The Journey *Is* the Destination: Reconsidering the Expert Sports Coach

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This article seeks to critically consider the traditional linear staged model of expertise development commonly employed in the sports coaching literature, which has been principally based upon the accumulation of threshold amounts of hours of experience. Here, we draw upon recent developments in the broader expertise literature, which is starting to represent expertise as complex, dynamic, non–linear, and contingent upon contextual influences. In particular, this article considers the potential utility of Grenier and Kehrhahn's Model of Expertise Redevelopment as a tool to further enhance our critical understanding of expertise in coaching. An example is provided in order to illustrate how the Model of Expertise Redevelopment might be useful for re-conceptualising expertise in coaching. This example not only acknowledges progress towards expertise, but also what happens after initial expertise is achieved, why redevelopment is sometimes required, and how redevelopment occurs in the developmental journey.

Keywords Sports coaching, expertise, expertise (re)development, expert coaches, coach education

In recent years, scholars of coaching science have paid increasing attention to notions of expertise and the development of expert coaches (e.g., Côte & Gilbert, 2009; Nash & Collins, 2006; Nash & Sproule, 2009). Indeed, it has been argued that researchers and coach educators would benefit from a greater conceptual and empirical understanding of 'how' and 'why' some coaches can consistently and purposively improve the knowledge, understanding, and performances of the athletes in their charge, while other coaches cannot (Schempp & McCullick, 2010). Given the significant investment and importance attached to coaches and coach education in many countries, it would seem that such inquiry and knowledge is clearly warranted (Cushion et al., 2010).

To date, the coaching community has largely drawn upon the work of Berliner (1994) and Ericsson and Charness (1994) to inform its understanding of the development and attainment of expertise. Indeed, this body of work has not only served to productively enhance our theoretical understanding of expertise in the context of coaching, but its application has also raised some critical concerns in terms of how coach education provision could be better framed and structured to help develop expert like coaches (e.g., Bell, 1997; Nash & Collins, 2006; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Schempp, McCullick, & Mason, 2006). In addition, it could be argued that these existing approaches have paid scant attention to the

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complexities of expertise development, maintenance, and adaption in relation to the changing demands of coaching contexts (Clancey, 2006; Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008). Indeed, in highlighting the significance of the relationship between context and expertise, Clancey (2006) suggested that expertise may be better understood as competence *in* settings that are characterised by changing contextual contingencies and dependencies. Similarly, the significance of fluid and multi-faceted contextual demands on coaching practice has gained increasing attention in coaching literature (e.g., Jones, Kingston, & Stewart, 2011; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009), and could subsequently be productively applied in our quest to understand expert practice in coaching (Côte & Gilbert, 2009).

The purpose of this article is to contribute to existing debates surrounding the conceptualization of expert practice in coaching. In particular, the aim of this article is two-fold. Initially, this article seeks to problematize the existing linear and staged model of expertise (Berliner, 1994) and the associated notion of 10 years or 10,000 hours of 'deliberate practice' (Ericsson & Charness, 1994) that have principally underpinned the discussions and conceptualizations of coaching expertise to date. It is important to recognize that our desire here is not to reject the academic standing and applicability of this work. Instead, our intention is to further acknowledge the contextual and dynamic nature of expertise in sports coaching, issues that we believe have not received sufficient consideration in the literature. In an attempt to somewhat redress this situation, the second aim of this article is to introduce Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) Model of Expertise Redevelopment (MER) as a tool to further enhance our critical understanding of expertise in coaching. It is not our purpose to argue that this model is superior to any other models of expertise utilized in the coaching literature. Instead, we believe that Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) work raises some critical questions that coaching scholars and educators might wish to consider in an attempt to better understand this complex and multi-faceted nature of expertise in coaching.

Theorizing Expertise in Coaching: The Current State of Play

While there remains a paucity of literature addressing coaching expertise, a number of scholars have usefully drawn on the work of the educational psychologist David Berliner (1994) in an attempt to explain how coaches move from novice-to-expert in a staged, linear fashion (e.g., Bell, 1997; McCullick, Cumings, & DeMarco, 1998; Schempp et al., 2006). In this respect, Schempp et al. (2006) have arguably provided the most comprehensive and detailed discussion of the possible application and utility of Berliner's model within coaching. Here, Schempp et al. (2006) contend that coaches progress through four developmental stages, namely: (1) *beginner* coach, (2) *competent* coach, (3) *proficient* coach, and (4) *expert* coach. The authors also detail the skills, knowledge, characteristics, and perspectives common to coaches as they pass through these phases. However, in doing so, Schempp et al. (2006) acknowledge that "experts are individuals and their thoughts and actions often take on an idiosyncratic, [and] at times eccentric, quality" (pp. 145–146). As such, they point out that the characteristics associated with each of the presented stages should be thought of as commonalities among coaches, rather than prescriptions for becoming an expert coach. Indeed, they recognize that knowing the qualities and characteristics of an expert is insufficient to become an expert practitioner. Rather, Schempp et al. (2006) draw on the work of Ericsson and Charness (1994) to contend that coaches must engage in at least 10 years of deliberate practice to become expert practitioners.

Schempp et al. (2006) define *beginning* coaches as "those with less than three years of professional experience" (p. 146). They contend that while everyone starts as a beginner they are seldom novices. Indeed, many beginning coaches have spent years as athletes, and

have engaged in coach education, which familiarises neophytes with the responsibilities, perspectives, and skills of this role. Schempp et al.'s (2006) work highlighted how beginners often focus on learning the organizational rules and procedures of their workplace, so that they can operate effectively. Here they contend that beginner coaches often become lost in everyday tasks (e.g., taking attendance registers, securing equipment, and managing athletes), while overlooking important instructional practices (e.g., practicing skill progressions, activity pacing, and player assessment), due to a lack of established routines and an inability to see the 'bigger picture.' Because beginner coaches primarily focus on enforcing rules and learning workplace regularities, Schempp et al. (2006) explain that "they seldom feel any personal control over the conditions and events of the practice and, therefore, may lack a sense of responsibility for their own actions" (p. 147). They point out that this can often lead coaches to believe that athletes are solely to blame for a lack of athletic progression and the evidencing of misbehaviour.

According to Schempp et al. (2006), *competent* coaches recognize similarities across situations and are therefore able to apply understanding developed in one context with a certain group of athletes to another. The authors also explain that while competent coaches often remain rule oriented, they are nonetheless "guided by circumstances and context when applying rules" (Schempp et al., 2006, p. 149). Additionally, Schempp et al. (2006) contend that competent coaches "develop a strategic knowledge that allows one to ignore or flex the rules as the situation dictates" (p. 149). Indeed, they suggest that strategic knowledge comprises an understanding of their athletes, their sport and the process of coaching, which is developed by identifying similarities in experiences that takes place through a process of trial-and-error. While beginner coaches are guided by work-based procedures and policies, Schempp et al. (2006) propose that competent coaches focus more on player and team development. The authors also highlight that competent coaches move away from relying heavily on highly structured and procedural plans to the application of 'if-then' contingency planning, which introduces a level of flexibility and adaptation to their coaching practice.

Schempp et al. (2006) propose that *proficient* coaches comprise the top 20–25% of sport coaches. The authors describe proficient coaches as individuals who have accumulated thousands of hours of coaching experience, which has helped them to "hone their perceptual capabilities, allowing them to recognize when something isn't working in a player's performance, a practice session or a game" (p. 151). They go on to contend that, "possessing a keen sense of timing that comes from an intimate understanding of the present environment, they can adroitly change the course of action in a direction that leads to greater success" (pp. 151–152). Schempp et al. (2006) suggest that their honed perceptual capacity allows proficient coaches to: attend to individual player performance while monitoring team performance; recognize and filter the important coaching information from unimportant information; and see beyond the symptom to identify the root cause in order to provide solutions to coaching problems. At the stage of proficiency, Schempp et al. (2006) argue that, coaches are no longer distracted by organisational rules and procedures. As such, proficient coaches are believed to "feel more personal control over their domain and harbor a strong personal responsibility for the success and failure of their athletes" (p. 153). Coaches operating at this level instinctively and intuitively respond to their monitoring of the constant flow of events. Indeed, Schempp et al. (2006) suggest that proficient coaches are continually striving to predict likely occurrences.

Finally, Schempp et al. (2006) explains that e*xpert coaches* are outstanding performers, which they describe as being "able to coach more athletes to higher levels of success in a greater variety of environments in a shorter amount of time than less expert coaches"

(p. 155). Expert coaches are individuals who possess an extensive understanding of everything there is to know about the sport they coach, the athletes they manage, and the skills and principles of coaching. Indeed, they suggest that experts are known to learn from a diverse variety of learning sources. However, despite possessing a comprehensive and detailed knowledge base, the authors explain that expert coaches have a propensity to deliver information at a level that the recipient will understand. Schempp et al. (2006) also highlight that experts frequently utilize intuition in their decision-making. They contend that years of practical experience, and their extensive understanding of pertinent topics, underpin this ability. As such, expert coaches are said to "get 'gut feelings' and have the confidence to go with them" even in situations where "those feelings run counter to accepted logic or convention" (Schempp et al., 2006, p. 157). Because of this, their actions and responses appear automated in nature. Hence, Schempp et al. (2006) comment that "Practice openings, closings, demonstrations, explanations, activities, player movement, equipment distribution and even interactions with athletes are performed with seemingly little effort, but result in remarkable outcomes" (p. 158). However, despite years of experience, the authors contend that expert coaches also retain a high regard for preparation and planning. Expert coaches focus on attending to atypical situations by using their extensive knowledge-base to make sense of any anomalies (e.g., a technical error) in order to select an action that will resolve the identified problem. In this respect, Schempp et al. (2006) argue that expert coaches invest considerable time into correctly "identifying, defining and analysing a problem before searching for a solution" as they realise that "if they don't get the problem right, they have no hope of getting the solution right" (p. 159).

The introduction of Berliner's (1994) staged model of expertise within the field of coaching has unquestionable advanced thinking on this topic. In this respect, Schempp et al. (2006) should be commended for making a coherent and valuable contribution. Indeed, they provide a detailed description of each level which clearly articulates the knowledge, skills, and attributes of coaching practitioners operating at each of the stages discussed. While this work should be rightfully applauded, it could be argued that the application of Berliner's (1994) linear developmental stages model to coaching evidences a belief that coaching expertise is a static end-point that coaches should strive to achieve, even if it is unlikely to be obtained. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that those proposing such a model recognize that not everyone can become an expert, as "it takes years of experience and extensive knowledge, but sometimes that is not enough" (Schempp et al., 2006, p. 155). However, it is believed that "everyone can increase their expertise and thus become a better coach" (Schempp et al., 2006, p. 155). Conceptualising coaching expertise in a linear fashion would appear to have had, and continue to be having, a significant impact on the design and provision of coach education programmes. For example, the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) has recently been introduced to provide an endorsement framework with a set of guiding criteria that help to ensure that there is a level of consistency between the National Governing Bodies provision of coach education and certification of coaching practitioners at various levels (Cushion et al., 2010).

The UKCC framework comprises a four-tiered system that introduces coach learners to an increasing range and depth of topics that they must evidence understanding and practical abilities in relation to. The level one course principally focuses on developing practitioners who are able to assist more qualified coaches. Indeed, at this level a practitioner is not permitted to coach on his or her own. At level two, coaches are taught the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare, deliver and review coaching sessions. Once certified, level two coaches are permitted to work autonomously. The level three course focuses on the planning, implementation, analysis and revision of annual coaching programmes. Finally, level

four helps experienced coaching practitioners to continue developing innovative coaching methods. The UKCC framework therefore attempts to provide a clear, logical, lineal, developmental coaching pathway for coaches to follow. As such, it would seem that it is underpinned, be it implicitly or explicitly, by existing understandings of expertise and its development.

While we acknowledge that the staged model of expertise has done much to advance understanding in relation to coaching expertise, we contend that further critical debate is now required to help advance thinking in this area of scholarly activity. For example, we commend Côte and Gilbert's (2009) recent efforts, which, among other things, have importantly placed the notion of *context* at the heart of discussions surrounding the conceptualisation and development of coaching expertise. In this respect, we find ourselves in agreement with their comment that "coaching contexts are unique settings" and that "an appreciation of these settings is crucial to understanding effective coaching" (Côte & Gilbert, 2009, p. 314). For example, elite coach Wayne Smith highlighted how his coaching of Rugby Union outside of the New Zealand sporting context presented a number of challenges that he did not initially anticipate. Here, he described how the tried and trusted methods that he had successfully utilized in New Zealand had to be significantly adjusted in light of the players' expectations and experiences of practice if he was to ensure that he could maintain high levels of player interest and motivation when coaching in Italy (Kidman, 2005).

A coach's ability to effectively navigate and adjust to their changing context would appear to be an important component of coaching expertise (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Indeed, the significance of context (e.g., the dominant discourses surrounding coaching practice in particular sports, the situational and sub-cultural demands and expectations placed on coaches, the micro-political nature of coaching environments inclusive of their ambiguity and pathos, and the nature of the resources at a coach's disposal) has become a topic of increasing inquiry in the wider coaching literature (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Purdy & Jones, 2011). Although discussions surrounding context have not been totally absent in the published work addressing coaching expertise, it has arguably not received as much attention as it perhaps deserves. In this regard, it would appear that further identifying and appreciating the importance of context cannot be over-estimated, especially when acknowledging that the contemporary expertise literature has served to demonstrate that an expert's performance may be facilitated or threatened by the context (e.g., cultural factors) or environment (e.g., the match between personal and organisational values) within which they operate (Martinovic, 2009). Indeed, Martinovic (2009) noted in a study of mathematics teachers that, "Expertise is not a characteristic of a person; rather, it is the product of an interaction between the person and the environment" (p. 168). Here, the author reported that most of the participant teachers occupied transitory positions on a novice-expert continuum, with more or less expert-like behaviours displayed dependent on the context encountered.

Similarly, Orland-Barak and Yinon's (2005) study of expert educational mentors demonstrated that changes in role requirements within a given context meant that the participants' behaviours were sometimes more novice like at certain times and more expert like in other situations. Similarly, in the business context, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000) have claimed that "It is not the fittest who survive, but the fittingest, those who co-evolve with their natural environment" (p. 246). As such, it would appear that context plays a central role in relation to the development and regulation of expertise across domains of employment. Importantly, however, such findings are also suggesting that practitioners do

not only progress towards expertise in a linear and staged fashion, but may also experience a loss of expertise due to contextual changes. As Jarvis (2006) indicates:

> Not everyone moves from novice to expert, some retreat and move on, or are moved, to another role so that they are no longer exposed to the same types of experience, but others do tend to presume on the situation and then move into ritualism and maybe to alienation, whereby they 'go through the motions of the action' but do not learn anything from it. (p. 115)

In light of this, while it would seem that "The path towards coaching expertise is one that anyone can pursue" (Schempp & McCullick, 2010, p. 230), we would do well to recognize that coaches could potentially also become *less-expert* in certain situations. From this perspective, expertise might be viewed as more contingent and adaptive than previously appreciated; an ongoing journey, rather than a realisable destination. As such, discussions surrounding coaching expertise could benefit from engaging with models of expertise that recognize the complex, non-linear, temporary, dynamic, contextual, and cyclical nature of expertise redevelopment (Nunn, 2008). A model conforming to this description will be presented in the following section.

An Alternative Approach to Expertise in Coaching

While it is not our intention to reject the developmental stages model of coaching expertise, it is our belief that the field of coaching might usefully consider recent advances in the broader expertise literature. In an attempt to achieve this objective, this section will focus on presenting Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) MER, and consider its potential utility for exploring and understanding coaching expertise. This is not to suggest that this model should be adopted above all others; rather, we are of the opinion that the work of Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) raises pertinent questions and issues that may assist the field of coaching to consider the notion of expertise in a different and potentially productive way. Indeed, it should be noted that we certainly do not believe that their work should be seen as the panacea or 'holy grail' for sports coaching (Jones, 2006). Rather, due to their pedagogical similarities, we contend that their model of expertise offers the potential for coaching to short-circuit some of the growing pains experienced by the wider expertise literature (Jones, 2006). Consequently, while we recognize the need for coaching science to develop its own conceptual language, we believe that the theories, concepts, and approaches developed by Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) can provide scholars with new and sophisticated vantage points from which to view expertise in coaching (Cushion, 2007; Jones, 2006).

Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) MER responds to calls for theorists to recognize the contextual nature of expertise as previously discussed (e.g., Clancey, 2006). In so doing, Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) recognize that the focus on linear, phased, characteristics based, or assessment based models of expertise do little to help us "understand the complexities of expertise development, maintenance, and adaptation that are the hallmarks of expertise in ever-changing organizational settings" (p. 2). This critique centres on their belief that experts "find themselves in different situations and contexts in which their expertise must be adapted to fit new parameters, new scenarios, and new challenges" (p. 2). Indeed, Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) contend that experts "operate within volatile *territories* in which the conditions change in both subtle and obvious ways, forcing experts back into development modes to adapt their competence in the setting" (p. 2). As such, they argue that alternative and more advanced models of expertise are required that "depict

the complexities of organisations in which experts function, including motivational factors and sociocultural influences, and how those complexities influence the establishment, enactment, and adaption of experts" (Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008, p. 3).

Of significance is that Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) model recognizes that the development of expertise is not a finite process with a definable end point, but rather depicts expertise as being "a fluid, cyclical process founded on continuous exploration, experimentation, and learning" (p. 8). Full expertise in this view is at best temporary, if not unattainable (Nunn, 2008). As such, the MER provides a contrasting representation and conceptualization of expertise when compared to that of the linear staged model that has traditionally dominated discussions of expertise in the coaching literature. Another notable element of the MER is its use of the term *territory of expertise*, which is comprised of three overlapping and interconnected contexts (i.e., constituency, content, and environment). According to Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008), *constituency* "encompasses those groups that influence or are influenced by the individual" (p. 13). For a coach of elite youth soccer players this might include interactions with players, the players' parents, and the programme director. *Content* refers to "the knowledge an individual has to demonstrate a skill and the specific information needed to function in a role" (Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008, p. 12). For example, a coach's tactical and technical knowledge of their sport would fall within this category. Finally, Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) contend that *environment* includes "the locale a person operates within, together with its culture, organisational structure, and geographical location or layout" (p. 12).

Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) suggest that their inclusion of the *territory of expertise* represents a paradigm shift in the exploration of expertise, as the term "moves away from thinking of domains as merely the field of expert knowledge void of context and makes clear the complexity of influences and the overall context of one's expertise that can change an individual's existing knowledge, skills, and knowing" (p. 9). Furthermore, they contend that the three interconnected and overlapping contextual influences comprising the *territory of expertise* each influence the three *states of expertise* (i.e., dependence, independence, and transcendence) depicted in their MER. According to Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008), the *state of dependence* is "characterized by an individual's reliance on other people or sources for information. The expert in a dependent state does not yet have the full capacity to take on tasks or challenges without drawing from outside sources" (p. 10). The authors go on to explain that "standard procedures, support, and direction from others, or step-by-step routines are [often] used to understand concepts and processes in this state" (p. 10). *State of independence* refers to "moving beyond a reliance on others to a comfort with new information, skills, and roles, and begins to supplement the existing knowledge base with new information" (Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008, p. 11). Finally, Grenier and Kehrhahn (2008) contend that practitioners can progress to a *state of transcendence*, which is when individuals are "in command of their knowledge and practices, and develop a sense of ownership" (p. 11). They go on to suggest that when in the state of transcendence "individuals are secure in their knowledge and abilities to such an extent that they are free to improvise and to feel confident in challenging and altering existing practices" (p. 11). Thus, individuals who move into transcendence "will continue to add to an existing repertoire and knowledge base through research and experimentation." However, they are also often able to operate unconsciously with a sense of confidence. Whereas there are three progressive states of expertise in the MER, it differs significantly from the staged models of expertise presented in coaching literature. The major distinction being that the MER recognizes that contextual factors may possibly influence a practitioner's level of expertise, which could result in regression as well as progression.

Model of Expertise Redevelopment: A Practical Example in Sport

To help demonstrate the potential usefulness and applicability of Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) work in relation to the field of coaching, we ask the reader to imagine an experienced, enthusiastic, proactive, and knowledgeable elite youth football coach, who is well respected by his peers for being an excellent coach of junior players. For the first period of his 15 year career, the coach worked closely with his mentor and engaged in his National Governing Body's coach education programmes, both of which he perceived helped him to develop the necessary knowledge, practical abilities, and confidence to increasingly work with greater independence. However, more recently, the coach has spent a considerable amount of time trying to think "outside of the box" by observing and talking to experienced coaches operating in others sports, seeking the advice of experts in the field of sports science, reading academic articles, and generally experimenting with new ideas.

Through the course of his career, the coach has learned how to navigate his working environment with considerable ease. Indeed, by accessing various sources of learning, and through simple trial-and-error, the coach has acquired an in-depth understanding of his sport, and a large battery of drills that he uses to develop his players decision-making and practical skills, while appealing to their youthful desire to be entertained. He has learned how to best conduct himself within an elite youth football setting, make use of the limited resources that he has available, and to effectively communicate with his boss the programme director, the children in his squad, and the parents of the children that he coaches. In short, he has all but mastered his ability to effectively interact within the context in which he works. Through the course of his career then, the coach has moved from a state of dependence, through independence, to transcendence by mastering the three territories of expertise (i.e., consistency, content, and the environment). Because of this he is often able to operate on 'autopilot' when engaging in this role.

Now let's imagine that, in light of his glowing reputation, the owner of a local semi-professional soccer club approaches the coach to take over the coaching and management of the team. After considerable thought the coach accepts the job, as he thinks that it offers him an exciting new challenge. Here, Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) model might help us to understand some of the difficulties the coach might face when appointed into his new role, and how these relate to his level of expertise. Whereas in his previous job the coach's was primarily responsible for taking training session and attending developmental matches only, his initial discussion with the owner makes it clear that he is now required to source players, negotiate salaries with new and existing squad members, and manage the team's budget. His previous role was developmental in nature, but the owner states that he wants to end the season with a top five position in the league championship, and informs the coach that this is ultimately how his performance will be judged. The number of individuals the coach has to interact with has also increased from relatively few persons at the academy (i.e., programme director, youth players, and parents) to a multitude of stakeholders (i.e., the owner, assistant coaches, adult players, administrators, ground staff, fans, and the local media) at his new club.

On entering the club, the coach notices that there are obvious differences in the culture of the two environments. Whereas the young players were relatively easy to manage, the senior squad members are far more jovial; there is a lot of pointed banter 'flying around' the training ground, which creates a different feel to the club. Some players are noticeably more motivated than others. Indeed, it would appear that certain squad members do not want to be there and if it were not for their being paid they probably would not be.

This seems strange as he is used to coaching children who, if anything, were overenthusiastic. The coach notices that there is an apparent hierarchy in the squad, with a clique of senior players exerting significant influence over the more junior members of the team. This seems to be causing some problems, which worries him as he has not had to deal with this before. Winning the players respect is also likely to be more difficult than he had originally anticipated. The coach's credentials do not appear to particularly impress some of the players; rumour has it that they were already questioning his lack of senior experience before the first training session had started. Even the more familiar aspects of the job are feeling foreign. When planning his initial training sessions the coach soon realises that he is not totally sure what equipment he has available, where it is stored, and how he goes about gaining access to it. When flicking through his book of drills, he realises that a lot of them are too 'basic' for senior players and that most focus on developing tactical and technical play within small-sided games, rather than preparing a squad for 11 vs. 11 situations. So, even his 'bank' of drills needs updating. Furthermore, in this new role, he will be judged on his knowledge and ability to translate this knowledge into effective tactical strategies in training and competition. He has been warned by colleagues that the trust and respect afforded by the players, assistant coaches and other key contextual stakeholders could be short lived if he does not demonstrate such expertise in his interactions with them. He considers the micro-politics of this environment to be very different from those associated with coaching a junior team. Indeed, the number of stakeholders with whom he has to deal with has increased and the expectations about his performance as a coach are very different from those he has grown used to.

In this respect, the MER would arguably appear more useful than the linear stage model presented in the previous section when trying to explain the above example, as it not only recognizes the movement from novice-to-expert, but also provides a useful framework for making sense of "situations where an expert experiences dramatic shifts in territory requiring an expert to operate in a new state of dependence, [before] moving to independence, and back again to transcendence" (Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008, p. 10). Linear, staged, understandings of expertise would perhaps suggest that the coach would need to engage in a further 10,000 hours of practice to become an expert in this new position. While this may be an accurate claim, we would argue that it would be incorrect to assume that the coach had once again become a complete novice. However, this does not mean that all of his existing knowledge (e.g., understanding of technical and tactical facets of the game, the pedagogical and bio-scientific principles of performance, etc.) is now redundant. Rather, he may need to modify existing and develop new understandings in order to better navigate the demands of practice in this particular context. As such, rather than being labelled a novice, he might more accurately be considered as an "individual requiring the time and resources to redevelop [his coaching] expertise" (Grenier & Kehrhahn, 2008, p. 11). Indeed, the change in context would likely evidence some significant knowledge and skills gaps that the coach would need to work on filling. In light of this, it is highly possible that he would be dependent on those around him and/or seek to learn from external sources that might assist him to better familiarise and equip himself for the demands of his new position. However, having previously engaged in a similar developmental process in the previous position, the coach might have developed the necessary skills and mindset to learn and develop the necessary underpinning knowledge and understanding to effectively coach in this new environment. Of importance here is the fact that the MER not only recognizes the development of expertise, but how a change in context can necessitate the need for redevelopment and a transition from a state of transcendence back to dependence.

At this point, however, it seems important to stress that while the taking of employment at a new club or organization, as per the example discussed above, presents a logical situation where a coach might need to redevelop their expertise; it is also conceivable that territorial changes within existing employment could also bring about such a transition. For example, imagine that the coach chose not to accept the senior coaching position, preferring instead to continue coaching in the academy of his existing club. The fact that the coach continues to work in the same organizational setting does not mean that his place of employment will not change around him. Suppose the programme director chooses to resign a few months later, in order to take a position elsewhere. Within a few weeks a new programme director is employed in his place. The new programme director quickly releases some of the existing members of staff and replaces them with coaches that he has previously worked with and has come to trust and respect. Our example coach would need to try and forge a relationship with these members of staff, including his new boss. The new boss has a different philosophy and strategic plan compared to the previous incumbent. The coaching staffs are expected to implement his vision along with its revised set of 'revolutionary' procedures and practices.

As part of the restructuring process, our coach is moved up from the U13s squad to working with the U18s squad. This would likely bring about its own set of new challenges, as the coach has never worked with players of that age. Also, this position has a distinctive set of tasks that the coach has not previously had to engage in. For example, the coach is now required to start working with the first team and reserve team coaches, to ensure that talented players are fed into the senior system. He has automatically become partially responsible for the recruitment, retention, and releasing of players. Working with the U18s team means that he has to give greater thought to the physiological development of the athletes, to ensure that they are physically prepared to make the transition to the senior game. When working with the U13s squad the development of tactical and technical knowledge was the primary focus, and physical fitness was given limited attention. As such, his drills and existing training session plans are not really suited to this requirement. The new academy director has also decided to introduce the use of video-based performance analysis technology, which he expects the coaches to utilize in their respective pedagogical practices. Our coach is slightly apprehensive about this because he has not previously used such technology to analyse performance or, indeed, provide feedback through video-based sessions with players.

What these examples should demonstrate is that it is a change in the territory that requires the coach to adapt and redevelop their expertise in order to operate effectively. In the example above, contextual changes relating to constituency, content, and environment mean that the coach could, temporarily at least, revert from a state of transcendence to a state of dependence as gaps in his knowledge and skills become apparent. In this respect, the MER would appear to be a potentially valuable tool for re-conceptualizing expertise in coaching as it not only acknowledges progress towards expertise, but what happens after initial expertise is achieved, why redevelopment is sometimes required, and how redevelopment occurs.

In light of the application of MER as outlined above, we might also start to question how the term expert has been used as an identifier of a participant's coaching status within the coaching literature. For instance, it would appear that Anders Ericsson's 10 years or 10,000 hours rule (Ericsson & Charness, 1994) has, and continues to, pervade the coaching literature, without perhaps commensurate critical thought towards its application. Numerous studies have, and continue to, cite the acquisition of 10 years or 10,000 hours practical experience as an academic rationale for the purposive sampling of expert coaches

(e.g., Bloom, Durand-Bush, & Salmela, 1997; Nash & Sproule, 2009, 2011). When considering the practical implications of the MER some of these coaches might, in fact, be engaged in a phase of redevelopment, despite having previously achieved expert status. In this respect, it would seem that expertise cannot, in reality, be simplistically associated with time accrued. For example, practitioners often repeat behaviours without learning from them, due to their failing to pay attention or recognize the differences posed by similar situations or the problems each context presents (Jarvis, 2009). Indeed, Jarvis (2009) contends that it is only when "we treat every experience as an individual learning experience can we gain expertise" (p. 66). Even in situations where coaches do positively engage in reflection, some coaches may critically engage at a deep level, whereas others might engage only superficially (Cushion & Nelson, in press). Thus, while it is not our intention to eradicate the application of this 'measure' of expertise, we believe that the field should give greater critical thought to its use.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to further understanding and discussion about the conceptualization, development, and redevelopment of coaching expertise. While the valuable contribution made by scholars that have applied Berliner's (1994) developmental stages model to the field of coaching were acknowledged, we have contended that the coaching community might also usefully consider more recent developments in the broader expertise literature. In this respect, it was demonstrated that contemporary discussions about expertise have started to question the applicability and value of linear staged models. Such arguments have focused on the failure to recognize the importance of context, that expertise is a fluid and cyclical process rather than a definable end point, and that experts have to continuously redevelop their competencies in order to operate in organisational settings that are ever changing.

In light of such critiques, we presented Grenier and Kehrhahn's (2008) MER as an alternative framework for making sense of coaching expertise. Here, we focused on providing a broad overview of the underpinning concepts and meanings of the MER, before providing some examples to demonstrate how the MER might be usefully applied to the field of coaching. Again, at this juncture, we would like to emphasise that we are not claiming that the MER should be considered above all other models of expertise. Rather, we were of the opinion that the MER might provide a useful framework for re-considering the notion of coaching expertise in a different light, as it attempts to address some of the contemporary concerns pitched at staged linear models. When applied to the field of coaching, the MER would appear to suggest that a coach's current state of expertise (i.e., state of dependence, independence, or transcendence) will likely be shaped by the circumstances of his or her territories of expertise (i.e., constituency, content, and environment). As such, it presents coaching scholars with an alternative model, which proposes that coaching expertise is likely to be a non-linear, cyclical, and contextually regulated process. In this respect, we hope that the introduction of the MER sparks further discussion and debate about how the field should conceptualize and understand coaching expertise. Here, we hope that this article will prompt others to test the validity of the MER as a tool for making sense of coaches' developmental pathways.

While context can clearly impact a coach's state of expertise, it is, however, important to recognize that, while coaches may be influenced by the structures of the context in which they work, they are also capable of attempting to influence those structures (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). For example, the work of

Potrac and Jones (2009) highlights how a coach had to manage and address particular contextual issues (e.g., resistance from certain players towards his coaching methods, and the high expectations of the club owner), while simultaneously trying to create a working environment that he considered to be desirable and effective. As such, we would argue that we need to better understand this interactive process and what this means for the development of coaching expertise. Indeed, we would suggest that future inquiry addressing expertise may wish to address the relationship between 'micro-political literacy' (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009) and expert coaching practice.

Finally, we would argue that a re-conceptualization of the expert sports coach represents a potential paradigmatic shift from the expert coach as a product, to the evolution of coaching expertise as a process. In this sense, expertise is always a process of becoming (Nunn, 2008), a never-ending journey of ongoing professional discovery. The great American basketball coach John Wooden seemed to be alluding to this when he suggested, "It is what you learn after you know it all that counts" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 198). Thus, Nunn (2008) suggests that expertise is never fully mastered, such that the journey *is* the destination.

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