

Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly the professional development literature in sports coaching encourages coaches to coach holistically. Yet the phrase 'holistic coaching' is mired in ambiguity and has the potential to become meaningless. The aims of this article are to explore the relationship between holism, humanistic psychology, humanism and sports coaching, and to pose some challenges, which could support the field to move beyond the influence of humanistic psychology.

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade the benefits of 'holistic coaching' have been promoted. Yet I contend many of these calls are based on little more than good intentions and a dictionary definition [1]. What is more, it is not clear as to what constitutes 'holistic coaching', because it has been used in a variety of ways including as a synonym to challenge dominant practices [2, 3] and to describe: instructional processes of coaches [4]; coach education strategies [1, 5] and; the coaching process [6]. To gain an in-depth understanding of the phrase 'holistic coaching,' it is useful to recognise that our understanding of holism is culturally specific and is informed by academic disciplines (e.g., psychology) and philosophies or belief systems (e.g., humanism). The purpose of this article is two-fold: i) to explore the relationships between holism, humanistic psychology, humanism and sports coaching; and ii) to pose some challenges as to how we can move our understanding of holism beyond the influence of humanistic psychology.

HOLISM

It is not possible to construct a simple definition of holism; yet it is possible, and arguably necessary, to gain a better understanding of the philosophies that inform practices conducted in its name. Tao and Brennan [7] have suggested that the interpretation and enactment of holism is influenced by cultural norms. This is evident in Aotearoa/New Zealand where Māori have used the term Hauora to describe a holistic philosophy of health, which recognises the integration and connectivity of the physical, social, spiritual and the mental as well as emotional domains. Various metaphorical frameworks are used to explain and 'operationalise' Hauora¹, some of which have been incorporated into cultural contexts such as the New Zealand Health and Physical Education curriculum [10] and the coaching of the

¹For example, the whare tapa whā (the four walls of a house) [8] and te wheke (the octopus) [9].

Ngāti Porou East Coast Bay representative rugby team [11], with tremendously varied results.

Our understanding of holism is not only influenced by cultural norms, but also by disciplinary traditions. Scholars in a range of disciplines and sub-disciplines have grappled with the concept of holism and its application. For example, Brown and Leledaki [12], whose work is influenced by sociology and cultural studies, observed how in the past few decades Eastern movement forms and meditative practices such as Yoga and Tai Chi have been adopted by, and incorporated into, many Western cultures without attracting much, if any, “socio-political recognition or resistance” (p. 124). Transpersonal theory has also influenced our understanding of holism. Drawing on the work of Washburn, Jenkins [13] described transpersonal theory as initially being “predominantly humanistic in its psychology and Eastern in its religion, a synthesis of Maslow and Buddhism (primarily Zen)...[Although] now it is more open to a diversity of psychological and spiritual perspectives” (p. 10). In addition, Jenkins [13, 14] explored how sport psychologists have used and adapted, for better or for worse, Zen Buddhism to gain insight into the sporting experience. While an increasing number of disciplines and sub-disciplines are influencing our understanding of holism, to date psychology (specifically, humanistic psychology) has primarily informed the discussion of holism in sports coaching.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Humanistic psychology is a dominant academic discourse, but it “does not involve a specific content area so much as an attitude or orientation towards psychology as a whole” [15, p. 1]. In describing the emphases within humanistic psychology, Shaffer [15] identified five central principles:

- a strong phenomenological and experiential orientation
- human’s “essential wholeness and integrity” (p. 12)
- human’s retaining “essential freedom and autonomy” (p. 14)
- it is anti-reductionist
- “human nature can never be fully defined” (p. 17)

Lombardo [16] drew on these principles when describing the application of humanistic psychology to the sport experience.

In making a link between holism and humanistic psychology, the ex-President of the Division of Humanistic Psychology of the American Psychological Association claimed that “the humanistic vision is historically holistic” [17, p. 121]. I do not doubt the intention of humanistic psychologists to be holistic, but I do question the veracity of the claim. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are recognised as pioneers of contemporary humanistic psychology, but others are credited for making links with philosophy (primarily with the European phenomenological tradition [17]. Aanstoos’ [17] claim may have been less contentious if he had said the ‘humanistic vision is holistic’, as this could have opened up the possibility for humanist psychologists to engage with, for example, transpersonal psychology. Interestingly, Jenkins [13] showed how Maslow, in his later years, did recognise the limits of his theory of motivational hierarchy, critiquing it as lacking ‘empirical support’ and lamenting that it had become “grossly simplified and decontextualised” (p. 9). At that stage in his career, Maslow welcomed the opportunity for humanist psychologists to engage with transpersonal psychology as evidenced by his claim:

I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still 'higher' Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centred in the cosmos, rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization, and the like. [cited in 13, p. 10]

HUMANISM IN SPORTS COACHING

Humanism has been described as an ideology or 'a belief system,' yet it has been suggested that people can adopt practices that reflect humanism without necessarily "being aware of the ideology or many of its values" [18, p. 184]. This may help explain why there is a range of interpretations of humanism and why humanistic coaches existed long before humanism became a topic of conversation in the sporting coaching literature. A longstanding advocate for humanism in coaching is Lombardo [16, 19, 20]. He described 'The Humanistic Model of Coaching' as being:

...an educational model devoted to the total development of the individual. It is *athlete-centred*, and focused on enhancing the self-awareness, and growth and development (across three domains of learning) of the participant...Athletes are expected to analyse, think and make important decisions. To facilitate the attainment of these outcomes, humanistic coaches ask many questions, require athletes to figure out strategies and the underlying reasons for both motor and team performances. [20, p. 4-5; italics added]

Athlete-centred coaching, and the associated emphasis on athletes being encouraged to make decisions and coaches to develop their ability to ask 'meaningful questions,' has been a focus of Lynn Kidman for several years [21-23]. In discussing athlete-centred coaching, Kidman [21] claimed that the "holistic development of the athlete is central to the success of an athlete-centred coaching approach" (p. 25). But humanistic and athlete-centred practices are not synonymous. This was illustrated when Kidman and Lombardo combined forces [22]; humanism was visible, but at times it did appear only as an additional adjective. This may have been a consequence of the authors recognising that while humanistic and athlete-centred approaches to coaching have similarities, and can be discussed at a 'general level', both terms can also be 'interpreted in many ways' [22, p. 23].

While there is a relatively small number of people explicitly writing about humanism in the sports coaching literature, I suggest people are writing about coaching practices in ways that reflect the values of humanism. For example, in a discussion on using stories in coach education, Douglas and Carless [24] explained how increasingly the literature on the professional development of coaches encourages coaches to reflect on their practices, coach holistically and adopt an athlete-centred approach. While Douglas and Carless do not explicitly talk about humanism, I contend it does in fact inform their work due to their referencing of Carl Rogers and use of contemporary professional development literature to justify their use of stories in professional development initiatives. Arguably the work conducted by Jones et al. [25] and Jones [26] has also been informed by humanism. Jones et al. [25] described, in the form of 'narratives', the practices of eight elite coaches. As a consequence of the questions asked of the coaches, as well as how the narratives were crafted, the coaches' stories included topics like: "developing 'thinking' players", "building player confidence through caring", and "establishing a learning environment to 'grow players'" (p. vi). Jones [26] documented his reflections on his practices as a coach of a national age-group boys' football team, which resulted in him arguing for importance to be

placed on “caring in the coach–athlete relationship, and of actively nurturing such an ethic to realise the potentialities of others” (p. 377).

As pointed out above, transpersonal theory can be used to move beyond ‘humanness’ and possibly humanism. Jenkins [27] illustrated this by also highlighting the importance of coaches caring for athletes. He suggested that the ideas of an executive coach, specifically Marshall Goldsmith, could usefully guide the practices of football managers, in this case, Roy Keane. While not explicitly stated, it is possible that the work of Goldsmith, a recognised Buddhist who is on record as having a desire to help people ‘find happiness and meaning’ in their professional work [cited in 27, p. 2] is informed by transpersonal theory. Additionally, Jenkins [14] showed how transpersonal and humanistic psychology is reflected in Timothy Gallwey’s ‘Inner Game’ series, and subsequently in the work of John Whitmore who described the ‘Inner Game’ as “the purest basis of workplace coaching” [cited in 13, p. 15].

CONCLUSION

If there is a desire from the sports coaching community to develop, on a systematic scale, holistic coaches, or coaches who can coach holistically, then I suggest there is much work to be done on developing our understanding of holism and its application. In this article, I briefly explored the influence humanistic psychology and humanism has had on our understanding of holism, both generally and in the context of sports coaching. However, a challenge is to move beyond the influence of humanistic psychology as this encourages a particular understanding of holism. Possible ways forward include recognising that interpretations of holism are culturally specific, and becoming familiar with how psychology and other disciplines, such as sociology and education, inform our understanding and practice of holism. If the sports coaching community fails to gain a greater understanding of holism, yet continues to use the phrase ‘holistic coaching’, the phrase has the potential to become meaningless.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Before commenting on the essay, I need to clarify what I think Tania Cassidy is saying. It appears that she has two central points. Her primary claim is that “we need a clearer understanding” of holistic coaching because, as currently employed, the “phrase has the potential to become meaningless” (p. 442). A secondary argument is that such an understanding needs to transcend the boundaries of humanistic psychology. A subsidiary purpose, one that would presumably provide evidence for these two primary objectives, is to “explore the relationship between holism, humanistic psychology, humanism and sport coaching” (p. 439).

HOLISTIC COACHING

The first claim is an intuitively appealing one. If we don’t understand something, or if we use terminology in ways that confuse more than enlighten, we need to do some homework. I have no doubt that “holistic coaching” is a phrase that has cache’ and is used as much to impress as inform. I’m sure too that it is used in many ways by people who have little understanding of what it might mean. But I am not convinced that Cassidy provides sufficient help in revealing the nature and scope of the problem.

If one is to make an argument for the conflation of different things under a single word or phrase (Cassidy calls this mixture of items “ambiguity”), it is always wise to lay out what those different things are. That is, we cannot be convinced that multiple things are called holistic coaching until we can see precisely what different items go under that heading. Cassidy argues that the phrase has been used for a variety of purposes—to “challenge dominant practices,” “describe instructional processes,” lay out “educational strategies,” or indicate “coaching processes” (p. 439). But this does not show that holistic coaching is ambiguous. In fact, a coherent philosophy of holism would be expected to have all of these potential purposes . . . and more. It would be odd if it didn’t. A philosophy of idealism, for example, might well affect how, who, what, and why we teach without being the least bit ambiguous. We expect powerful world views like dualism, materialism, and holism to impact all that we think and do.

Thus, Cassidy still needs to show the different concrete senses in which holism is used, the array of things that it denotes in common parlance, an array that is so broad that it threatens to make the phrase meaningless. She goes part way in this direction by suggesting that holistic coaching has something to do with humanism—with freedom, autonomy, and

anti-reductionist understandings—and possibly too with athlete-centered approaches to coaching. But these characteristics, by themselves, are not contradictory, or if they are, their incompatibility was not shown by the author. Even if they are “not synonymous” (p. 441) they could, it would seem, be part of a coherent understanding of holism. So the bottom line is that, even though it may be empirically obvious that the terms “holistic coaching” are employed in many different ways, the diffuse meanings that would support that claim are not provided.

It could be, for instance, that some coaches use holism to mean simply that they have a “caring” attitude toward their athletes. Others might mean that they “consider athlete’s emotions, not just their physical conditions”. Yet, others might think that holistic coaching as to do with “flexible strategies in seeking victory.” Still others, might think that holistic coaching involves “examining the whole gestalt of the game not just isolated elements”. The particulars here are not important, but to nail down the claim about ambiguity and confused meanings, we need to know what different things traffic under the name of holistic coaching.

TRANSCENDING HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

The claim that understandings of holistic coaching need to transcend the boundaries of humanistic psychology also has intuitive appeal. But the reader still wants to know more, and indeed, Cassidy offers further information. She suggests that transpersonal theories offer an attractive and compatible alternative. That is, standard humanism (and the holistic coaching that finds its home there) can be reformed and improved as a transpersonal enterprise. But hints are also dropped along the way suggesting that culture-relative, philosophical, phenomenological, sociological, and educational inputs might also lead to a better notion of holistic coaching, one that expands the boundaries inherent in humanistic psychology.

These hints or claims are left standing, for the most part, without supporting argumentation. Because of this, the reader may be left wondering exactly why it is so important to transcend psychological humanism. It could be that the reasons are obvious, but this is a dangerous assumption – particularly when recommendations for change or expansion are so specific. What would it mean to expand humanistic psychology in the direction of transhumanism, existential phenomenology, or student-active educational learning theories? What specific values would this generate that are not available from a humanistic approach? And importantly, how would this provide a clearer and less ambiguous notion of holistic coaching?

I like the intuitions that generated the work on this essay. The intent of the author is spot on. It is an article that is designed to expose our pretensions (bragging that we are holistic coaches because it sounds good), our ignorance (claiming such a status without knowing what it means), and our intransigence (sticking with worn out notions of humanism when other versions hold more promise). We could learn a great deal, I think, by following those leads to fruitful conclusions.

DEFINITIONS

If this article were read at that general level, it would be fine. It would have served an important purpose. But when the author begins to delve into specific recommendations and potentially contentious claims, more evidence and argumentation are needed. One more thing is needed, as well, and that is attention to definitions. This is the case because it is hard to argue for anything, or to provide clear evidence for one’s position, if we do not know what the key terms mean. Unless I missed them, I did not find solid definitions for holism, holistic

coaching (except for Lombardo's partial explanation), humanistic psychology, humanism, humanness, the values of humanism, athlete-centered coaching, transpersonal theory, or the European phenomenological tradition. Without anchors provided by definitions, it is very difficult to rally arguments that mean anything. Because of this, it is also difficult to determine the merits of the central claims about ambiguity and the expansion of humanistic psychology.

CONCLUSION

My guess is that Cassidy does, in fact, have evidence for the claims she makes. She *could* show more precisely the different meanings that have been attached to the holistic coaching label. She *could* document the confusion that has resulted. She *could* show how and why transpersonal theory may strengthen standard humanism. And certainly, she *could* provide clearer definitions of the key terms around which her essay is structured. This short essay may not have been the right place to do that. But I look forward to seeing those additions because the intellectual journey on which she has started is an important one.

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A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

I have heard it said that it is a useful exercise to ‘reinforce one’s prejudices’ occasionally or, to paraphrase Robert Burns, ‘to nurse one’s wrath to keep it warm’. I must admit that each time I read about coaching and humanistic psychology, I feel an immense frustration. The entirely laudable and eminently sensible enjoinders to greater individualisation, integrated interventions, the development of multiple talents, ownership by athletes, and non-authoritarian communication become mired in a discourse that resorts to generalisation and superficiality, is rarely ever related to coaching domains, and appears not to be susceptible to any level of verification.

There is no doubt that the excesses of poor coaching should be mitigated and that attention to expectations, inter-personal communication, purpose, conceptions of leadership, and the meaning and worth that the athlete attaches to the experience would contribute to this. This might impact coach education, and certainly should impact coaching practice. In particular, I could easily be persuaded that a developmental orientation towards individuals would be both appropriate and efficacious for them as individuals and as a catalyst to improved sport performance. I could wish, however, that the ‘humanistic’ literature were couched in practical and practice-related language. The discourse exemplified in Tania Cassidy’s target article cries out to be put in language that bears some resemblance to real life.

HOLISM

There may be a danger of overstating the drive to ‘holistic coaching’. Yes, there have been a number of articles and book chapters. Nevertheless, coaching education, the ‘received wisdom’ of coaching practice, and coaching research may be paying less attention than our academic navel gazing might suggest. This is probably because the response of coaches would be to say, ‘I recognise your good intentions, but I don’t know what you mean’. This is perhaps unfair, because the authors cited by Tania have attempted to apply their holistic descriptor to quite specific parts of the coaching process. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to ask, ‘what do you imply by the use of the term holistic?’, and ‘to which aspects of coaching do you intend it to apply?’ ‘Is it the coach’s approach that is holistic, the ‘coverage’ of activity, the range of goals and objectives, or the engagement of the individual in the process?’

I found myself trying to conceptualise holism in ways that did not involve octopi, Tai Chi, or adopting Zen Buddhism to improve my golf. First, we should note that the borrowing of

techniques for some aspect of coaching has nothing to do with holism. The roots of Zen Buddhism or Yoga may lie in philosophies that have a holistic genesis, but the application of particular techniques in relative isolation does not therefore convey or justify the holistic epithet. Second, holism as a philosophy implies that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (actually it goes beyond this to posit that the whole may not be divisible into its parts). Third, and when applied to medicine, holism proposes that treatment should be directed at the whole person, rather than at the specific symptoms. At this point my thoughts turned to the specificity demonstrated in altering the long-jumper's take-off leg angle by four degrees, honing the timing inherent in the line-out, or learning a specific pace for the third 500 metres of a rowing race. Nevertheless, I feel quite comfortable with the developmental thread that runs through holism, and I prefer that to the selective application evident in much of the literature.

If the term holistic conveys the coordinating function of the coach, recognises multi-lateral development, implies the focusing of activity to overarching goals, requires the development of multiple talents, and asks for comprehensiveness and balance in all of the factors impinging on sport performance and the welfare of the individual athlete – then I'm comfortable with it. In my simple pragmatic approach to conceptualising coaching, I'm not sure that the term should be applied as a blanket term, when we have adequate (said optimistically) means of describing each element of the coaching process. In passing, I would add that the term holistic is better applied to those domains in coaching in which the intensity of the engagement and the scope of the intervention make it meaningful – perhaps the very domains for which the term is often used as a 'critical opposite'.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Disciplines have an epistemology and ontology that is characteristic. However, my reading of humanistic psychology is that it is not a discipline. Its principles are a combination of the perceived limitations of the other disciplines and a set of beliefs that espouse the notions of ultimate goodness/achievement/fulfilment through self-determination. This set of precepts or principles is rightly termed humanism; more akin to a belief system – more mantra than mandate. Therefore I have no particular criticism of writers on coaching and humanistic psychology, because few if any actually translate these beliefs into coaching practice (and certainly not critically). This literature lacks substance and lacks verification.

I have a great deal of concern with the question of evidence; one that is not completely assuaged by the problem that garnering any evidence about the effectiveness of coaching practice is singularly difficult. The issue is that the humanistic psychology 'approach' is justified on grounds of values and beliefs, rather than effectiveness or even applicability. Indeed, many of its precepts defy interrogation. It has therefore captured the moral high ground and is unassailable on those heights. The precepts of care, concern, capability, confidence, and so on, cannot be gainsaid, but neither are they 'provable' in any meaningful way. For me, the most telling point is that much of the writing is bound up in the language of 'should' and 'ought to'. Humanism is a 'prescription based on belief'. It cannot be challenged for that, but it does tend to justify itself by comparing practice to a rather sanitised and idealised vision. No-one can argue that the practices advocated by writers on humanistic coaching are 'wrong'; my problem is that I am not faced with any evidence that they are 'right'. Inevitably in such circumstances, the suppositions are supported by case studies and biographical accounts, with understandable limitations of selectivity and lack of critical appraisal.

HUMANISTIC COACHING

I have previously treated humanism as an ideology within coaching studies and stressed the centrality of the empowerment of the individual, and that coaching practices and interpersonal relationships can facilitate this. I have presented a demanding set of coaching behaviours derived from Carl Rogers work [1, p. 182]. These are completely idealised, but like most visions they may contain some valuable and applicable lessons.

I'm not sure what athlete-centred means, but it seems to me to sit quite happily in that vague ground defined by humanist boundaries. It has become a mantra that no 'official' document can be without. If we mean that the athletes' needs should be paramount, then the premise is appealing and perhaps quite generally applicable. However, it cannot be an exclusive practice and there is a danger of a lack of domain and context specificity. We must not imagine that notions of players thinking for themselves or coaches establishing a positive learning environment have only just been thought of. My former coach John Syer describes this as being 'on the etheric' [2, p. 219]. In other words, we make manifest something which already exists; a favourite pastime of academics. My point is that we might pay less attention to the political correctness of coach education and more attention to how the precepts can be operationalised and in which circumstances (and to what end) they are most effective.

Development coaching, or coaching with young people, requires a more balanced approach than high-performance coaching. In other words, in those domains of coaching, stakeholders should ensure that the coaching landscape is suffused by a layer of humanist principles. Coaching practice should have a dual focus of performance and welfare. It is for the academic community to demonstrate in rather more convincing ways than hitherto that these humanism-based behaviours are effective for both performance and welfare.

The term 'coaching' is often used in a lazy, unrefined way. It makes no sense to use this 'family term' [3, p. 243-252] in place of a more detailed account of coaching practice. It is a mistake to apply humanist principles to such a blanket term, when in reality, the coach's behaviour might be more context specific. If I apply the notion of self-determination and responsibility to coaching, I might reasonably find them displayed differently in planning, match coaching, team selection, discussing long-term goals, discussing lifestyle, identifying performance-related targets, managing training sessions, and issues of adherence, interpersonal conflict, and managing expectations. I have no doubt that a humanism-based belief system has much to offer coaching practice, but I would wish it to be appraised critically in a rather more context-specific and coaching process-specific way.

CONCLUSION

Overall I tend to support Tania's basic premise; humanism is to be found in coaching prescriptions, but its application is some way away from its deep philosophical roots. As a pragmatist, I applaud the academic efforts to link those roots to its application, but as a coach educator I have no problem in presenting the humanistic framework of behaviour as a coaching philosophy – one that should be approached critically, has a significant amount to offer and can be illustrated to work effectively in receptive circumstances. Part of my concern with writers on humanistic psychology and coaching is that it is used, not as a means to understand or educate, but as a dialectical stance against which to juxtapose that which is conceived as 'bad coaching'.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Tania Cassidy stated that a key aim of her target article was to examine the relationship between holism, humanistic psychology, humanism, and sports coaching. In recent times, there has been a consistent use of the notion of holistic coaching in the literature [e.g., 1, 2]. In response to the growing use of related terms, Cassidy suggests that there seems to be some conceptual ambiguity associated with the use of such labels and highlights a key point in her article that unless terms such as ‘holism’ are operationally defined in the literature, they have the potential to become meaningless. Once again, the issue of ‘linguaging’ is raised [3-5]. Cassidy also suggests that humanistic psychology is a necessary but not sufficient understanding of holism, but does not present her argument/s in sufficient detail for a more in depth discussion. Cassidy then introduces the field of transpersonal psychology as a way forward in encompassing spiritual needs within coaching; however, the supporting argument/s are inadequate to contribute to meaningful discussions for moving beyond humanistic psychology towards a more comprehensive understanding of holism.

Nevertheless, in our commentary, we use the opportunity to express some views about holistic coaching. These include: i) conceptualising holistic coaching; ii) the goals of coaching; and iii) underscoring the importance of examining the subjective experience in sport.

CONCEPTUALISING HOLISTIC COACHING

Holism comes from the Greek word *holos*, meaning *all, whole, entire, total*, and is representative of the idea that the properties of a given system cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone. Instead, the system as a whole determines in an important way, how the parts behave. Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* summarised the general principle of holism via the now well-known phrase: ‘the whole is more than the sum of its parts’.

Humanistic thought and the notion of holism (holistic vision) dates back to the Ancient Greeks (e.g., Anaximander, Plato, Aristotle) and was resurrected in the Renaissance period with a return to classical Greek thought [6]. More recently holism is associated with the humanistic movement of the 1960s, and later also included the integration of Eastern thinking (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism), which has consistently advocated non-duality. “The humanistic self is an engaged, involved, situated self, concerned and caring about the whole of Being, of which it’s an interrelated manifestation” [6, p. 128].

A central theme of Cassidy's article is that the ways in which sports coaching scholars have (and have not) conceptualised holism, humanism and the like have served to muddy the dialogue regarding 'holistic coaching'. Based on the derivations described above, we argue that there is a need to view these terms and the concepts that they represent as being largely philosophical and aspirational. With this in mind, we disagree with Cassidy's comments that previous sports coaching researchers have not sufficiently clarified their use of such terminology. For example, drawing on the text of Cassidy et al. [1], Jones and Turner [7] broaden and apply a dictionary definition of holistic such that it includes "emotional, political, social, spiritual and cultural aspects, in addition to mental and physical ones" [p. 183-184]. The authors then go on to characterise their view of holistic coaching in a way that is in keeping with the anti-reductionistic sentiment that runs through most of the associated literature we have reviewed on holism.

It is our view that other authors have also sufficiently clarified their position with respect to other terms under discussion (e.g., humanistic coaching). In summarising our comments here we would argue that it is difficult (if not impossible) to develop more precise definitions regarding terms with such philosophical and aspirational orientations. What we do agree with, however, is that these philosophical views have not sufficiently informed sports coaching practice and research. As noted by Cassidy, the impact of repeated calls for practices (and educational support for practices) that more closely represent holistic coaching has been somewhat limited.

We suggest that the discussion of holistic coaching with respect to research, practice, and education should be grounded in a consideration of the goals of coaching work, that is, the goals for all significant actors within the sporting environment.

GOALS OF COACHING

Underpinning coaching behaviours are the goals of coaching. At all levels, athletes aspire towards competent performance and typically coaches focus on performance enhancement. However, through these relationships within the specific context of sport, other aspects of development (e.g., psycho-social, spiritual, cultural) are also influenced – sometimes explicitly and others times implicitly. Therefore, the goals of coaching as espoused by many scholars promote the view that coaching should be more than winning and losing [e.g., 8]; that is, coaching should foster the development of the whole person [e.g., 1, 7, 9].

Coaches, athletes, and other actors engage in sport for various reasons. The primary goals of coaching should be negotiated by the coach and the athletes they coach and the extent of the negotiation is probably dependent upon several factors, including both the coach and athletes' beliefs about learning, coaching, and performance [10].

One might consider the extent to which such theories as Self-determination theory (SDT) [11] might help frame the discussion of coaching goals. The organismic social-cognitive theory of SDT is consistent with assumptions of the holistic approach to coaching and has been used to inform a range of sports coaching studies. Essentially, SDT proposes that humans are active organisms in responding to both "internal and external environments to be effective and satisfy the full range of needs" [11, p. 8]. Autonomy-supportive coaching, which is based on the tenets of SDT, seeks to satisfy the three psychological needs of humans – autonomy, competence, and relatedness (a sense of belonging) and might be considered to be a necessary but insufficient consideration of holistic coaching. The human organism is innately active and receptive to development. Holistic coaching is concerned with the role of the coach in facilitating athlete growth and development (e.g., physical and psycho-social aspects) and SDT research has reported the benefits of such a humanistic approach to

coaching beyond performance outcomes [e.g., 12-14]. Humanistic coaching, which might be considered within a broader conceptualisation of holistic coaching, “refers to athletic leadership which is process-oriented, athlete-centered, and emphasizes the uniqueness of each participant.” [15, p. 23]; however, we extend this line of thinking to include coaches and other support personnel (e.g., sports scientists). The goal of coaching therefore, should be to create an environment that fosters positive processes in human growth and potential for all actors including themselves. It is not simply the establishment of such environments, but the perception of those environments by significant actors that is of most relevance. If the goal of coaching is to extend athletes’ development to include spiritual aspects, then consideration of the tenets of transpersonal psychology is warranted.

SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN SPORT

We underscore the importance of examining the subjective experience in sport. Humanistic psychology, which has its roots in existentialism and phenomenology, is grounded in ‘subjective experience’, with the emphasis on what is possible (assets and creativity) rather than one’s failings. “By understanding our capacity for self-actualisation ... we can eventually realise our potential” [16, p. 182]. Key concepts within the third force in psychology are: experience, autonomy, creativity, human potential, and self-actualisation [16]. Humanistic psychologists stress the importance of awareness in thoughts and feelings about self and the world in optimising one’s potential. Jourard [17] explains that:

A humanistic psychologist ... is concerned to identify factors that affect man’s experience and action; but his aim is not render the man predictable to, and controlled by, somebody else. Rather his aim is to understand how determining variables function in order that a man might be liberated from their impact as he pursues his own free projects. [17, p. 18]

Hence the notion of autonomy, which is consistent with humanistic psychology, is important but not enough to ensure that one’s potential is optimised.

Transpersonal Psychology (fourth influential force or wave in psychology) emerged from within humanistic psychology to become a distinct field in psychology. It emerged from a stronger consideration of the spiritual aspects of the human experience. This fourth force “is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness” [18, p. 91]. In synthesising the definitions of transpersonal psychology, mostly through the 1970s and 1980s, Lajoie and Shapiro [18] found five key themes in these definitions: states of consciousness, higher or ultimate potential, beyond the ego or personal self, transcendence, and the spiritual. The epistemological foundations of transpersonal psychology can be found in the humanities and seem to be an extension of humanistic psychology with its inclusion of spirituality to integrate even higher levels of consciousness [19]. In acknowledging the importance of spirituality in people’s lives, humanistic and transpersonal psychology promoted practices such as meditation, yoga, and prayer and through such practices, people were connected with the deepest values by which they live [19].

Both humanistic and transpersonal paradigms in psychology underscore the individual potential good in humans and are appropriate for examining the subjective experience of those engaged in and through sport. There has been research on holistic or humanistic coaching that has independently examined the voice of the athlete and the voice of the coach.

This independent examination of coaches' and athletes' perceptions lacks a more holistic view of the subjective experiences of all actors; that is, what have been missing are the interdependent voices of coaches, athletes and other actors, in a specific coaching context. Examining the subjective experiences of all actors within a specific coaching environment, time and place, will provide a more holistic and qualitative account of the context. We propose that future situated research consider all actors within the sporting context in examining their collective and individual subjective experiences.

Aanstoos [6] argues that humanistic psychology can continue to be relevant in the 21st century. We also suggest that transpersonal psychology is also relevant for this century and some researchers have used this framework for examining the sporting experience [e.g., 20]. Aanstoos [6] provides some suggestions for the relevance of humanistic psychology in future research. First, he suggests that humanistic psychology can provide additional content for examination (e.g., mental toughness); however, it can also contribute through the development of novel and more rigorous qualitative methods of enquiry. Furthermore, as a field, psychology has traditionally (and at times uncritically) adopted approaches that "took for granted that the subject matter in psychology was mechanistic, reductionistic, causalistic, and elementistic" [6, p. 124]. Both humanistic and transpersonal paradigms can continue to develop a better approach that reflects an understanding of the epistemological foundations that underpin their approaches. Perhaps consideration of Aanstoos' thoughts about a way forward for humanistic psychology can also be said for transpersonal psychology.

CONCLUSION

We argue not for one paradigm over the other, but consideration of both paradigms (and others) that create an in-depth and a relationally interdependent understanding of the subjective experience that, in turn, might guide and inform both coach education (including continuing professional development) and subsequent practice.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

By discussing the relationship between holism, Humanistic Psychology, and humanism in sports coaching, Tania Cassidy suggests that the concept of holism has been flippantly used and definitively muddled by inconsistent use and varying etymology. However, of greater significance is the connection Cassidy makes between holism and Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. In drawing this connection, Cassidy suggests that there may be merit in focusing on the unique needs and experiences of coaches, reviving a classic approach that seems to be rarely advanced in the world of sports coaching. By broadening her suggestion and looking more closely at theorists like Jung, Maslow, Frankl and Adler, such an approach seemingly offers impactful and positive consequences.

‘HOLISTIC COACHING’ AND MEANING

More philosophical than functional, Cassidy’s closing line seems an appropriate place to start: “If the sports coaching community fails to gain a greater understanding of holism, yet continues to use the phrase ‘holistic coaching’, the phrase has the potential to become meaningless” (p. 4). Interestingly, Cassidy is not the first to suggest that, “Clarifying the term *holism* and distinguishing its correct meaning from common misuse would help . . .” [1, p. 149]. While Cassidy states, “it is not clear as to what constitutes ‘holistic coaching’ because it has been used in a variety of ways” (p. 1), one can not help but wonder the value of focusing on an issue that may very well be inconsequential on a number of levels (e.g., to coaches, to practitioners, etc.). Regardless, by focusing on this issue of defining holism, the centerpiece of Cassidy’s article, one would be quick to lose sight of a much more profound point woven throughout the text.

GENERAL OR DISTINCT

Cassidy makes much ado about holism’s connection to Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology, concluding that we “move beyond the influence of humanistic psychology as this encourages a particular understanding of holism” (p. 4). Ironically, in stating her concerns as she does, it seems as if Cassidy is railing against the more universalized term of holism, calling for a more specific conception. Thus, in calling for this more individualized approach to holism, Cassidy is calling for a more Humanistic and/or Transpersonal approach to working alongside athletic coaches.

The field of psychology has long harbored a consistent debate about, what Kimble calls,

the *Epistemic Differential* [2], or the conflict between scientific objectivism and humanistic subjectivism [3]. However, in the world of sport coaching, Cassidy subtly reminds us of the value of the debate, calling attention to the anti-reductionist sentiment of Humanistic Psychology. I agree in force that coaching may be better for embracing more traditional psychological perspectives [4], specifically those that call for more introspective and transcendent practices. While the debate has long waged between the merits of decreasing statistical emphasis in understanding the unique person, Cassidy draws us back into this age-old argument. Cassidy alludes to coaches being better understood as individual human beings with distinct views, skills and perspectives.

In a similar vein, Jung poetically frames a perspective that fully supports a more individualized approach:

Under the influence of scientific assumptions, not only the psyche but the individual man and, indeed, all individual events whatsoever suffer a leveling down and a process of blurring that distorts the picture of reality into a conceptual average. We ought not to underestimate the psychological effect of the statistical world picture: it displaces the individual in favor of anonymous units that pile up into mass formations. [5, p. 11]

Similarly, Maslow says, “Certainly it seems more and more clear that what we call ‘normal’ in psychology is really a psychopathology of the average, so undramatic and so widely spread that we don’t even notice it ordinarily” [6, p. 15]. In referencing Maslow and Jung, it is intended to highlight the notion that Cassidy may actually be making bold and poignant suggestions by casually connecting holism, sport, and Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. In creating this connection, Cassidy is touching on a powerful intersect where coaches can invert more focus on their personal paths and unique circumstances to more fully develop and serve the athletes they are dedicated to. Conceivably there is no need to redefine terms, but rather to focus attention on how a term, in this case holism, applies to the unique circumstances coaches are regularly engaged in.

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

In further reflecting on the works of more traditional Humanistic and Transpersonal psychological theorists, opportunity to positively impact sports coaches abounds. In describing the *Goals and Implications of a Humanistic Education*, Maslow concludes that, “With increased personal responsibility for one’s personal life, and with a rational set of values to guide one’s choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they lived” [7, p. 188]. While Maslow also spends much time discussing the power of individualized learning, the larger point is that people are most engaged, most apt to grow and better themselves when they are addressing concerns, questions, and concepts relevant to their individual circumstances. As for coaches, working to further understand and address issues related to the individual coach are not only the most important to that coach, but they are also the most impactful.

In introducing Frankl to the conversation, his timeworn insights regarding the individual effort to advance the self can lead to practical and powerful advantages for coaches. Specifically, a positive outlook and faith in human ability result in, “(1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life’s transitoriness an incentive to take

responsible action” [8, p. 162]. Similarly, in the competitive and goal-driven world of coaching, individual happiness and professional satisfaction may be summed up in the following manner: “Normally pleasure is never the goal of human strivings but rather is, and must remain, an effect, more specifically, the side effect of attaining a goal” [9, p. 34]. In short, as with Maslow, Frankl outlines key suggestions that may greatly impact the individual position of coaches, affording them the opportunity to address their personal situations in ways that not only advance themselves, but also impact the players they lead.

Finally, Adler states, “It is absurd, therefore, to study either physical or mental conditions abstractly without relating them to the individual as a whole” [10, p. 15]. It would seem that the same can be said of sports coaching. To best understand the methods and techniques, deficiencies, and skills of a coach, one needs to understand the individual. Adler also says, “When we speak of virtue we mean that people play their part” [11, p. 206]. In this sense, we circle back to Cassidy’s supposition that focused attention on individual sports coaches could benefit their effort and development.

CONCLUSION

“An apple is an apple is an apple . . .” [12, p. 21] echoes Aldous Huxley’s sentiment that the human urge to manufacture order may have value, but it is also not without consequence. Not all apples are alike. Some are rotten, some delicious, and grouping them into a single category reduces the meaning of that fact. We need to be more specific when speaking of sport coaches, honoring their individual experiences, and more clearly addressing their holistic deficiencies and strengths. Within her article, Cassidy pokes at a powerful issue that is never clearly made explicit, as her regular references to Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology seem to welcome discussion related to a narrowing down, focusing on the single coach as opposed to the group. To this end, perhaps we need less focus on broadly defining terms, and more focus on attentively understanding how they can be best applied to the individual. In recalling the vital insights of theorists as potent as Jung, Maslow, Frankl and Adler, the opportunity and value of addressing the sports coach as a unique individual is clear. While this conversation certainly warrants more extensive probing, the idea that sports coaches can be positively impacted by the theories and perspectives put forth by Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology seems to be a step forward.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Tania Cassidy's discussion about holism in sports coaching helpfully raises interesting questions about humanistic approaches which are also relevant in the relatively young field of coaching psychology. It has been argued that coaching psychology itself emerged from the sports coaching of the 1960s, transferring into business from the 1970s and 1980s [1, p. 9]. Cassidy's challenge about the vagueness of the term 'holistic coaching' is relevant in the field of coaching psychology where there is a similar discussion about the role of humanistic coaching.

Within coaching psychology, there has been renewed interest in the ideas of Carl Rogers [2-5]. However, despite the revival of Rogers and a parallel flourishing of positive psychology, there is a growing divergence in the literature, with various groups appropriating the term 'coaching' to refer to their own approaches. Cassidy's concern about the vagueness of the term 'holistic coaching' can be applied more generally to 'coaching' itself.

Cassidy correctly identifies the Rogerian or person-centred approach as underlying Lombardo's definition of coaching. Within coaching psychology, there is a tension between those who lean towards the principled non-directivity of a Rogerian approach and those who believe that coaching needs to be more directive. Transpersonal or life coaches are more likely to favour the Rogerian or humanistic approach, while executive and performance coaches focus more on behavioural and cognitive-behavioural models.

Some academics have worked to incorporate the humanistic approach into broader models of coaching. Passmore's integrative coaching model, for example, refers to Rogers' necessary and sufficient conditions as part of the process of "developing the coaching partnership" [6, p. 159]. Passmore goes on to suggest that this needs to be supplemented by the use of emotional intelligence to "maintain the coaching partnership" and a range of behavioural and cognitive techniques in order to lead to improved performance [6, p. 157-164]. In effect, Passmore argues that Rogers' conditions are necessary, but not sufficient for an effective coaching relationship.

DIRECTIVE VERSUS NON-DIRECTIVE COACHING

While supporting Cassidy's call for clarity around terminology, there may be an opportunity to adopt a broader view which would support coaches and their clients (including athletes). Perhaps 'coaching' could be used as an umbrella term for a range of conversational helping interventions which could be seen on a 'directive to non-directive spectrum' [7]. Humanistic

coaching would be very close to the non-directive end of the spectrum, while mentoring or instructional coaching would feature near the directive end.

In this way, we could move to a genuinely client- or athlete-centred approach by the very fact that the coaching intervention would be based on the best interests of the client or athlete. If the need is to foster independent thinking, self-esteem or self-confidence, the coach and client would agree to use a more non-directive approach. On the other hand, if the client requires new skills or additional information, the coach could agree to employ a more directive approach.

HUMANISTIC VERSUS ATHLETE CENTRED

This suggestion supports Cassidy's assertion that "humanistic and athlete-centred practices are not synonymous" (p. 441). Humanistic coaching would be one of the interventions towards the non-directive end of a spectrum of approaches. With careful contracting between coach and client, a humanistic approach might be the best way of supporting an athlete. At other times, however, it may be more supportive to be more directive; challenging an athlete, for example, to set higher expectations.

CONCLUSION

By clearly recognising the strengths of a broad range of coaching interventions and embracing the good intentions of an increasingly diverse group of coaching practitioners, it may be possible to channel our energies from arguing over terminology to working together to embed a broad spectrum of effective, person-centred coaching approaches.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

In her article, Tania Cassidy raises some timely questions regarding the issues of holism and humanistic psychology as they relate to coaching practices and, more broadly, coach education. In this regard, we would readily agree with her view that, while the term ‘holistic coaching’ has been increasingly utilised in the coaching discourse, there remains considerable uncertainty and variability in relation to what this term means to scholars, educators, and practitioners alike. As such, if our understanding of ‘holistic coaching’ is to go beyond assuming a functional link between it and good practice, then there is a need to underpin such rhetoric with supporting theory and empirical inquiry [1]. We would argue that this is especially important if ‘holistic coaching’ is to become a practically useful approach for educators and practitioners in the field.

HOLISTIC COACHING PRACTICE

In recent years, ‘holistic coaching’ has been increasingly championed as a better approach to the previous emphasis on the technical, tactical, and physical development of athletes that has historically dominated the field of coaching in many sports [2]. Indeed, it could be argued that the inclusion of the psycho-social features of sports participation is both a welcome, and indeed necessary, aspect of coach education. However, like Kretchmar [2], we would question if holism has had the paradigmatic shift in coaching and coach education that was initially anticipated to accompany this doctrine. While we fully support the intentions of this perspective, we would question if genuinely holistic coaching has been promoted or, instead, whether coach education has simply identified a list of further variables for coaches to address in a sequential and prescribed manner [2]. From our shared experiences of participating in coach education and our research with coaches on their educational experiences, we would question if practitioners have been provided with a genuinely integrative understanding of the athletes that they work with. In keeping with the criticisms of the rationality-based approach to coach education [3, 4], we believe that holistic coaching has tended to be presented as an unproblematic and straightforward activity.

One of the challenges that we have found in our work with students is how to best represent, and conceptualise, the holistic nature of athletes, their behaviours, and the meanings and interpretations that they may attach to their sporting experiences. While we

support the criticisms of viewing athletes through the lenses of Newtonian and Cartesian thought [2], it has proven difficult to provide an alternative holistic conceptual framework that recognises the integrative nature of human beings. Our efforts to respond to this challenge have led us to search for ideas and concepts from diverse sources, including existential thought and even theology. One model that we have found to be of some value in assisting our thinking here is provided by McAuliffe [5], who drew upon the work of Heidegger, Van Kaam, and Vogelien (among others) to develop what he termed the Field Model for the counselling of alcoholics. His thesis suggested that human beings consist of four integrated elements. These are the 'subjective', the 'physical', the 'social', and the 'spiritual'. Significantly, these elements do not have distinct boundaries, but, instead, they are all intertwined, intermeshed, and ultimately inseparable. As such, this model suggests that a change in any one area will also be identifiable in the other three areas. For example, a female athlete may be diagnosed with breast cancer and need a mastectomy. While surgery may correct the physical 'problem' and allow the athlete to return to training and competition, the athlete may subjectively feel incomplete as a woman. She may also feel depressed or paranoid that the cancer could return. Socially, the changes to her body may lead her partner to view and respond to her differently. In addition, she may feel awkward and embarrassed at having to display her body in public, because of the stigma that might be attached to it. Spiritually, if she is religious, she may question why her god let the cancer happen to her. Alternatively, if she is a humanist, she may come to question the purpose and fairness of life. Consequently, her coach may need to understand not only the psychological, social, and spiritual components that accompany the athlete's physical illness and recovery, but also how these might influence and impinge upon her future sporting endeavours.

While we do not believe that this model will solve all our coaching ills in relation to holistic thought and practice, we do believe that, alongside other frameworks and theories, it may assist coach educators and coaching practitioners to better understand and appreciate the essential integrative nature of human life. In particular, it could assist our understanding of how athletes' engagements both inside and outside of the sporting arena may impact upon their respective experiences, responses, and actions. Indeed, we believe that coaching scientists, educators, and practitioners could better recognise the 'person' behind the 'performer'. In this respect, it is important that our discussions of holistic coaching practice advance beyond the rationalistic and functional conceptualisations that have dominated our existing understanding and practice in coaching [2]. Such understanding may also lead us to reconsider how we best prepare coaches to engage in such complex social interactions with athletes. We therefore agree with Tania Cassidy's suggestion that the issue of holistic coaching requires much greater thought and theorising if we are to develop more appropriate understandings for practice.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: IS IT TIME TO MOVE ON?

In light of the above discussion that addresses the essentially human side of coaching, we can understand why researchers, educators, and practitioners have been attracted to the concepts and theories provided by humanistic psychology. While we agree with Tania Cassidy's proposal that our thinking in this area should not be confined to humanistic psychology, we would contend that the coaching literature has, to date, failed to critically explore and engage with the theories in this area. It would perhaps be somewhat unwise for us to not fully consider the complexity, subtlety, and sophistication that this body of literature may be able to offer the field of coaching. For example, we would argue that the work of Carl Rogers deserves greater critical scrutiny than has been evidenced in the coaching literature thus far.

Indeed, his work might provide a valuable tool for thinking about athlete-centred coaching.

Over more recent years the term ‘athlete-centred coaching’ would appear to have become a ‘buzz-word’ used by academics, coach educators, and coaching practitioners. While we are certainly not averse to the phrase and what it potentially stands for, we are concerned with the field’s apparent lack of theoretical understanding and what this means for the practice of coaching. Here, we believe that the field of coaching could better draw on the work of Rogers [6] to provide a more complete conceptualisation of ‘athlete-centred coaching’ than has been achieved thus far. Indeed, while others have made passing reference to Rogers’s work, no-one has, to our knowledge, explicitly attempted to provide an in-depth and critical exploration of the application of his theorising to coaching. While it is beyond the scope of the present commentary to provide a detailed exploration of the key tenets of Rogers’s work, we would like to touch upon his discussions about the facilitation of learning and how his work might provide greater understanding about what is meant by ‘athlete-centred coaching’ and how we theorise this approach.

Our discussions with coaches and coach educators have demonstrated to us that ‘athlete-centred coaching’ is often characterised by the application of a questions-based pedagogy with the intention of identifying and working towards shared goals. In addition, it would appear that ‘athlete-centred coaching’ is often associated with the need to maintain a positive, cheerful, caring, coaching front at all times. While we broadly agree with the principle of engaging athletes in the learning process espoused in the coaching literature (e.g., Kidman [7, 8]), we believe that our present reading and application of Rogers’s work in relation to ‘athlete-centred coaching’ is both partial and incomplete. For example, Rogers argued that while teachers should strive to engage students within the learning process, educators should recognise that this might entail the application of a variety of pedagogical approaches. This could be especially so if learners prefer to be instructed and guided. In light of this, coaches aspiring to implement ‘athlete-centred coaching’ may need to utilise a variety of approaches in an attempt to address the needs and desires inherent within their group of athletes. To limit ‘athlete-centred coaching’ to the use of questioning behaviours would not appear to reflect the complexities and nuances that Rogers identified. Equally, when drawing on Rogers’s theorising, it would seem important to acknowledge that coaches can only meaningfully use such an empowering approach to the degree that they feel comfortable.

The notion that ‘athlete-centred’ coaches are those that are “nurturing, supportive, nice, inclusive, responsive, and kind” [9, p. 2] suggests that coaches may have to “modify, induce, neutralise, inhibit, and control a variety of positive and negative emotions and act in ways that are at odds with his or her personality [1]”. Rogers’s theorising, on the other hand, stresses the importance of “entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade” [6, p. 106]. Indeed, Rogers goes on to contend that when seen from this point of view the teacher, or in this case the coach, “can be enthusiastic, he can be bored, he can be interested in students, he can be angry, he can be sensitive and sympathetic” [6, p. 106]. In other words, the facilitator of learning is permitted to experience the full range of emotions that inevitably accompany practice. This is not to suggest that coaches should act upon every emotion that they feel. Instead, coaches would live their feelings and where appropriate choose to share these feelings if they believed they might benefit the learning and development of their athlete(s).

Rogers also acknowledged that facilitators need to be fully accepting of the fact that learners will experience a full range of emotions during the educational process, hence the educator needs to try and have an “awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student” [6, p. 111]. In this sense, Rogers [10] contended that learning

must encompass both cognitive ideas and feelings; something that we would argue is largely under-explored in the coaching literature. Space prohibits us from further expanding upon the application of Roger's work to coaching here. Needless to say, we believe that such an expanded consideration of his theorising, and the associated debates that could accompany this, would fruitfully contribute to our shared agenda of enhancing coaching practice and coach education provision.

CONCLUSION

Like Tania Cassidy we agree that the field of coaching should not be restricted to the concepts and theories of humanistic psychology. Indeed, we are fully supportive of her recommendation to explore other disciplines, which include education and sociology. Nevertheless, we are mindful that discussions about the application of principles taken from humanistic psychology remain limited and largely superficial at present. If we are to develop a greater understanding of what is meant by the terms 'holistic coaching' and 'athlete-centred coaching,' we believe that much greater conceptual and theoretical clarity is needed. This will inevitably require researchers, practitioners and coach educators to engage with theory from a diverse range of disciplines and sub-disciplines, which includes humanistic psychology.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

The central challenge proposed by Cassidy's target article is "to support the field to move beyond the influence of humanistic psychology" (p. 442). This is the purpose I have chosen to develop my commentary.

In particular, I would like to suggest that – if Humanistic Psychology really is a dog that has lost its bark - at least one way beyond Humanistic Psychology is to consider what Positive Psychology might offer to coaches and coaching. My proposition, presented more as a heuristic device than as a personal manifesto, is that Positive Psychology may incorporate elements that will help to 'move beyond' the predominantly subjective and qualitatively-oriented research base that Humanistic Psychology has relied upon.

FROM HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

'EVOLUTIONARY' APPROACH

In addressing any 'move beyond' we must recognise that coaching has a history. Humanistic Psychology has already had a strong influence on establishing and reinforcing ethical standards, routines and practices in coaching. Indeed, for pragmatic reasons it might be wise to intentionally celebrate this compatibility and continuity, rather than to seek clear water. For the many coaches who aspire to practice based on Humanistic Psychology principles, any shift toward Positive Psychology may be best presented as a form of natural progression or evolution. Such continuity is only likely to add to the likelihood that a shift might actually happen. Within this point, and despite the different scales of change that 'moving beyond' may be taken to suggest, we should still acknowledge and value the very large effects that even small differences in perspective can have on both performance and outcomes [1].

'REVOLUTIONARY' APPROACH

Positive Psychology also represents a more revolutionary 'move beyond' Humanistic Psychology. We might use this approach to encourage change in other groups. Executive coaches, for example, seem to value Positive Psychology over other approaches for its: i) personal relevance; ii) absence of diagnosis; iii) relevance to immediate tasks; and iv) the human growth that it seems to generate [1]. Indeed, Positive Psychology can also be seen as being: a) facilitative; b) concerned with optimal functioning; c) value-oriented; and d) appropriate for being applied across the spectrum of individuals to large groups [2].

Positive Psychology can also provide a different intervention language and distinctive targets for action. One such target of Positive Psychology is that it can help coaches to identify and then build the clients' individual strengths [2]. Yet, this is contentious; the relative lack of attention to personal shortcomings is precisely why some have been suspicious of unrefined contemporary claims for Positive Psychology [3, 4]. Acknowledging this critique, and with a concern that organisations and individuals do not become the equivalent of 'Stepford Wives' [5], this approach has recently been refined to include Realised and Unrealised Strengths, Learned Behaviours and Weaknesses [6].

BALANCING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Part of why Positive Psychology might represent a move beyond Humanistic Psychology is that researchers increasingly recognise the value of balancing positive *with* negative experiences to heighten intervention outcomes. For example, the so-called 'positivity-negativity ratio' [7, 8] suggests that at least three positive emotions are needed to counterbalance every negative emotion; until this ratio is achieved flourishing remains elusive.

Flourishing

Flourishing is characterised by a life filled with emotional, psychological and social well-being and high functioning in all areas [9]. Seen in this way, flourishing summarises the aspirations I have heard many coaches endorse, especially those working in sports or executive scenarios. Yet, a superficial grasp of this ratio over-attends to the positivity, whereas Positive Psychology endorses more closely attending to the emotional impact(s) of the interaction between coaches and performers. While there is limited evidence that such a ratio has equivalent effects on coaching-based relationships in sport (although it is growing in workplaces, e.g., Corporate Leadership Council [10]), the framework remains for all to investigate in whatever ways they find convincing.

Resilience

Resilience represents another Positive Psychology concept receiving increasing attention. While acknowledging the numerous definitions, my preference emphasises the learned capacity to develop through and beyond the negative effects of setbacks [11]. Inevitably, such adaptability reflects a range of personal qualities – including learned coping responses – as well as contextual factors. Importantly, resilience places individuals into their real-world context, including their personal histories. As we face turbulent economic, societal and cultural times that will ensnare most people in their slipstream, this seems central to enhancing performance without fixing the 'brokenness' of any individual. Positive youth development [12] frames its practice around the 5 'C' factors (Contribution, Confidence, Competence, Connections, and Character), each of which has an important role in resilience-building. Given that the four 'C' factors used by Côté and Gilbert [13] to define coaching effectiveness and expertise show some compatibility with those emphasised in positive youth development, this only adds to the appeal of adopting Positive Psychology.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Positive Psychology can be seen as 'moving *beyond*' because of its underpinning evidence, by capitalising on the availability of new high-tech research approaches and analytical techniques. As an *applied* discipline [2], Positive Psychology has always been willing to 'borrow' from, for example, recent advances in magnetic resonance imaging of brain function and from new ways to analyse change (e.g., nonlinear dynamics modelling [8]).

This seems particularly important as we move into a new world order and as many developed nations seek to recover their economic stability. For example, central to the Broaden and Build Theory of Emotion [14] is the notion that positive emotions facilitate the highest levels of cognitive activity, including the executive functioning that characterises high-level performance. In contrast, negative emotions inhibit such processing. Further, as understanding of the different functions of emotions is refined, this work is showing how emotions spread among groups, making it highly relevant to those who work with teams and/or in groups. Research continues to reveal the positive effects of Positive Psychology approaches in improving markers of employee performance (e.g., [15]) and how these approaches may be integrated within established work practices such as performance reviews.

At least one destination in the subsequent journey is to move toward helping coaches to work more effectively (and efficiently) with individuals and groups of varying sizes and cohesiveness to produce speedy results. Indeed, part of what makes Positive Psychology different to Humanistic Psychology is that it has emerged not only with a distinctive philosophical stance (to live a good life celebrating what is right with life and oneself, rather than attending to what is wrong and trying to fix what does not function well), but also that it draws upon a predominantly empirical evidence-base. It is also salutary to point out that as the dynamics of society intensify and expand, the limitations of Positive Psychology will be no greater or lesser than for any other coaching approach.

CONCLUSION

This commentary suggests that coaches may justifiably choose to ‘move beyond’ Humanistic Psychology by considering how Positive Psychology might enhance their coaching. This proposition has been based on three main points. First, it may be easier to make a shift by acknowledging that Positive Psychology represents an evolution into Humanistic Psychology. Second, and to intentionally appeal to a different coaching audience, we can present Positive Psychology as a revolutionary way to address those new themes that play an important part in enhancing daily performance and that add quality to our individual and collective lives. Finally, the underpinning evidence that supports Positive Psychology is based on new technologies - whether we take that to indicate measurements, assessments and/or distinctive forms of testing of outcomes. These technologies are now able to show how the central concerns of Positive Psychology – especially personal estimates of strengths, emotional features and resilience – are responsive to teachable interventions.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

I was intrigued by Tania Cassidy's article, arguing for a clearer understanding of holism and a suggestion that interpreting its meaning is culturally based. I wondered where my interpretation had developed, so I dug into my own culture to determine where the word began to be embedded in my writing about athlete-centred coaching.

LOMBARDO'S HUMANISTIC COACHING

I owe most of my reflection to Bennett Lombardo's original work on *Humanistic Coaching* [1], where he embedded his writing on humanism within the social psychology discipline. Following the work of humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, Lombardo called for coaches to focus on the development of the 'whole' athlete and encourage them to enable athletes to reflect on the subjective, thrilling experience of sport. Additionally, his humanism discussions were underpinned by Jay Coakley's [2] work, with a sociocultural emphasis of the sport environment and its impact on athletes. Lombardo's humanistic theme, based on social psychology, pedagogy and sociology, came from his frustration in watching undergraduate students' culturally-based education being over-influenced by what Nash et al. [3] depict as a "tendency to privilege the technological, biophysical and scientised aspects coach education programmes" (p. 530). Thus Lombardo's intentions were to ensure that athlete growth and development was considered holistically, rather than just from the physical domain.

Lombardo's work inspired me, because - like his students - my cultural base was largely influenced by the emphasis on the physical. Realising that there was more than just the physical, my interpretation evolved into acknowledging an 'holistic', 'athlete-centred' and 'humanistic' coaching approach. For me, all three terms are about the individual and his or her culturally-based context. With Cassidy's prompting, I reflected on my personal meaning of holism and the importance for coaches to understand training athletes holistically. Retrospectively, holism is based on growth and development research which is embedded in psychosocial [4, 5], human science and pedagogical literature [6] even though human development theory discourses [7] claim to originate in humanistic psychology. Growth and development research highlights the importance of considering the person from his or her cultural base, to enable learning to occur [4, 5]. An athlete's ability to learn is dependent on the 'whole' person and is culturally specific to that person. Thus, being humanistic is ensuring that those culturally specific needs are met. Based on my research, I was privileged

to join Lombardo [8] and continue to promote humanistic coaching, where sport experiences are used to enhance personal development and understanding. Sport provides an avenue for this humanistic, holistic educational experience so athletes have an opportunity to develop as human beings.

ATHLETE-CENTRED COACHING

In our work, we use the terms humanistic and athlete-centred coaching interchangeably because both refer to the total development of the 'whole' individual [9]. Both terms focus on enhancing athlete self-awareness, and holistic growth and development [8]. For athletes to perform (at any level), they need to be self-aware, and to have ownership and responsibility for their learning [10]. If we want to develop people who are self-aware, we need to provide an environment for athletes to be themselves and for coaches to focus on each individual's complex, culturally-based needs [9]. Indeed in *Athlete Centred Coaching*, Lombardo and I explicitly define our interpretation of holism in a separate section entitled 'Humanism and Athlete Development', whereby the holistic needs are identified and explained as physical, cognitive, psychological, social and spiritual. Additionally, Jones and Turner [11] also label factors of holism as emotional, political, social, spiritual and cultural aspects in addition to the mental and physical. The importance of growth and development of individuals cannot be underestimated. In reflecting on Cassidy's comments, however, I believe that the act of merely identifying and labelling the needs on a systematic scale is limiting in, and of, itself and detracts from the notion that human development is culturally based.

Athletes learn verbally and non-verbally, and from hidden messages given in the sport context [9]. An individual's growth and development accrue as a result of direct contact with people and encounters with various situations, regardless of exactly how the coach behaves or the specific nature of the sport environment. An athlete's interaction with any given environment brings about change and any learning which occurs is culturally specific. I would go one step further in suggesting that, like athlete-centred coaching, holism is individually based, but depends on the individual's cultural context (his or her uniqueness) [8, 9, 11, 12].

Mattson et al. [13] provide further evidence for a cultural base, when they argue that for an individual, the specific nature of the revelations and learnings will vary, paralleling the uniqueness of each person and reflecting the individual's personal encounter with sport. In their research, they found that an individual's specific culture is a determinate of how he or she learns and to become good at sport requires attention to several cultural-based needs, such as parents, an environment of fun, athletes' determination and their discipline for training. Thus, the unique 'whole' context of an individual's culture determines his or her learning.

Humanistic, athlete-centred coaching is about offering a supportive learning environment to help athletes' growth and development, and this requires thinking holistically about the athlete. Through holism we can offer the 'human' side of sport; it is about "being authentic, true to oneself, human in every way" [8, p. 178].

CONCLUSION

Coaching humanistically is about enabling people be who they are and coaches encouraging autonomy and freedom of athletes; and addressing their 'holistic' needs, which are unlimited, dynamic and complex for each 'whole', unique person.

Coaches are responsible for the well being of their athletes. The coaching process is

vulnerable to differing social pressures. The movement experiences in sport should be humanising in that they positively influence self-esteem, self-direction, independence and opportunities that can “express intense movement of joy and supreme well-being” [14, p. 85, as cited in 8, p. 181]. To attend to these individualised, holistic experiences coaches need to focus on the ‘whole’ person, one who has been socially constructed and has a personal, culturally-based practice and understanding.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

While Cassidy must be commended for addressing an issue related to coaching behavior, especially since so few in the profession actually focus on such issues, I cannot help but think that she is confronting an issue that really is not an issue. It appears to me that there are only minor differences between holism and humanistic psychology. The more substantial issue would appear to be the overwhelming dominance and, indeed, acceptance of The Professional Model of Coaching by those in the coaching profession.

THE PROFESSIONAL MODEL OF SPORT COACHING

I wish that humanistic coaching/humanism truly dominated the sports coaching scene. Indeed, in my experience and meager research endeavors related to coaching, humanistic coaching behavior, despite my strong desire for it to be true, is indeed, a rare occurrence. The dominant model/form of athletic leadership has been, and apparently will continue to be, the Professional Model of Sport Coaching; i.e., the coach's needs take priority over the athletes' needs, and winning is the only measure of success (as opposed to other outcomes indicating successful and valuable sport experiences). The Professional Model of Sport coaching is, apparently, on the upswing in our highly competitive, dare I say, cut-throat world of sport, rather than decreasing! In the Professional Model of Sport Coaching, the many needs of the many participants in the sporting venture are of secondary concern to the coach (implicit here is the fact that the goals, objectives, and needs of the coach take priority). Certainly, the Professional Model of Sport Coaching is neither holistic in its intent, nor humanistic in its methodology! In the Humanistic, Educational, and/or Holistic Model, the intent is much more athlete centered, and while not all needs can be addressed, the coach attempts to address as many of the needs and goals of the performers as possible. Certainly in these latter three models of coaching leadership, the coach, at the very least, has an interest and is concerned about the needs, hopes, desires, etc., of the participant and in this way attempts to address the entirety of the sport experience.

The professional model of sport coaching does not pretend to be a model which embraces the educational approach. Humanistic coaching, and indeed holism which should intersect with humanistic tenets, and should strive for several mutually agreed-upon objectives, should be an educational approach (when contrasted with the professional model). The Professional Model is one dimensional in its intent – all leadership behaviors, actions,

decisions, strategies, etc. are directed toward the goal of winning and/or the objectives of the coaching staff.

HOLISM AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Holism, as well as humanistic psychology, attempts - as difficult as it may seem to accomplish - to address the many dimensions of the athlete; i.e., the physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual/mental areas. It is in the latter characteristics that humanistic psychology differs from the holism model. Humanistic psychology typically does not address the spiritual dimension, while holistic practitioners certainly would address this characteristic of the performer. Humanistic athletic leaders tend toward more well-rounded educational efforts and holism starts with the total person in the athletic arena.

While holism and humanism might be somewhat different, I believe that they are more similar than dissimilar, and Cassidy has raised a discussion point which should not distract professionals from the more pertinent issue - why does the Professional Model of Sport coaching continue its dominance in sport? Why hasn't holism and/or humanistic coaching penetrated to a much greater degree as well as to a level which would be more readily apparent to observers?

The more potent aspect of Cassidy's discussion should be: How do we create more sport leaders/coaches who not only embrace holism/humanism as viable (and mostly similar) approaches, but also to making the sport experience more educational than it currently is?

CONCLUSION

Cassidy has addressed a major concern in athletic coaching, something researchers few and far between have attempted to accomplish. Specifically, she has focused on the relatively rare occurrence of holistic/humanistic leadership in sport; i.e., leadership which diverges from the Professional Model of Sport which continues to hold sway and clout in our field.

Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Tania Cassidy challenges readers to gain a greater understanding of holism or run the risk that the phrase “holistic coaching” will become meaningless. While I agree with the importance of gaining greater knowledge about holism and how it might inform that field of coaching, I am more concerned with the lack of an operational definition of holistic coaching. We live in a world where “up-naming”, using a new name for an already existing concept, has become the norm. A quick review of the coaching literature reveals at least four coaching philosophies that are quite similar and I would wager that most coaching professionals would be hard pressed to differentiate among holistic, humanistic, autonomy-supportive, or mastery-oriented coaching approaches.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The fields of counseling and sport psychology have been challenged to document “evidenced-based practices.” Can the profession of coaching be far behind? Without operational definitions of holistic coaching or any of the aforementioned approaches, it is doubtful that researchers could document the effectiveness of one coaching approach over another. As such, I disagree with Tania Cassidy’s belief that we must move beyond the influence of humanistic psychology. Instead, we should work to identify concrete measures of terms like athlete-centered coaching, while being sensitive to cultural differences. Only when researchers can tease out measurable differences between terms like holistic versus autonomy-supportive coaching can we identify the specific coaching behaviors that are most likely to foster positive youth development. For example, Conroy and Coatsworth [1] have developed the Autonomy Supportive Coaching Questionnaire to examine youth sport participants’ observations of coach behaviors that foster autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

THE FIRST TEE’S COACH TRAINING PROGRAM

I am also encouraged by the increase in sport-based youth development programs that have attempted to identify coaching behaviors that foster the athletic, personal, and social development in youth. To illustrate this point, consider the The First Tee’s Coach Training Program, which has the four Building Blocks:

Activity Based. The First Tee Coaches a) “talk less”, which enables participants to become involved more quickly in golf and other activities; and b) create or

introduce learning environments that provide numerous opportunities for self-discovery.

Mastery Driven. The First Tee Coaches: a) keep their attention consistent with their intention (e.g., building a positive relationship with their participants); and b) create learning and performance situations to facilitate self-assessment rather than encourage comparison to others.

Empower Youth. The First Tee Coaches: a) strive to get to know participants by asking open-ended questions and engaging in active listening; and b) build rapport with participants by acknowledging them as individuals and treating them as the experts.

Continuous Learning. The First Tee Coaches: a) may use the Good-Better-How model of feedback to assess their own skill development and for providing positive reinforcement to their mentees; and b) take advantage of interactive situations (coachable moments) to reinforce previously learned life skills.

CONCLUSION

Although the First Tee Coach Building Blocks are not based specifically on any one coaching philosophy, they appear to have much in common with the humanistic and holistic coaching approaches outlined in Cassidy's article. More importantly, the Building Blocks provide a roadmap of specific behaviors that are likely to lead to the desired outcomes inherent in both holistic and humanistic coaching philosophies.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

In her paper about holism in sports coaching, Tania Cassidy argues that a clear definition of holistic coaching is needed. She uses Lombardo's [1] definition of humanism in coaching to help us understand holistic coaching. Specifically, his definition focuses on "the total development of the individual...[that is] athlete-centered, and focused on enhancing the self-awareness, and growth and development of the participant..." (p. 441).

I agree with Cassidy in that much of our writing in sports coaching reflects humanism and the importance of developing an athlete-centered approach, without explicitly mentioning humanism. Specifically within the sport psychology literature, we emphasize that the coach must develop the athlete beyond the physical, but we rarely use the term "holistic coaching." In her conclusion, Cassidy suggested that the way to move forward is to become familiar with how psychology and other disciplines such as sociology inform our understanding of holism in coaching. Hence, this will be the focus of my commentary.

THE TRIAD OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

When I first read Cassidy's paper about holism in sports coaching, I immediately thought about Robin Vealey's triad of sport psychology [2]. I think this is a simple framework that emphasizes the importance of coaches using an athlete-centered approach and developing the athlete beyond their physical performance. Vealey's triad points to how the field of sport psychology attempts to help athletes achieve: a) optimal performance, b) optimal development, and c) optimal experiences in sport. Regarding optimal development, many coaches only focus on the physical development of the athlete. Research within sport psychology has consistently found, however, that successful athletes use mental skills more than less successful athletes [3-5]. Mental skills such as purposeful self-talk, imagery and relaxation can be applied to areas outside of sport, and help athletes develop optimally in other areas such as academics or their future profession – hence, the teaching of mental skills is developing the athlete in a more holistic manner beyond just teaching physical skills.

The second component of Vealey's triad is optimal development – which includes the optimal development of an athlete's physical skills, but also the important development of an athlete's self-perceptions, self-worth and competence. Athletes continue to participate in sport because it is fun. Research indicates that fun and enjoyment are key reasons that youth participate in sport [6], and one of the main reasons that youth drop out of sport is because it is no longer fun [7]. Therefore, coaches should focus on the optimal development of their

athletes to keep the experience fun, and enhance the quality of their participation.

The third component of Vealey's triad is optimal experiences to enhance the personal meaning and joy that sport can provide an athlete. She discusses Csikszentmihalyi's [8] concept of flow, which is being totally absorbed in the task or being "in the zone." Flow is achieved through the strategic use of mental skills and includes effortless performance, a lack of conscious thinking, a sense of control, and feeling highly energized. All of these components cannot be achieved if a coach is only focused on the physical performance of an athlete. Vealey's model and the research that supports her model provides strong evidence that holistic coaching is essential. It seems to me that the triad would be difficult for a coach to achieve if they are not engaged in holistic coaching.

A LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

When I think about the importance of focusing on the total development of the athlete, I am also reminded of research within sport psychology related to life skills development. I instantly think of the work of Dan Gould [9-11] and Steve Danish [12, 13]. Gould has defined life skills as "those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for us in non-sports settings" [9, p. 60].

Gould and his colleagues examined how successful high-school coaches teach life skills and develop character in their players [10, 11]. All of the high-school coaches that were a part of this study were finalists for the National Football League (NFL) "Coach of the Year Program." An important implication of this study is that sport coaches can be successful at both winning and teaching life skills to athletes. Many of the coaches believed that teaching life skills such as hard work and integrity actually allowed their team to be more successful on the field.

These highly successful high-school football coaches were highly motivated to win, but also had well-established coaching philosophies that emphasized life skills and developing the athlete as a whole. In fact, personal player development was a top priority; the coaches' philosophies emphasized the importance of developing their athletes physically, psychologically, socially and academically. It would seem to me that for a coach to engage in holistic coaching, the development of the whole athlete would be emphasized within their coaching philosophy. One way to move forward when educating current or future coaches regarding holistic coaching is to ensure that a life-skills approach is integrated into their philosophy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WINNING

Gould and colleagues' research with successful high-school football coaches points to the possibility that winning is possible when coaches focus on player development. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that winning is important, particularly in the USA. Cassidy asks us to think about how holistic coaching is culturally specific and I see the importance of winning as a "roadblock" to emphasize holistic coaching, particularly within my culture. More specifically, I see it difficult to emphasize holistic coaching at certain levels of sport in the USA such as the collegiate and professional levels given the importance placed on winning at these levels of sport. The work of sport sociologists such as George Sage, Jay Coakley, and Stanley Eitzen help us understand the importance of winning in U.S. sport. It may be particularly difficult for coaches of major collegiate programs to focus on player development when millions of dollars are spent to support their football or men's basketball programs [14]. A recent *USA Today* report [15] suggested that NCAA Division I-A coach's

salaries average 950,000 U.S. dollars a year, not counting benefits, incentives, subsidized housing, or any other perks. In fact, at least 42 Division I-A coaches were earning over \$1 million a year in 2006. Division I-A collegiate football coaches earn this type of salary because they have the potential to win and bring in millions of dollars to their university. With so much focus on generating money, I wonder how these coaches focus on holistic coaching.

CONCLUSION

I agree with Cassidy that our writing in sports coaching reflects humanism and the importance of developing an athlete-centered approach, without explicitly mentioning humanism. I provide a few examples within the sport psychology literature of the importance of developing the whole athlete. I also point out the importance of winning, particularly in the USA, and how this may be a potential roadblock for emphasizing holistic coaching.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Tania Cassidy's article on holism in sports coaching is an intriguing piece that has stimulated much reflection for us. After reading the article, we found ourselves digging through a diverse array of literature to better help us formulate our response. In addition to reviewing coaching and teaching literature, we also dusted off our weathered copy of Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* [1]. Perhaps this is the true value of Cassidy's article, and future discussions about holism in coaching – to stimulate self-reflection. One of the first questions we pondered after reading the article was related to the practical value of attempts to define holism in coaching. If discussions about holistic coaching can trigger such reflection among sport coaches, and those who train and work with coaches, then Cassidy will have succeeded in making an important contribution to the profession. The past four decades of research on coaching has clearly shown that regular self-reflection is critical to becoming an effective coach [2].

Cassidy raises several questions that revolve around the specific nature or definition of holism and/or humanism in sport coaching. We agree that the term 'holism' is loosely applied to numerous aspects not limited to sport coaching, but in the realm of education in general. For example, coaches often state that they feel love or have deep compassion for their athletes. Similarly, school teachers often comment on the notion of caring for their students. In the field of physical education, we can point specifically to the work of Hellison who has devoted much of his career to teaching and researching 'humanistic physical education' [3, 4]. Any time we state that we care about the 'whole' person, or take the 'whole person approach' we tend to believe that we are engaging in holism. Therefore, it is evident that, as Cassidy claims, the field may have a distorted definition of holism. However, as Cassidy notes, this may be due to the fact that there is no simple definition of holism.

A PLAYER-CENTERED APPROACH

There is a considerable amount of literature related to 'holistic' coaching here in North America, but the term itself is rarely used. A more common label here is 'player-centered approach' [5]. A player-centered approach seems to focus on athlete empowerment and responsibility, and is defined as a style in which "the coach supports player autonomy by implementing various strategies intended to enhance each player's decision-making ability during game play, as well as outside of game play" [5, p. 24]. Although there does not appear to be much research directly on this style of coaching, some authors have concluded that a

player-centered approach leads to increased player engagement, increased communication, increased competence, and increased motivation [5]. Finally, the role of the coach seems to be more of a facilitator when adopting a player-centered approach [5]. We find this conclusion somewhat odd given that the evidence from the past 40 years of research on quality coaching shows that effective coaches play many roles, including but not limited to that of a facilitator [2]. In other words, we believe that effective coaches don't concern themselves with labels, but rather with ensuring that their athletes learn and develop a wide range of competencies. In this sense, we might conclude that effective coaches have humanistic, or holistic, qualities or values that guide their actions. What, then, might be considered examples of holistic qualities? One of us recently co-authored an article in which we created a blueprint for the characteristics of successful coaches. We labeled this blueprint the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport [6]. The Pyramid, inspired by legendary American basketball coach John Wooden's Pyramid of Success [7], includes fifteen characteristics that seem to be present in successful coaches. These characteristics were selected based on a comprehensive review of the literature and our collective personal experiences of teaching, coaching and consulting with effective coaches. We might argue here that, based on Cassidy's description of holistic coaching, that the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport is in fact a portrait of a holistic coach.

THE ROLE OF ECOLOGY

Today, perhaps more than ever, sport coaches are encouraged to 'know' their athletes [8]. This aspect of athlete-centered coaching reflects, as Cassidy proclaims, a criterion of humanism. This 'knowledge of athletes' must include the family and socio-economic background of the individual. Sport coaches must comprehend the setting from which the athlete came in order to identify with the athlete. The sport coach must understand that the environment shapes or molds the athlete. This view is reflected in an ecological perspective on human development [9, 10]. Sport coaches are first and foremost teachers [6, 7, 11]. Metaphorically, they often are expected to teach 'life skills' through sport. Speaking holistically, effective coaches likely believe that the individual or 'self' can be taught. This ideal is perhaps best captured in one of legendary coach John Wooden's famous maxims, "you haven't taught until they have learned" [12]. This educational and nurturing aspect of effective coaching, which rests on an understanding of the ecology of the athlete, is most surely a 'part' of holism. Often in athletics we hear the phrase "this kid is not coachable". Is it that the athlete is not receptive to feedback, or is it that the sport coach does not know how to communicate effectively with the athlete? Understanding the background of the athlete has the potential to enhance the communication style of the sport coach. When a coach takes the time to learn about the ecology of a particular athlete, this is an example of a coach's self-development – another key component of holism. In the past decade of working with and teaching sport coaches, we have witnessed them in general becoming more sensitive to the ecology of the athlete.

HOLISTIC COACH TRAINING THROUGH KINESIOLOGY

One of Cassidy's main criticisms of using the term holism and/or humanism can be linked to cultural differences. Specifically, this discrepancy presents itself in the educational context. In North America, the role of educating those who pursue a career in sport coaching generally falls within a university/higher education setting [13]. Further, sport coaches often pursue a career as a physical education teacher to support their coaching aspirations. Therefore, the prospective coach typically follows a kinesiology-based curriculum. This

training includes the study of many aspects of human movement (e.g., motor learning exercise physiology, biomechanics, sport psychology, sport pedagogy) A coach's formal training is 'dynamic,' because it involves numerous sub-disciplines under the kinesiology umbrella. All the 'parts' or courses within kinesiology contribute to the knowledge of the 'whole' for future sport coaches. The breadth of the kinesiology field provides a unique educational setting for producing a well-rounded holistic sport coach.

HOLISTIC SPORT PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTING

Each of us has spent a considerable amount of our respective careers teaching and delivering sport psychology. We have found that sport coaches, particularly in elite sport contexts, are familiar with sport psychology. Coaches appreciate the mind-body connection and understand the importance of helping athletes develop a healthy and positive outlook. We learned early in our graduate training with renowned applied sport psychology consultants such as Ken Ravizza [14] and Terry Orlick [15] that effective coaches 'do sport psychology; they just don't call it that'. For example, if you polled effective sport coaches about their use of sport psychology, most of them would likely report few if any sport psychology strategies. Yet, all would affirm that they help their athletes set goals, develop performance routines and focus during competition. In the same light, we contend that effective sport coaches 'do' holism; they just don't think about their work in this way, nor would they label themselves as 'humanistic coaches'. It is very common for sport psychology consultants to have athletes reflect on their best performances [15]. We have seen many sport coaches also use this technique. This simple yet powerful exercise is, we believe, an example of holistic coaching in action.

CONCLUSION

According to Cassidy, an individual must be fully invested in the true definition of holism to engage in 'holistic coaching.' However, as we have illustrated, most sport coaches in North America are educated from a 'parts' perspective. They realize that the basic fundamentals complete the big picture. Effective sport coaches understand all the collective parts that create the entire athlete.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

As Tania Cassidy points out, much of our present understanding of coaching has been made through the analysis of individual coaches' experiences interpreted from a humanistic perspective that, by its very nature, places the individual at the centre of all action and change and ignores how historical workings of knowledge, truth and power have influenced coaches' ways of thinking, imagining and being. To advance the practice of coaching, and to bring coach education more in line with recent academic debates concerning the socially constructed nature of the self, society and sport, I agree with her that the study of coaching could benefit from going beyond humanism and embracing more post-structuralist inspired frameworks to show how contemporary "coaching knowledges" are socially derived. This would highlight the importance of coaches developing a critical understanding of how they use their knowledge and what they believe coaching is. It would also enable coaches to challenge the numerous taken-for-granted practices that presently inform coaching with the aim of developing more innovative and ethical coaching practices. Moreover, I agree with Cassidy regarding the necessity of moving beyond a humanistic perspective if as coach educators we hope to make any real changes to the practice of coaching.

BEYOND HUMANISM

While the humanistic view of development and identity was certainly an important challenge to the dominance of psychoanalysis and behaviorism, it was in many ways just the flip-side of a modernist, essentialising coin. For humanists, knowledge was built on listening to people: a person's words or meanings were considered to represent her or his inner truths. It was through the truth of experience that people were seen to be able to clarify their problems, know themselves and adjust any attitudes or motivations that may be interfering with the 'natural' evolution of the self. This epistemological position privileged individuals' interior worlds as distinct from the sociocultural context they lived in. Subsequently, the notion of a unique, isolated individual as a specific concept gained strength through the humanistic movement [1].

Humanism is also uncritically enmeshed with dominant western cultural norms that subscribe to success, self-determination, mastery and material accumulation. Humanism rewarded and encouraged those who accepted the modern challenges of competition, achievement and self-development. So it was that the principles of humanism, and more specifically humanistic coaching, found a comfortable home in sport where success is largely

seen to be the result of an individual's efforts alone. Accordingly, humanistic coaches have tended to ignore the influence of culturally embedded practices on their athletes' performances and equally upon their own understanding of coaching [2]. For when individuals are conceived of as free agents, 'their psychology' is a matter of personal choice, not a social production generated from a range of historical and cultural processes.

It is apparent today that we live in a society where our understanding of ourselves and our relations to others is shaped through psychology—the cult of the individual self, the modern science of the subject. Our language, the terms available to us for making sense of ourselves and others, is rooted in the characterization of the individual self [3]. As a consequence, individuals in Western society often feel isolated from their culture and their history. The modern quest for self-fulfillment undercuts a commitment to society, leaving an empty self. The ideal self has freed itself from tradition and authority and dis-associated itself from the society it inhabits [4]. In humanistic ethics, virtue is being responsible towards one's own existence, and vice is irresponsibility towards oneself. The self-actualizing person must be self-contained, true to his or her own nature and ruled by the laws of his or her own character rather than by the rules of society. But do an individual's meanings or interpretations really form a preconstituted centre to the experience of culture and history? Or is the self a position in language, something formed from the dominant discourses that exist in society and culture? More specifically, is the practice of coaching best understood by examining how coaches' 'knowledges' have been lived into existence?

Granted, it is important to encourage coaches to reflect on their coaching practices, their individual experiences. However, when the individual is located at the centre of knowledge and reality this is to ignore how the individual is an effect of the workings of power not an autonomous agent. It is also to emphasize the primacy of human consciousness to understand coaching at the expense of analyzing the transformations in coaching that have occurred due to the historical workings, shifts, junctures and relations of power between people, knowledge and the practice of coaching. In this way, so-called holistic coaching, as justified by a humanistic position, can only serve as a conceptual tool of domination likely to result in even more constrained modes of coaching practices. Foucault [3] was skeptical of the humanist assumption of one true self, an essential self who holds some specific knowledge within his or her being. Instead, he believed that subjects are constituted through a number of rules, styles and inventions to be found in the cultural environment.

CONCLUSION

To advance holistic coaching, coaches need to be encouraged not only to share their personal experiences as coaches but also to re-examine how they coach and what it is they already do. In other words, how can coaches challenge their assumptions and coach holistically by simply clarifying their personal philosophies? This is to describe and to reinforce existing practices, not to question them; this is to assume that the truth of coaching is something that can be discovered from listening to coaches, or by coaches listening to themselves, as opposed to acknowledging that how a coach believes he or she should coach is an invention, a product of numerous power struggles concerning what should or should not constitute the reality of coaching and the "truth" of sport science knowledge used by coaches to coach [2]. I believe it should be the job of coach educators to illustrate to coaches how to unpack their practices and beliefs—many of which will be taken-for-granted—so that they can begin to understand how they have been influenced by dominant discourses—such as humanism and the sports sciences—to simply coach as they were coached or to coach as they believe they are 'expected' to coach. For until coaches and coach educators acknowledge how power

relations have influenced their taken-for-granted assumptions about how to coach and how to educate coaches, respectively, it will be difficult to identify alternatives to challenge the many dominant discourses that surround sport and coaching and subsequently advance the practice of coaching.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

In this commentary on Tania Cassidy's target article, I hope to do two things. First I will make some comments about holism and integration. Then I will make a play for spirituality in this area.

HOLISM AND INTEGRATION

I agree with Cassidy that the mantra of holism can easily slip into the Emperor's new clothes. Even the idea of integrating different aspects of the person is problematic, implying a neat fit between cognitive, affective, and physical domains. To make matters worse, tagged on the end of those ideas often comes the word spirituality, as if this is a separate domain from the others. If it is separate, then what does it mean? I would question that it can be seen as separate from the other domains. However, even if one obtains clarity about what these different domains might be, I would still question this idea of simple integration. On the contrary most theories in psychology and spirituality suggest that the relationship between the domains is difficult. It is very often difficult, for instance, to articulate underlying feelings, a difficulty that may well be reinforced by underlying dynamics and even world views and beliefs that reinforce a sense of guilt or even shame [1, 2]. Genuine 'holistic' reflection then demands some pretty hard work in all the different domains, with no easy fit between them. This would include serious reflection on belief systems at both an affective and intellectual level. Do we actually know what we think and feel? Integration then would be a dynamic rather than easy thing, involving hard questions about meaning in and between all the domains.

I want to argue that this integration might be best focused then in the virtue of integrity. There are debates about whether this is one virtue or several [3]. However, at its heart integrity involves: consistency between thought and action (walking the talk and vice versa); clarity about purpose (moral and functional); capacity to stand up for principles; and integration of the different domains noted above [4]. Integrity is never perfect and thus involves the capacity to learn and develop. It also involves a strong sense of taking responsibility. Such responsibility can be seen under three interconnected heads [5]: agency, accountability to, and liability for. The first of these involves the person being responsible for his or her thinking, practice and effect on the social and physical environment. Accountability involves the capacity to give an account to another, and the understanding of

who you owe an account to, and why. Liability (moral not legal) is a broader idea that demands reflection on what I or my wider group might be responsible for. This tends to move into a negotiation of shared responsibility.

There is no space to develop the detail of this further. The broad point I want to make is that holism is better located in the more dynamic view of meaning and value, something located in the identity of the person and group. We tend, of course, not to hear about this kind of reflectivity until a crisis is reached. A clear, current example of this is the relationship between Wayne Rooney and his manager Alex Ferguson. Whatever the truth of this crisis, the relationship seems to be being played out around all the domains of holism, with value, meaning, belonging and identity at its heart. Very probably, it also involves a reluctance to examine and acknowledge certain areas in the relationship. Jung's idea of the shadow side, not the bad but rather the unacknowledged aspects of one's life, comes into play here and is a key aspect of integrity [6]. For sport, this can make all the difference. Reflecting on the value and meaning in all of these domains can help to motivate and connect, to the self and to different stakeholders. It can also guard against unacknowledged factors that can lead to problem practices such as drug taking.

The argument then is that to take holism seriously leads to a dynamic situation, with continual reflection on identity, value and meaning. For most of us this is always messy. But it need not in coaching lead to the need for qualifications in transpersonal psychology. On the contrary it can be focused in reflection and questioning. This is the kind of questioning exemplified in Barcelona Football Club, where they have moved beyond vision, values and corporate and community identity to the development of a code of ethics (to be finalised in spring 2011). This is an ongoing learning organization. The coach is part of that and the value and meaning that this generates is part of the context of coaching, with the sportsperson finding his or her identity in relation to that.

All of this takes us beyond the domain of any one academic or professional discipline or subsection of that. The intentional activity of coaching can engage moral, psychological and social meaning, without becoming therapy.

SPIRITUALITY

Is spirituality the domain on the end to be distinguished from the first three? Some would argue that case. Hence, Zohar and Marshall [7] want to distinguish spiritual intelligence from emotional intelligence. It is not clear, however, that the idea of spirit is analogous with emotion. Spirituality is rather focused on the development of significant life meaning and value in individuals and groups and in response to a plural social and physical environment. As such it invites critical use of the intellect and honest reflection on emotion, on purpose and on interactions with the social and physical environment. It is also about taking responsibility for that reflection and questioning. It is the moment of questioning that invites the questioned to take responsibility for his or her life meaning in practice. I would argue that this is what lies behind the advice from Rilke to a young poet:

I would like to beg you dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer. [8]

There is an element of the existential in this piece. But it is more. It is about taking responsibility for a narrative over time and for meaning and value in context. Some of this is summed up through transpersonal psychology, but also in ideas such as higher learning [9].

CONCLUSION

The search for spirituality I would argue is found in the wrestling with that meaning, and the resolution of the tensions between the different domains, rather than a static 'heaven', and as such should be claimed by coaching.

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Holism in Sports Coaching: Beyond Humanistic Psychology

A Response to Commentaries

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INTRODUCTION

I wish to sincerely thank the eighteen colleagues for their commentaries on the target article. The *Coaching Insights* section provides a welcome opportunity for people to discuss an issue with its target-commentaries-response configuration. The discussions can also highlight how new knowledge does not necessarily make the social world more transparent and how discussions can result in our understandings to spin off in new directions [1]. The commentaries have prompted me to reflect on the assumptions that implicitly and explicitly informed the target article, and make connections with work previously unfamiliar. The focus of my response is on the following issues: definitions; the role of holistic coaching in the professional coaching model; and ‘moving beyond’ humanistic psychology.

DEFINITIONS

In the target article, I argued for clarity around what constitutes ‘holistic coaching’. I explicitly stated that it is “not possible to construct a simple of definition of holism” (p. 439). But is it possible to have clarity without universal definitions, or am I just ‘wanting my cake and eating it too’? Several commentators raised the issue of definitions. Petitpas was concerned with “the lack of an operational definition of holistic coaching” (p. 479), claiming such an omission could jeopardise a researcher’s abilities to “document the effectiveness of one coaching approach over another” (p. 479). I am not convinced this documentation is necessary, because no one approach can ever explain all effects [2]. Kretchmar was another who argued for more attention to be given to definitions. His rationale was that “it is hard to argue for anything, or to provide clear evidence for one’s position, if we do not know what the key terms mean” (p. 446). This has intuitive appeal, but if we agree that holism (for example) is influenced by cultural norms, can there really be a universal definition? Maybe a case can be made for defining how terms are being used in a particular context, which could then support readers to make informed judgements regarding the merits of the claims being made. Leidl proposed something similar when he suggested that rather than redefining terms, it may be more generative if attention was focused “on how a term, in this case holism, applies to the unique circumstances coaches are regularly engaged in” (p. 460).

Mallett and Rynne suggested that, because terms and concepts such as holism are represented as “being largely philosophical and aspirational” it would be “difficult (if not impossible) to develop more precise definitions” (p. 454). They disagreed with my claim in the target article that “previous sports coaching researchers have not sufficiently clarified

their use of such terminology” and cited the work of Jones and Turner as evidence of those who described holistic coaching as including “emotional, political, social, spiritual and cultural aspects, in addition to mental and physical ones” (p. 454). Yet, drawing on the work of Kretchmar, Nelson et al. question if Jones and Turner’s description of ‘holistic coaching’ genuinely promotes the concept, or whether they are simply identifying a long list of “variables for coaches to address in a sequential and prescribed manner” (p. 465). They went on to propose that an unintended consequence of describing ‘holistic coaching’ in a list form, is that it could be (re)presented as “an unproblematic and straightforward activity” thereby supporting a “rationality-based approach to coach education” (p. 465). Similarly, Robinson problematised the integration of the cognitive, affective and physical domains in discussions of holism and made the observation that often spirituality gets “tagged on the end” to the list of domains (p. 493). He asked whether spirituality is a separate domain and (if it is) what it means.

DOES THE WHOLE EQUAL THE SUM OF THE PARTS?

Hamel and Gilbert comment that the cultural differences in our understandings of holism can be explained by the education received by the coaches. They described the situation in North American where coaches, with a tertiary education, generally experience a “kinesiology-based curriculum” and claimed, that “[a]ll the ‘parts’ or courses within kinesiology contribute to the knowledge of the ‘whole for future sports coaches” (p. 487):

...most sports coaches in North America are educated from a ‘parts’ perspective. They realize that the basic fundamentals complete the big picture. (p. 487)

Suggesting that the sum of the parts equals the whole contradicts the Aristotelian phrase Mallett and Rynne described as the “general principle of holism”, namely, “the whole is *more than* the sum of its parts” (p. 453; italics added) and Lyle’s point that, “the whole may not be divisible into its parts” (p. 450). A limitation of holding the position that if students or coaches are educated “from a ‘parts’ perspective” they will see “the big picture” is that there is little, or no, recognition that “certain discourses in alliance with other discourses dominate both what is taught...and how it is taught” [3, p. 199].

HOLISTIC COACHING AND THE PROFESSIONAL COACHING MODEL

In his commentary, Lombardo laments the dominance of ‘The Professional Model of Sports Coaching’ and states that it is “neither holistic in its intent, nor humanistic in its methodology!” While emphatic that humanist and/or holistic coaching needs to be an educative enterprise, Lombardo claims that this was not possible in the Professional Model of Sports Coaching.

Expressing his scepticism of a positive relationship between humanistic informed coaching and performance sport, Lyle appealed for the “academic community to demonstrate in rather more convincing ways than hitherto that these humanism-based behaviours are effective [for performance sport]” (p. 451).

Pressures do exist on coaches working in the professional and performance sectors that make it difficult to coach holistically. Due to cultural differences that exist between countries and sporting codes in these sectors, however, coaches may experience (and cope with) different pressures. Robinson provides the example of Barcelona Football Club becoming an “ongoing learning organization” and explained that the club is exploring the role of ethics and holism. In a similar vein is a study that was funded by the Australian Football League

(AFL), which “explored the emergence and evolution of a ‘professional identity’ for AFL footballers – an identity that has many facets including the emerging life as that a professional leads a balanced life and has a prudent orientation to the future, to life after football” [4, p. 13]. In an effort to develop “balance” in the lives of the footballers, the AFL encouraged them to “undertake some form of training or education, get a job, [or] do community based activities” [4, p. 15]. While the primary reason for supporting footballers this way may have been “to enhance their effectiveness and performance and thus contribute to their club/team performance” [4, p. 15], opportunities still existed for practices to have an educational orientation.

Kelly and Hickey [4] argued that the professional identities of the young footballers, “who want to *become* AFL footballers” are shaped by “concerns with the *complete person*” that are “driven by the management of risks in the global sports entertainment environment” [4, p. 16; italics added]:

...the individuals who want to play football at the elite level... need to be understood, developed and coached as a *complete package*, as young men who are *more than the sum of the parts* of their body, their mind and their soul.
[4, p. 16; italics added]

It was recognised by the interviewees that “each of these elements can look different and must be developed differently in different individuals” (p.18).

Kelly and Hickey use social theories to understand work-life balance of professional footballers, pointing perhaps to a difference in the sport research cultures between Australia and North America. Kamphoff associates a research agenda that focuses on “the total development of the athlete” with the work conducted by sport psychologists Dan Gould and Steve Danish that relates to ‘life skill development’ (p. 482). Interestingly, life skills research has also been conducted here in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but it has been adapted to fit the cultural context that is unique to this country [5, 6]. Heke adapted the GOAL and SUPER life skills programmes by incorporating an indigenous research approach known as *Kaupapa Māori*; and Hodge et al. [7] adapted life-skill programmes to include elements of Hellison’s ‘Teaching Responsibility through Physical Activity’. Responsibility is integral to Simon Robinson’s discussion on the merits of using integrity as a concept for integrating the cognitive, affective and physical domains and therefore could potentially contribute to the life skills literature and our understanding of what it means to coach holistically.

‘MOVING BEYOND’ HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

REFORM AGENDA

Nelson and his colleagues drew on the work of Kretchmar to contend that “‘holistic coaching’ has been increasingly championed as a better approach to the previous emphasis on the technical, tactical, and physical development of athletes that has historically dominated the field of coaching in many sports” (p. 465). On this basis, an argument can be made that many of the commentators here hold reformist agendas. Some reform agendas are based on the assumptions that knowledge production is linear, evolutionary and the replacement of one form of knowledge with a “superior” form “contributes to human advancement” [8, p. 26]. These reform agendas are based on the modernist notion that knowledge is stable and can take on some form of emancipatory politic. Emancipatory politics “works with a hierarchical notion of power” [9, p. 211] and is concerned with the fundamentals of “justice, equality and participation” [9, p. 212]. Those who adopt these

reformist agendas have been criticized for taking the moral high ground, as was the case when challenges were made to the dominant technocratic approach to the teaching of physical education [10].

LIFE POLITICS

Life politics focuses on 'ethics of the personal' [1, p. 156] and is based on the assumption that individuals have some degree of emancipation. According to Giddens, it is "a politics of self-actualisation in a reflexively ordered environment, where that reflexivity links self and body to systems of global scope" [9, p. 214]. Questions may be asked of Giddens' use of the term 'self-actualisation' in relation to life politics, given that it is a concept attributed to humanistic psychologists such as Rogers and Maslow. But the answer may lie in Giddens' definition of life politics:

...life politics concerns political issues which flow from processes of self-actualisation in post-traditional contexts, where globalising influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realisation influence global strategies. [9, p. 214]

Two advantages of highlighting life politics in the sports coaching context is that: i) it recognises the self as a reflexive project; and ii) it enables coaches and coach educators to take into account an ethic of care and responsibility. Adopting an approach that is informed by life politics appears to be compatible with the point Robinson made in his commentary with regard to integrity involving "a strong sense of taking responsibility" (p. 493). Moreover, it appears to support Leidl's suggestion that Frankl's insights into the "individual effort to advantage the self" can benefit coaches by providing them with opportunities to "address their personal situations in ways that not only advance themselves, but also impact the players they lead" (p. 461).

CONCLUSION

When attempting to 'move beyond' there is a temptation to discard existing practices and adopt new and so-called 'better' practices. This is not always generative. One possible alternative is to encourage ourselves to think "more carefully, critically and responsibly about the *effects* our practices might be having instead of simply recommending we stop doing something" [2, p. 378; italics added].

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