

**Exploring sports coaches receptiveness to alternative pedagogical approaches to coaching [abstract only]**

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**EXPLORING SPORT COACHES' EXPERIENCES OF USING A CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO COACHING**

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**Introduction**

Contemporary coaching approaches are becoming more prominent in academia, however, there is still limited take-up by practitioners [1]. This results in a disconnect between what contemporary empirical research suggests as sound pedagogical principles, and what coaches adopt in practice [2]. Research has investigated why sport coaches continue to use traditional reproductive pedagogical methods [3]. However, limited research has explored the insights and experiences of high-performance coaches who are employing contemporary methods in practice. Hence, this study aimed to (i) explore the insights of high-level coaches who are adopting contemporary approaches to understand why these coaches have eschewed more traditional methods, and (ii) gain information on their experiences when employing these contemporary approaches in their practice.

**Method**

Fifteen sports coaches (9 to 28 years professional experience) from individual (5) and team sports (10) were interviewed. Coaches ranged from working within national level sports teams, coaching Olympic athletes and being employed within professional sport organisations. Participants were purposively sampled based on their adoption of contemporary models of learning in their pedagogical practice, defined as athlete-led, non-linear, individualised, and focused on problem solving [4]. Interviews ranged from 35 to 99 minutes and were transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis of the qualitative data was conducted.

**Results**

The thematic analysis revealed 58 lower-order themes, 12 higher-order themes, which were organised into 3 dimensions; (i) factors underpinning model of learning; (ii) model of learning; and (iii) responses to contemporary approaches. Coaches reported a typical culture of traditional methods of learning within their sports. However, they believed traditional approaches were not effective in developing athlete performance. Hence, they adopted a non-linear, individualised, adaptive approach, emphasising representative learning designs [4]. Typical reactions to this approach resulted in resistance from stakeholders (e.g. athletes, parents, NGBs) [3]. However, coaches continued to use this approach and expressed how positive reactions emerged over time with effective communication with stakeholders being critical for acceptance of their model of learning.

**Conclusion**

Despite the well-accepted theoretical ideas of contemporary models, coaches face a hard challenge implementing these new models of coaching in practice. Continued integration between experiential and empirical knowledge may increase the acceptance of contemporary pedagogical approaches and encourage the uptake of these models of learning.

**References**

- 1] Renshaw et. al., *Phys Educ Sport Pedagogy*, 2018.
- 2] Jones et. al., *Sport Educ Soc*, 2012.
- 3] Moy et. al., *Phys Educ Sport Pedagogy*, 2016.
- 4] Renshaw et. al., *Routledge Studies in Constraints-Based Methodologies in Sport*, 2019.