on student learning and fun” (p. 294). Pushing an athlete to do his best is not enough. In a study of 120 musicians, artists, athletes, mathematicians and scientists, Bloom (1985) found that, “No matter what the initial characteristics (or gifts) of the individuals, unless there is a long and intensive process of encouragement, nurturance, education and training, the individuals will not attain extreme levels of capability in these

particular fields” (cited in Bailey & Morley, 2006, p. 221). Caring about the athlete as a person is a simple method of convincing the player to listen to and believe in what you are attempting to teach. “Evidence suggests that interaction from the teacher characterized as caring goes a long way to foster student motivation and learning in physical education” (Larson, 2006, p. 339).

The Importance of Fun

The concept of fun reflects a level of enjoyment that causes the athlete to continue with the activity. This can occur at many levels of play and ability, not just at a recreational, non-competitive level. Even at a competitive level, whether in school or community, sports are games, played by children in the care of adults. As Muckian and Duerst (2003) point out, “If you know anything about working with kids, you know that taking the game too seriously is a dangerous and slightly wrongheaded approach to what, done correctly, could be an invigorating exercise and a delightful pastime” (p. 4). There needs to be consideration of the focus of the sport.

“Student beliefs and attitudes impact their behaviors” (Rikard & Banville, 2006, p. 386). If players believe they can contribute, if they believe they are having fun, then they are more apt to continue with the sport, but many of their beliefs depend on the coach. Muckian and Duerst (2003) explain: “The vast majority of youth soccer players lose interest in the game by the age of 13. Too often poor or misguided coaching is at the root of the problem” (p. 4). Children need, even in sports, to understand the relevance of what they are doing and how it fits into their life. As previously discussed, life-long physical activity is necessary for good health and well-being, yet Rikard and Banville report, “The most disturbing response from the majority of students (82%) was their

belief that activities taught in their physical education classes had no transfer to their choice of activities outside the school” (p. 397). People are more likely to engage in activities they consider fun. Garn and Cothran (2006) point out, for example, that “Portman’s (1995) work on learned helplessness described how students viewed failure in physical education to be ‘not fun’ and led to student disengagement” (p. 282). People enjoy those activities in which they feel they can do at least reasonably well. Again, Garn and Cothran note, “Students discussed feeling competent as a source of fun and lack of success/meaning as a barrier to fun” (p. 291).

Garn and Cothran (2006) surveyed students and teachers to quantify the concept of “fun.” According to Ewing and Seefeldt (1988, cited in Garn & Cothran), “Fun is considered one of the most important reasons that children are involved in physical education activity, and a lack of fun is one of the critical reasons why children and adolescents stop participating in physical activity” (p. 281). Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986, cited in Garn & Cothran) provide a working definition of fun:

1. Achievement-Intrinsic: Predictors related to personal perceptions of competence and control such as the attainment of mastery goals and perceived ability.
2. Achievement-Extrinsic: Predictors related to personal perceptions of competence and control that are derived from other people such as social evaluation and social recognition of achievement.
3. Nonachievement-Intrinsic: Predictors related to physical activity and movement such as sensations, tension, action, and exhilaration, and competition such as excitement.

4. Nonachievement-Extrinsic: Predictor related to nonperformance aspects of sport such as affiliation with peers, and having positive interactions with teachers/adults involved in the experience. (p. 284)

Garn and Cothran (2006) also found that “Teacher relationships were viewed by some students as directly responsible for creating fun” (p. 289). The students commented about their teachers, “He liked what he did...He was fair and fun...My teacher was really fun. I think she is the reason why it is such a memorable experience” (p. 289). Sports represent an area of education that can provide students with the opportunity to succeed, resulting in a sense of enjoyment. If coaches want to maximize their athletes’ efforts, they should consider the “fun” aspect of what they are attempting to accomplish. Research strongly indicates that from the athletes’ perspective the impetus for participation is their desire to have fun, to exhibit and extend their own athletic skills, and to experience positive social outcomes that result from participation (Whisenant, 2005, p. 353).

The Bench

The bench is a tool in team sports that indicates the amount of playing time an athlete receives from the coach. The amount of time that an athlete spends sitting on the bench indicates the coach’s confidence in the athlete’s ability to perform the required tasks. “Inequities occur when the perceived levels of inputs fail to render adequate rewards or outputs,” according to Whisenant (2005, p. 344). The athletes view their time on the bench according to how fair they perceive the coach’s actions to be. Whisenant discusses these actions in terms of justice:

Each justice dimension has the potential to provide insight into the level of commitment student athletes may report, based on their perceptions of fairness

demonstrated by their coaches. Procedural justice, perceived fairness of how decisions are made, measures the extent to which students feel the coaches listen to their views, apply decisions consistently among the athletes, allow the students to challenge decisions, and make decisions based upon accurate information.

Distributive justice measures the fairness of the decisions the coaches make regarding who plays during competitive activity. It provides insight into the perceptions the students hold regarding how they were rewarded for their effort during practice, their level of experience, performance while in competition, and skill level. Interpersonal justice measures the athletes' perceptions regarding the treatment they received from their coaches. The students were able to indicate to what extent their coaches treated them with dignity and respect. (p. 346)

Whisenant explains the importance of perceived fairness: "The student athletes' intent to continue playing the referent sport [their stated favorite] was linked to their perceptions of fairness across each of the three justice dimensions" (p. 351).

Becker and Solomon (2005), in a study of coaching effectiveness in intercollegiate basketball, discuss the relationship between what the coach expects and how the athlete performs – the expectancy theory. Confidence of an athlete in his/her ability to accomplish the goals set out by the coach is gained from the coach: "The coach's evaluation of athlete confidence was the only significant predictor of actual athlete performance" (p. 253). Players who receive more playing time improve at a greater rate. Becker and Solomon explain:

While starters and nonstarters receive the same amount of practice time to engage in motor skills, starters receive significantly more feedback during this time than

do nonstarters. This reinforces the findings that high expectancy athletes, in this case starters, are afforded more instructional and motivational input than are nonstarters. (p. 253)

Players who spend more time on the bench do not improve at as great a rate and can, due to a decrease in confidence in their ability, actually cease to improve. The study looked at attributes that coaches expect an athlete to exhibit. Becker and Solomon used a 30-item measure, the SESS (Solomon Expectancy Sources Scale), for coaches to assess athletic ability; hard worker, receptivity to coaching, willingness to learn, love of sport, willingness to listen, competitiveness, honesty, respect, self-discipline, integrity, team chemistry, trust, athleticism, coordination, courage, high aspirations, communication, confidence, role acceptance, pressure, agility, leadership, speed, concentration, mental maturity, athletic experience, reaction time, strength, good strategy, and complete assessments. These attributes are also ones that an athlete will maintain throughout life.

This study also assessed how effective the coaches were considered to be. Becker and Solomon (2005) found a difference in how the two groups of coaches assessed athletes. They assessed coaches to determine whether they were successful (a career win over 60%) or unsuccessful (a career win under 50%), and then looked at how they weighted the 30 items. They found that successful coaches rated 21 of the 30 SESS items higher than less successful coaches. Furthermore, nine of the items rated higher by less successful coaches were physical attributes (Coordination, Strength, Speed, Reaction Time, and Agility). “These trends indicate that successful coaches are placing a higher degree of importance on psychological factors, while less successful coaches appear to be prioritizing physical attributes” (p. 261). It appears that the more successful coaches put

more consideration into the athlete as a person, which could be considered a child-centered approach. Becker and Solomon were able to establish that how coaches think is important as a factor in coach effectiveness. Coaches' attitudes and value systems affect how well they coach. The impact of how a coach considers a player does make a difference in that player's athletic career. Becker and Solomon inferred that an athlete's performance is more influenced by his or her perception of what the coach thinks than by what he or she believes. Furthermore, the treatment of individual players transmits to the team: "Evidence suggests that teams reporting a higher level of trust in their coach are more likely to excel during the season than teams lacking trust" (p. 262).

Athletes gain their sense of ability and confidence from their coaches. At some point, to really succeed, they learn to play for more than the coach's approval. "The move towards being more intrinsically motivated to engage in certain activities ... is developmental in nature" (Li et al., 2005, p. 52). The ability of athletes to 'dig deep' within themselves relates to intrinsic motivation, and according to Li et al., "Intrinsic motivation generally leads to engagement in an activity for pleasure and enjoyment or as an end in itself" (p. 52). An effective coach learns to teach athletes to find effort and motivation within: "When individuals receive information that enhances their perceptions of competence, their intrinsic motivation increases" (p. 52). Success results in a sense of enjoyment, which creates the confidence to work harder. "When individuals feel competent, they will be intrinsically motivated to engage in tasks and, conversely, will withdraw from tasks when perceiving themselves to lack competence" (p. 52). Mistakes become not a source of embarrassment but a part of the learning process.

Intrinsic motivation results in the athlete growing as a person as he/she learns to try new things. According to Li et al. (2005), “There is clear evidence that intrinsic motivation leads to adaptive cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences” (p. 52). These authors performed a study involving university students, to assess how belief in one’s ability affected athletic performance. They were particularly interested in the amount of effort expended in relation to students’ success and belief in their own ability. “Persistence was positively associated with effort/importance and interest/enjoyment scales, but negatively correlated with tension/pressure” (p. 60). If athletes do not perceive that the amount of time they spend ‘on the bench’ is fair, their belief in their ability deteriorates: Li et al. explain:

When participants were more orientated toward beliefs that ability cannot be changed, they were more likely to have lower initial perceived competence when presented with a novel learning task. They were also likely to show interest and enjoyment, exert less effort, and be less intrinsically motivated. (p. 53)

Conversely, those who feel that they have a role to play and can manage the task given will increase their effort and therefore their performance: “Participants who felt more competent were likely to feel more relaxed, display more interest and enjoyment, be more intrinsically motivated, and achieve better performance” (Li, Lee, & Solomon, 2005, p. 60). Fairness does not always denote an equal amount of playing time for each player, as Whisenant (2005) explains:

Student athletes may be less concerned with the fairness of their own playing time as a reward than they are with being associated with a winning team. In other words, the pride of being on a winning team may override feelings of being fairly

rewarded with playing time even if they rarely (or never) get to play. The outcome of not playing may then be perceived as being fair since the outcome of winning is so positive. (p. 352)

The emphasis on the whole child in a progressive education philosophy would dictate that each child on the team is accorded equal importance in that they understand and are given a contributing role to play. According to Li et al. (2005), emphasizing beliefs in the efficacy of effort can foster students' motivation (p. 62).

Winning and Success

The measure of success of a sports program is not entirely tangible. Jones and Wallace (2005) point out, "The goal of outright 'success', however so defined, is logically unobtainable for most, if not all, coaches" (p. 120). Winning is measurable but insufficient within a progressive education environment. Furthermore, as Petitpas et al. (2005) caution, "Coaches and parents who place primary emphasis on external motivations such as winning, social comparisons, and public recognition, can create an ego-orientated or performance-focused environment" (p. 65). An imbalanced emphasis on external motivations decreases the successful achievement of life-long intrinsic motivations. These are, however, difficult to quantify, as Jones and Wallace explain:

In other words, an inherent *pathos* or unbridgeable gap exists between the lofty and often contradictory goals inspiring coaches to act, and their capacity to attain all these goals on the ground. They may even be unable to measure the attainment of unquantifiable goals, such as promoting the enjoyment of participation or 'progressive' development of their athletes. (p. 120)

Whisenant (2005) discusses factors beyond winning that reflect the import of a sports program and an effective coach:

While winning may be one variable in assessing a program's effectiveness, athletic administrators should also look at participation and retention rates. Participation and retention rates would reflect the athletic program's ability to reach the maximum number of children and allow the program to meet the educational and child development goals of interscholastic athletics as stated before. These findings strongly support the position that the climate of fairness created by coaches directly influences a student athlete's desire to continue playing interscholastic athletics and influences performance. (p. 353)

Athletes who experience child-centered coaching in a positive and fair environment perform more consistently and at a higher level. Jones and Wallace (2005) caution that it is impossible, in the traditional sense, for everyone to win:

Logically, the 'win-lose' essence of competitive games in all sporting contests, be it professional or school sport, is bound to entail one individual or group seeking outcome goals at the expense of another or others doing the same. (p. 120)

Coaching is difficult and has personal implications through the relationship developed between coach and athlete. Coaches are as dependent upon their athletes' performance as the athletes are on the coaches': "Coaches' ambitions rest on what such athletes learn, and how their increased capability translates into improved athletic understanding and, ultimately, performance" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 120).

Mallett (2005) discusses his coaching practice of intrinsic motivation, "an athlete-centered approach to coaching," during his preparation of the two men's Australian relay

teams for the Athens Olympics in 2004. Balance and understanding became important as he created teams from individuals who each had their own entourage of trainers and coaches. He discussed directed individual goals and the athletes' need to formulate team goals, accomplishing this through self-determination theory (SDT). SDT examines how to create intrinsic motivation in the athlete, since athletes with intrinsic motivation have been found to persist longer, use positive coping strategies in stressful situations, and invest more effort. Mallet believes that even an Olympic medal is insufficient motivation for athletes to do their best and reach their full potential because it is too much of an external motivation: "High performance sport that focuses on winning and monetary rewards associated with winning has the potential to undermine self-determined forms of motivation and shift the locus of causality from internal to external" (p. 418). The effort required at the elite level of Olympic performance needs intrinsic motivation if it is to be sustained over the long training period and during the performance itself. Mallet puts this responsibility onto the coach and explains the methodology:

Coaches (people with power) should display a number of behaviors that are consistent with an autonomy-supportive coaching climate: (a) behaviors that acknowledge and respect an athlete's perspective and feelings; (b) the provision of opportunities for athletes to choose; (c) the limited use of controlling behaviors; and (d) the valuing of initiative, independent problem-solving and involvement in decision making, in preference to controlling athletes to think, feel, and behave in a certain way. (p. 420)

Self-determination theory, with the coach as a collaborator, helps athletes, whether or not they are at an elite level, to accomplish their best performance.

Education

Through experience and education, coaches discover what they feel is effective at developing young athletes and successful teams. In Canada there are various levels of coaching education. Each sport offers certification. Universities and colleges offer courses in kinesiology faculties. This does not mean that all coaches take advantage of such education; in fact, “It has been estimated that 90% of youth sport coaches in the United States do not have formal training in coach education or youth development (Petitpas et al., 2005, p. 65). Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) add, “Youth sport coaches in the United States often rely on common-sense behavioral repertoires” (p. 131). Common sense has a place in coaching, but effective coaches take advantage of knowledge outside of their experience. All coaches are not certified teachers, but they are teachers and ought to treat athletics as a learning environment, where both the sport and the individual are important. As Butler (2006) notes, “Teachers [physical education] may also value lifelong activity, health-related fitness, understanding of structure, and rules, working in teams, acceptance of authority and exposure to social justice issues such as fairness and equity” (p. 247).

Petitpas et al. (2005) describe an important aspect of a physical education environment:

Youth sport programs that promote psychosocial development are those that use sport as a vehicle to provide experiences that promote self-discovery and teach participants life skills in an intentional and systematic manner. In addition, these programs have clearly defined goals and strategies. (p. 66)

Coaches with defined goals have to have some organizational skills and a vision for their athletes. The teacher's value system is passed onto the student. Through education, coaches learn to organize how they are going to teach a sport. Sports education is a less formal environment than the classroom, but it is still an educational opportunity and needs to be taken seriously. Weinberg and Gould (2003) describe how the TARGET acronym was developed to represent the manipulation of environmental conditions that foster a mastery-oriented environment:

1. Tasks. Focus on learning and task involvement.
2. Authority. Students participate in the decision-making process.
3. Reward. Reward for improvement not social comparison.
4. Grouping. Create cooperative learning climate within groups.
5. Evaluation. Have numerous evaluations on personal improvement.
6. Timing. Proper timing is critical to the interaction of all of these conditions.

(p. 128)

Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) advocate Coach Effectiveness Training (CET), a program based on creating a positive learning environment. They describe certain specific behaviors: specify what coaches should do after desirable player behaviors (i.e., reinforce, don't take youngsters' efforts for granted), after mistakes (i.e., encourage immediately, don't punish), following misbehaviors (i.e., establish clear expectations, avoid nagging or threatening athletes), and to create a positive learning climate (i.e., provide instruction and encouragement, avoid sarcasm or degrading comments). The CET program also promotes a philosophy of winning that emphasizes learning, effort, and improvement over objective, normatively evaluated success (p. 133). CET is a child-

centered philosophy that, according to Conroy and Coatsworth (2006), “draws primarily from interpersonal theory ... and self-determination theory ... to propose that the mechanism of coach training effects involve a process of internalization (p. 134). A process that is internalized becomes a part of the individual’s belief system and a part of his or her habits. This leads to a more intrinsic motivation, making it more likely that an individual, coach or athlete, will follow through with their objectives: “Intrinsic motivation has been identified as an important construct affecting individuals’ achievement strivings and outcomes” (Li et al., 2005, p. 52).

Butler (2006) advocates Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), a model that is “based upon constructivist learning theory that suggests that learners will make sense of their world by synthesizing new experiences with what they have previously come to understand” (p. 248). TGfU emphasized the development of the whole child as opposed to the “strong emphasis on winning and unthinking compliance” of the 1930s and 1940s (p. 251).

Baker, Cote and Abernathy (2003, cited in Butler, 2006) suggest that early specialization is not necessarily the key to athletic success and that participation in other activities may aid in the development of expert decision-making skills. “Practice in other sports may circumvent the need for hours of the sport-specific practice generally considered a prerequisite for expertise in team ball sports, by helping players to develop pattern recognition and decision-making skills” (Butler, 2006, p. 251). Athletes do not succeed only because they are able to do what they are told. According to Butler, “Learners are stimulated to think through situations and are encouraged to make decisions in small groups. Skills in negotiating, questioning, compromising and listening

can thereby be developed and fairness, equality and empathy can be promoted” (p. 252). Creative thinking on the field of play can occur if the athletes have learned how to think creatively. Butler argues, “Their ability to make decisions as a part of a skillful performance is paramount and decision-making is thus inherent in the conceptualization of ‘the able student’” (p. 251). Events can happen too quickly for a coach to intervene and it becomes necessary for athletes to make their own decisions. Butler comments:

Thinking, rather than simple adherence, becomes a life-long habit and skill, including the ability to think critically, to make commitments and civic choices and to develop awareness of global problems.... A democratic citizen has sound character (honesty, integrity, respect and responsibility) and a social conscience (appreciates liberty and justice). (p. 256)

TGfU can be an important model for coaches because it teaches them to teach their athletes to respond. “By moving the focus of learning from ‘how’ to ‘why,’ TGfU encourages learners to think” (Butler, 2006, p. 255).

Nelson and Cushion (2006) used interviews, observation and documentation to develop a coach education program, using the framework of reflective practice, a process found at the heart of all experience-based learning theories. Reflection is particularly useful for coach education, as it links “knowledge gained from professional experience, observations, coaching theory, and education” (p. 175). This model acknowledges education through experience. As coaches apply theories and work with athletes, their ideas and techniques undergo changes. It is important for coaches to take the time to realize what is effective and the reasons behind that success or lack of success. There is a limit in that it is impossible for coaches to be entirely open-minded since their own world

view will color their thinking. As Nelson and Cushion note, “Reflection ... was bound by the coaches’ personal approach or philosophy to coaching, ... referred to as a role frame (p. 175). The coaches must have some self-knowledge in order to understand their athletes. “An analysis of role frames allows the practitioner to “critically examine the underlying components that guide and influence his or her behaviors” (p. 178). In essence, Nelson and Cushion advocate that coaches have to think about what they are doing and, as life-long learners, question themselves regularly: “Those responsible for the provision of coach education should be urged to shape learning around practical, contextualized coaching experience and have practitioners reflect upon it” (p. 182).

Lawson (2005) has questions for sports education programs. His focus is upon sustained physical activity for each individual. The emphasis and funding of elite, “pro-olympic” sports is detrimental to physical education, in Lawson’s opinion:

In many nations, this pro-olympic system accounts for the selectivity, limitations, and, indeed, the failure of SEPE programs to reach ‘the masses’. To begin with, selectivity, exclusion, and the accompanying prestige and special identities are inherent in the meaning of ‘elite.’ (p. 142)

Lawson disagrees not with the elite level that some athletes are able to attain, but with the attitude that it is the only successful level of a sport. He argues that only a few athletes reach those levels and that they may even be the people who gain the most benefit.

Lawson asks, “The question is, who benefits, and for how long?” (p. 142). It is not the performance that is the problem, but the attitude that is embraced. According to Lawson, “Its ‘win at all costs’ framework encourages ethical violations and moral problems” (p. 142). The resulting attitudes filter down to everyday sports education, in Lawson’s

opinion: “Many [SEPE professionals] thus lack commitments and abilities for teaching and counseling everyday people, enabling them to play without ‘win-lose’ dynamics and to exercise enough to secure health and well-being outcomes” (p. 143). The emphasis on the few is contradictory to the ideals of physical education and is simply too narrow in focus. For Lawson, “It also limits participation through limited opportunity structures and its demands on athletes” (p. 142).

Physical education is necessary for good health. It provides an outlet for stress and presents opportunities for social interaction. Those engaged in physical education learn life-long attributes. Coaches need to be aware of the importance of what they are doing so they can be more effective.

Chapter Three. Methodology

Participants

The criterion for inclusion in this study was that the participant had coached at least one season of youth sports. The majority of participants were approached while attending high school volleyball tournaments in southern Alberta and invited to participate in the study by the researcher.

Instrumentation

A survey was designed (see Appendix A). An Application for Ethical Review of Human Research was made to the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, and permission was received for the study. The survey was organized into sections according to the literature review on effective child-centered coaching. The sections are the following: Coaching Education, Coaching Experience, Athlete Aptitude, Athlete Skills, Athlete Attitude, Athlete Fitness, Teamwork, Success and Life-long Application.

Data Collection

Participants had the option to return the surveys anonymously by mail, or in person. Dialogue was welcomed. The time frame was the fall semester of 2006.

Data Analysis

The coaches' comments were organized under the sections in which they appeared. The surveys were organized according to whether the coaches coached team sports, individual sports or both types of sports. They were organized further according to whether the coaches only coached, or coached and refereed. Division then occurred along the lines of coaches who were teachers (holding certification) and those who were non-teachers.

The data, with allotted symbols, was plotted, per section, per question, into tables. Totals in each area were then converted into percentages and applied to charts.

Chapter 4. Results

Coaches were generally quite surprised by the request to fill out the surveys, but after some thought they agreed to participate. Five people asked for copies for their colleagues. Out of the 40 surveys distributed, 36 were returned. Eight coaches completed and returned their surveys to the researcher in person; three of them took the time to also discuss their ideas and responses. The remaining 28 surveys were returned by mail. Two coaches signed their names and indicated an interest in further discussion. Volleyball tournaments were the main venue for distribution because of proximity for the researcher.

Not all of the questions were answered by all of the coaches, which accounts for percentages sometimes falling short of 100 percent. Some coaches added categories to the responses of the questions. Comments were often inserted next to the coaches' answers, as well as in the comment section. Those comments are represented here verbatim. The Results section is organized in the same subject format as the survey.

Coaching experience takes into account education and experience. The Education category includes teaching certification, coaching education and kinesiology education. The Experience category includes the age of the athletes coached, number of seasons, level (setting of the team) and sports (type and number) that these individuals coach. All of the coaches who participated in this study are or have been athletes.

Coaching Education

Of the 36 coaches who responded to the survey, 24 have teaching certificates, including a varsity coach who is teaching kinesiology at the university level. Twelve coaches do not hold a teaching certificate. Noting the differences in education and experience between those who hold teacher certification and those who do not, the

coaches were divided into two groups -- teachers and non-teachers. Percentages are used to express comparative data. As shown in Figure 1, 33 percent of the respondents to the survey reported that they do not hold teaching certificates, and 67 percent that they do.

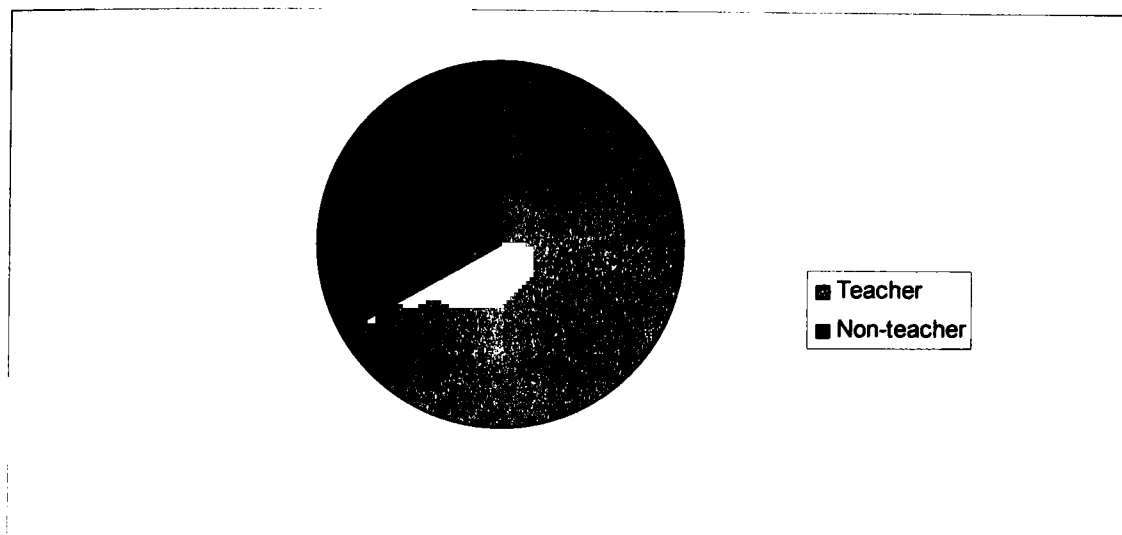


Figure 1. Teachers and non-teachers, according to teaching certification.

Being designated as a non-teacher does not mean that a coach is not educated in sports. Twenty-five percent of the participants who do not have teaching certification have taken at least some kinesiology courses, and some are currently working on university degrees. Eight percent already have a university degree with a major in kinesiology (see Figure 2).

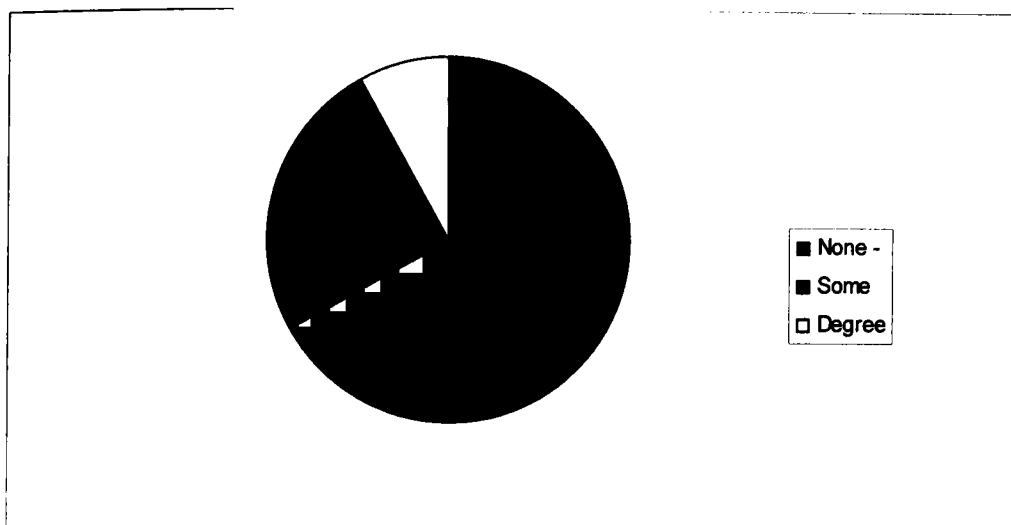


Figure 2. Kinesiology education of participants without teaching certification.

In the group of coaches surveyed, respondents who hold teaching certificates reported having more kinesiology education than those who do not, as shown in Figure 3. Of the teachers, 29 percent have a degree with a major in kinesiology, 8 percent have a degree with a minor in kinesiology, and 42 percent have taken at least some kinesiology courses at a university level. Twenty-one percent of the teachers and 67 percent of the non-teachers reported “none” when asked how much kinesiology education they had.

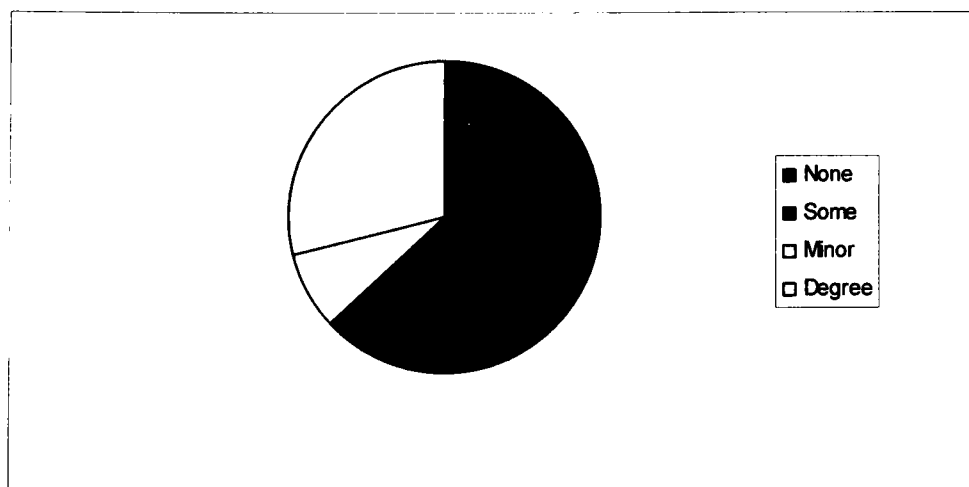


Figure 3. Kinesiology education of teaching-certified coaches.

Half of the participants without teaching certification, that is, the non-teachers, have received coaching education, as shown in Figure 4. Of these, 17 percent hold coaching certificates, while 8 percent teach to provide certification to coaches.

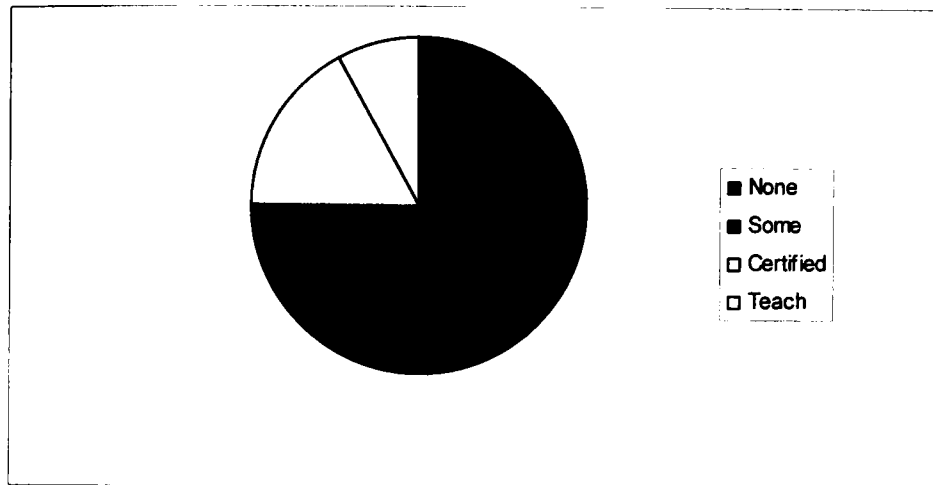


Figure 4. Coaching education of coaches without teaching certification.

Of the teaching-certified participants, referred to in this study as the teachers, 17 percent teach coaching certification courses, 54 percent are themselves certified to coach, and 25 percent have taken at least some coaching courses, as shown in Figure 5. Fifty percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported having no education in coaching, the “none” category. Moreover, 25 percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported having neither kinesiology nor coaching education.

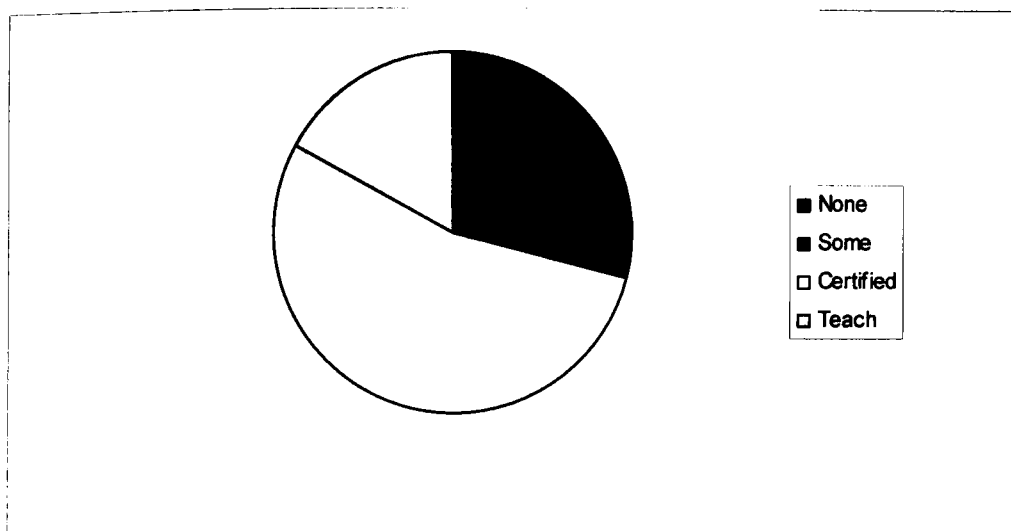


Figure 5. Coaching education of teaching-certified participants.

Coaching Experience

Participants who have teaching certification reported having more coaching experience, as illustrated in Figure 6. Twenty-five percent of the teachers have coached for 30 or more seasons, whereas none of the non-teachers have that much experience. Forty-two percent of the teachers, but only 8 percent of the non-teachers, have coached for 21 to 30 seasons. Seventeen percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers reported having 9 to 20 seasons of coaching experience. Fifty percent of the non-teachers reported having coached 4 to 8 seasons. Of the non-teachers, 25 percent were beginning coaches, compared to only 12 percent of the teachers. Although their age is a consideration for at least some of the less experienced coaches, other reasons for these differences were not ascertained.

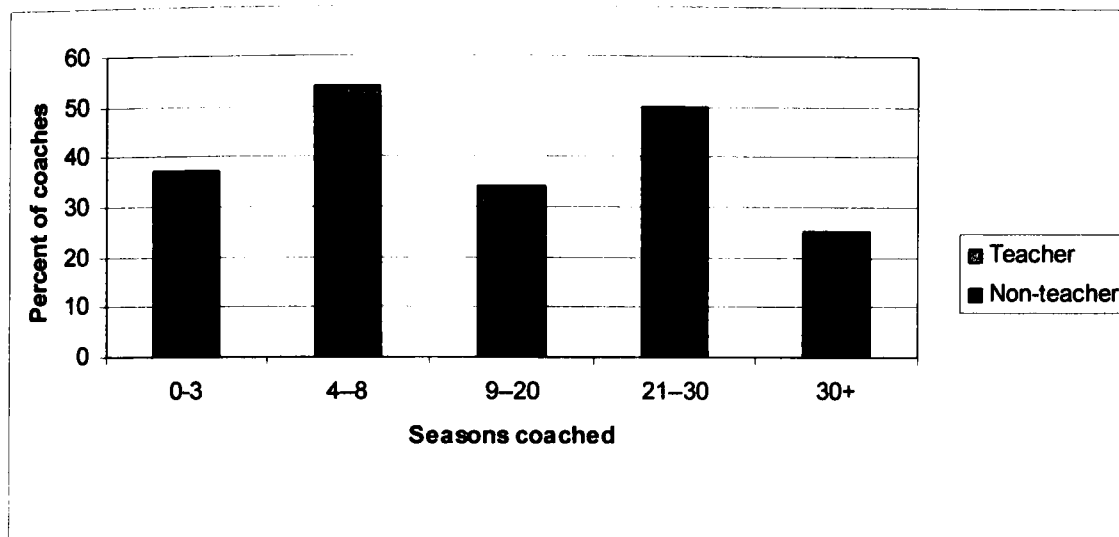


Figure 6. Seasons coached by teachers and non-teachers.

All of the teaching-certified participants coach at the school level, as do most (58 percent) of the non-teachers (see Figure 7).

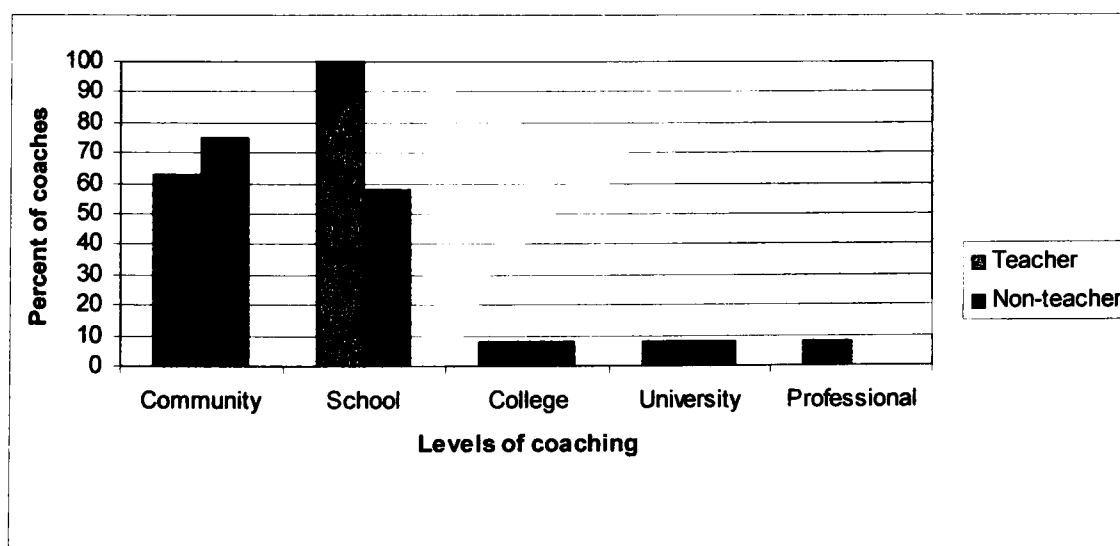


Figure 7. Levels of coaching experience for teachers and non-teachers.

Although the coaches were approached primarily at school events about participating in the survey, 63 percent of teachers and 75 percent of the non-teachers also coach at a community level. In each group, 8 percent report having coached at a college

level and 8 percent having coached varsity at a university level. Of those certified to teach, 8 percent have coached at a professional level. Figure 8 illustrates the types of coaching in which these participants engage.

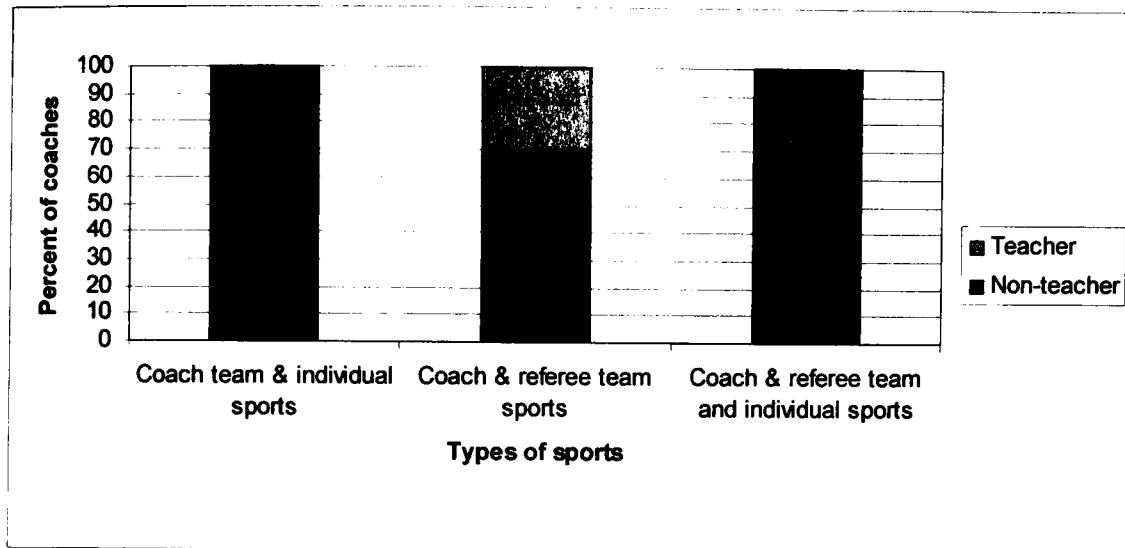


Figure 8. Team and individual sports coached and refereed.

In total, 57 percent of the teachers and 47 percent of the non-teachers coach individual (wrestling, waterskiing, track and field, swimming, rodeo, gymnastics, golf and diving) and team sports but do not referee. Of the teachers, 30 percent do not coach individual sports but concentrate on coaching and refereeing team sports, compared with 70 percent of the non-teachers. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers are involved in coaching and refereeing team and individual sports, compared to 33 percent of the non-teachers. All of the participants who are referees also act as coaches. Eighty-three percent of the teachers referee as well as coach, compared with 75 percent of the non-teachers. Comments on the surveys describe the difference in the roles of coach and referee. One coach commented, "I believe a coach should guide and challenge an athlete,

and be open to learn from that athlete.” Another wrote, “I believe an official is there to call a fair game and present the rules in a non-judgmental manner.”

Most of the surveys were handed out at high school tournaments, which accounts for the numbers of coaches who coach at a 12-to-15-age level (100 percent of the teachers, 58 percent of the non-teachers), and at a 16-to-19-age level (75 percent of the teachers, 67 percent of the non-teachers) (see Figure 9). However, the respondents also coach younger age groups. Thirty-three percent of the teachers and 42 percent of the non-teachers coach children aged six and under. Meanwhile, 50 percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers coach the 7-to-11 age group. In addition, 21 percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers have experience coaching athletes age 20 and older.

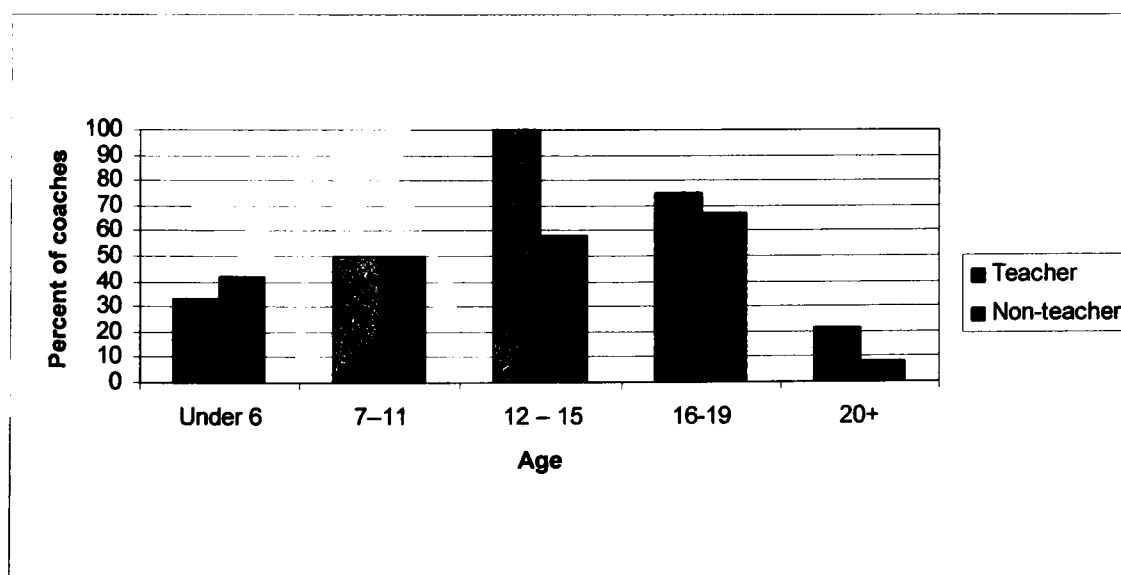


Figure 9. Ages of athletes coached by teachers and non-teachers.

As Figure 10 indicates, the teachers report coaching from two to ten sports, while the non-teachers report coaching from one to three sports.

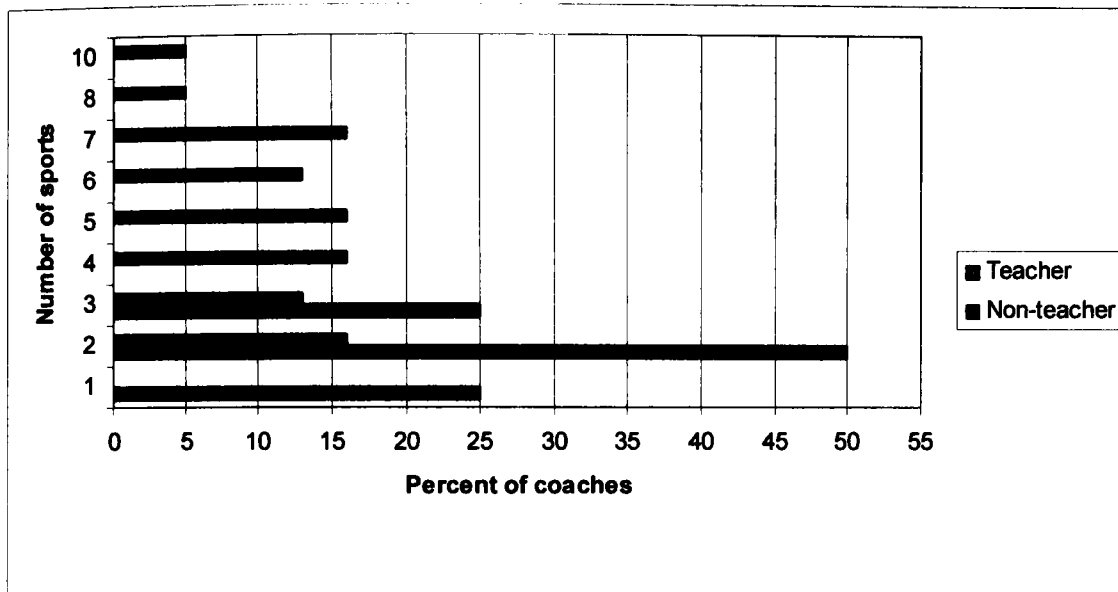


Figure 10. Number of sports coached by teachers and non-teachers.

Most of the surveys were distributed at volleyball tournaments that the researcher was able to attend, which resulted in a target group of volleyball coaches. However, the 36 coaches surveyed report coaching a variety of sports, as indicated in Figure 11. The breakdown for some of the sports is so small, for example, only one person reported coaching for Aussie Rules (Australian Rules Football) that the percentage of coaches was not calculated.

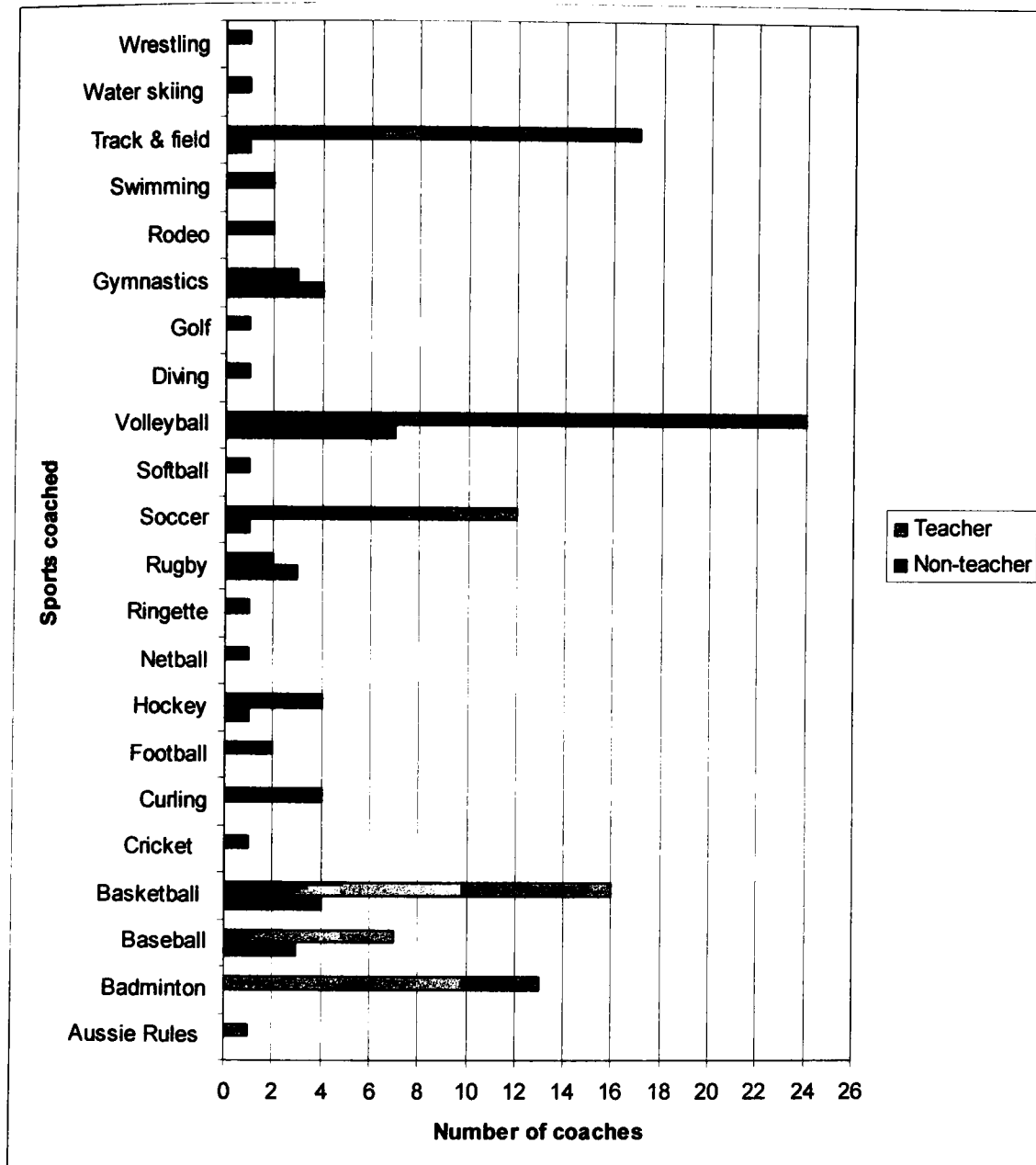


Figure 11. Sports coached by participants.

The Importance of Aptitude

Aptitude is the level of natural talent that an athlete brings to a sport. Of the teachers responding to this survey, 46 percent answered that a player's aptitude is somewhat important and 38 percent that it is very important. The remaining 8 percent reported that it is essential that players have natural ability. Forty-two percent of the non-

teachers said that a player's natural ability is either very or somewhat important, while the remaining 16 percent felt that it is not important.

Seventy-one percent of the teachers reported that aptitude is very beneficial to a player's athletic development; 21 percent thought aptitude to be somewhat beneficial. Eight percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers said that some degree of aptitude is essential to athletic development; however, the non-teachers split evenly at 42 percent between very and somewhat beneficial, and 8 percent said that aptitude is not beneficial.

Half of the non-teachers and 71 percent of the teachers indicated that players' level of aptitude is somewhat beneficial to their personal development. Thirty-four percent of the non-teachers, compared to 12 percent of the teachers, felt that aptitude was not beneficial. Seventeen percent of teachers and 8 percent of non-teachers reported that aptitude is very beneficial, while 8 percent of non-teachers felt that it is essential to a player's personal development. The responses are illustrated in Figure 12.

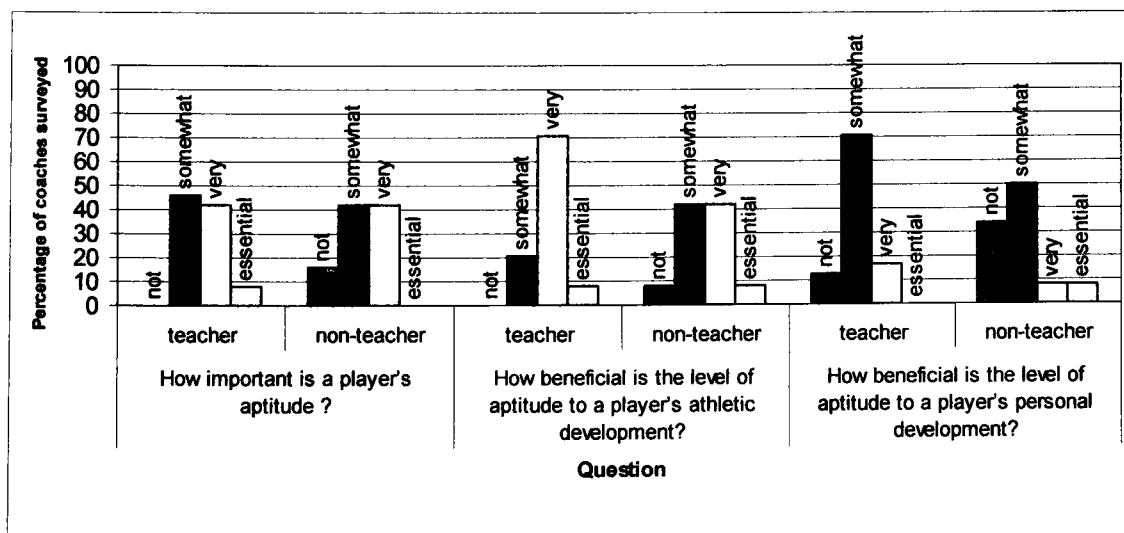


Figure 12. Importance of aptitude in athletic development.

Coaches were asked to rate the importance of aptitude to a player's skills, attitude and fitness. One added this comment:

The amount of importance for each of the above [fitness, skill, attitude and aptitude] would change with the level of competition. For example, at the community rec level, skills and fitness may be most important. At the provincial or national level, aptitude/skills/competitive results may be the most important. Coaches commented that their rankings depended upon the level they were coaching. One explained, “Because I have coached at many different levels, I have mixed feelings about the above [ranking]. It sure varies from one level to the other.” Another added, as a justification, “I’m referring to elite athletes.”

Ninety-two percent of both teachers and non-teachers rated attitude as the most important quality in a player. One wrote, “You can’t teach attitude, [but] skills can be learned.” Eight percent of the teachers and none of the non-teachers rated aptitude as the most important quality. Again one commented, “Attitude is not really teachable, and aptitude isn’t really coachable.” Eight percent of the non-teachers rated fitness as the most important quality in a player. One wrote: “You can’t teach aptitude, but you can work on fitness and skills. Skills come easier when fitness is in place. Attitude is most important because even the most gifted athlete won’t succeed without a good attitude.”

In each group, half of the respondents rated aptitude as the second most important quality, while 33 percent of the teachers rated skills, and 33 percent of the non-teachers rated fitness as second. Of the non-teachers, 17 percent rated skills as second in importance, while 8 percent of the teachers rated attitude or fitness in this position.

Skills were allotted third place in importance by both the teachers (54 percent) and the non-teachers (50 percent). One commented, “I believe everyone can develop their skill if they have the willingness to try.” The next highest choice for the teachers, at 34

percent, was aptitude, while the non-teachers, at 33 percent, chose fitness. Seventeen percent of the teachers rated fitness as third in importance, while 17 percent of the non-teachers rated aptitude in third place. One commented, “I don’t believe in being born with natural abilities. We are born with the potential to develop our abilities/skills in the area of our personal interests through hard work, commitment and determination.”

The highest percentage of the teachers (75 percent) ranked fitness fourth in importance. The non-teachers split at 33 percent each for aptitude and skills, followed by 25 percent ranking fitness and 8 percent ranking attitude as fourth in importance. Thirteen percent of the teachers chose skills for this position, and the remaining 8 percent chose aptitude. Again there was a comment:

I have had players on my teams who have limited skill, but bring a tremendous work ethic and positive attitude – to fill a role within. I also have had tremendously skilled players who also fill a role. Ability has varied in both instances!

Figure 13 displays the comparative rankings for aptitude, skills, attitude, and fitness by the teachers and the non-teachers in this study.

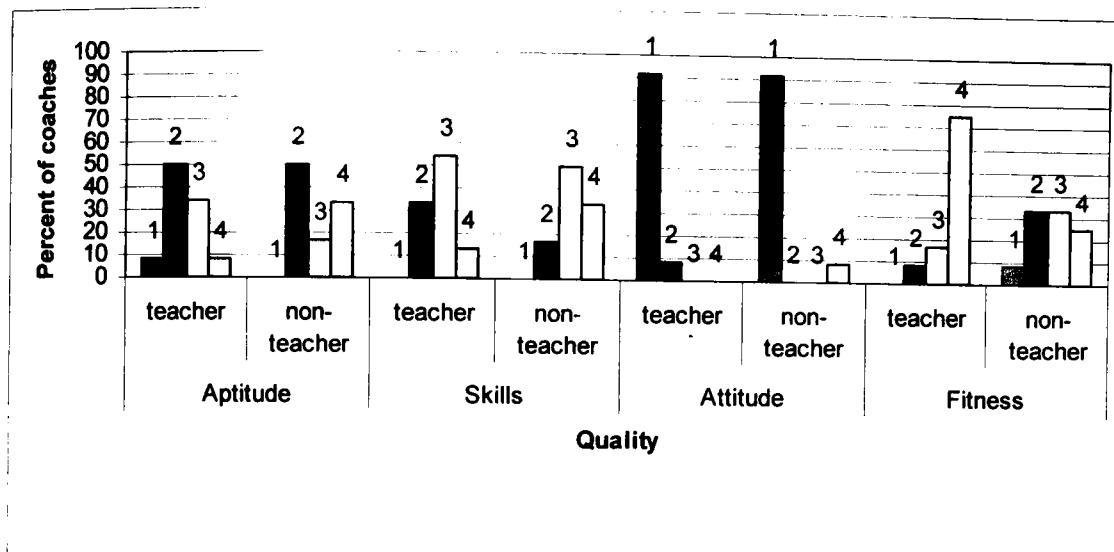


Figure 13. Players' qualities ranked by importance.

Skills Development

Figure 14 illustrates the responses of both groups concerning the importance of developing players' individual skills.

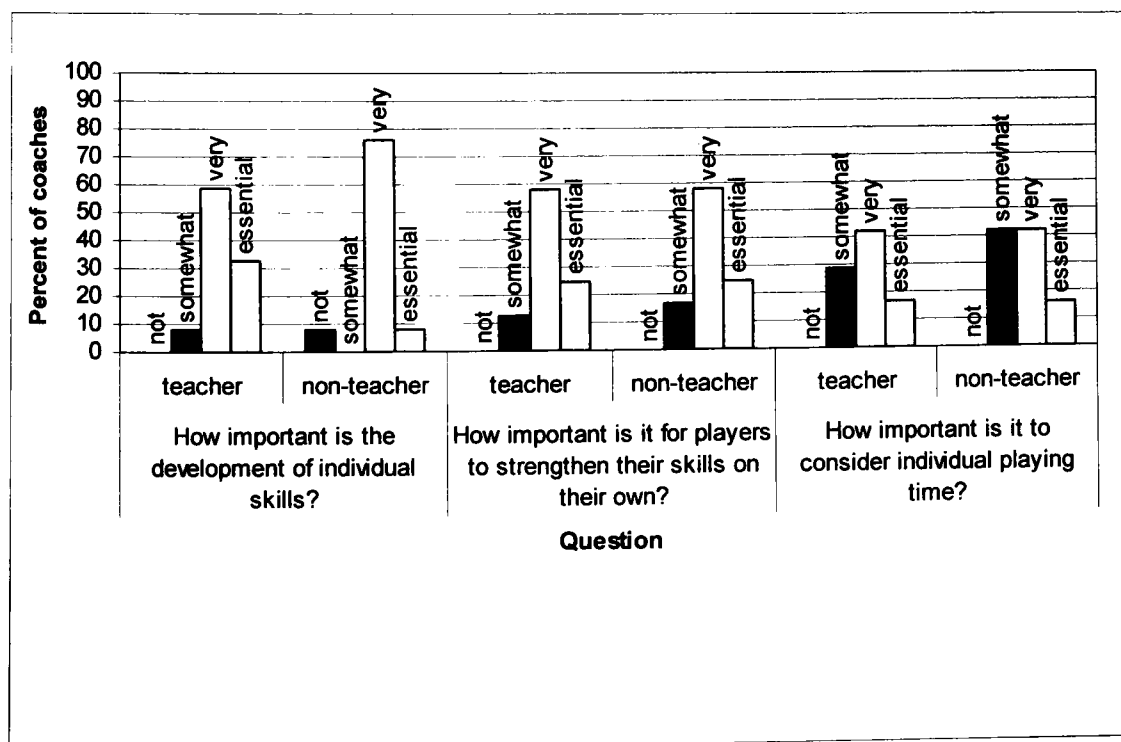


Figure 14. Importance of developing individual skills.

Although some skills are common to many sports, different sports require particular skills. One coach explained: “Depends on roles given and positional play. 10.5-foot guards will be very challenging to coach on a 3A basketball team.” The majority of the coaches surveyed in this study (76 percent of the non-teachers and 59 percent of the teachers) considered developing individual skills to be very important. One commented, “Learning new skills can give the individual a feeling of success and accomplishment.” Thirty-three percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers reported that individual skill development is essential. Another noted, “Helping an athlete attain skills will not only help your team, but will give the individual greater self-esteem.” Eight percent of the teachers rated skills development as somewhat important; on the other hand, 8 percent of the non-teachers said that skills development is not important.

Fifty-eight percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers indicated that it is very important for players to strengthen their skills on their own. One commented, “I believe that if students truly wish to improve, they must take the initiative to improve on their own.” Seventeen percent of the non-teachers and 13 percent of the teachers said that it was somewhat important for players to strengthen their own skills. Twenty-five percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers indicated that is essential for players to work on their own skills. As one coach commented, “Every team member must come willing to give 100% to developing their own skills in order to help the team.”

Forty-two percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers felt that it is very important to consider individual playing time in order to develop players’ skills. One noted, “[It’s] tough to develop game skills if they don’t play games.” The teachers and the non-teachers agreed, at 17 and 16 percent respectively, that individual playing time is

essential. One explained, “Practice cannot simulate the adrenaline rush that a game can, which can affect performance.” Forty-two percent of the non-teachers and 29 percent of the teachers reported that playing time is somewhat important to skills development.

The importance of individual skills development translates to time spent by the coaches. Figure 15 shows the percentage of time spent by teachers and non-teachers on developing players’ skills.

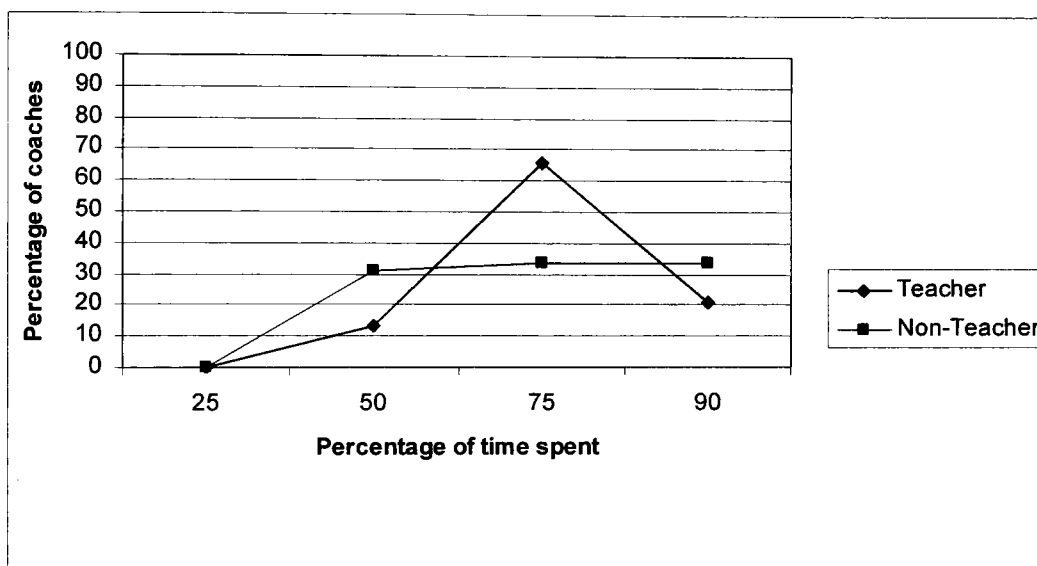


Figure 15. Time spent on skills development.

Thirty-one percent of the non-teachers and 13 percent of the teachers reported spending at least 50 percent of their time working on players’ individual skills. Sixty-six percent of the teachers reported spending 75 percent of their time doing so; 21 percent reported spending about 90 percent of their time. Among the non-teachers, 33 percent reported spending 75 percent of their time and another 33 percent 90 percent of their time on individual skills development.

The Role of Attitude

Figure 16 displays teachers' and non-teachers' responses to three questions concerning the attitude of players. One coach commented, "I believe this 'attitude' section to be by far the most important to a team and its success." Seventy-nine percent of the teachers and 75 percent of the non-teachers replied that attitude is essential; 25 percent of the non-teachers and 21 percent of the teachers ranked it as very important. One commented, "Players' attitudes can make or break the team."

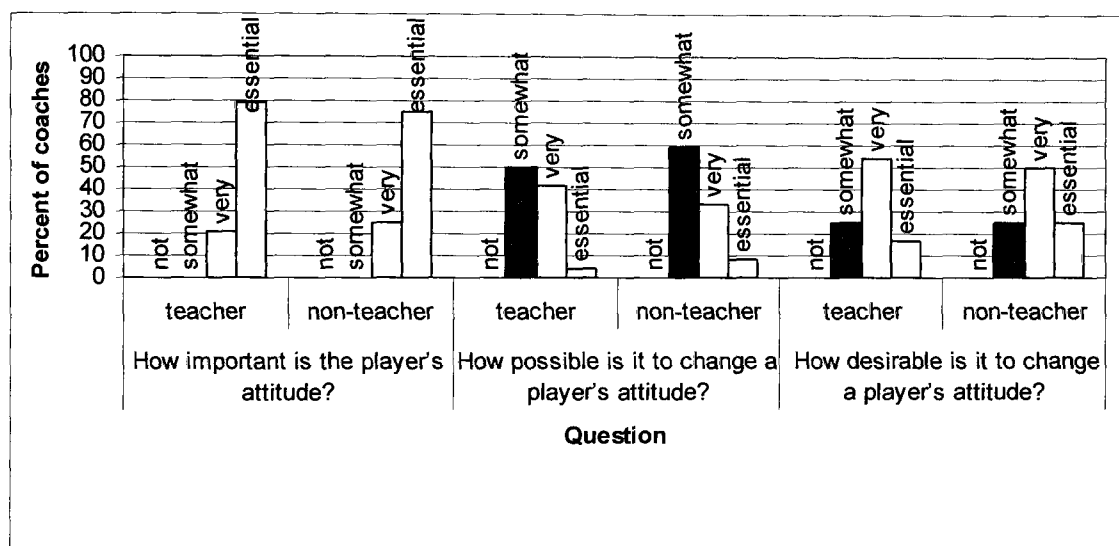


Figure 16. Importance of a player's attitude.

Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported that it is possible to change a player's attitude, with one coach pointing out that "[It is] easier if [the player is] young." Forty-two percent of the teachers and 33 percent of the non-teachers thought attitude very possible to change, although one commented, "There is only so much players and coaches can do without family/home support." Fifty-nine percent of the non-teachers and half of the teachers thought it somewhat possible to change a player's attitude. One coach wrote:

Generally speaking... kids (humans) do not change their stripes (attitudes). They either have a supportive attitude or a destructive attitude. A coach (teacher) can correct behavior – but the *player* dictates as to whether or not there is an attitude *change*. This may or may not reflect their position on the team.

Twenty-five percent of the non-teachers and 17 percent of the teachers found it essential to change a player's attitude, especially "if it is negative or self-destructive." More than half of the teachers (54 percent) and half of the non-teachers (50 percent) thought it very desirable to change a player's attitude. However, as one commented, "It depends on how bad a player's attitude is as to how desirable it is to have him on the team." One-quarter of both the teachers and the non-teachers said that changing a player's attitude is somewhat desirable. However, a coach of varsity teams noted that, "I only choose athletes with good attitude, and therefore do not need to change [their attitude]."

Figure 17 illustrates how much responsibility for players' attitude the teachers allocate to the players themselves, the captain, the team, and the coach. Sixty-two percent of the teachers felt that an individual player is responsible for his or her attitude 90 percent of the time.

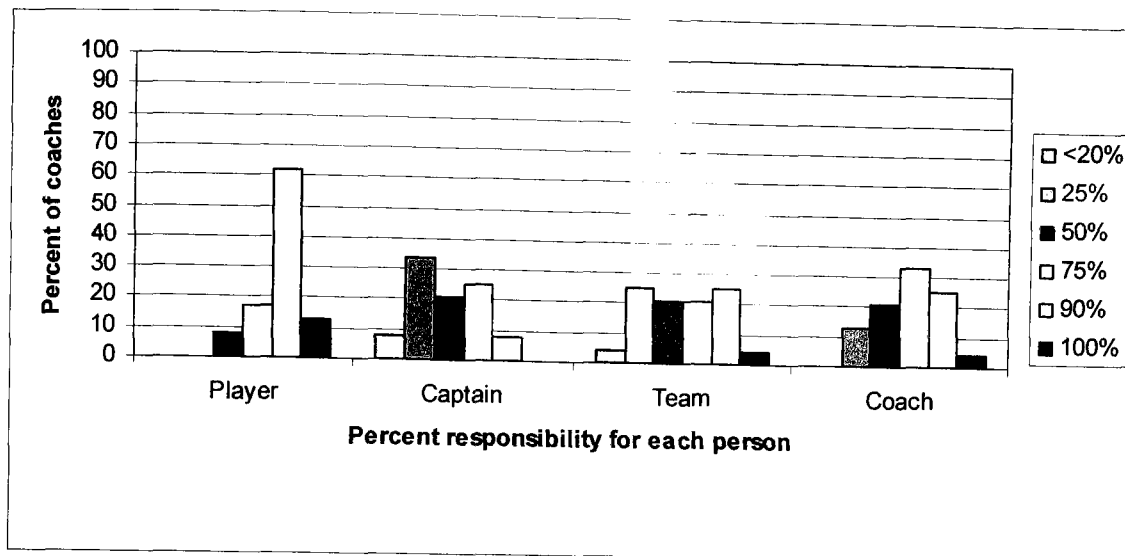


Figure 17. Teachers' allocation of responsibility for players' attitude.

By contrast, 33 percent of the non-teachers felt that individual players are responsible for their own attitude 90 percent of the time, as shown in Figure 18. One explained, "The attitude of those around the individual does affect his/her attitude, but the key lies within the individual."

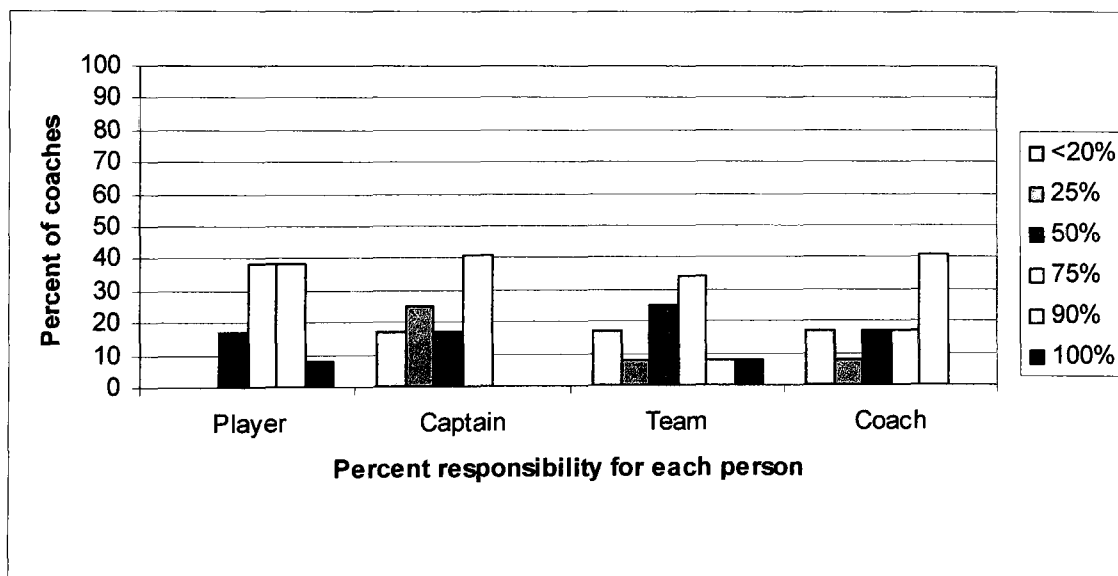


Figure 18. Non-teachers' allocation of responsibility for players' attitude.

Thirteen percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers thought that individuals are 100 percent responsible for their own attitude. They commented, “[It] really comes down to the individual,” and “100% leads to good team attitude.” Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers thought that 50 percent of the responsibility lies with the individual, while 17 percent assigned the individual 25 percent of the responsibility. Of the remaining teachers, 17 percent allotted to the individual 75 percent of the responsibility for attitude and 8 percent allotted 25 percent of the responsibility.

Of the teachers, 8 percent responded that 90%, the highest category chosen, of the responsibility for individual attitude belongs to the captain. Twenty-five percent of the teachers chose 75 percent, 21 percent chose 50 percent, and 34 percent chose 25 percent for the captain’s responsibility for players’ individual attitude. One coach commented, “The coach and captain need to lay the groundwork, but the individual is essentially responsible for their own attitude.” Eight percent of the teachers and 17 percent of the non-teachers allotted the captain less than 20 percent of the responsibility, with one coach commenting, “None – the captain has other responsibilities.” As Figure 18 shows, 41 percent of the non-teachers allocated the highest rating for responsibility to the captain, setting it at 75 percent. Seventeen percent of the non-teachers reported that the captain had 50 percent of the responsibility, and 25 percent reported that the captain had 25 percent of the responsibility.

There is more variation amongst the responses concerning the team’s responsibility for individual players’ attitude. The highest choice was by the non-teachers: 34 percent reported that the team has 75 percent of the responsibility for players’ attitude. Twenty-five percent allocated the team 50 percent responsibility, 17

percent allocated it less than 20 percent responsibility, and 8 percent each allocated the team 25 percent or 100 percent responsibility. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 4 percent of the teachers allocated the team 100 percent of the responsibility, and another 4 percent only 20 percent of the responsibility. The rest split fairly closely: 25 percent responded that the team has 90 percent responsibility and 21 percent that it has 50 percent or 75 percent of the responsibility. No comments were made under this section.

The question of the coaches' responsibility for individual players' attitude yielded more contrast and more discussion. One coach responded:

It's not so much responsibility for the attitudes themselves, but to nurture and foster only the attitudes necessary for team members to grow and develop as a team to the best of their ability. This would be 100% of the coaches' "responsibility."

Another noted, "If the coach is fair, good attitude is maintained by the individuals themselves."

Among the non-teachers, 41 percent put 90 percent of the responsibility on the coach, compared with the teachers' 25 percent for that designation. As one coach explained, "Attitude reflects leadership." Seventeen percent of the non-teachers placed 75 percent, 50 percent, or less than 20 percent responsibility on the coaches, while 8 percent thought that coaches had 25 percent of the responsibility for individual players' attitude. Among the teachers, 33 percent indicated that coaches have 75 percent of the responsibility, and 21 percent chose 50 percent. Thirteen percent of the teachers thought that coaches were 13 percent responsible, while 4 percent allotted coaches 100 percent of the responsibility. One coach qualified his response: "A coach's attitude is also very

important. Attitude is often more important than skill and aptitude, for without a proper attitude, there is no teamwork or desire to succeed.”

“Attitude is the most important factor involved in an individual’s development in sport, yet we spend the least time on it,” commented a coach at the beginning of this section. Figure 19 illustrates the amount of time that coaches estimate they spend on developing their players’ attitudes.

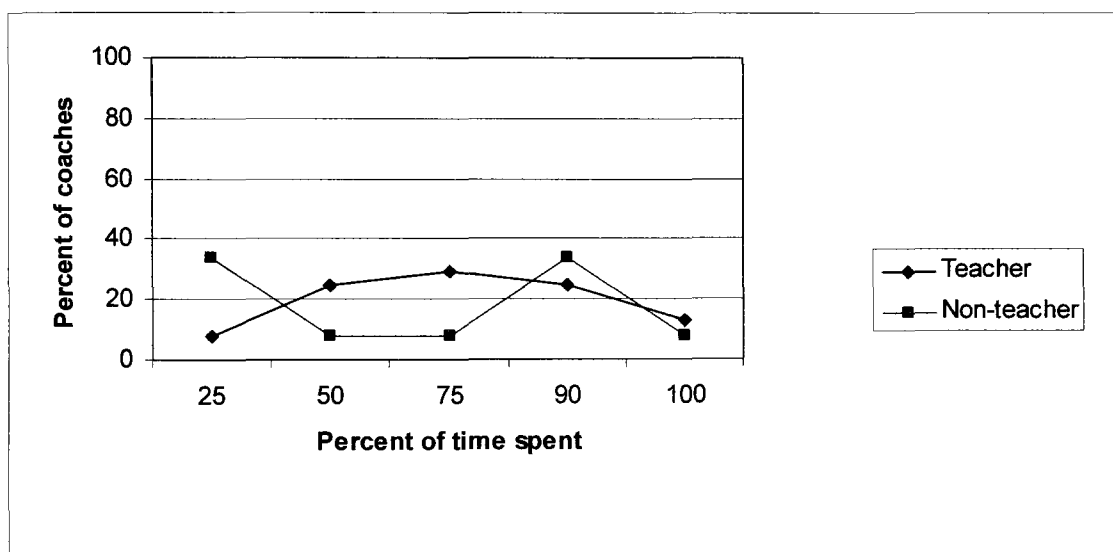


Figure 19. Time spent on attitude development.

Thirteen percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers reported that they work on attitude 100 percent of the time. One commented, “I think I constantly work on attitude.” Another noted, “Attitude is always an element of focus – willing – cooperative.”

Thirty-four percent of the non-teachers and 25 percent of the teachers reported spending 90 percent of their time on attitude. One coach echoed the verbal comments of many: “[The percentages] will not add up to 100% as attitude (as well as fitness) are built into drills. So not one ‘thing’ is being worked on in any given drill.” While 8 percent of

the teachers reported spending 25 percent of their time on attitude, the rest were closely split: 25 percent of the teachers reported spending 50 percent of their time on attitude, and 29 percent reported spending 75 percent of their time. The non-teachers dropped to 8 percent each for spending 50 percent and 75 percent of their time on attitude. One coach pointed out that attitude is not a drill-orientated activity: “Attitude is essential, even though it often takes a small amount of time. Winks, smiles, bonding drills or activities.” This coach commented on the importance of attitude and added a contributing factor:

Good attitude can change a mediocre athlete into a great one – these are the athletes that are willing to work on their own to improve skills and fitness. But I also feel another factor in attitude development is parents – both positive and negative.

Another coach added, “Passion for something is the same as success.”

The Importance of Fitness

Figure 20 illustrates the responses concerning the importance of players’ fitness levels, of players’ increasing their fitness on their own, and of days off.

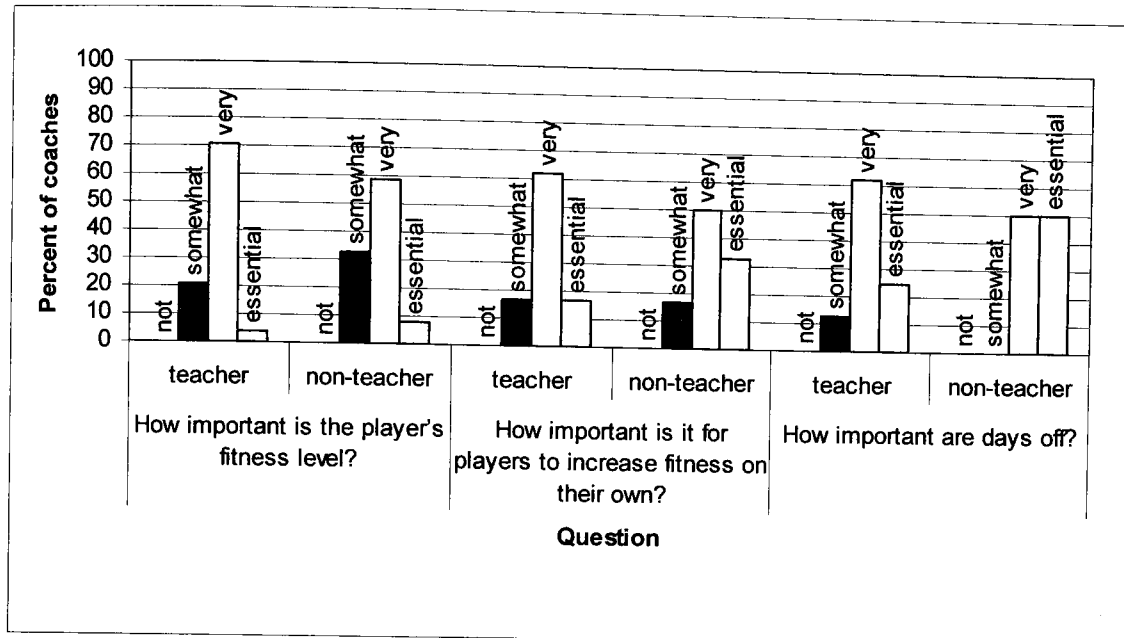


Figure 20. Importance of players' level of fitness.

Seventy-one percent of the teachers and 59 percent of the non-teachers reported that the players' fitness level is very important; 8 percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported that it is essential. One commented, "You can always improve the player's fitness." Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 21 percent of the teachers felt that it is somewhat important. One coach wrote: "A player's fitness level is somewhat important to participate on teams, but using teams as a means of increasing fitness is also important. Anything a student can do to increase fitness is vital."

Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 17 percent of the teachers said it is essential for players to increase fitness on their own. One explained, "The little time I have in practice and games needs to be on skill and attitude. It is essential they work on their fitness on their own." Sixty-two percent of the teachers and half of the non-teachers thought players' fitness level to be very important. Seventeen percent of both the teachers

and the non-teachers reported that it is somewhat important for players to increase their fitness on their own.

Concerning the importance to athletes of taking rest time, one coach wrote, “So much growth occurs during times of rest.” Another commented, “Players need days off to become personally motivated to do fitness on their own. Days off for players are also needed; rest is important.” Half of the non-teachers thought that days off are essential, although one coach added, “Days off are essential to an athlete’s development, but I find that when they are young they are not informed as to why they need to take days off, and many will over train as a result.” The remaining half of the non-teachers thought rest days very important. One commented, “Rest recovery is very important... hence sometimes practices [are scheduled] too soon after a major tourney and the team plays brutal!!” Twenty-five percent of the teachers thought that days off are essential, while 62 percent thought them very important. Again one commented, “Taking a break is essential; if your life revolves around *only* sport, eventually it won’t be fun.” Thirteen percent of the teachers reported feeling that days off are somewhat important. One explained, “[It] depends on conditioning of team, length of the season, the intensity of the ‘league’ – you need to keep the team’s overall fitness high.” Another added that taking a break is essential “if you are a high-level athlete.”

Figure 21 indicates the percentage of time that teachers and non-teachers report spending on improvement of their players’ fitness.

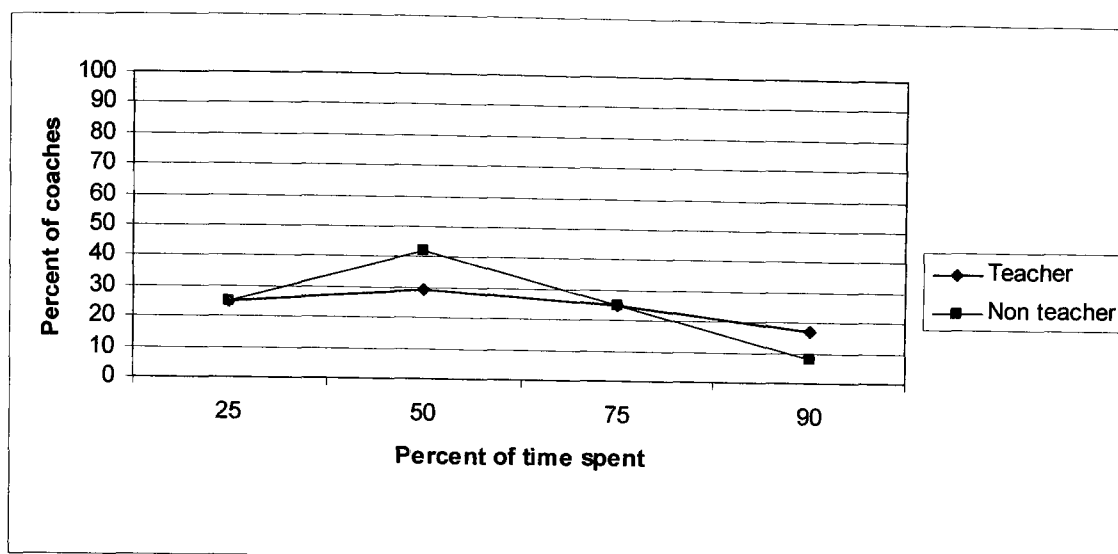


Figure 21. Time spent on improving players' fitness.

“Practice time should be at a high enough intensity that fitness improvements are gained without necessarily isolating fitness,” wrote a coach, echoing comments made in person. Forty-two percent of the teachers and 29 percent of the non-teachers said that they spend half of their time on fitness. One commented, “Less than 25% on just fitness but 50% including drills that incorporate fitness with other goals.” Twenty-five percent of both groups reported spending 25 percent of their time on fitness. One added, “Between 25 and 50% at the middle and end of season and 90% at the beginning.” Twenty-five percent of the teachers and the non-teachers agreed that they spend 75 percent of their time on fitness. One explained: “I believe that fitness can be indirectly taught to an athlete. A formal “fitness” time is not necessary in my opinion.” Seventeen percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers reported spending 90 percent of their time on fitness. One coach commented, “I build fitness in skill drills also, not just in ‘fitness’ training.”

Teamwork

Figure 22 illustrates the responses of the teachers and non-teachers concerning the importance of individual success to team development, and the converse.

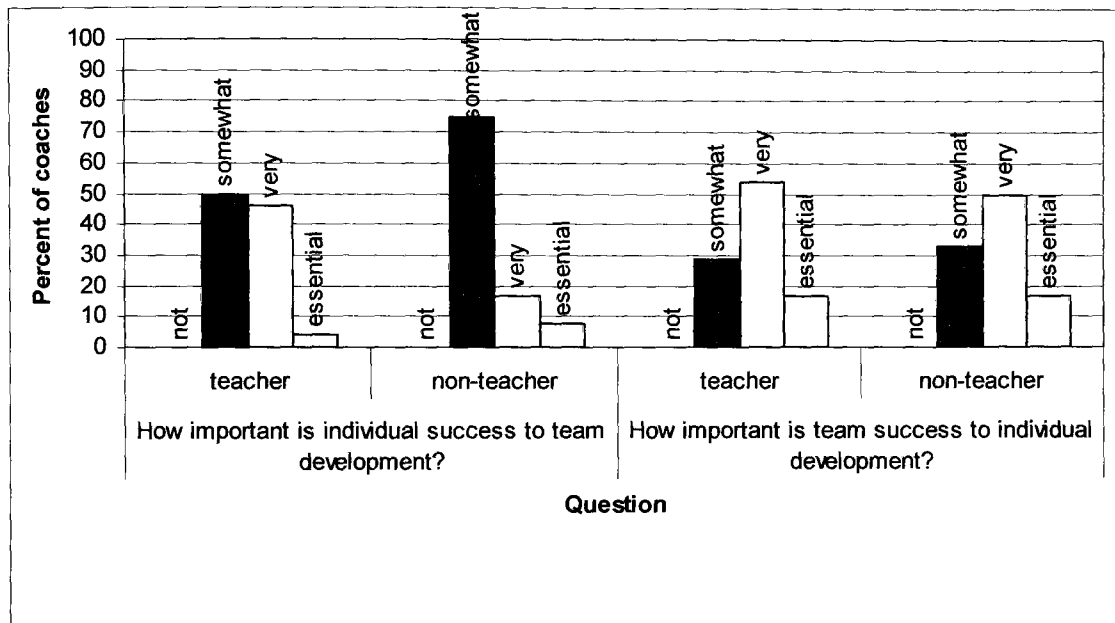


Figure 22. Relationship of individual and team success to team development.

When asked to rate the importance of individual success to team development, the teachers' responses split mainly between very important at 46 percent, and somewhat important at 50 percent, with the remaining 4 percent considering that individual success is essential for team development. Most (75 percent) of the non-teachers felt that individual success contributing to team development was only somewhat important, with 17 percent choosing very important and 8 percent choosing essential. A coach explained, "[In] some sports (e.g., volleyball) a great player is nothing because it is dependent on the play around them."

For the converse of the question -- how important team success is to individual development -- 17 percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers thought it essential.

Fifty-four percent of the teachers and 50 percent of the non-teachers thought it very important. Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 29 percent of the teachers thought that team success is somewhat important to individual development.

Figure 23 illustrates the participants' responses concerning the frequency with which they sacrifice team goals for the sake of the individual player.

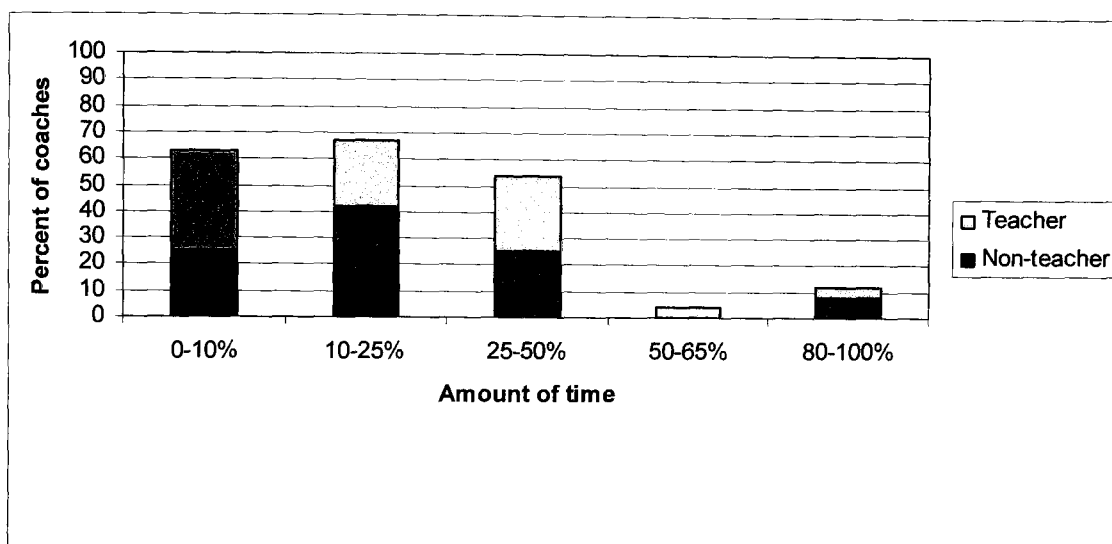


Figure 23. Frequency of sacrificing team goals for the sake of the individual.

Thirty-eight percent of the teachers reported that they sacrifice team goals for the sake of the individual up to 10 percent of the time they coach; 25 percent of the non-teachers report doing the same. Forty-two percent of the non-teachers and 25 percent of the teachers report doing so from 10 to 25 percent of the time. Four percent of the teachers reported that they sacrifice team goals for the sake of the individual between 50 and 65 percent of the time. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported doing so between 80 and 100 percent of the time. One coach added, “[There is] always – exception...playoffs at a higher level – a player may have less playing time – but everyone sees the court.”

Figure 24 displays the teachers' and non-teachers' responses concerning the question of sacrificing players' individual goals for the sake of the team.

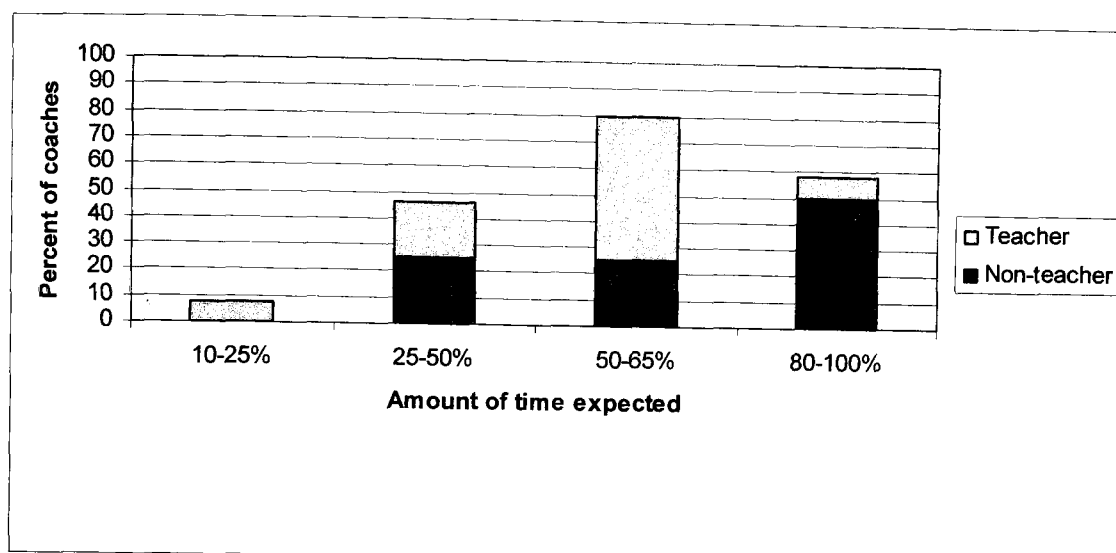


Figure 24. Frequency of sacrificing individual goals for the sake of the team.

Fifty percent of the non-teachers, again in a category that they added to the survey, said that players should sacrifice, or at the least “definitely have a willingness” to sacrifice their own goals for the sake of the team from 80 to 100 percent of the time. A coach explained: “When everyone sacrifices, a common bond is formed and a sense of *team* or *family* is gained through a common commitment.” The rest of the non-teachers split evenly: 25 percent felt that players should sacrifice their own goals for the sake of the team 50 to 56 percent of the time, and another 25 percent felt that they should do so 25 to 50 percent of the time. Most of the teachers (55 percent) thought that players should sacrifice their individual needs 50 to 65 percent of the time, with 25 percent of the teachers choosing 25 to 50 percent, and 8 percent choosing 10 to 25 percent of the time. One commented, “I do not believe it is a sacrifice as a team sport, that should be a goal.”

Another wrote, “My philosophy does not care much for the individual. The team almost *always* comes first.” A third noted, “There is no I in TEAM...there is in WIN.”

Figure 25 shows the results for teachers’ and non-teachers’ responses concerning the importance of players’ receiving equal and fair playing time.

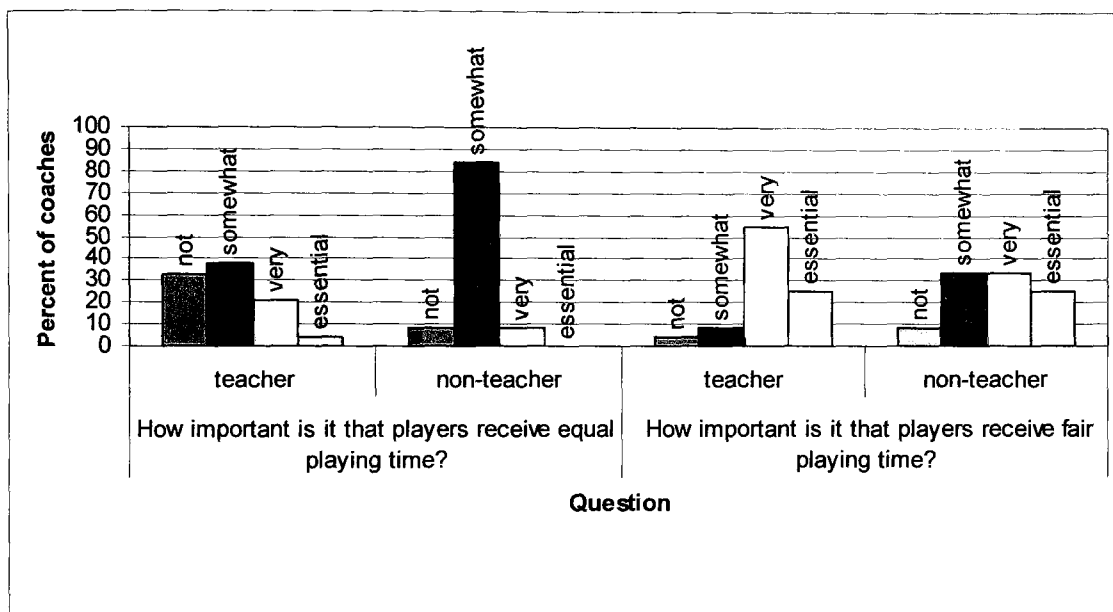


Figure 25. Importance of equal playing time.

“Equal playing time depends on age of players, level of competition,” wrote one coach. A higher percentage of the teachers (33 percent) than the non-teachers (8 percent) thought that equal playing time is not important. Those coaches who did not believe in the importance of equal playing time provided the following comments:

- Depends on the level of play...JV → somewhat. SR → NOT, College → NOT, University → NOT. Also depends on info stated at start of season. Players have to know these particulars in advance. [If you have] 7 Baby sitters [with] #1 being the best to #7 being the worst, Are you going to give #7 baby

sitter a chance to look after your child – when the other 6 are available and much, much better? NOT

- Equal playing time Junior High, Tier 2 and below. Tier 1 and above *Not*.
- Playing time needs to consider a player's ability to compete at a given level.
- Equal playing time is not necessarily best for anybody. Playing time should consider the level of play and the context of the game.
- Equal playing time at practice.

Eighty-four percent of the non-teachers and 38 percent of the teachers reported that it is somewhat important to provide equal playing time for their players, commenting, “[It] varies with level of team and age” and “depending on the level of play.” One coach qualified, “[Playing time] may not be equal, but everyone must feel that they contribute to the team, that the coach is NOT underestimating/ignoring their commitment.” Twenty-one percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers said that it is very important that players receive equal playing time. The following comments were made:

[I] think a coach has to be up front with his players. He has to explain that in certain situations the better players will receive more playing time.

Players are happy as long as they feel a part of something positive.

There are times when it could be necessary to play your better players to achieve the team goal. If the entire team wants to attain a certain level of achievement they are usually willing to do whatever it takes – even sit on the bench.

Four percent of the teachers but none of the non-teachers thought that equal playing time is essential. One coach commented:

I have an equal play philosophy: *A player is more important than a win*. I have sacrificed many games over the years. No one remembers who won or lost – but a child who would have had to sit on the bench the entire season would have remembered forever. It's okay to lose a game, it's not okay to lose a player.

Another explained: “Players at a certain level/age need to go from playing equal amounts of time to playing fair amounts of time. Fair is determined by the amount of time they earn through effort at practice, improvement of skills, etc.”

Twenty-five percent of both the teachers and the non-teachers thought that it is essential for players to receive a fair amount of playing time. Fifty-five percent of the teachers and 33 percent of the non-teachers said it was very important. One coach explained:

I definitely distinguish between equal playing time and fair playing time – I am more a fair playing time coach. By that I mean you will get equal playing time based on fair calculations of practices attended, good work ethics and positive attitude. I used to say “NO PRACTICE – NO PLAY.”

Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 8 percent of the teachers reported that a fair amount of playing time is somewhat important. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers felt that providing fair playing time is not important for their players.

Figure 26 illustrates the teachers' and non-teachers' responses concerning the importance of player-player and player-coach relationships.

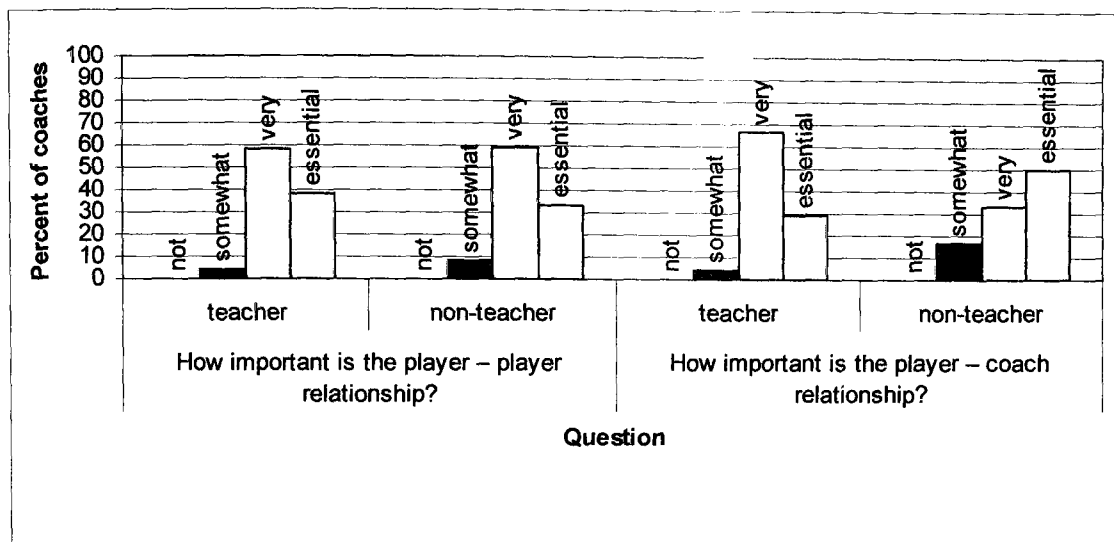


Figure 26. Importance of player-player and player-coach relationships.

The question regarding the importance of the player-player relationship did not provoke discussion or controversy. As shown, 38 percent of the teachers and 33 percent of the non-teachers reported feeling that this relationship is essential. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers and 58 percent of the non-teachers said it is very important. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers found the player-player relationship to be somewhat important.

As for the player-coach relationship, one coach wrote, “Trust is essential if a coach is going to have an impact on both the team and individual.” Fifty percent of the non-teachers reported that the player-coach relationship is essential; 67 percent of the teachers found it to be very important. Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers said that it is very important, while 29 percent of the teachers said that it is essential. Seventeen percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers chose the response “somewhat important” for this relationship.

Satisfaction and Success

People volunteer for an activity because it makes them feel good, providing a sense of satisfaction at some level. They feel successful, as this coach explained:

I find that on different teams players will aim for success for different reasons.

Athletes will usually aim for success for the love of the game and for individual success, but once the team jells and a good coach/athlete relationship is developed, the athlete is more likely to buy into the team goals and the coach's philosophy.

This section asked coaches why they think their players are involved. The teachers (see Figure 27) and the non-teachers (see Figure 28) examined and compared four possible motivations. As one coach pointed out, "These [motivations] are not exclusive of each other but rather should complement each other."

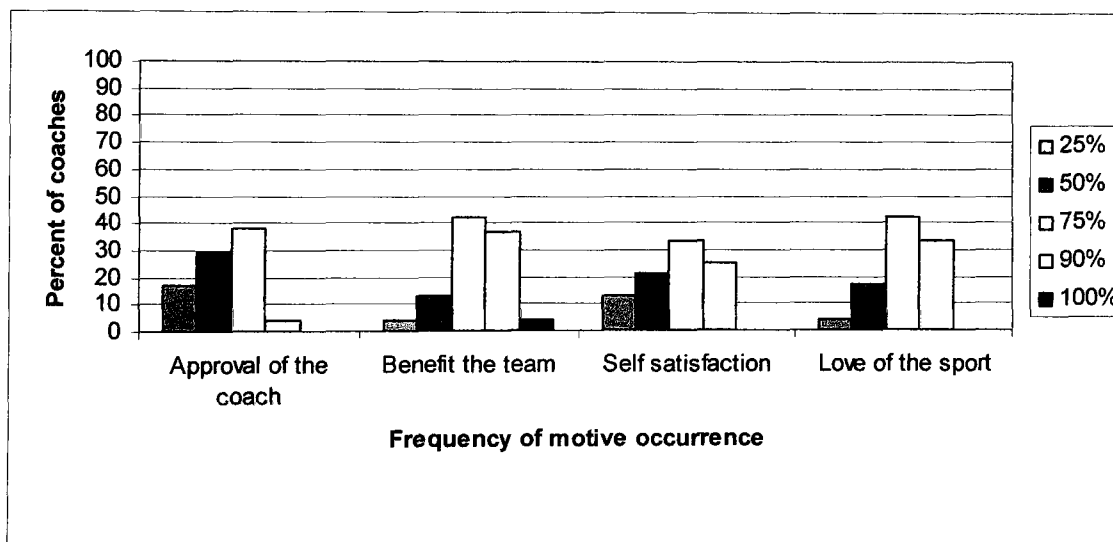


Figure 27. Teachers' ranking of players' motivation for sports involvement.

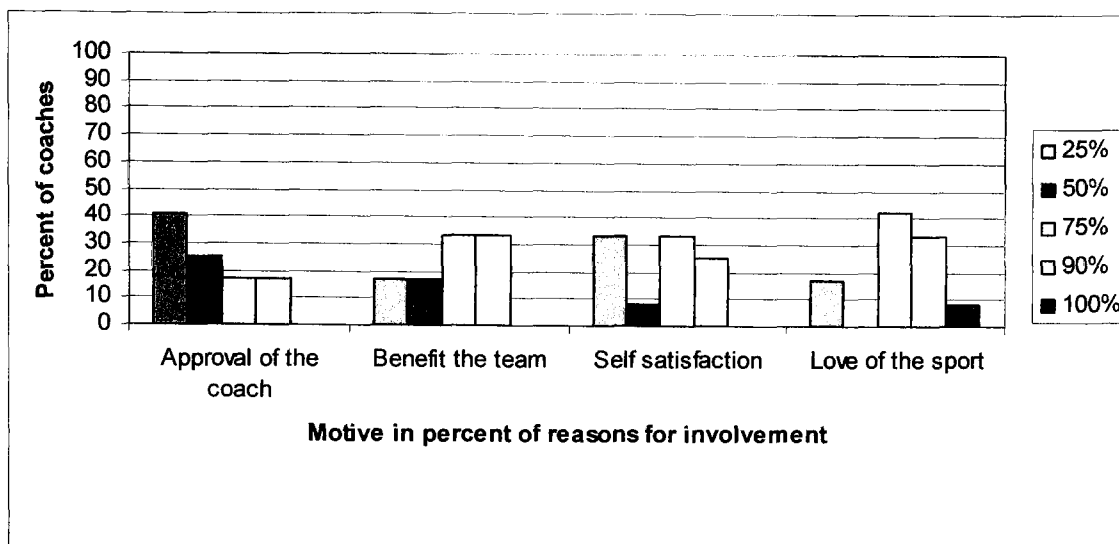


Figure 28. Non-teachers' ranking of players' motivation for sports involvement.

Thirty-eight percent of teachers said that players aim for the approval of the coach 75 percent of the time, with a coach commenting, "In schools there is usually no choice." Twenty-nine percent of the teachers thought that approval of the coach was important 50 percent of the time, and 17 percent thought it was important 25 percent of the time, with one coach adding, "There has to be respect here." Eight percent of the teachers did not answer the question, while 4 percent added a 5 percent category. One coach commented, "Stupid question. How can a coach answer?" Seventeen percent of non-teachers responded that players play for the coach 90 or 75 percent of the time, while 25 percent considered the amount to be 50 percent, and 41 percent of non-teachers considered it to be 25 percent.

In deciding how often players aim for success by playing for the team, 4 percent of teachers picked the extremes of the scale, 25 or 100 percent. Thirty-seven percent stated that players do so 90 percent of the time; 42 percent chose 75 percent; 13 percent

said players play to benefit the team half of the time. Non-teachers divided more evenly: 33 percent chose 90 or 75 percent, while 17 percent chose 50 or 25 percent.

Of the teachers, 25 percent said that players aim for success in terms of their own achievement 90 percent of the time. Thirty-three percent responded that players do so 75 percent of the time, while 21 percent responded 50 percent of the time, and 13 percent responded 25 percent of the time. Of the non-teachers, 33 percent each reported feeling that players are concerned about their own needs either 75 or 25 percent of the time. One-quarter of the non-teachers chose 90 percent, while the remaining 8 percent said that players do so half of the time.

How often do players aim for success by playing for the love of the sport? One coach commented, “I would hope 100%, or at least after they have played for me.” None of the teachers thought players actually play for love of the sport all of the time; however, 33 percent said they do so 90 percent of the time, 42 percent chose 75 percent of the time, 17 percent chose 50 percent of the time, and 4 percent chose 25 percent of the time. Eight percent of the non-teachers indicated that “love of the sport” motivates players 100 percent of the time. Thirty-three percent felt this was the motivator 90 percent of the time, 42 percent chose 75 percent of the time, and 17 percent chose 25 percent of the time.

Figure 29 illustrates the teachers’ and non-teachers’ responses concerning the importance of winning and individual achievement.

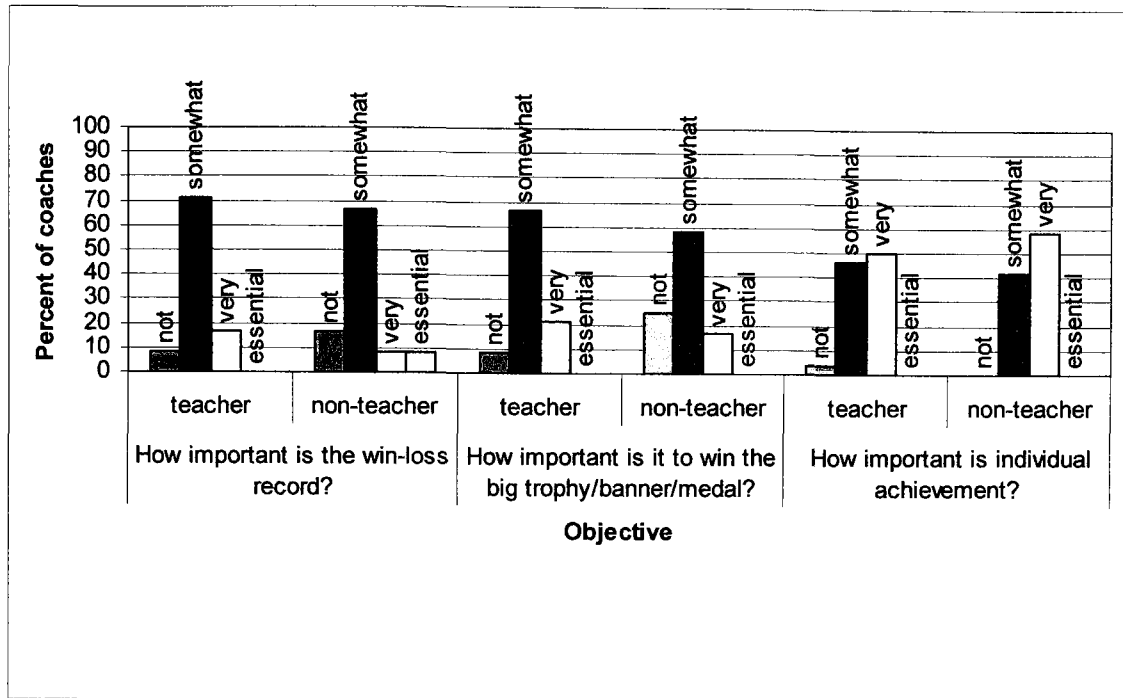


Figure 29. Importance of winning and individual achievement.

Seventy-one percent of the teachers and 67 percent of the non-teachers indicated that the win-loss record is somewhat important, in terms of having a successful season. However, one coach wrote that it “depends on team’s goal.” Another commented that it “depends on the level.” Eight percent of the non-teachers responded that the win-loss record is essential or very important, while 17 percent of the teachers thought it to be very important. Seventeen percent of the non-teachers and 8 percent of the teachers reported that the win-loss record is not important. One coach made this comment: “Define success? I coach for quality of performance, not for wins or losses. Although they are nice, I would almost rather play well and lose than play crappy and win ugly.”

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers and 58 percent of the non-teachers reported that winning the top award is somewhat important. Twenty-one percent of the teachers and 17 percent of the non-teachers said that the big win is very important. One coach

qualified that it “depends on the level of competition,” and another that it “depends on realistic level of play of team to the level being played.” Twenty-five percent of the non-teachers and 8 percent of the teachers said that those wins are not important, with one coach noting, “You have to see progress and achievement as individuals, team and a coach or you lose hope.”

Neither group felt that individual achievement is essential to a successful season. However, 58 percent of the non-teachers and 50 percent of the teachers said that it is very important; 46 percent of the teachers and 42 percent of the non-teachers said it is somewhat important. Four percent of the teachers report that individual achievement is not important to a successful season. One coach explained, “A sense of accomplishment leaves an individual feeling good about themselves, but that doesn’t have to translate to wins and losses.”

Figure 30 indicates the coaches’ spread of opinion on the importance of the team and individual players reaching a certain skill level.

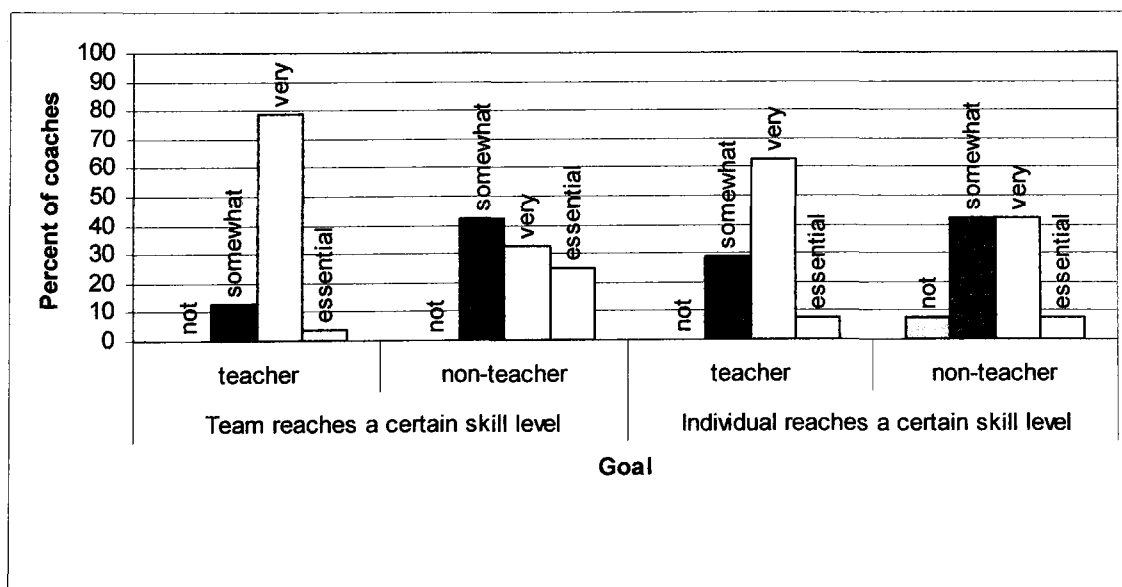


Figure 30. Importance of team and individuals reaching a certain skill level.

“I consider any improvement in skill level as success,” wrote a coach in response to the question regarding the team reaching a certain skill level. To 25 percent of the non-teachers, but only 4 percent of the teachers, the team’s reaching a certain skill level is essential. Seventy-nine percent of the teachers but only 33 percent of the non-teachers found team skill level to be very important. Forty-two percent of the non-teachers and 8 percent of the teachers said that team skills levels are somewhat important.

Eight percent of both groups found it essential that individual players should reach a certain skill level, while 8 percent of the non-teachers said that it is not important. The rest of the non-teachers split, at 42 percent, between considering attainment of a particular skill level very important and somewhat important. A coach added, “[Skill level is important] in that they achieve the skill level based on goals to improve. Must be realistic.” The majority (63 percent) of the teachers found it very important that the individual reach a certain skill level, with the remaining 29 percent considering this somewhat important. A coach explained: “Again... skill level and expectations will dictate. The important thing here – is the players playing at a level *they* want to play at – be it recreation, provincial, national or pro level.”

Figure 31 shows the importance that teachers and non-teachers allot to players’ individual goals, to team goals, and to the team’s “jelling.”

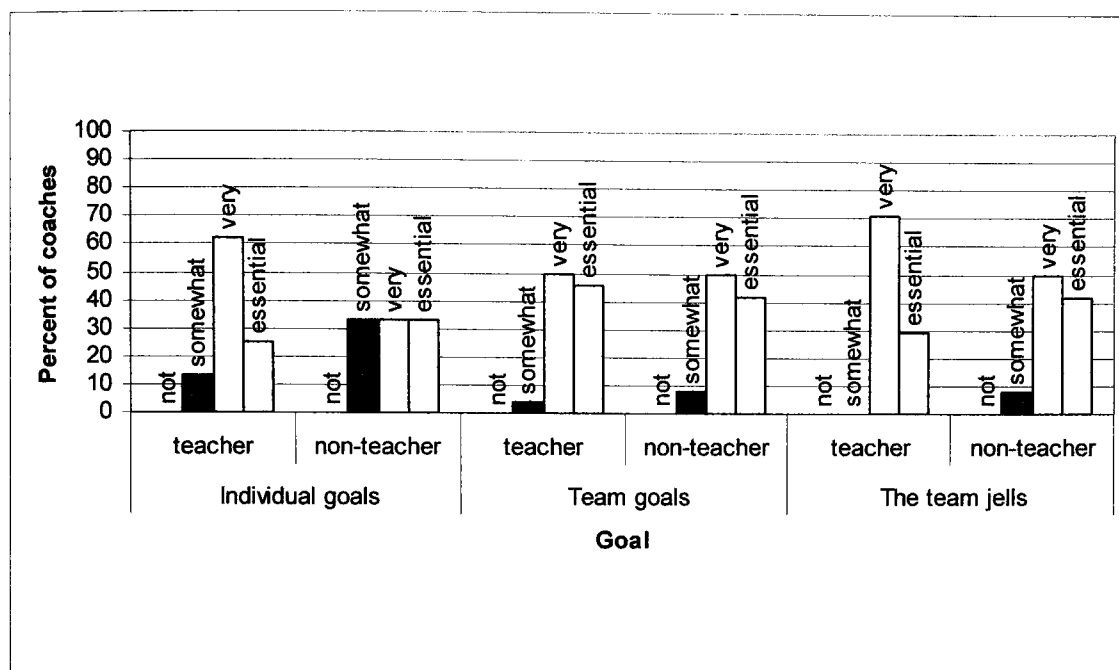


Figure 31. Importance of individual goals, team goals, and team cohesion.

Most (62 percent) of the teachers said that individual goals are very important, with 25 percent finding them essential and 13 percent deciding that individual goals are somewhat important. The non-teachers were evenly split at 33 percent each between considering individual goals essential, very important and somewhat important. One said players should “play their best.” Half each of the teachers and non-teachers agreed that team goals are very important. Forty-six percent of the teachers and 42 percent of the non-teachers considered team goals essential. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers considered team goals somewhat important in determining a successful season.

The majority of the teachers (71 percent) said that it is very important for the team to “jell” (become more cohesive) while the rest (29 percent) said that it is essential. Half of the non-teachers said that it is very important, 42 percent that it is essential, and the

remaining 8 percent that it is somewhat important for the team to jell for a successful season.

Figure 32 illustrates the coaches' responses about the importance of having fun in sports.

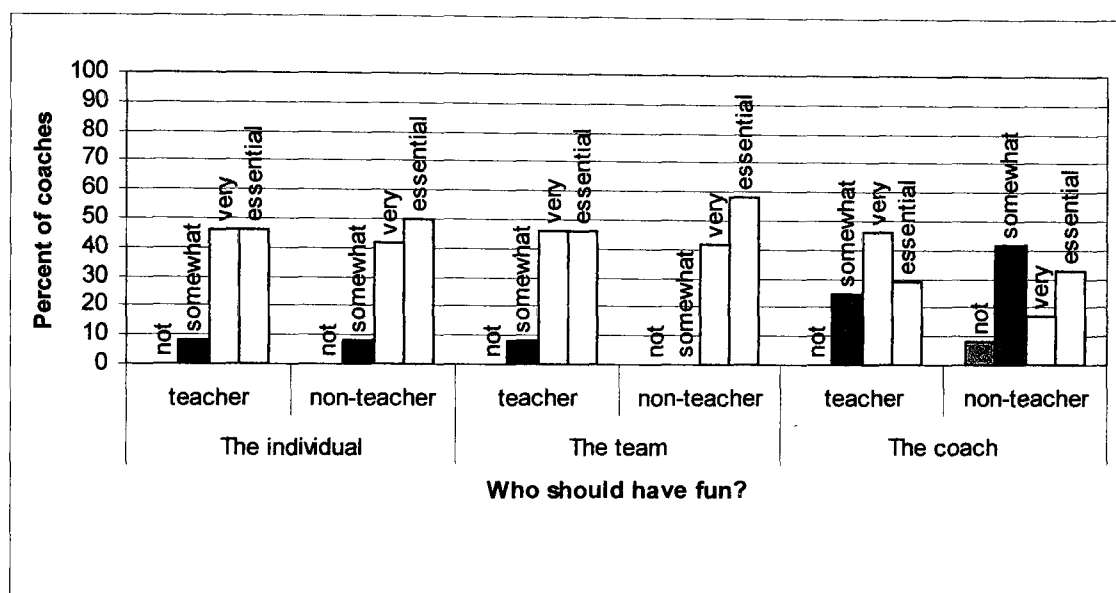


Figure 32. Importance of having fun in sports.

“What is meant by fun?” asked one coach. Another commented, “It’s all about making memories and following dreams...growth is the result that leads to self-satisfaction.” Forty-six percent of the teachers felt that it is essential or very important for the individual player to have fun, while 8 percent felt that having fun is somewhat important. Half of the non-teachers felt that having fun is essential, while 42 percent said that it is very important. Eight percent of the non-teachers felt it is somewhat important for individuals to have fun while participating in sports.

Forty-six percent of the teachers thought that the team having fun is either essential or very important, with 8 percent finding that team fun is somewhat important. The non-teachers split between “essential” (58 percent) and “very important” (42

percent) on this point. One coach qualified, "... if by fun you include a feeling of success and accomplishment and well-being."

There was more variation in the responses to the question whether the coach should have fun. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers said that it is essential, 46 percent that it is very important, and 25 percent that it is somewhat important that coaches have fun. Of the non-teachers, 33 percent said that it is essential and 17 percent said it is very important for coaches to have fun. Forty-two percent said that having fun is somewhat important for coaches, while 8 percent said that it is not important. One coach added, "The coaches' fun/feelings should be less important than the team's needs."

Next the coaches assessed how much winning, enjoyment, skill attainment, team unification and overall improvement of the players and the team contribute to a successful season. Figure 33 displays the teachers' assessment of these factors' contributions to a successful season.

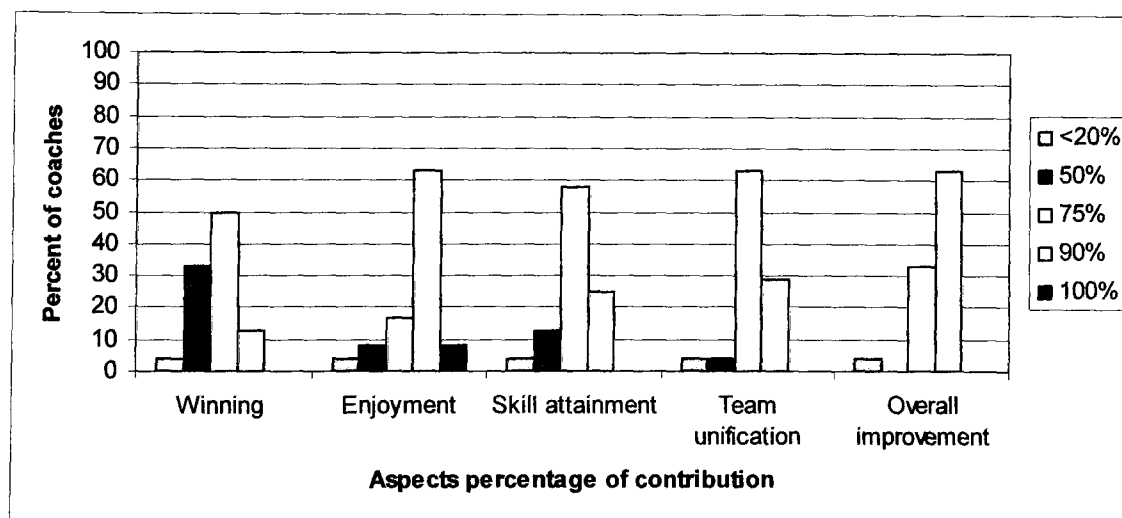


Figure 33. Teachers' assessment of factors that contribute to a successful season.

Sixty-three percent of the teachers allotted 90 percent contribution to overall improvement and enjoyment, with a comment that "If kids enjoyed it – it was probably

successful.” Twenty-nine percent of the teachers allotted a 90 percent contribution to team unification, 25 percent allotted this amount to skill attainment, and 13 percent to winning. One coach added, “Generally...no one likes to lose every game.” A 75 percent contribution was allotted by 63 percent of the teachers to team unification, by 58 percent to skill attainment, by 50 percent to winning, by 33 percent to overall improvement, and by 17 percent to enjoyment. A valuation of 50 percent was chosen by 33 percent of the teachers for winning, 13 percent for skill attainment, 8 percent for enjoyment, and 4 percent for team unification. Four percent of the teachers rated winning, skill attainment, team unification and overall improvement at less than 20 percent in terms of contributing to a successful season. Eight percent allotted enjoyment 100 percent as a contribution to a successful season. A coach summarized:

All of these [factors] depend upon level of play and team potential. Most measures of success should be based on improvement (which is not more wins because the opponents are improving as well) or improved quality of play and whether potential was met.

Figure 34 shows the non-teachers’ ratings for the various factors that contribute to a successful season.

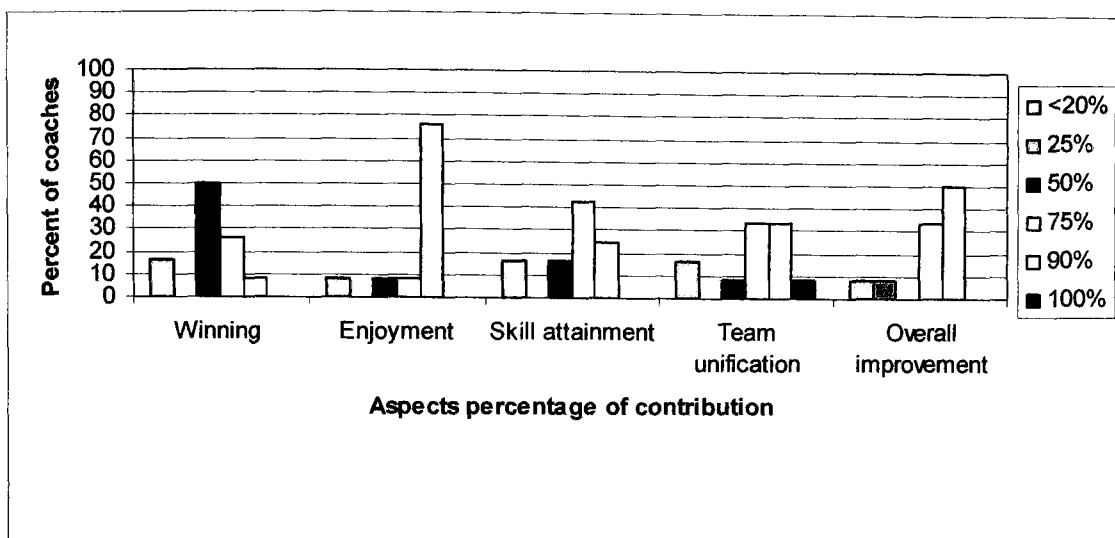


Figure 34. Non-teachers' assessment of factors that contribute to a successful season.

Sixteen percent of the non-teachers allotted to winning, skill attainment and team unification a rating below 20 percent. Seventy-six percent of the non-teachers allotted a 90 percent rating to enjoyment. “A good team goal is simply to see improvement, especially when working with junior high students who have little experience with many sports,” added one coach. Among the non-teachers, 8 percent rated winning as contributing 90 percent to a successful season, 26 percent rated winning at 75 percent, and 50 percent rated winning at 50 percent. One coach shared a personal experience to illustrate a negative effect:

My son is currently playing high school basketball for a very “win at all costs” type of coach. My son is a very good athlete – by far the most fit on his team – but is lacking in skills. Therefore his playing time is becoming less. So instead of developing his skills, he is starting to lose the ones he has and is very frustrated. He was also chosen team captain at the beginning of the season because of his hard work and great attitude. But because of not getting to play, his attitude is definitely less than positive.

Eight percent of the non-teachers rated enjoyment as contributing to a successful season at levels of below 20 percent, 50 percent, or 75 percent. The 75 percent level was the non-teachers' highest choice (by 43 percent), followed by 90 percent (by 25 percent) and 50 percent (by 16 percent) under skill attainment. Team unification elicited a 34 percent split between 90 percent and 75 percent importance. Eight percent of the non-teachers allotted team unification 50 percent, and another 8 percent allotted this factor 100 percent importance. "Unification suggests FUN!" exclaimed a coach. As for how overall improvement contributes to a successful season, 34 percent of the non-teachers allotted this factor 75 percent and 8 percent allotted it 25 percent. One coach summarized:

I feel that junior and senior high sports are so important – but even more importantly, we need to realize that this is what they are – not NHL or NFL or World Cup Soccer. Kids love being with their peers – and what better way than through healthy sports. So make it fun and keep it fun and let everybody play.

Life-Long Application

"Success builds success," commented a coach. Most of the teachers and non-teachers (75 percent) agreed that it is very important to develop personal attributes in their players, as shown in Figure 35. Twenty-five percent of the non-teachers and 21 percent of the teachers said that doing so is essential. Four percent of the teachers said that it is somewhat important.

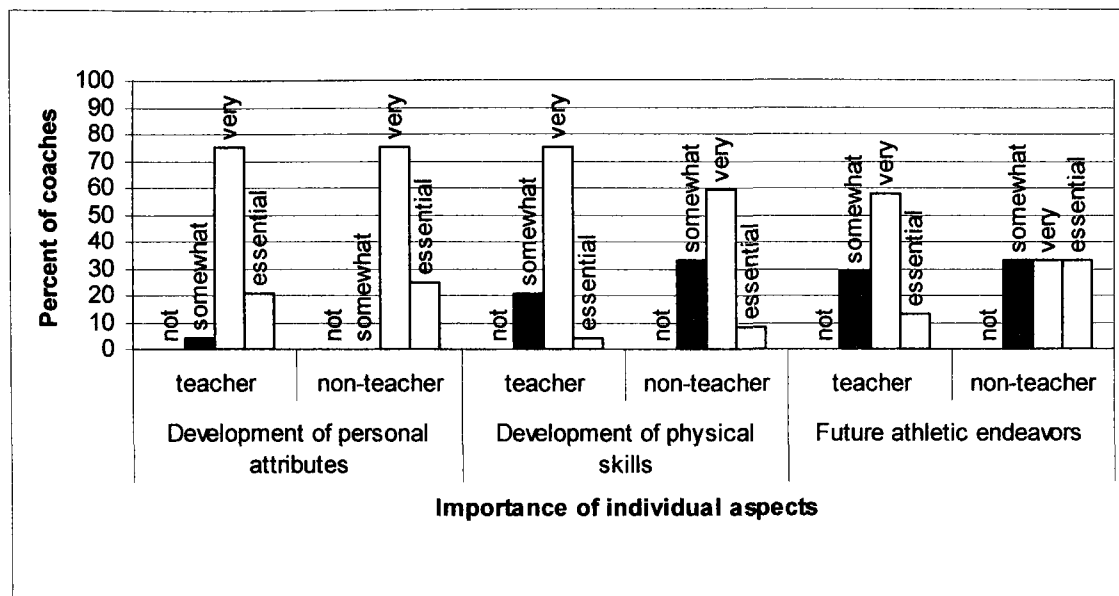


Figure 35. Individual development of players.

Seventy-five percent of the teachers reported that it is very important to develop their player's physical skills, while 59 percent of the non-teachers agreed. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers considered this factor essential, although one coach commented, "If they have no skill...good odds they are not on your team." Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 21 percent of the teachers declared development of players' physical skills to be somewhat important.

Most of the teachers (58 percent) reported that players' future athletic endeavors are a very important consideration; 29 percent considered it somewhat important and 13 percent considered it essential for coaches to consider players' athletic futures. The non-teachers were evenly split at 33 percent between considering this factor somewhat important, very important, and essential.

Figure 36 displays the teachers' and non-teachers' responses concerning whether they intentionally or subconsciously work to develop players' personal attributes.

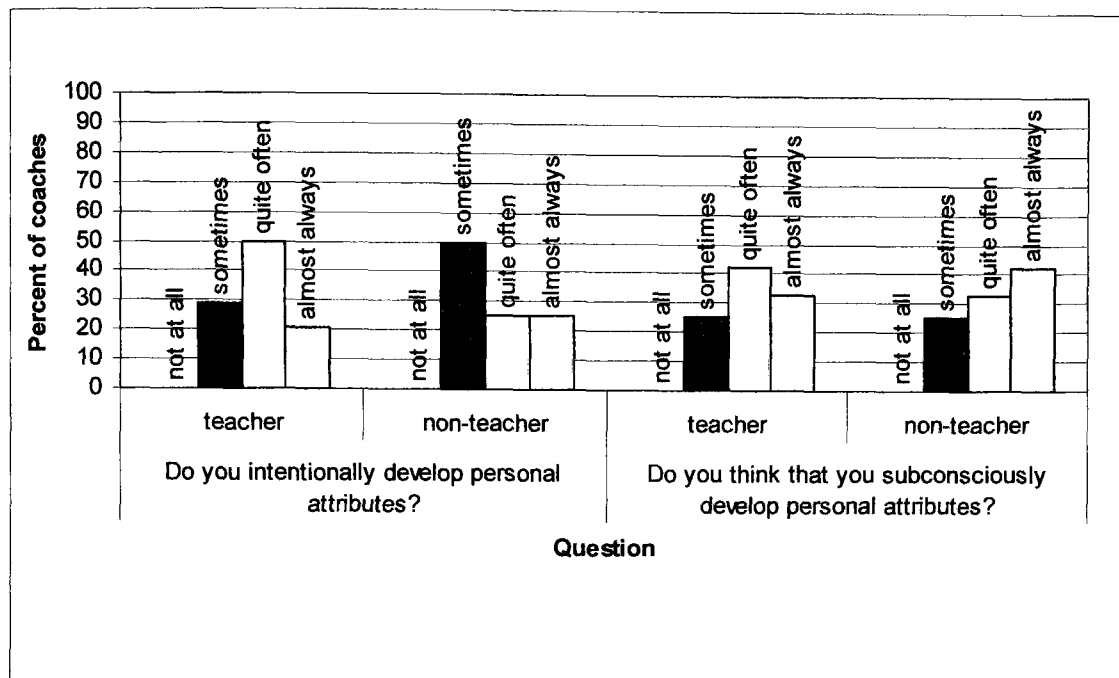


Figure 36. Development of players' personal attributes.

Half of the teachers said that they intentionally work on developing players' personal attributes quite often, while half of the non-teachers said they sometimes do so. The remaining half of the non-teachers split evenly, at 25 percent each, between working on players' attributes almost always and quite often. Of the remaining teachers, 29 percent chose "sometimes" and 21 percent chose "almost always." A university varsity coach's commented, "My goal is to develop young contributing men, not just VB players."

Coaches were also asked whether they subconsciously develop their players' personal attributes. Forty-two percent of the non-teachers, and 33 percent of the teachers, indicated that they almost always do so. Thirty-three percent of the non-teachers and 42 percent of the teachers reported doing so quite often. Twenty-five percent of both the teachers and non-teachers indicated that they sometimes do so.

The questions for which data are illustrated in Figures 37, 38 and 39 assume that personal attributes are developed in sports. The purpose of these questions is to examine whether there is lifelong application of those attributes and then to specify the applicable area. Figure 37 displays the teachers' and non-teachers' responses concerning any lifelong application in health and fitness of the personal and physical attributes developed in sports.

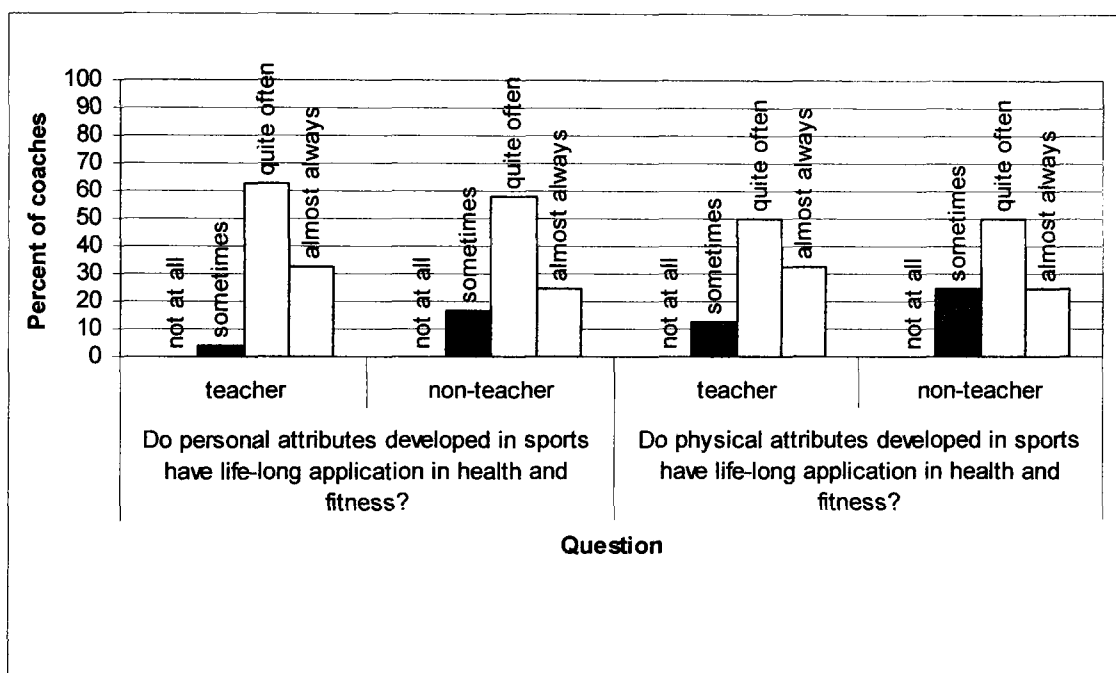


Figure 37. Life-long application of personal and physical attributes in health and fitness.

Sixty-three percent of the teachers and 58 percent of the non-teachers said that those attributes quite often have life-long application in health and fitness. Thirty-three percent of the teachers and 25 percent of the non-teachers said that this occurs almost always. Seventeen percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers felt that life-long application of personal attributes sometimes occurs in health and fitness.

Could the physical aspects of sports, such as skills and fitness, be considered to have some life-long application? Half of each group of coaches responded that was quite

often true. Thirty-three percent of the teachers and 25 percent of the non-teachers thought it is almost always the case. A quarter of the non-teachers and 13 percent of the teachers said that physical attributes sometimes have life-long application in health and fitness.

Figure 38 compares teachers' and non-teachers' opinions on how personal attributes apply to personal and professional relationships over a lifetime. Half of the coaches said that attributes developed in sport almost always carry over into personal relationships. Forty-six percent of the teachers and 42 percent of the non-teachers said that it is quite often the case. Eight percent of the non-teachers and 4 percent of the teachers reported that those attributes sometimes apply in the long term to personal relationships.

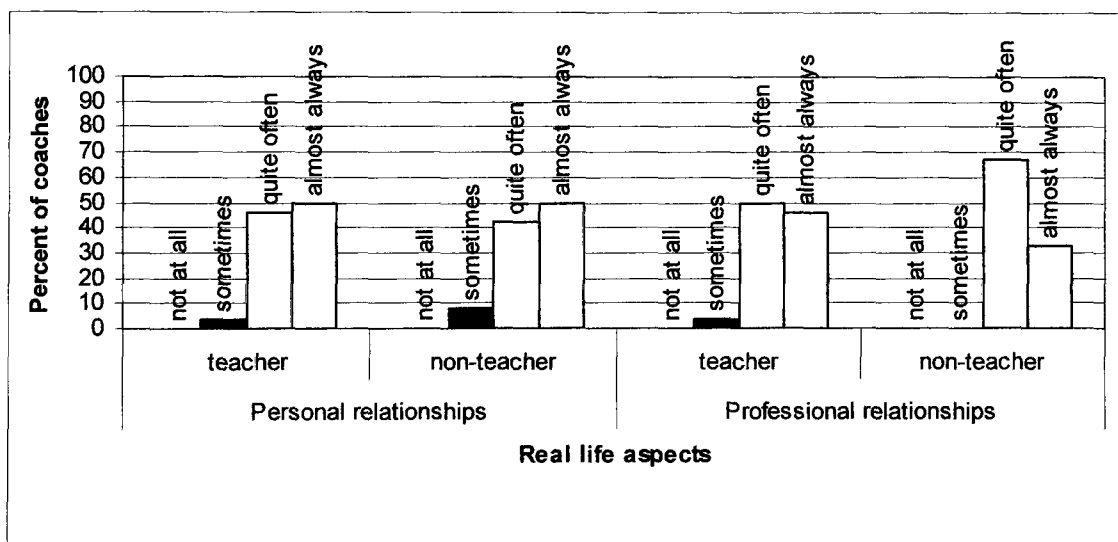


Figure 38. Lifelong application of attributes to personal and professional relationships.

The non-teachers responded that attributes developed in sports do apply to professional relationships, with 67 percent choosing “quite often” and 33 percent “almost always.” The teachers were almost evenly divided, in that 50 percent chose “quite often”

and 46 percent chose “almost always,” while 4 percent reported that the attributes developed in sports sometimes apply in the long term to professional relationships.

Figure 39 displays the extent to which coaches believe that personal attributes developed in sports will apply later in life in a player’s home life and place of work. Application to home life may occur quite often, according to 66 percent of the teachers and 50 percent of the non-teachers. Thirty-four percent of the non-teachers and 21 percent of the teachers said that attributes almost always apply to home life. Thirteen percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers felt that these attributes sometimes apply to home life. Eight percent of the non-teachers felt that attributes developed in sports do not at all apply to home life. One coach wrote, “I believe organized school sports builds organized adults.”

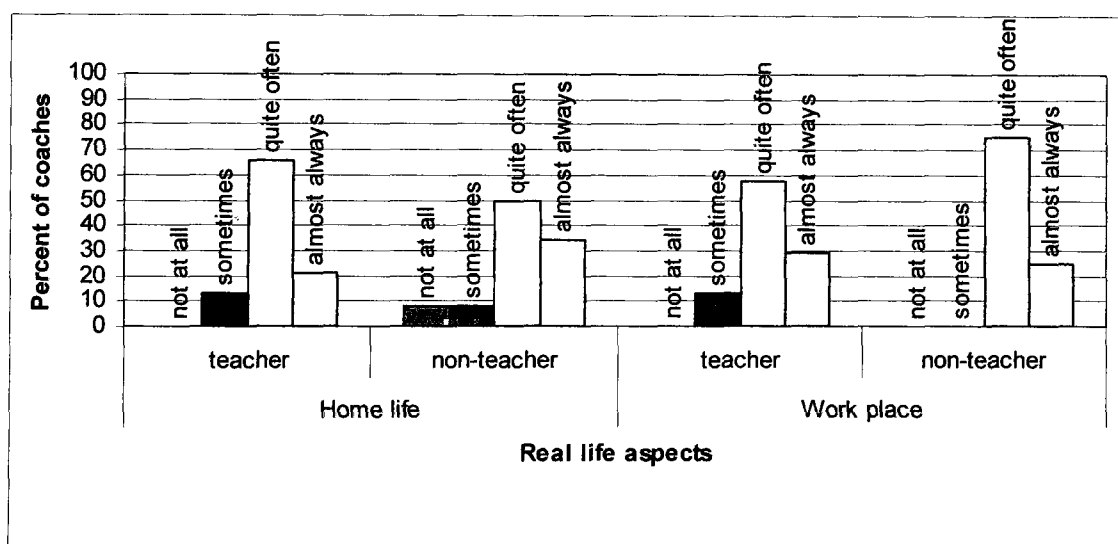


Figure 39. Long-term real life application for home life and workplace.

The non-teachers thought it more likely that attributes developed in sports would have application in the workplace; 75 percent answered “quite often” and the remaining

25 percent “almost always.” Twenty-nine percent of the teachers chose “almost always,” while 58 percent chose “quite often.” One coach explained:

I find that being involved in sports at an early age taught me important “group work” skills that I then used in school, social situations and the workplace. I find that people who were not involved in sports at an early age take longer to develop the skills to succeed in group situations.

Thirteen percent of the non-teachers said that attributes developed in sports sometimes have application in the workplace. This coach expressed a personal belief:

Check the backgrounds of most administrators in schools. You will find these 3 things in the good ones! 1) most have coached, 2) most have PE/Kines, 3) most have played some athletics (varying levels): *and the excellent ones...* have the above 3 *plus*: Have exceptional people skills, Have empowered their staff through teamwork, Have empowered their staff by supporting and trusting their decisions, “Let them play,” Celebrate achievements with camaraderie, Let their individuals be individuals within the team!

Next coaches were asked how much time they spend on developing their players’ personal attributes. Their responses are illustrated in Figure 40.

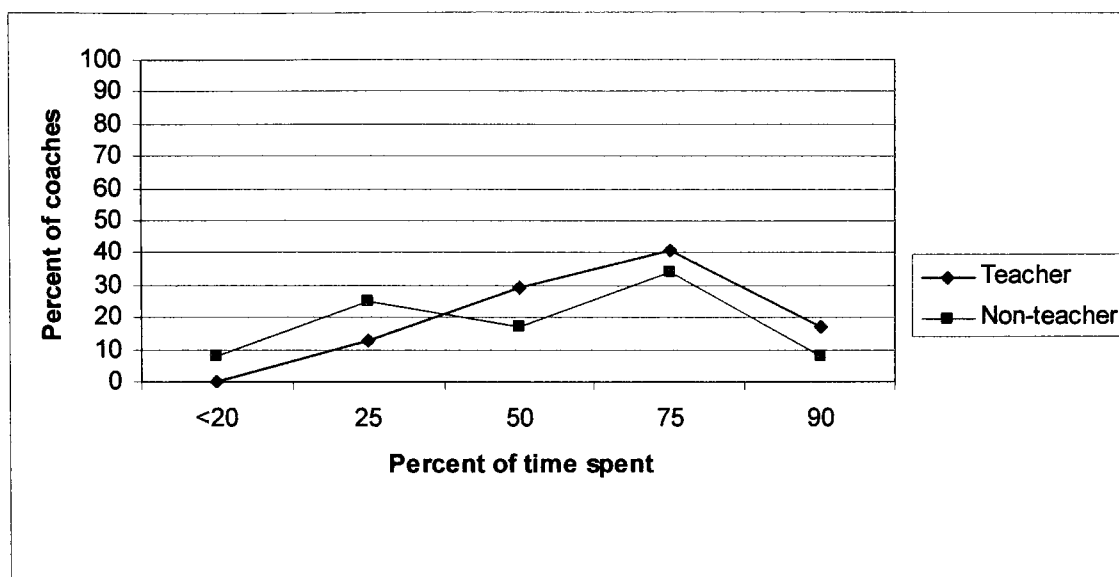


Figure 40. Time spent developing players' personal attributes.

Developing players' personal attributes absorbs one-quarter of the time for 25 percent of the non-teachers and 13 percent of the teachers. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers, and 17 percent of the non-teachers, reported spending half of their time in this area. Forty-one percent of the teachers and 34 percent of the non-teachers spent three-quarters of their time on this effort. Seventeen percent of the teachers and 8 percent of the non-teachers reported spending 90 percent of their time in this regard, while 8 percent of the non-teachers spent only 10 percent of their time.

Coaches were asked to indicate which of the listed personal attributes they believe that players can develop in sports. Figure 41 illustrates the responses.

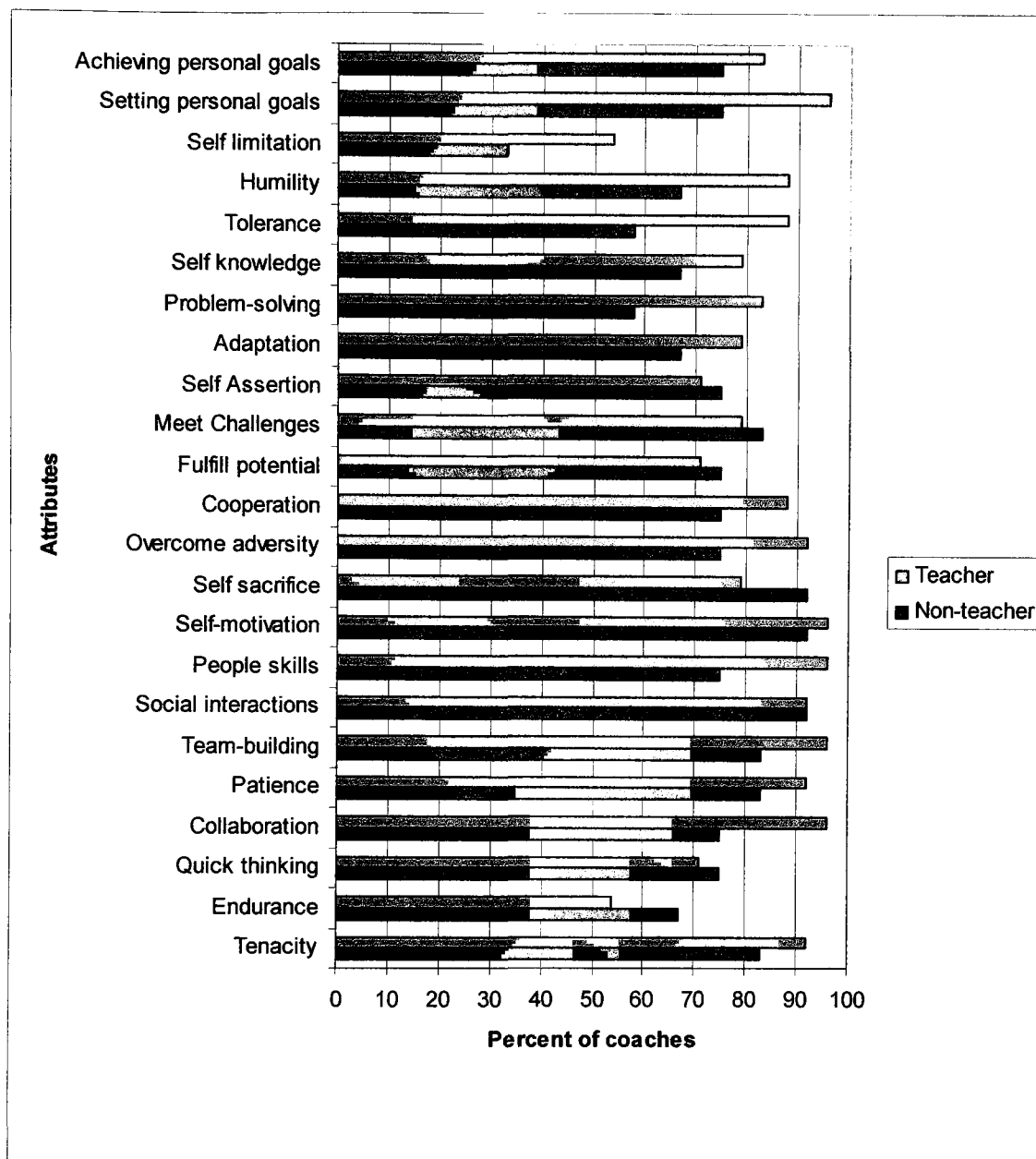


Figure 41. Attributes with lifelong application.

None of the attributes listed were chosen by all of the coaches, although some were chosen by over 90 percent of each group. Over 90 percent of the teachers selected tenacity, collaboration, patience, team building, social interactions, people skills, self-motivation, overcome adversity, and setting personal goals. Over 90 percent of the non-teachers chose social interactions, self-motivation, and self-sacrifice. Self-limitation was

the least chosen attribute by the non-teachers, at 33 percent. Self-limitation and endurance, at 54 percent each, were the attributes selected least often by the teachers. A higher percentage of the teachers than the non-teachers selected each of the attributes, except for endurance, self-sacrifice, fulfill potential, meeting a challenge, and self-assertion. Ninety-two percent of both groups chose social interactions.

On some of the surveys, two check marks were put beside collaboration, patience, team building, social interactions, self motivation, overcome adversity, cooperation, fulfill potential, adaptation, tolerance, humility, and fulfilling commitments. Humility was given an extra star on one survey.

One coach took exception to self-limitation and said s/he preferred an “anything is possible attitude.” Another commented: “If students develop these attitudes at a young age, they will be able to carry them into their lives. Many lessons learned on a team transfer very well to everyday situations.” Another commented as follows:

I feel all positive attributes gained in sports have life-long applications – that is one of the main reasons I am so supportive of kid’s sports programs. Whether or not the individual chooses to apply these attributes later in life is totally up to them – but the basics are there and the groundwork is laid.

Coaches took advantage of the space provided to suggest other attributes that they consider are developed in youth sports: compromise, love of working hard, pushing self to achieve high standards, sportsmanship, self-confidence, delayed gratification, faith, forgiveness, compassion, pride, heart, guts, achieving team goals, mental toughness, physical toughness, dedication, determination, discipline (two coaches), courage, resilience, and fulfilling commitments. Two coaches also commented on their own

involvement in self-growth. One wrote, "By filling out this survey, I have gained a lot of insight into my own coaching techniques." Another noted, "My personal attributes continue to evolve and be learned." At the end of the survey, one coach commented:

A part of me believes that sports should be mandatory for children, but that wouldn't be fair to the many who have little interest in such activities. Still it seems so essential to physical and emotional development, and given the right guidance and positive encouragement, life long success and self-confidence are genuine outcomes.

Another coach put in a last word: "Life without sports is work. Go, Vikings, go. Go, Habs, go. Go, Als, go. Life with sports is work too!"

Chapter 5. Discussion

The coaches who participated in this survey take their sports education seriously. Among the participants, the percentages of non-teachers (75%) and teachers who have had some coaching or sports education (96%), compare very favorably with the 90% of U.S. coaches (Petitpas et al., 2005) who are uneducated in the formal sense in sports education. It is important to ensure that coaches exemplify life-long learning, that they continue their education. This survey may have functioned, in a small degree, as a vehicle for self-reflection (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). The interest the coaches took in the survey shows their commitment and willingness to share their experience; the teachers especially have amassed knowledge, in terms of the seasons and sports they have coached, that they could share with other coaches. Mentorship would provide an avenue for them to share their knowledge. In retrospect, a question could have been included regarding their willingness to act as mentors.

Information about how the coaches had themselves been coached as athletes might have helped to illuminate their beliefs and value systems, as there is a relationship of cause and effect (Larson & Silverman, 2005). Although the team approach involving parents and community support is helpful in training athletes (Lawson, 2005), the survey could have included questions about pressures from these same groups, especially in terms of winning and playing time for athletes. A section could have been included with questions designed to ascertain why the participants coach.

Despite the differences among them in experience, education and philosophies, the overall impression is that these participants are coaches who think of their athletes as individuals. They work to develop their athletes' strengths and to improve upon their

weaknesses. There were some anomalies in the general attitude, such as a belief in a two-tier system of players and non-players, which Becker and Solomon (2005) discuss as an approach without benefit for the nonstarters. Most of the coaches, especially those who have coached below and/or beyond the high school level, reported that they attempt to ensure that all players have some playing time. The athletes discussed in this study are generally under the legal age of 18. This places the coach in the position of a parent, which implies that a caring relationship ought to be developed (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006). These players are children, by legal definition, yet many coaches felt that the high school level of sport, even in small communities, is the elite level. Coaches who have coached at higher levels were more likely to put emphasis on the athlete as an individual, possibly because a stronger individual yields a stronger athlete (Bailey & Morley, 2006).

The coaches explained that they build athletes' confidence through successful skill development. They also teach attributes such as trying hard and persevering. Many of the coaches were aware of the differences between game time, with its attendant speed and pressure, and practice time; they recognized that playing time makes a difference in an athlete's development (Becker & Solomon, 2005; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Whisenant, 2005). There were some strong reactions regarding playing time, especially from teachers. Non-teachers overwhelmingly supported equal playing time and, at the least, fair time. Teachers were more polarized between those who seriously consider the amount of time that is beneficial for the individual athlete and those who believe that there are starters and non-starters.

Despite the participants' belief in the life-long benefits of sports education, they appeared to give only limited consideration of the athlete's future. The question might

have yielded a clearer viewpoint if it had been broken down in terms of injuries, participation, attitudes, and health and well-being. Teachers tended to coach more multiple sports than did non-teachers. A section inquiring how coaches felt about athletes playing multiple sports would have been useful, as the research has shown playing multiple sports to be a common factor among very successful athletes (Lawson, 2005). The coaches' spending time on fitness could indicate concern for the individual's well-being, as well as sport development at the present and in the future (Butler, 2006; Lawson, 2005), yet many coaches put the responsibility for fitness onto the player. While coaches cited time constraints, additional questions could be asked regarding whether the athletes were provided with fitness programs.

Coaches' scheduling time for rest would seem to indicate a caring attitude, as a coach pointed out, since doing so gives athletes an opportunity to recover. It is also a way to allow the athletes to take part in the rest of their lives (Lawson, 2005). Non-teachers put more emphasis on rest time than did teachers. A teacher pointed out that breaks were important for high-level athletes. Since young athletes are going through sometimes extreme emotional and physical changes, it seems implausible that their need for breaks would be any less (McHale et al., 2005). Questions that asked about the level of the athletes coached might have eliminated some confusion and made the responses easier to understand in this section.

Many coaches, in a fashion typical of progressive education, focused their assessment of success on intangibles such as performance, improvement (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Larson, 2006; Petitpas et al., 2005) and enjoyment (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Jones and Wallace, 2005; Li, Lee & Solomon,

2005; Whisenant, 2005). A majority were also very focused on winning. As an overemphasis on winning can deter athletes (Butler, 2005; Lawson, 2005), there should have been questions about the participation and drop-out rates for the coaches' sports programs. If the coaches considered these rates in determining their methodology, this would indicate if the program was based on a progressive education philosophy. The child-centered approach would be to organize a sport program so that the maximum number of children could participate (Whisenant, 2005). A section related to funding and staffing would have been helpful to indicate if the coaches would welcome options such as involving more teams in more tiers of play.

Attitude is a non-quantifiable attribute that the coaches emphasized, yet some coaches did not believe that attitude is teachable. It was pointed out in the surveys that a good attitude also depends on the athlete's home and community (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006); however, much of the responsibility for attitude is put onto the athlete, raising the question of how a child develops the appropriate attitude on his/her own. Teachers, far more than non-teachers, thought that the onus for attitude is largely on the child. Many researchers (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Li et al., 2005; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Wright & Burrows, 2006) would argue that attitude is malleable and that consequently the responsibility lies with the coach. For some of the coaches, much of the responsibility for team attitude rests with the captain, a peer of the athletes. The survey questions did not provide the opportunity for the coaches to explain if they provided assistance or knowledge related to attitude.

Some coaches acknowledged that it is the coaches' responsibility to nurture the athletes in their care (Larson & Silverman, 2005; Males et al., 2006; Petitpas et al, 2005;

Taylor & Doherty, 2005). They reported feeling that they accomplish this by being fair (Butler, 2006; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Larson, 2006; Whisenant, 2005) and having a positive and flexible attitude (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Wright & Burrows, 2006). Although they felt that the athlete's attitude is the athlete's responsibility, the coaches put time and thought into attitude development through activities and drills.

The coaches acknowledged the multitasking aspect of coaching, in that they work on aspects of the sport and of the player at the same time (Jones & Wallace, 2005). These participants believe strongly in the possibility of improving their players' skills through drills and games. Their knowledge of the game enables them to find more ways to encourage their players (Bailey & Morley, 2006; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Rikard & Banville, 2006). It may have been useful to the coaches if a section had been included that examined how coaches continue their education, what changes they have seen in their knowledge and styles and how their strengths and weaknesses affect their own performance and interaction with their athletes.

For these coaches, there is a correlation between individual success and team success (Butler, 2005; Giacobbi et al., 2005; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Mallett, 2005). Teachers agreed with this idea more than the converse, which might indicate an emphasis on the individual. These coaches are very aware of the needs of the individual. Coaches struggle to balance individual and team goals so that both may benefit; some coaches place less emphasis on the external modes of success, such as winning, and more on the individual's self-confidence and participation. The group dynamic of the team, according to these coaches, is important and depends on the strengths and abilities of individual

players (Butler, 2005; Giacobbi et al, 2005; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Mallett, 2005). It is difficult to ascertain if this emphasis comes from a desire to help the individual or to develop a strong and/or winning team. Further questions might clarify this point.

The interaction of the coach and each of the players determines the attitude of the players and the team (Garn & Cothran, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Larson & Silverman, 2006; Males et al., 2006; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Petitpas et al., 2005). These coaches emphasized the concept of fun and enjoyment of participation for both themselves and the athletes. There was some confusion about the definition of fun, but the researcher assumed that the concept of fun, although multi-layered, is based on enjoyment of participation in sports, because sports are games and games are fun (Garn & Cothran, 2006; Larson, 2006; Larson & Silverman, 2005; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Taylor & Doherty, 2005; Whisenant, 2005). In return, the coaches report, they expect sacrifices and the best effort from the players, so it becomes a correlation, as in the real world. The survey should have asked for explanation of the sacrifices that coaches expect of the players, such as time commitments, best effort, and sharing of plays.

Effective coaches acknowledge the importance of intrinsic motivation for their players. Intrinsic motivation is the medium that enables athletes to take what they have learned and make it a part of their personal characteristics (Butler, 2006; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Li et al., 2005; Mallet, 2005; Petitpas et al., 2005; Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Intrinsic satisfaction of players is developmental (Li et al., 2005). The responses gave the impression that the section concerning why athletes play took many of the coaches by surprise. Indications that the coaches understood the motivation of their players would indicate that they have tried to develop a relationship with them (Bailey & Morley, 2006;

Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Larson, 2006; Larson & Silverman, 2005; Males et al., 2006; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Petitpas et al., 2005). The answers would have been more accurate if the survey had included the degrees and the continuum of each of the motivations for playing.

All of the coaches indicated that they have some awareness of the individual needs of their players. They mentioned maintaining a focus on learning and improvement, with some emphasis on individual players' needs and goals. These coaches were aware of the health and well-being benefits of sports (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006), as indicated in the attributes they chose. They agreed with the premise that sports education is an important venue for developing life-long attributes in their players (Becker & Solomon, 2005). They believed that there were a number of attributes that athletes would learn through participation in sports, attributes that they would need in their adult lives. The different degrees of importance attached to different attributes by these coaches can be attributed to the coaches' own personalities and values (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006). The coaches in this study gave varying degrees of importance and effort into development of their players as people, showing their different philosophies, approaches, and degrees of student understanding (Rikard & Banville, 2006). They indicated that they could be somewhat flexible in changing their goals depending on the individuals and in discussing team goals with their team (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

An increase in the number of participants in the survey would help to determine if the small differences, in this study, in terms of the groups, athletes coached, experience, certification, and education were significant. More sports could also be covered through additional surveys. Piloting the survey might have eliminated confusion about what the

questions were asking, although it seemed important to avoid giving the participants too narrow a view. It is very unfortunate that interviews were not carried out, due to the time constraints, as there are coaches willing to put in the time to share their knowledge.

Coaches bring their own values and personalities to their coaching situation, resulting in various styles, which may still bring about similar results. Lack of appreciation for a coach may be a result of his/her ignorance of the sport, the players, or the expectations of the community. It may be helpful for schools to use a survey that would ascertain individuals' coaching philosophy, to develop compatibility between the coaches and the community. Dialogue amongst those involved, coaches, players, parents and administrators, creates a more effective team that in turn creates a better athlete and more 'fun' for everyone.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

It is possible to unite a teaching and coaching perspective of child-centered education through youth sports. The practical nature of sports enables the athlete to gain knowledge through actual experience. The pragmatism, learning in an actual manner, of discovery with practical solutions reflects a progressive education philosophy.

Sport mimics real-life experiences in terms of interactions with people, as players learn to care about other people and to work together to attain a common goal. Athletes develop a work ethic, learning to use their talents to do their best. They develop physical skills such as speed, coordination and strength. Players gain practice in the mental skills of pattern recognition, creative thinking, critical thinking, quick thinking and anticipation of events. They learn to apply past experiences and knowledge to new experiences, a life-long skill. Athletes learn how to handle strong emotions, both their own and others', in various situations. They develop confidence and assertiveness as they learn to work with their strengths and weaknesses and realize that they can make a definite contribution to the team and to society. While players learn that they can make a difference, they also learn to be less self-centered. Sport enables athletes to experience a sense of accomplishment and joy through both the fun and the adversity involved in playing a game. Sport develops anticipation in athletes, who learn that there are consequences to each action.

The literature indicates that coaches facilitate effective sports education. Coaches have the responsibility of teaching a sport, while treating the child as both an athlete and a person. Through flexibility, fairness, positive thinking and caring, coaches exemplify how to have fun while learning. By considering the future of the athletes in terms of

health and well-being, skill acquisition, and development of life-long attributes, coaches help to develop people who will become moral and accomplished citizens. They share this knowledge with their associates, children and students. The coach participants in the survey supported the premise by sharing their beliefs, experiences and techniques. They represent a body of practical knowledge that should be used in developing coaching philosophy.

The dichotomy of sports is that it is a game with serious consequences. The game is played for fun, while resulting skills and attributes are life-long. Physical and emotional injuries can also be life-long. Coaching is a considerable responsibility with the potential of extraordinary enjoyment for the player and the coach.

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Appendix. Survey Instrument

The Value of Youth Sports

I am completing my Master of Education Program at the University of Lethbridge by engaging in an action research project entitled *Child-Centered Education Through Sport*. The objective of a project is to provide a basis for further learning. The last three decades of my involvement in sport have been exciting and rewarding. It fascinates me how we employ different techniques, yet we each attain success and enjoyment with our teams. It is my hypothesis that organized sport can provide children with skills and attitudes that have lifelong application. I ask you to take time from your extraordinarily busy schedule to contribute your experience and knowledge to my project by completing the following survey. Any comments or ideas that you have will be gratefully received and used in my discussion.

The survey may be sealed and returned in the envelope provided, ensuring anonymity. [Name address and phone number of the researcher was included.]

There are different types of questions. Some require checks in appropriate blanks; some require circling the applicable responses. Many questions have multi-answer responses. Blanks are provided if there are additional options that apply to you. There is room for comment at the end of each section. Thank you for your contribution.

Coaching Experience

As head coach or assistant coach or manager:

1. How many seasons (beginning to end of a single sport session) have you coached?

0 - 3 4 - 8 9 -20 21 -30 30 plus

2. What sports have you coached?

badminton baseball basketball curling fastball figure skating

football gymnastics golf hockey rodeo rugby slo-pitch

soccer swimming track & field volleyball wrestling

other _____

3. What ages have you coached?

under 6 7 - 11 12 - 15 16-19 20+

4. What levels have you coached?

community school college university semi-pro professional

5. Are you a certified teacher?

yes no

6. Are you a volunteer?

yes no

7. Have you participated in sports as an athlete?

yes no

8. Have you taken kinesiology courses?

none some have a minor have a degree

9. Have you participated in coaching clinics?

none some certification teach them

10. Further comments:

Referee Experience

This position provides a unique perspective that is important to sport development. If you both coach and referee, please fill out both the coaching and the refereeing sections.

1. How many seasons have you refereed?

0 – 3 4 - 8 9 -20 21 plus

2. What sports have you refereed?

badminton baseball basketball curling fastball figure skating

football gymnastics golf hockey rodeo rugby slo-pitch

soccer swimming track & field volleyball wrestling

other _____

3. What ages have you refereed?

under 6 7-11 12-15 16-19 20+

4. What levels have you refereed?

community school college university semi-pro professional

5. Are you a certified teacher?

yes no

6. Have you participated in sports as an athlete?

yes no

7. Are you a volunteer (willingly or otherwise)?

yes no

8. Have you taken kinesiology courses?

none some have a minor have a degree

9. Have you participated in refereeing clinics?

none some certification teach them

10. Further comments:

Aptitude

1. How important is a player's aptitude (natural ability)?

not somewhat very essential

2. How beneficial is the level of aptitude to a player's athletic development?

not somewhat very essential

3. How beneficial is the level of aptitude to a player's personal development?

not somewhat very essential

4. Rate in order of importance:

_____ aptitude

_____ skills

_____ attitude

_____ fitness

5. Further comments:

Skills

- How important is the development of individual skills?
not somewhat very essential
- How much time do you spend on skill development?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
- How important is it for players to strengthen their skills on their own?
not somewhat very essential
- How important is it to consider individual playing time?
not somewhat very essential
- Further comments:

Attitude

- How important is the player's attitude?
not somewhat very essential
- How much time do you spend on attitude development?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
- How much responsibility for individual attitude lies with the player?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
- How much responsibility for individual attitude lies with the captain?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
- How much responsibility for individual attitude lies with the team?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
- How much responsibility for individual attitude lies with the coach?
25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

7. How possible is it to change a player's attitude?

not somewhat very essential

8. How desirable is it to change a player's attitude?

not somewhat very essential

9. Further comments:

Fitness

1. How important is the player's fitness level?

not somewhat very essential

2. How much time do you spend on fitness?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

3. How important is it for players to increase fitness on their own?

not somewhat very essential

4. How important are days off?

not somewhat very essential

5. Further comments:

Teamwork

1. How important is individual success to team development?

not somewhat very essential

2. How important is team success to individual development?

not somewhat very essential

3. How often do you sacrifice team goals for the sake of the individual?

0 – 10% 10 – 25% 25 – 50% 50 – 65% other _____

4. How important is it for players to sacrifice themselves for the team?
 0 – 10% 10 – 25% 25 – 50% 50 – 65% other _____
5. How important is it that players receive equal playing time?
 not somewhat very essential
6. How important is it that players receive fair playing time?
 not somewhat very essential
7. How important is the player – player relationship?
 not somewhat very essential
8. How important is the player – coach relationship?
 not somewhat very essential
9. Further comments:

Success

Definitions of success vary among coaches, sports and individual teams.

1. How often do players aim for success by playing for the coach?
 25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
2. How often do players aim for success by playing for the team?
 25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
3. How often do players aim for success by playing for themselves?
 25% 50% 75% 90% other _____
4. How often do players aim for success by playing for love of the sport?
 25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

5. How important is the win-loss record?

not somewhat very essential

6. How important is it to win the big trophy/banner/medal?

not somewhat very essential

7. How important is individual achievement?

not somewhat very essential

8. How important is it that the individual has fun?

not somewhat very essential

9. How important is it that the team has fun?

not somewhat very essential

10. How important is it that the coach has fun?

not somewhat very essential

11. How important is it that the team reaches a certain skill level?

not somewhat very essential

12. How important is it that an individual reaches a certain skill level?

not somewhat very essential

13. How important are individual goals?

not somewhat very essential

14. How important are team goals?

not somewhat very essential

15. How important is it that the team jells?

not somewhat very essential

16. How much does winning contribute to a successful season?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

17. How much does enjoyment contribute to a successful season?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

18. How much does the skill attainment contribute to a successful season?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

19. How much does team unification contribute to a successful season?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

20. How much does overall improvement contribute to a successful season?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

21. Further comments:

Lifelong Application

1. How important is the development of personal attributes?

not somewhat very essential

2. How important is the development of physical skills?

not somewhat very essential

3. How important is it to consider the future athletic endeavors of the player?

not somewhat very essential

4. How much time do you spend on development of personal attributes?

25% 50% 75% 90% other _____

5. Do you intentionally develop personal attributes?

not at all sometimes quite often as much as possible

6. Do you think that you subconsciously develop personal attributes?

not at all sometimes quite often most of the time

7. Check the positive attributes that you believe could have life-long application:

___ Tenacity

___ Endurance

___ Quick thinking

___ Collaboration

___ Patience

___ Team-building

___ Social interactions

___ People skills

___ Self-motivation

___ Self sacrifice

___ Overcome adversity

___ Cooperation

___ Fulfill potential

___ Meet a Challenge

___ Self Assertion

___ Adaptation

___ Problem-solving

___ Self knowledge

___ Tolerance

___ Humility

- ____ Self limitation
- ____ Setting personal goals
- ____ Achieving personal goals
- ____ other _____
- ____ other _____
- ____ other _____
- ____ other _____
- ____ other _____

8. Do personal attributes developed in sports have life-long application in personal relationships?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

9. Do personal attributes developed in sports have life-long application in professional relationships?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

10. Do personal attributes developed in sports have life-long application in health and fitness?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

11. Do physical attributes developed in sports have life-long application in health and fitness?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

12. Do personal attributes developed in sports have life-long application in home life?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

13. Do personal attributes developed in sports have life-long application in the workplace?

not at all sometimes quite often almost always

14. Further comments: