Educating Coaches: The Role of Higher Education Institutions

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Mission of Higher Education Institutions

Service to the public

• Provide formal and accessible learning opportunities
• Conduct research in the national interest

Brint, 2019
Recognition of the Role of HEIs in Coach Education

Research has shown coaches have at least an undergraduate degree (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006)

From 1998 to 2015 there has been a 76% increase in HEI Coach Education Programs in the US (Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2019)

• Many programs still minors or concentrations
Base Curriculum on Specialized Knowledge in Coaching Profession

Seven Core Responsibilities of the National Standards for Sport Coaches (SHAPE America, 2019)

ICCE, 2013 plus Standards for Higher Education: Sport Coaching Bachelor Degrees (Lara-Bercial et al., 2016)
Create Programs Based on Curricular Approaches & Learning Theory

**Examples of Curricular Approaches**
- Standards-based
- Competency-based
- Forward & Backward Designs
- Spiral Curriculum

**Examples of Learning Theories**
- Social Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Situated Learning
- Self-Directed Learning
NEED: Develop a Better Understanding of What Works for Coaching Practice

Sport coaching is the purposeful improvement of an individual or team’s performance in sport.

- It is an integrated process
- It is a complex role involving complex decision making
- It is adapted to the needs of the coaching context
- It intersects with the self

Abraham et al., 2013; Lyle & Cushion, 2017
Next Step #1

HEIs can lead the way in providing effective coach education programming by intentionally:

- considering the curricular approaches and learning theories aligned with the specialized knowledge and skills in sport coaching; and
- embracing the complexity of coaching practice
NEED: Develop a Better Understanding of What Works for Coaching Learning

(Werthner & Trudel, 2006)
Next Step #2

- Blend learning situations to align with how coaches learn
- Develop programming to meet learners where they are and prepare them for their coaching contexts

Factors to Consider
- Instituting learner-centered approaches
- Integrating reflective practice throughout curriculum
- Blending formal and informal learning situations through field experiences and effective mentoring and communities of practice
- Providing opportunities for non-formal learning
Next Step #3

Be more deliberate in developing mutually beneficial collaborations with community coaching programs to

- provide community coaches with situated learning experiences meeting them where they are;
- Integrate practical coaching experiences into courses; and
- develop meaningful field experiences
Conduct Systematic Evaluation

- Program Reviews
  - Achievement of Program Outcomes
  - SWOT Analysis

- External Evaluation
  - Accreditation Review
Next Step #4

Devote time and resources to develop and evaluate their coach education program

Embrace evaluation science (Patton, 2018) by using evaluation models and theories to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs
Conduct Research to Support Evidence-based Practice

- Answering research questions practical to sport coaching, coach learning, and coach education
- Being resource hubs for coaches to find evidence-based content for coaching practice
Next Step #5

Provide faculty in coach education programs with time and resources to address the research needs in the coaching profession
Role of Higher Education Institutions

Provide a service to the sport coaching community by:

• Identifying and implementing best practices for educating coaches
• Collaborating with local communities to improve coaching practice and promote blended learning situations
• Sharing evaluation methods and findings
• Conducting research that furthers coaching science

What Can We Do to Lead the Way?