

European Sport Coaching Framework



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

**Sergio Lara-Bercial, Julian North,
Kirsi Hämäläinen, Klaus Oltmanns,
Jan Minkhorst and Ladislav Petrovic**



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Dedication

All partners and working group members would like to dedicate this work to the memory of Professor Pat Duffy, who not only drove forward coaching and coach education in Europe over the last 20 years, but more specifically inspired and initiated this project. Pat, your legacy lives on.



Foreword

In the recently published 'White Paper on the Future of Europe', President Juncker reminded us of our final objective: 'We want a Union in which all citizens and all Member States are treated equally'. The integration of disadvantaged groups in society—the creation of a sense of belonging for the ones feeling excluded—represents a major concern for the European Union. It is a real challenge for the EU motto, 'United in diversity', to become a reality. In this context, the role of a coach in society has changed. Technical skills are not enough anymore. There is a need to invest in the development of coaches. In this respect, the first step is education.

It is with great pleasure that the Commission is supporting the CoachLearn project. This initiative and the establishment of the *European Sport Coaching Framework* contribute to the education, mobility and employability of coaches. It was financed through the education part of the Erasmus+ Programme. This support is a strong, positive signal to other sports organisations that their projects and initiatives can be eligible for programmes in other fields like education, on the basis of their quality and impact.

Education in and through sport is currently a key topic for the European Commission. This was a priority in the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014 and EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017 and also found its place in the third work plan that is currently in progress. This topic is still gaining importance. Moreover, it is now seen as an absolute necessity: Sport and education play a key role in building active citizenship. In this regard, the coach's role is not just to teach technical skills, but also to educate and promote values, solidarity and respect. As the people who are often the closest to our youngest generations, coaches can effectively contribute to a better and more inclusive society.

Yves Le Lostecque

Head of the Sport Unit in the European Commission

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Acknowledgements

The CoachLearn consortium would like to thank the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme for the opportunity to develop and carry out this very significant project. Specifically, the support offered by the UK's National Agency EcorysUK and the invaluable advice provided throughout the duration of the project by Mr. Yves Le Lostecque, Head of the Sport Unit in the European Commission, and Ms. Agata Dziarnowska, Policy Officer, deserve our recognition and gratitude.

The consortium would also like to thank the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) as a primary partner in developing the precursor of this project, the *International Sport Coaching Framework*. Specially, the support and advice provided by Mark Harrington, chair of ASOIF's Sport Development and Education Group, has been greatly appreciated.

Leeds Beckett University (LBU), as project lead organisation, would like to thank all CoachLearn partners, the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), the Netherlands Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF), the Hungarian Coaching Association (HCA), Trainerakademie of the DOSB in Germany and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland for their absolute and resolute commitment, not only to CoachLearn, but to the development of coaching in the EU and beyond.

Sergio Lara-Bercial, Senior Research Fellow for LBU and principal investigator for CoachLearn, would like to thank all members of the working group for their hard work, generosity, ingenuity, companionship and the sheer passion for coaching and coach education and development they have shown during the course of the project. You are a unique group of people and a pleasure to work with. The working group included John Bales (ICCE), Kirsi Hämäläinen (Haaga-Helia), Rita Horvath (HCA), Karen Livingstone (ICCE), Jan Minkhorst (NOC*NSF), Julian North (LBU), Klaus Oltmanns (Trainerakademie) and Ladislav Petrovic (HCA). A special mention is due to NOC*NSF support staff Bas van der Heijden and Philipp van Benthem for their contributions to parts of this project.

We are also particularly indebted to Human Kinetics' Ted Miller for his continued counsel, skilled guidance and input.



Advancing Coaching Across a Continent

Exciting things are happening in coaching in Europe, thanks in large part to work started more than two decades ago. In 1995 the Sport Coaching Expert Group of the European Network of Sport Science in Higher Education initiated a concerted campaign to improve coaching systems and coach education throughout the continent. Progress was subsequently accelerated with the founding of the European Coaching Council (ECC), the European branch of the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), in 2001 led by the late Professor Pat Duffy. What has been learned through that continued effort significantly informed and shaped the drafting of the *International Sport Coaching Framework (ISCF)*, which was first published in 2013. The *ISCF*, created in cooperation with the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations and Leeds Beckett University, has since had a positive effect in the way coach education and development are understood and conducted worldwide.

As originally intended, the *ISCF* has become a global reference point for the development of coaching and coaches. Countries as diverse as Japan, Italy, Portugal, the United States, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Brazil and Poland, and international federations like the International Triathlon Union, the International Tennis Federation, the International Golf Federation/PGA World Alliance and World Sailing have engaged with the ICCE and utilized the principles contained in the *ISCF* to continue to develop their coaching systems. These applications of the *ISCF* have demonstrated it to be a flexible and effective guide to support the tailor-made development and enhancement of coaching systems.

Europe has always been at the forefront in recognising and promoting quality coaching and coach education. Recently, through a series of white papers, communications and work plans for sport, the European Commission has emphasised the importance of preparing a suitably trained coaching workforce to meet the needs of athletes and participants. Accordingly, the ECC has advocated the development of common guidelines for those working in coach education. And what better way to move toward meeting that goal than to create a Europe-specific version of the *ISCF*? Thus, taking into account the recent history of coach development in Europe together with the newly established, broader perspective on education, this *European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF)* was created to enhance sport coaches' learning, mobility and employability across the European Union through the provision of a shared reference point and language.

The *ESCF* was developed from October 2014 through June 2017 as part of the CoachLearn project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The first stage of the project focused on creating a solid understanding of the current educational and coaching arrangements in the European Union. An analysis was done of the European coaching workforce and existing European education frameworks and mobility tools that determine the boundaries and rules of play under which coaching systems need to operate. In line with the *ISCF*, the *ESCF* recognises and covers five key areas of interest that serve as fundamental drivers of all coaching systems (see figure I.1):

- Athlete-centred vision
- Coaching practice
- Coaching expertise
- Coach development
- Coach certification and recognition

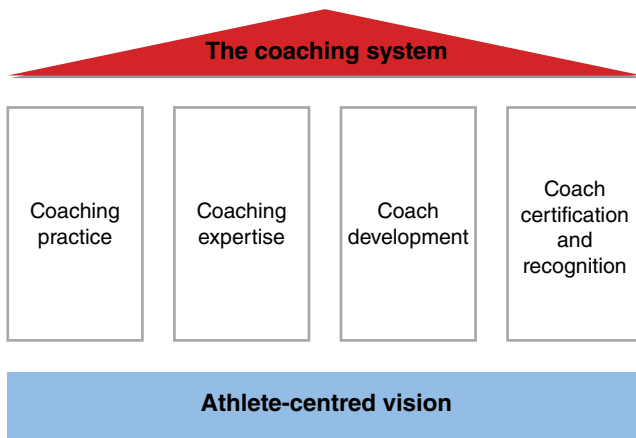


FIGURE I.1 The five drivers of coaching systems.

The second stage of the project sought to ensure the utility of the *ESCF* by identifying the most effective approaches and tools in the field. Throughout the book, you will find case studies from across the European Union. In addition, development and application tools to support countries and federations have been built and are hosted at www.coachlearn.eu. **In this sense, the *ESCF* is not so much a recipe to strictly follow as it is a menu of options to choose from.** The choices made by countries and federations will depend on their unique objectives and circumstances.

As you read the *ESCF*, keep in mind that it does not replace or supersede the *ISCF*. Rather, it simply contextualises the principles and guidelines of the *ISCF* for the benefit of European practitioners.

The *ESCF* is another significant resource in the collaborative worldwide effort led by the ICCE and its members to bring coaching to new heights. We hope you find it a useful tool to support your work.

John Bales

President, ICCE

Sergio Lara-Bercial

Project Leader, CoachLearn

Senior Research Fellow, Leeds Beckett University and ICCE

For more information on the CoachLearn project, please visit www.coachlearn.eu.

Coaching in Europe Today

Coaches play a central role in promoting sport participation and enhancing the performance of athletes and teams. In accordance with internationally recognised and domestic sporting codes, coaches guide the participation of children, players and athletes. Across 28 member states, it is estimated that up to nine million coaches—volunteer, part-time paid and full-time paid—deliver an array of sporting opportunities to hundreds of millions of participants.¹

In addition to their core role, coaches contribute to the development of athletes as people, to the creation of cohesive teams and to the building of communities with a shared interest. Coaching can also contribute to social aims by promoting activity and health; coalescing citizens behind a common cause;



The ESCF embraces the definition of coaching provided in the ISCF: 'Coaching is a process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development'.² This definition emphasises coaches' ongoing nurturing and educational support of participants and the notable signs of progress expected as a result of that experience.

and generating economic activity through employment, education, purchase of equipment, use of facilities and attendance at events.

In today's landscape, coaches work with increasingly diverse populations and face heightening demands from their athletes, their athletes' parents, administrators and fans. Even in voluntary positions, coaches are required to fulfil a variety of roles, such as educator, guide, sport psychologist and business manager. At higher levels of competition, coaches are asked to emphasise positive interaction and overall development of athletes rather than simply the win-loss record.⁴ And in this digital age, the public has greater access to information, and there is increased visibility to a larger community. All of these factors make coaching both more exciting and taxing than ever before.

Current European Coaching Policy

Over the last 20 years, the European Coaching Council (ECC) has led a number of initiatives to develop coach education within the European Union.⁵ These initiatives have reflected the wider changes in the overall education landscape.

The European Framework for the Recognition of Coaching Competence and Qualifications (EFRCCQ),⁶ adopted by the ECC in 2007 in Rio Maior, kick-started the process of modernising coach education in Europe and laid the foundation for its alignment with wider European structures such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The need to transition from input-based qualifications (i.e., focused on number of hours, subject knowledge and curriculum) to output-led qualifications (i.e., centred around the development of skills and competences required to fulfil specific jobs and practical and flexible learning) was a major need stressed by this document.

The publication of the *International Sport Coaching Framework* provided new impetus and addressed some of the needs of European partners identified in the EFRCCQ from a global outlook. The guidance and drive provided by the European Commission's 2007 White Paper on Sport, the 2011 Communication on Developing the European Dimension of Sport and the Work Plans for Sport 2011-2014 and 2014-2017⁷ have also stimulated investment and progress in coaching. All these documents have strongly emphasised the role of a suitably trained coaching workforce in the successful delivery of sport across the European Union. Governments, federations and other organisations have been encouraged to invest in coaching.

Professionalising Coaching in Portugal

The National Programme for Coach Education (NPCE)

Lead Organisation: Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth

Start Date: 2010

Main Purposes

- Recognise and highlight the role coaches play in Portuguese sport and society
- Ensure that coaching is considered in the same light as any other profession
- Develop coach education of the highest quality
- Bring coach education in line with European policy
- Facilitate integration of education from different sectors (VET, HEI, federations)

Key Features

- Based on official legislation that regulates access to and practice of the profession of coaching
- Applied to all sport disciplines
- A Sports Coach Licence and renewal process, without which it is not possible to work as a coach
- Competence-based education
- Provisions for reconciling education from different sectors and pathways
- Built-in recognition of prior learning systems
- Compulsory practicum period in all qualifications

Main Achievements

- The backing of official legislation
- Unification of criteria across sectors and sports
- Acceptance and buy-in of the licence system by coaches

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- www.idesporto.pt

The integration of sport coaching qualifications within national qualification frameworks (NQFs) is central to continued progress in this area. In this respect, the overall picture across Europe remains heterogeneous.⁸ Two countries have fully integrated their coaching qualifications into their NQFs, whilst 15 others have completed this process only partially. Most of the remaining member states have started to consider the transfer and adaptation of coaching qualifications to the NQF, so the trend is positive overall. Notably, in the countries where integration has taken place, this has normally been facilitated by the development of a coaching-specific qualifications framework aligned to the EQF and the NQF and adhered to by a critical mass of national governing bodies of sport.

The ESCF adopts the ISCF perspective of effective coaching: 'The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts'.³

Despite these advances, some key challenges persist.

- There are limited resources for coach education and development within key organisations.
- Ensuring that coaching qualifications have a practical focus, with sufficient time and resources allocated to experiential learning modes, requires new thinking and investment.
- Facilitating alignment in coach education provided by different sectors, and the recognition of prior learning, remains problematic.
- The value and nature of coach certification and licensing continues to be debated.
- The development of a suitably trained coach developer workforce is still a low priority in some countries and federations.
- Aligning with EQF and the NQF may seem limiting for some coach education organisations.

Coaching Status in Europe

A significant feature of the European coaching landscape is the large amount of variability in relation to the employment and remuneration status of coaches. Research data and evidence from different countries show that the coaching community consists of volunteer coaches, part-time paid coaches and full-time paid coaches, as outlined in figure 1.1.⁹ For instance, in the United Kingdom, 76 percent of coaches are volunteers, 21 percent are part-time employees and just 3 percent are full-time employees. By contrast, in Lithuania¹⁰ all coaches are either part-time employees or full-time employees, even if the same coaches also do some additional voluntary coaching. In many cases, however, volunteers undertake pre-coaching roles when a formal decision to coach or gain qualifications has not yet been made. The variations in the ratio of paid to unpaid coaches, according to sport and context, lead to contrasting ways in which the identity of coaches is perceived (see table 1.1).

Coaching differs from other occupations due to its high proportion of volunteers, many of whom are parents and older athletes who take on immediate coaching needs. For this reason, coaching is seen as a 'blended' occupational area.

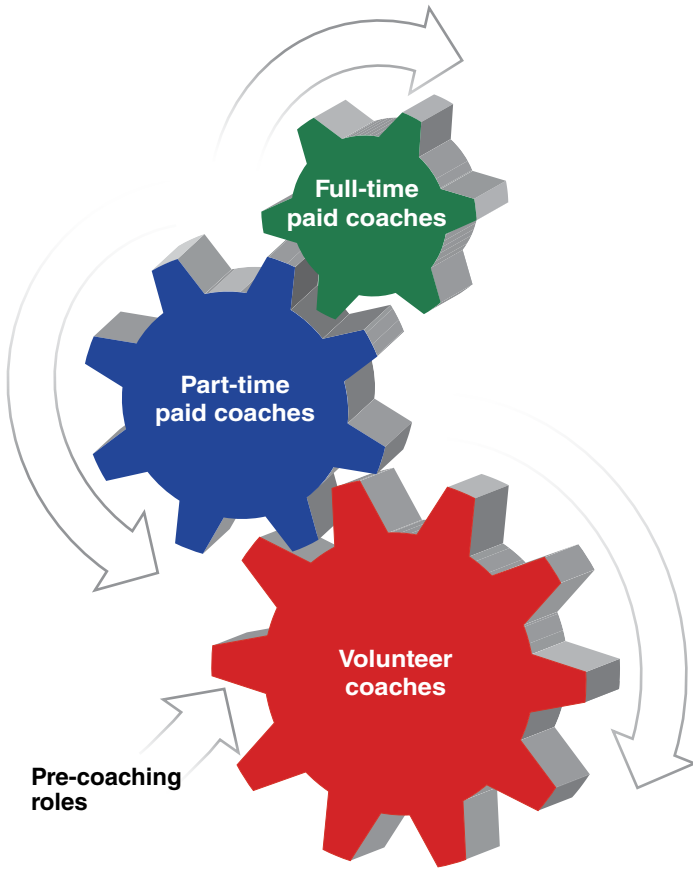


FIGURE 1.1 Categories of coaching status.

TABLE 1.1 Coaching Status and Identity

Professional identity	Blended identity	Voluntary service identity
High proportion of paid coaches committed to professional standards, organisation and professionalisation.	Majority of unpaid coaches with a substantial number of paid roles. Commitment to a process of professionalisation and organisation.	High proportion of volunteer coaches with few, if any, paid roles. Commitment to service and volunteering for its own sake. Varied agenda on professionalisation and organisation
Sport, country and organisational variation		

European Coaching Systems

Each country and sport needs to find the most suitable way to meet the needs of coaches and athletes. This does not happen in isolation but is the result of the interactions between the constituents of the *coaching system*.¹¹

The coaching system: The people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context.

The people, organisations and functions that make up the coaching system can be seen in figure 1.2.

Effective coaching systems may differ in size, structure and number of components to fit available resources and to reflect the sociocultural and institutional reality and objectives in which they are embedded.

The existence of an organisation or consortium of organisations with an official mandate to lead the coaching system and facilitate the coordination of its constituents is central to success. The articulation of the existing system, even if it has not been formalised, is paramount to understanding its strengths and areas for improvement.

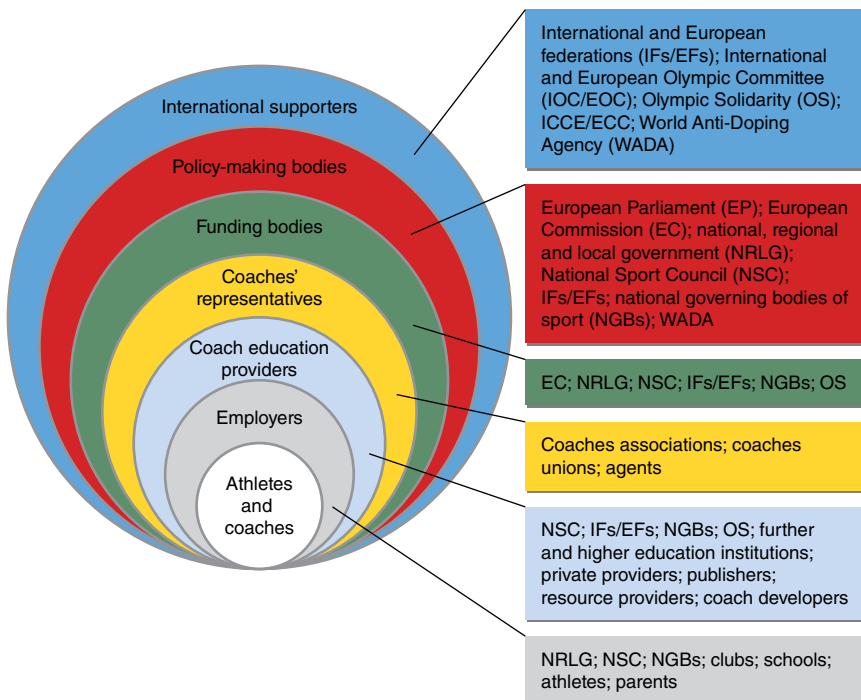


FIGURE 1.2 The people, functions and organisations that make up the coaching system.

¹In the United Kingdom, research has found that 1.1 million coaches deliver sport to over 10 million participants every year (North, J. (2009). *The UK Coaching Workforce*. Leeds, UK: Sports Coach UK). Research conducted as part of CoachLearn (North, J., Härmäläinen, K., Oltmanns, K., Petrovic, L., Minkhorst, J., Lara-Bercial, S., and McIlroy, J. (2016). *Sport Coaching Workforce Data Collection Across Five Countries*. Leeds, UK: CoachLearn) estimated that between five and eight million coaches could be active in the European Union. In addition, recent research by the European Commission found that there were nearly four million qualified coaches across the European Union. This report highlighted, however, that this figure could be much higher due to data collection anomalies (European Commission (2016). *Study on Sport Qualifications Acquired Through Sport Organisations and (Sport) Educational Institutes*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union).

²International Council for Coaching Excellence, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, and Leeds Beckett University (2013). *International Sport Coaching Framework, Version 1.2*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. p. 14.

³*Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴This theme has been taken up in the following recent publication: European Commission Sport Unit (2012). *EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

⁵For a full review of these developments, please download Project CoachLearn Report 1 from www.coachlearn.eu/project-reports.html.

⁶The EFRCCQ was developed as part of the wider AEHESIS (Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science) project between 2004 and 2007, supported by the Socrates Programme of the European Commission.

⁷European Commission (2007). *White Paper on Sport*. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union; European Commission (2011). *Developing the European Dimension in Sport*. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union; Council of the European Union and the Representatives of Governments of Member States (2011). *European Union Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014*. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union; Council of the European Union and the Representatives of Governments of Member States (2014). *European Union Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017*. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union.

⁸European Commission (2016). *Study on Sport Qualifications Acquired Through Sport Organisations and (Sport) Educational Institutes*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁹Research evidence is drawn from the following: North, J. (2009). *The UK Coaching Workforce*. Leeds, UK: Sports Coach UK; Duffy, P., Hartley, H., Bales, J., Crespo, M., Dick, F., Vardhan, D., Normann, L., and Curado, J. (2011). Sport coaching as a 'profession': Challenges and future directions. *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 5(2), 93-124. The conceptual framework for coaching status has been adapted from the following: South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (2011). *The South African Coaching Framework*. Johannesburg, South Africa: SASCOC; North, J., Härmäläinen, K., Oltmanns, K., Petrovic, L., Minkhorst, J., Lara-Bercial, S., and McIlroy, J. (2016). Project CoachLearn Report #3. *The Context and Motivations for the Collection and Application of Sport Coaching Workforce Data in 5 European Countries*. Leeds, UK: Leeds Beckett University.

¹⁰Lara-Bercial, S., et al. (2017). *Coaching Children Workforce State of the Nation Reports*. Leeds, UK: iCoachKids.

¹¹For more information regarding coaching systems, and for a simple tool to explore what your current system looks like and what you may want to be like in the future, please visit www.coachlearn.eu/tools.

Athlete-Centred Vision

Coaches face many distractions and pressures that can affect their practice and the impact they have. By having a clear focus, they are able to direct their attention and energy toward meeting the needs of their athletes, optimise their well-being and improve their performance in their specific sports contexts.

Coaching Philosophy and Responsibilities

Coaches, like everyone, focus their attention and actions on the things they value. Even at the highest level of competition¹ research has shown that successful coaches operate from a coherent and robust set of values and beliefs anchored in a genuine desire to do well for others. These values provide them with a reference point that facilitates ethical decision making.



A prerequisite of coaching should be a commitment to the positive sport experience and development of each athlete.

The basis of an athlete-centred approach is the protection of and respect for the integrity and individuality of those with whom coaches work. Coaches have a responsibility to safeguard and protect the children and young people in their care. At the elite level, coaches have a moral duty to ensure that athletes are supported in the development of dual careers, which allows them to transition seamlessly into a new phase of their life once they retire from national and international competition. Recent work led by the European Commission, the International Olympic Committee and the Council of Europe has focused extensively on these areas.²

Coaches must also abide by the international and national rules relating to anti-doping as defined by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in the CoachTrue programme.³ They must also remain vigilant with regard to the threat of sport corruption, and the International Centre for Sport Security has developed guidelines and tools in this respect.⁴ The clear expectation is that coaches will perform their duties in an ethically responsible way, play by the rules at all times and protect the integrity of sport.

Coaches should be supported to explore their values and beliefs and to develop a personal, ethically grounded coaching philosophy over time. This will encourage coaches to develop the self-awareness required to discern whether their values and behaviours are aligned, and to do something about it when they are not.

A coaching philosophy should be informed by basic ethical principles and focused on supporting the objectives of each athlete in specific contexts. If the values held by the coach are different from those of the athletes and their families, it is unlikely that the outcomes will be satisfactory.

It is also important for coaches to establish whether the values of their employers match their own. Coaches need to be able to reconcile the interests of employers, teams and groups with those of the individual athletes. A strong values system helps coaches be proactive and decisive when a conflict of interests arises.

Positive Athlete Development

The needs and goals of athletes vary across the different sport domains and participant development stages. The purposeful and positive consideration of this evolving picture for each individual in the planning and delivery of a sport system has been termed *long-term athletic development*.

One of the most popular models that attempts to explain the phases of engagement in sport through a lifetime was developed by Istvan Balyi.⁵ His long-term athlete development (LTAD) model is outlined in figure 2.1.

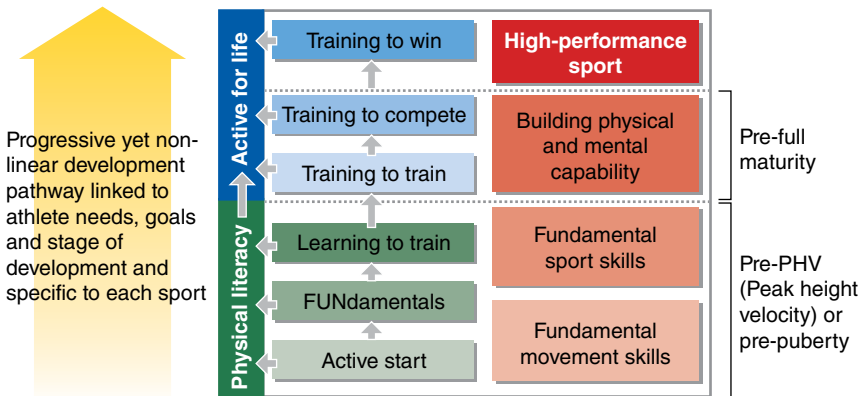


FIGURE 2.1 Long-term athlete development.

LTAD uses a number of physical and psychological markers to propose a continuum of developmental stages and the associated coaching practices to maximise the performance potential of each individual, as well as foster lifelong participation. Though the model has received some criticism,⁶ it has been adopted and adapted by a significant number of sports organisations and national federations and has, in most cases, proven to be a good starting point for participant development planning. Crucial to long-term athletic development, however, are the context-specific modifications of the model, including the titles and objectives of the stages and the associated age categories.

The developmental model of sport participation (DMSP), a complementary approach developed by Jean Côté,⁷ identifies different engagement trajectories in sport, namely recreation and performance. In the performance trajectory are three key phases:

1. **Sampling phase.** Children take part in a variety of activities and develop foundational movement and game skills in an environment characterised by fun and enjoyment.
2. **Specialising phase.** Young athletes begin to focus on fewer sports, possibly favouring one in particular.
3. **Investment phase.** Athletes commit to achieving a high level of performance in a specific sport.

The recreation trajectory also has three phases, with the first two being the same as in the performance trajectory. However, the sampling and specialising phases are followed by the recreational years, in which children or adolescents continue to take part in sports for social interaction, a healthy lifestyle and sheer enjoyment.

As with LTAD, the extent to which the stages described in the DMSP exist in different sports and countries will vary depending on culture, tradition, structures

and available opportunities. Individual variation will also be present. These models, however, provide a basis for identifying key areas of focus in coaching at the various stages, taking into account individual needs and rates of development along the way. This may require adjustment of ages and stages to reflect the actual state of affairs in any given sport or country.

Coaching Domains in Europe

Research evidence⁸ has identified two main types of engagement in sport: *participation sport* and *performance sport*.⁹ The former emphasises involvement and enjoyment; the latter accentuates competition and results. Within each of these two types of sport engagement are three subdivisions (see table 2.1):

TABLE 2.1 Sport Participation Segments

Participation	Performance
1. Children	1. Emerging athletes
2. Adolescents	2. Performance athletes
3. Adults	3. High-performance athletes

These segments are outlined in figure 2.2 as part of an overall sport participation map. The definition and extent of these segments and the nature of the sport participation map need to be defined based on the needs of each sport and country. This approach may also involve the development of two maps: the existing position and the desired future one.

To achieve true athlete-centred coaching, coaches’ philosophy, knowledge and capabilities need to reflect and match the changing needs of participants

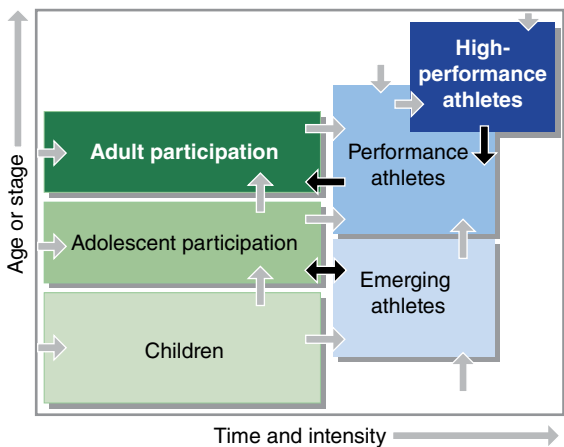


FIGURE 2.2 Sport participation map.

and athletes at different stages of engagement in sport. Coach education, therefore, must account for the different participation segments that coaches work with. This is likely to entail the provision of specialised training to gain the required level of competence to fulfil the needs of participants in a specific segment. Coaches must continually improve and expand their capability. The organisations that employ them owe it to coaches to ensure they have sufficient educational footing, philosophical orientation and resources to fulfil the duties expected of them.

Coach development programmes need to reflect the domains and contexts in which coaches will work. This will help coaches develop the relevant philosophy, knowledge and capabilities to maximise the chances of athletes’ and participants’ having positive developmental experiences in and through sport.

Building on the division of sport engagement into two main categories—participation and performance—the *ISCF* proposed six coaching domains (see figure 2.3).

The number and makeup of the coaching domains may vary among nations and sports, depending on the participation and performance patterns. Each sport should conduct an analysis of its participant base to more precisely determine the contextual fit and coaching domains required to meet the needs of participants. It is also important to recognise that coaches may work simultaneously in the two categories and within different domains, depending on the nature of their role.

Coaching Outcomes

Effective coaches establish objectives for and with their athletes. These goals stem from positive values and a desire to create the best possible experience

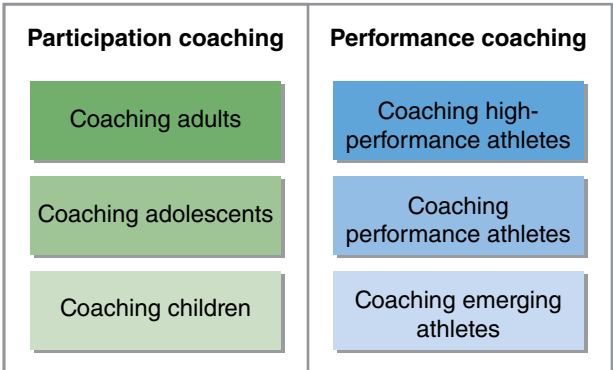


FIGURE 2.3 Coaching categories and coaching domains.

British Gymnastics Participant Development Model

Lead Organisation: British Gymnastics

Country: United Kingdom

Start Date: 2011

Main Purpose

- To decrease high levels of participant dropout from the sport at an early age due to an excessive focus on competition and performance

Key Features

- Based on customised research that identified the types of individuals and groups who participate in gymnastics so programmes could be tailored appropriately
- Eight age-based and stage-based participation segments and six main motivations for engagement were identified
- A combination of age-stage and motivation segments led to the creation of eight participation segments; this led to the creation of new programmes throughout the UK's gymnastics club network to more specifically meet participant demand and need

Main Achievements

- Increased offering throughout the country
- Decreased dropout and increased participation and performance

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- <https://www.british-gymnastics.org/documents/clubs-schools-and-leisure-centres/club-support-2/research/4114-participant-model-for-gymnastics/file>

for them. The goals will also often align with the overarching aims of the organisation, institution or programme in which the coach works.

For assistance in this goal-setting process, a coach can consult one of the many available classifications of athlete outcomes and coaching objectives. Some of these classifications focus on sport-related competences, such as physical, mental, technical and tactical proficiency. In other cases, the emphasis is on outcomes related to the holistic development of the participant. Either way, coaches should see the athlete as a whole person with his or her own individual needs and preferences.

Based on ongoing research,¹⁰ the outcomes associated with effective coaching can be grouped into three main categories:

1. **Sport competences.** Physical, technical, tactical and cognitive capabilities required to take part at different levels. These competences form the traditional core business of sport and occur within the context where participants strive for and deal with the consequences of competition, success and failure.

2. **Personal competences.** Capabilities that relate to the development of the whole person and that may be supported and developed through participation in sport. These can be grouped into self-development, cognitive, emotional, moral and social outcomes.
3. **Life experience.** The personal life experiences lived through sport that may positively contribute to the individual life course of the participant (e.g., the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, the development of a strong personal and professional network of contacts, a professional career as a player or coach, a disposition to give back to the community).

Coaches have a strong responsibility to identify what they seek to achieve with their athletes. Coaches should also develop a clear sense of why they are striving for these objectives, and the objectives should be informed by their values and philosophy and by two-way interaction with the athletes. The long-term benefit and well-being of the athlete should always be paramount.

The outcomes and objectives outlined in this chapter offer a menu of options for coaches. This menu will also assist in the design of coach education programmes for specific participation domains.

¹Lara-Bercial, S., & Mallett, C.J. (2016). The practices and developmental pathways of professional and Olympic serial winning coaches. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 3(3), 221-239.

²Education and Training in Sport Expert Group (2012). *European Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission; International Olympic Committee (2005). *Athlete Career Programme*. International Olympic Committee; Council of Europe (2010). *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Revised Code of Sports Ethics*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe; Council of Europe (2012). *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Protection of Child and Young Athletes From Dangers Associated With Migration*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe; Council of Europe (2015). *Pro-Safe Sport for Young Athletes*. <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/home>.

³<http://coachtrue.wada-ama.org>.

⁴International Centre for Sport Security (2014). *Fighting Against the Manipulation of Sport Competitions*. Paris, France: International Centre for Sport Security.

⁵Balyi, I., and Hamilton, A. (1995). The concept of long term athlete development. *Strength and Conditioning Coach*, 3(2), 5-6.

⁶The youth physical development model, an alternative model proposed by Rhodri Lloyd and Jon Oliver, builds on the LTAD model by offering additional guidance on best practices in participant development across different stages of development. Lloyd, R.S., & Oliver, J.L. (2012). The youth physical development model: A new approach to long-term athletic development. *Strength and Conditioning Journal*, 34(3), 61-72.

⁷Côté, J. (1999). The influence of the family in the development of talent in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 395-417.

⁸Lyle, J. (2002). *Sport Coaching Concepts: A Framework for Coaches' Behaviour*. London, UK: Routledge.

⁹There are other ways to break down motives for participation, but the participation-versus-performance divide offers a good starting point. For an alternative perspective, see Collins, D., Bailey, R., Ford, P. A., MacNamara, Á., Toms, M. and Pearce, G. (2012). Three worlds: New directions in participant development in sport and physical activity. *Sport, Education and Society*, 17(2), 225-243.

¹⁰This research has been conducted by Lara-Bercial, McKenna, Côté and North. This research has also informed the development of a variety of curricula and courses for the training of coaches in countries such as Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, Japan and Philippines. Additionally, current research led by Schipper van Veldhoven, Fix, Lara-Bercial and North is looking to develop a European Coaching Children Curriculum as part of a project co-funded by Erasmus+, iCoachKids.

Coaching Practice

In previous chapters, we discussed how coaches in Europe work to fulfil a broad range of athlete and institutional outcomes across a variety of domains and contexts. The variety of objectives and the number of factors that affect their work make coaching a complex and challenging activity. This chapter covers a series of functions and related tasks that, if effectively and consistently executed, can make coaching not only a doable and effective job, but a rewarding one as well.

Primary Functions of the Coach

The *European Sport Coaching Framework* specifies six primary functions for guiding athlete development and improvement, essentially defining the daily work of the coach. These primary functions have been derived from consultation and from a substantial review of the existing literature and newly developed primary research.



1. **Set the vision and strategy.** The coach, in partnership with athletes and teams, creates a vision and a strategy based on the needs and stage of development of the athletes and the organisational and social context of the programme. The coach develops a specific plan that outlines the steps required to bring the strategy to life and realise the vision.
2. **Shape the environment.** The coach works with a group of athletes and takes responsibility for the individual objectives and the institution's goals. In order to do so, the coach seeks to optimise the environment in which the programme occurs through the procurement and maximisation of personnel, facilities, resources and working practices and through the management of other coaches and support personnel.
3. **Build relationships.** The coach builds positive and effective relationships with athletes and others associated with the programme. This includes personnel at the club, school, federation and other levels. The coach is responsible for engaging in, contributing to and influencing the organisational context through the creation of respectful and effective working relationships with those he is accountable to (e.g., performance managers, board of directors).
4. **Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions.** The coach organises suitable and challenging practices using effective pedagogy and methodology to promote learning and improvement. The coach prepares for targeted and appropriate competitions and also oversees and manages the athletes in these competitions. The coach creates additional and relevant internal and external competitive opportunities as appropriate to promote individual and team development.
5. **Read and react to the field.** The coach observes and responds to events appropriately, including all on-field and off-field matters. Effective decision making is essential to fulfil this function and is a capability that should be developed in all coaches at each stage of their development.
6. **Reflect and learn.** The coach evaluates the programme as a whole, as well as each practice and competition, and is continually seeking improvements. In addition, personal evaluation and reflection underpin a process of ongoing learning and professional development. An important element of this process is the coach's efforts to support the education and development of other coaches.

The primary functions, as seen in figure 3.1, are interrelated and interdependent, and they occur within a cyclical process of continuous improvement that includes planning, implementation, review and adjustment.

These primary functions describe how coaches accomplish their aims in general terms. Substantial variation may exist depending on the nature of specific coaching roles and circumstances. Experienced coaches typically are more engaged in all of the functions than are early-stage coaches. However,

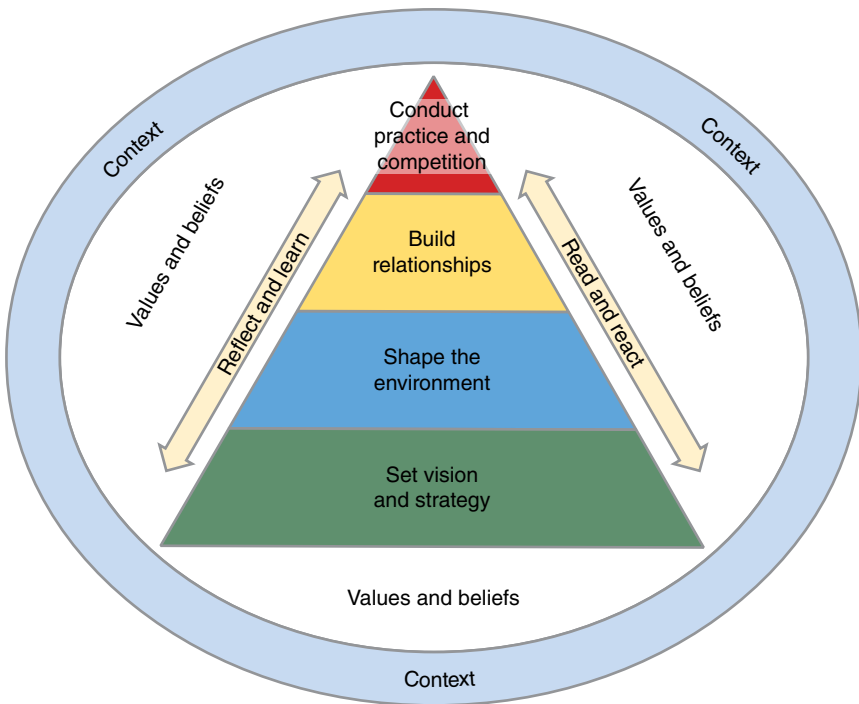


FIGURE 3.1 The primary functions of the coach.

all coaches—regardless of experience—should be aware of and strive to fulfil these primary functions.

The foundational role of a clear and robust set of values and beliefs, and a sound vision and strategy informed by the objectives of the athletes, the team and the organisational and institutional context, cannot be overemphasised.

Task-Related Coaching Competences

In the process of successfully fulfilling the primary functions on the job, coaches demonstrate task-related competence. Coaching qualifications and development opportunities should go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and foster the integration and application of knowledge. The *ISCF* classified the range of tasks that coaches carry out according to the six primary functions. More recently, the

Effective Kayak Slalom Coaching

Lead Organisation: Leeds Beckett University and British Canoeing

Country: United Kingdom

Start Date: 2012

Main Purpose

- To study effective kayak slalom coaching of 11- to 13-year-olds in a performer/talent development programme using observations and interviews with one coach, two paddlers and the wider entourage, over a 14-month period

Key Features

The coach (Brad) illustrated many of the primary functions described in the *European Sport Coaching Framework*:

- **Set the vision and strategy.** Long-term programme directed toward the 2020 Olympics, with the 11- to 13 year-old stage based on the development of the paddlers' technical skills and key psychological behaviours
- **Shape the environment.** Challenging but caring coaching environment
- **Build relationships.** Very good relationships established with paddlers, other coaches, parents and other stakeholders based on competence, trust and humour
- **Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions.** Practices set up on open water, flat water, swimming pools and gymnasiums using a variety of pedagogical strategies; competition at major age-group and senior events used as a developmental approach
- **Read and react to the field.** Long-term planning but also in situ decision making to reflect water conditions, paddler characteristics and so on
- **Reflect and learn.** A strong willingness from the coach to reflect on and learn about his coaching, often engaging with academic theories

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- North, J. (2017). *Sport Coaching Research and Practice: Ontology, Interdisciplinarity, and Critical Realism*. London, UK: Routledge.

ICCE has refined this classification by delineating specific competences¹ (table 3.1). These task-related competences are fluid and interrelated. They have each been aligned with a specific function for ease of understanding and representation, but some competences span multiple areas.

TABLE 3.1 Task-Related Competences of the Coach

Primary functions ^a	Task-related competences <i>The coach is able to</i>
Set the vision and strategy	• Understand the big picture and align methods with local, regional and national policy and objectives • Develop a suitable vision for the program relevant to the athletes in it and also to institutional priorities • Set up a relevant strategy that supports the fulfilment of the vision • Make effective and informed decisions relating to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of medium- to long-term programmes of practice and competition based on institutional and athlete needs
Shape the environment	• Effectively identify and recruit athletes and staff • Identify, reflect on and challenge prevailing beliefs, values and assumptions within the coaching environment to establish a suitable culture • Identify and source the relevant resources (human and material) required to fulfil programme and participant needs • Employ all reasonable measures to keep athletes and staff safe from harm
Build relationships	• Lead and influence the attitudes, behaviours and understanding of key stakeholders (e.g., parents, managers) through the meaningful presentation of ideas • Establish and maintain an ethical, effective, inclusive and empathetic relationship with athletes, staff and other stakeholders • Appreciate physical, mental and cultural diversity in participants and adapt practice accordingly • Adhere to established codes of conduct and legal requirements in coaching • Educate athletes, staff and other stakeholders to enhance their contribution to their own objectives, the program's objectives and their overall well-being

> continued

> continued

Primary functions	Task-related competences <i>The coach is able to</i>
Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions	• Conduct comprehensive needs analyses for individual athletes or teams in order to design and deliver tailored coaching programmes, taking into account participant needs and capabilities in the context of wider programmes, curricula, policies and targets • Select, design and justify appropriate pedagogy, coaching practice and communication methods to facilitate the short-term, medium-term and long-term learning needs of participants • Conduct a functional analysis of multiskill^b activity or of their chosen sport (or sports) and identify the implications for coaching practice • Identify the core elements of their chosen sport (or sports) at the key stages of participant development • Devise, interpret and apply an appropriate curriculum for a multiskill environment or in their chosen sport (or sports) in line with participant needs and agreed-upon industry standards • Deliver a series of coaching sessions in the context of medium- and long-term planned programmes of practice and competition using a wide range of appropriate learning modes for participants and coaching behaviours • Conduct risk assessments in order to deliver safe and ethical coaching practice • Identify, create and manage suitable competitive opportunities to contribute to ongoing athlete development • Develop appropriate competition strategies to maximise chances of learning and success • Maintain a professional attitude toward coaching practice, athletes and all stakeholders at all times
Read and react to the field	• Conduct an insightful analysis of coaching practice to make informed judgments relating to the efficacy of the learning environment established • Conduct an insightful analysis of athlete performance or team performance to make informed decisions regarding on-the-spot adjustments to enhance performance • Conduct an insightful analysis of the programme to make informed judgments relating to the efficacy of the environment established • Make good in-action and post-action decisions to increase the chances of reaching objectives

Primary functions	Task-related competences <i>The coach is able to</i>
Reflect and learn	• Identify and reflect on assumptions and practices as a coach and student, demonstrating the ability to conduct informed analysis and a willingness to apply the principle of continuous improvement to his or her own coaching • Identify his or her own learning needs and take responsibility for the development and application of strategies for further self-development as part of an ongoing process • Take an objective and critical approach to problem identification and solution, using evidence-based approaches and appropriate research methodologies • Develop an initial personal coaching philosophy and style, recognising the need for further growth based on learning, evidence and experience

^aThe capacity to engage in meeting these primary functions requires a synoptic application of knowledge, skills and professional competences, the contribution of each being dependent of the specific context and demands.

^bMultiskill activity refers to sport sessions aimed at the development of overall psychomotor skills, typically in children, sometimes referred to as fundamental movement skills. These types of activity can be done as part of a sport-specific session (e.g., multiple skills with a theme of tennis) or as outright multiskill sessions.

Adapted from the International Coaching Degree Standards, ICCE, 2016, pp. 18-19.

¹In response to the ever-growing number of universities offering bachelor degrees in sport coaching, the ICCE convened an expert working group in 2015 led by Professor Alfonso Jiménez to develop the International Coaching Degree Standards. The standards were published in 2016 and are downloadable from www.icce.ws. Sergio Lara-Bercial led the technical development of the document, supported by Andy Abraham, John Bales, Pascal Colmaire, José Curado, Kristen Dieffenbach, Masamitsu Ito, Olivia Mokgate, Lutz Nordmann and Steven Rynne.

4

Coaching Expertise

For coaches seeking to improve their coaching practice, and for those within the coaching system responsible for improving the effectiveness of their workforce, it is important to recognise there will be differences between those who have just started coaching and those who have extensive experience. It is also important to recognise differences between those who have not been able to capitalise on their experience (since extensive experience does not always mean improved performance) and those who have.

In sport coaching research, it has been common to compare the knowledge, skills and competences of novice coaches (and those who are underperforming) with those who have taken advantage of their experiences and are seen as experts. There are many different definitions of expertise, but we broadly



equate it with *consistently superior performance*.¹ Expert coaches consistently perform to exceedingly high standards in terms of, for example, creating a vision, shaping the environment, building relationships, conducting practice, reading and reacting, and learning in the contexts they work. They are also more likely to achieve the goals and aspirations of their participants and performers.

The idea of a novice–expert continuum is very useful and powerful. It provides a framework within which individual coaches can understand where they are now, and what they can aspire to, in terms of the development of their practice. It also provides system builders with important tools for structuring coach development and qualification pathways (a topic discussed in more detail in chapters 5 and 6).

Thinking About Expertise

There is now a great deal of research on expertise and expertise development in sport in terms of athlete development and coaching. Within this research there is a variety of underpinning assumptions, ideas and models available. Nevertheless, *expertise* is a useful composite term for a range of experiences, knowledge, skills, behaviours, capabilities and competences that enable individual coaches to consistently perform at the very highest level in the contexts they work.

Research from cognitive psychology—which focuses less on the actual characteristics of expert practice (i.e., what coaches do) and more on the cognitive resources that coaches require to perform—often cites the following as characteristics of experts.

- Are more knowledgeable about their chosen fields and contexts
- Have more complex representation of that knowledge
- Exhibit superior memory performance
- Have more effective storage and access to knowledge
- Are better at reading situations and situational data
- Interpret greater meaning from available information
- Have superior anticipation skills
- Make better decisions

The understanding of expertise must, however, go beyond the cognitive characteristics of experts. We need to understand how these abilities combine with more tacit ways of knowing and doing, through experience in the coaching context, to provide the basis for effective coaching practice. This means that expertise in any coaching context is not straightforward; it has cognitive, behavioural and social dimensions. Thus, expertise can be developed in many different ways.

Thinking About Expertise Development Through Stages

A useful thinking tool that has emerged from the expertise research is the idea of *stages of expertise development*. This concept originated from philosophy,²

Integrating Academic Knowledge and Coaching Practice in Higher Education

Leeds Beckett University Sport Coaching Bachelor's Degree

Lead Organisation: Leeds Beckett University

Country: United Kingdom

Start Date: 2005

Main Purpose

- Support the professionalisation of coaching through the creation of an undergraduate degree

Key Features

- Sole emphasis on coaching (not a sport science degree with some coaching modules)
- Based on Abraham et al.'s who-what-how model of coaching instead of independent subjects
- Coursework that is of a practical nature (although academically informed and multidisciplinary)
- Substantial practicum period
- Highly individualised focus

Main Achievements

- Over 200 students per academic year
- Staff of 25 people from a variety of disciplines
- Enhanced employability of graduates
- Progression to master's degree available

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- <https://courses.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/sportcoaching>

but has also been adopted by researchers in other fields, including education.³ Sport coaching researchers⁴ have also adopted and adapted it. This research compares the characteristics of experts (the final stage of development) with those at lower levels.

The original education research proposed five stages: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert. In the research on coaching, the novice and advanced beginner phases have been collapsed into one beginner category to produce a four-stage model. Both the original research and the coaching research are described in table 4.1.

This work is useful because it provides a way to think about the development of sport coaches through a number of clear stages. Although it is recognised that individual development will not be so linear, this approach provides a useful guide for identifying next steps and potentially a structure for curriculum

TABLE 4.1 Stages of Expertise Development in Teaching and Sport Coaching

Stages of expertise development in teaching ³	Stage of expertise development in sport coaching ⁴
Stage 1: Novice Learning about the environment through common characteristics and context-free rules	Beginner Less than three years of experience Learning rules and norms of coaching
Stage 2: Advanced Beginner Experience used to develop episodic and case knowledge and to situate propositional knowledge Similarities across contexts are recognised Early strategic knowledge developed	Delivering structured sessions and maintaining athlete behaviour more important than athletes' learning Feels out of control when situation doesn't match rules and norms
Stage 3: Competent Prioritise and plan Conscious choices about action Can work out what strategies are important in context Accepts responsibility for actions	Cultivating competence More experience and knowledge Recognises patterns between events Develops strategic knowledge Contingency (if-then) planning Working toward bigger-picture goals
Stage 4: Proficient As a result of extensive experience, recognises similarities across multiple contexts, developing a holistic view Problems solved through intuition/know-how Can predict likely problems	Practicing proficiency Significant number of years coaching More focused on athlete learning, including individualised learning Stronger perceptual skills More intuitive, with stronger sense of control and accountability
Stage 5: Expert Intuitive grasp of situation that doesn't require analysis and deliberation Effortlessly fluid and adaptable Usually successful; analytical when not 'in flow'	Excelling to expert Consistently outstanding performance Extensive knowledge Committed to learning and synthesising new knowledge Greater variety of strategies for same task

building. Indeed, it is not surprising that most international coach education and qualification systems use either a three- or four-level approach with an additional entry phase. The use of stage models in coach development and qualification will be discussed more in chapters 5 and 6.

Coaching Knowledge

A central element underpinning coaching expertise is coaching knowledge. Various authors have proposed a number of knowledge classifications that help inform the development of curricula.

Jean Côté and Wade Gilbert⁵ have proposed that for coaches to be effective, they need to consistently integrate and apply three types of knowledge: professional (subject matter knowledge and how to teach it), interpersonal (knowledge related to the ability to connect with people and build positive relationships) and intrapersonal (knowledge of self and personal philosophy based on experience, self-awareness and reflection) (table 4.2). As expressed in chapter 2, the centrality of intrapersonal knowledge is highlighted by the ICCE. Coach behaviour must be underpinned by a clear and explicit set of values, ethical principles and responsibilities. Coach education and development initiatives should ensure all three types of knowledge are included.

An alternative and complementary classification has been proposed by Andrew Abraham and colleagues.⁶ They proposed that to facilitate decision making, planning and practice, coaches can consider the requirements of the participant (who), the specific demands of the sport or activity (what) and the methodological and pedagogical approach to facilitate development (how). The Abraham and colleagues model emphasises the need for knowledge to be contextualised to the needs of the participant and the sport and the importance

TABLE 4.2 Coaching Knowledge Areas

Knowledge area	Samples of subject matters
Professional knowledge	The sport Athletes Sport science Coaching theory and methodology Foundational skills
Interpersonal knowledge	Social context Relationships
Intrapersonal knowledge	Coaching philosophy and values Lifelong learning

Adapted from Côté and Gilbert (2009)⁵.

of coaches' understanding of how to create a positive and optimal learning environment. This model also highlights the relevance of coaches' understanding of the cultures and contexts in which they operate and of their own personal values and philosophy (figure 4.1).

Understanding of culture and context:

Policies, pathways, resources, NGB, player/athlete/participant/other expectations and constraints

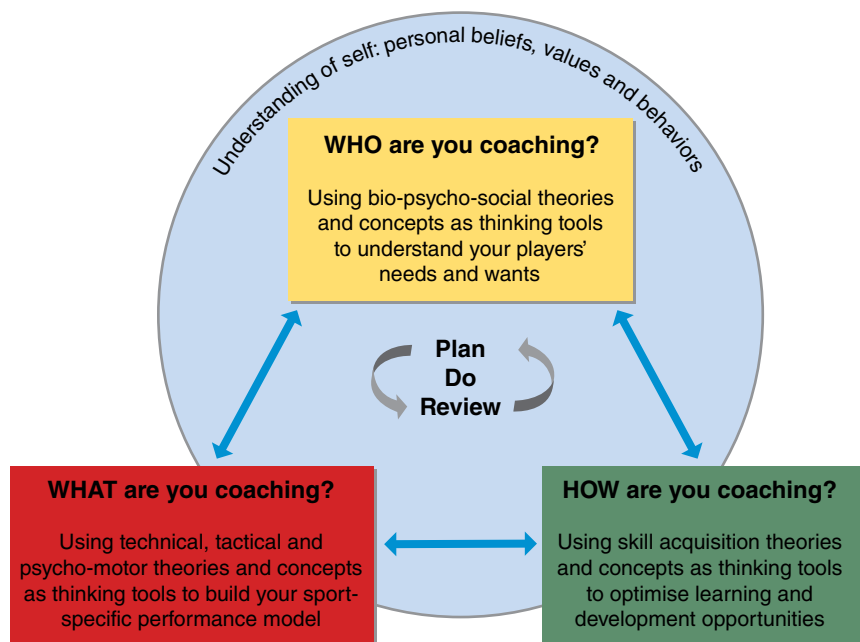


FIGURE 4.1 The who-what-how model of coaching knowledge.

Adapted from Abraham et al., 2015⁶.

¹Performance here is understood as the process of coaching, not a win-loss record.

²Dreyfus, H.L., & Dreyfus, S.E. (1986). *Mind Over Machine*. New York, NY: Free Press.

³Berliner, D.C. (1994). Expertise: The wonders of exemplary performance. In J.N. Mangieri and C. Collins Block (Eds.), *Creating Powerful Thinking in Teachers and Students*. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

⁴Schempp, P.G., McCullick, B., and Sannen Mason, I. (2006). The development of expert coaching. In R.L. Jones (Ed.), *The Sports Coach as Educator* (pp. 145-161). London, UK: Routledge.

⁵Côté, J., and Gilbert, W. (2009). An integrative definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 4(3): 307-323; Gilbert, W., & Côté, J. (2013). Defining coaching effectiveness: A focus on coaches' knowledge. In P. Potrac, W. Gilbert, & J. Denison (Eds.), *Handbook of Sports Coaching* (pp. 147-159). London, UK: Routledge.

⁴Abraham, A., Jiménez-Saiz, S.L., Mckeown, S., Morgan, G., Muir, B., North, J., and Till, K. (2015). Planning your coaching: A focus on youth participant development. In C. Nash (Ed.), *Practical Sports Coaching* (pp. 16-53). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Coach Development

A coach's primary mission is to help sport participants develop not only as athletes, but also as people. To fulfil that aim, a coach needs functional and task-related competences that are underpinned by knowledge and reflection. Coaches will have different levels of expertise, based on their experience, education and development pathway. So just how does one progress to greater levels of expertise in a coaching role?

As we saw in the previous chapter, expertise development takes time and effort. Coach development must therefore proceed in a progressive and sustainable way. There is thus a need for long-term coach development (LTCD). This approach to coach development takes into consideration the coach's stage of development, how the coach learns and which participants the coach is working with.



LTCD will address both coaching for participation and coaching for performance across the six sport engagement domains described in chapter 2. It will also foster the progression of coaches across multiple domains through the offering of a variety of learning and development opportunities. The LTCD pathway may look different for each country, sport or discipline, because it needs to be tailored to specific needs and available resources.

Coaches may also have different developmental pathways due to varying personal circumstances and exposure to diverse sources of learning. The gradual accumulation of experiences contributes to the long-term development of the coach.

National and international federations and other providers have a key role in identifying the optimal developmental process that will enhance the learning and progression of their coaches. Recent research¹ has indicated that the combination of athletic experience, coaching experience and a mix of educational opportunities provides the basis for a pathway that may lead to higher levels of expertise in performance coaching (see figure 5.1).

For coaches working in youth sport, the route into coaching may start as parents supporting their children’s participation in sport. Their initial coaching practice is likely to be largely influenced by their own playing experiences, yet their methods progressively become shaped by exposure to formal coach education and the interaction with other coaches.

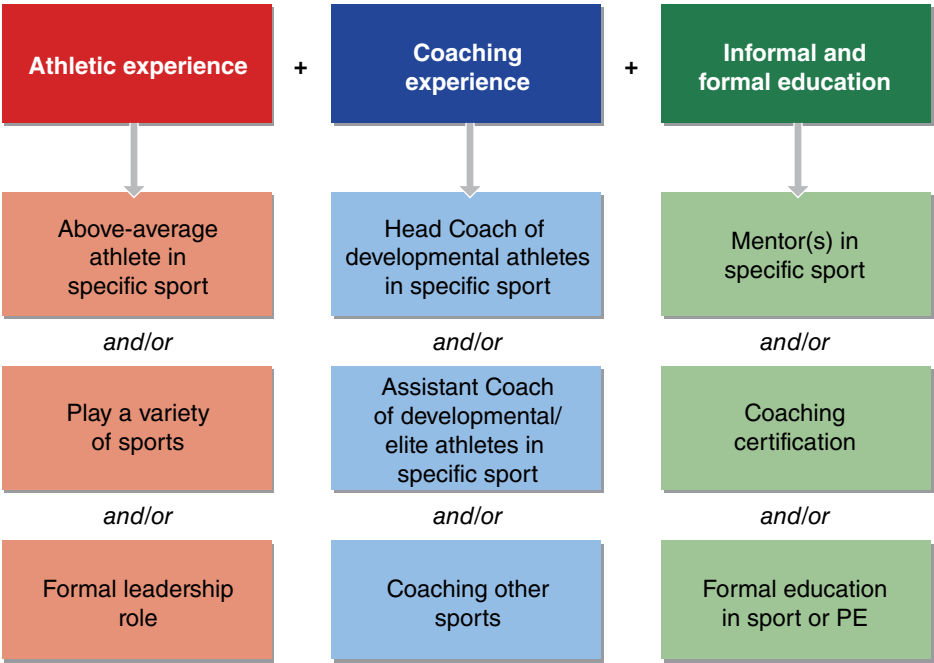


FIGURE 5.1 Experiences contributing to the development of performance coaches. Adapted from Côté, Erickson & Duffy (2013).

The Learning Process

Education and development in general must support the establishment of effective behaviours, skills and attitudes, and not merely the accumulation of knowledge. European policy² has long recognised that learning is a lifelong process and that multiple experiences can facilitate the development of competence. Each nation and sport should develop a clear view of what long-term coach development means in their context and what expertise is required at every level. This will provide a firm foundation for curriculum development and delivery that includes a variety of learning experiences to meet the needs of coaches at each stage of development.

We propose a classification of learning situations adopted from the work of Jennifer Moon.³ This classification distinguishes between three types of learning situations: mediated, unmediated and internal.

1. **Mediated learning** is aided directly by another person or through the use of a medium that simplifies the material of teaching. This can be formal (e.g., college or federation program of instruction) or non-formal (e.g., mentoring and coaching clinics).
2. **Unmediated learning** refers to when coaches initiate their learning, choose what they want to learn and decide how they wish to learn it (e.g., observing others coach, having a discussion with a fellow coach, reading a book or watching a DVD). This has also been referred to as *informal learning*.
3. **Internal learning** is the process of consciously or unconsciously reflecting on our lived experiences, which leads to new realisations. This process is constantly taking place, yet the amount of learning we take from it can be optimised.

How Coaches Learn

Beginning coaches are not a blank slate. Whether through personal experiences as an athlete or spectator, they arrive at their first coaching experience with their own conception of what coaching is. From that starting point, as research indicates, coaches learn in multiple ways. However, the relevance of the different learning modes changes as coaches progress through their developmental journey.

In the early stages, coaches may benefit strongly from mediated learning opportunities provided through formal education. These can be seen as laying a knowledge foundation. This formal education challenges or confirms initial personal theories and supports the creation of a conceptual framework that helps coaches organise and make sense of their coaching practice. As coaches continue to develop, non-formal learning opportunities become more relevant; the interaction with clinicians, mentors, open source material and other coaches provides a chance to check and challenge their emerging philosophy and way of doing things as well as gain new knowledge.

Research⁴ also shows that coaches learn best when

- their prior experiences and abilities are recognised and they are encouraged to reflect and build on them;
- they are motivated to take responsibility for learning and are given opportunities to drive it and direct it to their own needs;
- the application of what is being learned to the practical context in which they coach is clear and facilitated;
- the topics and learning materials are clearly relevant;
- the climate is positive and supportive to minimise anxiety, encourage experimentation and challenge them appropriately;
- interaction and sharing with other coaches is promoted;
- a variety of learning activities is offered and
- they experience some success and gain feedback that builds their self-confidence.

Research also shows that much of coaches' learning takes place on the job. Coach education must therefore also focus on equipping coaches with tools to maximise learning that takes place as a result of day-to-day practice. Coaches' self-awareness and their ability to reflect on their experiences is essential.

The educational and developmental experiences of coaches ought to mirror the complex and changing environment in which they operate. Coach development should therefore offer a blended learning package composed of mediated and unmediated learning situations and significant job-related components to foster optimal internal learning. This will promote knowledge gains and behavioural change and encourage coaches to seek additional self-directed learning opportunities.

Experiential Learning

Traditionally, coach education has provided mediated, predominantly formal, learning situations. Very often, coach education has been classroom based, assessment focused and compliance driven. However, the general education trend in Europe is to facilitate the translation of knowledge into practical skills through the completion of practical assignments and practicum periods. Coach education is no different, and there is ample evidence that coaches learn well from practice-based experiences and interaction with other coaches.⁵ The need to ensure that knowledge imparted in the classroom can be assimilated by coaches through reflection on what it means for their practice is also paramount. All this points to the need to balance formal coach education in the classroom with learning experiences on the field, court, track, pool or gym.

Experiential learning, which is central to coach development, is different from learning from day-to-day experiences: Experiential learning is intentional and can be mediated or unmediated. Through exposure to a broader range of situations, it provides coaches with a chance to discover what knowledge and

Developing Personalised Expertise

Netherlands' TopCoach5 Programme

Lead Organisation: NOC*NSF (Netherlands Olympic Committee)

Country: Netherlands

Start Date: 2004

Main Purpose

- To offer a high-level, high-quality development programme for coaches wishing to obtain the level 5 coaching qualification (the highest qualification in the Netherlands)

Key Features

- Centrally run programme
- Competence-based experiential learning
- Research- and evidence-based teaching
- A programme that is not sport specific (This allows all federations to have coaches achieve level 5 qualification at a fraction of the cost of running sport-specific courses.)
- A personalised learning programme and mentor for each coach

Main Achievements

- Increased frequency of level 5 courses
- Increased numbers of level 5 qualified coaches
- Cross-sport knowledge exchange and enhanced relationships
- Greater cooperation with and between higher education institutions

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- www.topcoach5.nl

skills they already have and to enhance their decision-making capabilities across a broader spectrum of coaching circumstances. Coach developers can play a significant role as sounding boards or critical friends.

Research conducted by the ICCE has shown that many coach education programmes throughout the world fail to provide a link between theoretical knowledge and its applicability to coaching practice in specific contexts.⁶ The use of experiential learning pedagogies such as reality-based assignments, problem-based learning, micro-coaching opportunities, reflection in/on action and supervised practicum periods have been shown to make a positive contribution to coach development.

Many coaching courses in Europe include a mix of classroom-based teaching and instruction on the court, playing field, track or pool. Whilst a positive development, such arrangements represent *practical learning* and not *experiential*

learning. During a practical learning session, coaches may experience the activity themselves as participants or see others delivering coaching. Experiential learning, on the other hand, is more about taking what has been learned in the course and applying it in a real environment. It can also be about carrying out an assignment before any instruction has been given and then discussing it with the course tutor and fellow learning coaches.

Experiential learning requires self-awareness and self-reflection on the part of the coach. Awareness and reflection are teachable skills and should be a central part of a balanced coach development programme.

Mentoring

An effective on-the-job learning option is the use of trained mentors. Coaching organisations must value, recognise, respect, trust and encourage the contribution that experienced coaches can offer in guiding, educating, mentoring and developing less seasoned colleagues. Coaches with more seniority must also recognise that this mentoring and support role is a core part of their professional responsibility.

Mentors can come from the same sport, a different sport or another professional field altogether. Their role may be that of trusted advisor, sounding board, critical friend or any combination of these, based on the needs of the coach and the specific situation.

The process of coach development takes place over time and includes athletic experience, coaching experience and formal, non-formal and informal education. The progression from novice to expert is not a linear process, and all learning opportunities form part of an interdependent learning network. The design of coach education programmes should make provision for this and take into account the coaches' experience and working contexts.

Communities of Practice

Coaches can also learn from being part of a community with a shared interest. In education theory, this is known as a community of practice.⁷ Theorists propose that the interaction with others who deal with the same challenges and are passionate about similar topics leads to the sharing of practical knowledge, the consideration of diverse points of view and the cogeneration of new ideas and ways to solve those challenges. Communities of practice also provide coaches with the social support required to make critical changes to their practice that may otherwise be difficult.

The extent to which 'regulated' communities of practice can be effectively promoted and used as part of coach education programmes is still uncertain.⁸ The role of a skilled facilitator has been highlighted as key to the learning process in these cases.⁹ Online forums and social media may also hold great promise in this regard.

Fostering a Community of Expert Coach Developers

The NSSU-ICCE Coach Developer Academy (CDA)

Lead Organisation: Nippon Sport Science University and ICCE

Country: Japan and United Kingdom

Start Date: 2014

Main Purpose

- To foster the development of expert international coach developers and to construct a network all over the world (This CDA is part of the Sport for Tomorrow programme of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.)

Key Features

- Collaboration between national and international agencies
- Blended learning opportunities for the future coach developers
- A 12-month individualised programme with a large amount of experiential learning and self-reflection
- Creation of a community of international coach developers who share knowledge and experiences

Main Achievements

- Three cohorts (over 50 candidates) have completed the programme
- The CDA has brought to life the principles of the *International Coach Developer Framework*
- Graduates from CDA are acting as coach developer ambassadors back in their own environments
- Coach developers continue to interact and learn from each other after graduation

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- <https://cda.nittai.ac.jp/index.html>

Coaches also gain much knowledge from experts in related fields such as strength and conditioning specialists, biomechanists, sport psychologists and nutritionists. The value of these exchanges is increased when the knowledge is conveyed systematically, presented at the appropriate level of complexity and combined with examples and applications to the coaching of the athletes.

How Coach Developers Can Help

The preparation and competence of those who deliver coach education (coach developers) are fundamental to participant learning. However, very often, coach

developers have not been trained to deliver coach education¹⁰ but find themselves in that position by virtue of their expertise.

Federations, coaching organisations and educational institutions are advised to give careful consideration to how they identify and train those who will deliver their coach education programmes. Being an expert in a topic does not necessarily imply an ability to communicate the knowledge to learners in a way that will help them apply the new knowledge. Therefore, coach developers must be experts in the topic in question and, more importantly, experts in learning. They also must have a genuine passion for developing others. It is therefore paramount that coach developers be carefully selected and recruited, have a suitable support system and be evaluated regularly so that their competence and growth in the role can be assessed.

Coach developers also play a vital role in the delivery of non-formal learning situations and the promotion of coaches' engagement in unmediated situations. Coaches with sufficient experience and a real desire to develop other coaches' skills may wish to train to become coach developers. Each sport and nation should establish a long-term career pathway for coach developers; that pathway should be clearly linked with and aligned to coaching categories, domains and roles.

Federations, countries and educational institutions should invest time and resources in creating an effective coach developer workforce. This will enhance their ability to enrich existing coaches as well as increase the number of new coaches coming into the system in those areas where they are needed.

For more information in this area, please see the *International Coach Developer Framework* published by the ICCE.¹¹

¹Côté, J., Erickson, K., and Duffy, P. (2013). Developing the expert performance coach. In D. Farrow, J. Baker, and C. MacMahon (Eds.), *Developing Elite Sport Performance: Lessons From Theory and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 17-28). New York, NY: Routledge.

²European Commission Education and Culture Directorate General (2008). *The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

³Moon, J.A. (2004). *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*. London, UK: Routledge-Falmer.

⁴Lara-Bercial, S., Dohme, L.C., Rankin-Wright, A.J. North, J. and Ripoll, S. (in preparation). Did the coaches learn and how do we know? Evaluation of the coach advancement programme of the Philippines Academy of Sport; Trudel, P., Culver, D. and Werthner, P. (2013). Looking at coach development from the coach-learner's perspective: Considerations for coach development administrators. In P. Potrac, W. Gilbert, and J. Denison (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Sport Coaching*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

⁵Carter, A., and Bloom, G. (2009). Coaching knowledge and success: Going beyond athletic experiences. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 32(4), 419-437; Lara-Bercial, S., Dohme, L.C., Rankin-Wright, A.J., and Ripoll, S. (in preparation). Did the coaches learn and how do we know? Evaluation of the coach advancement programme of the Philippines Academy of Sport.

⁶Scoping studies of coach education programmes in Japan, India, Philippines and Malaysia showed this trend.

⁷Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1998). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. In E. Wenger, *Communities of Practice*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

⁸Cushion, C., and Nelson, L. (2013). Coach education and learning: Developing the field. In P. Potrac, W. Gilbert, and J. Denison (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Sport Coaching*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

⁹Culver, D., and Trudel, P. (2008). Clarifying the concept of communities of practice in sport. *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, 3(1), 1-10; Lara-Bercial, S., Dohme, L.C., Rankin-Wright, A.J., and Ripoll, S. (in preparation). Did the coaches learn and how do we know? Evaluation of the coach advancement programme of the Philippines Academy of Sport.

¹⁰North, J., et al. (2015). *Evaluation of the UEFA Coaching Convention*. Nyon, Switzerland: UEFA.

¹¹International Council for Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, and Leeds Beckett University (2013). *International Coach Developer Framework*. Leeds, UK: International Council for Coaching Excellence.

6

Coach Certification and Recognition

The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 officially gave the European Union authority over sport to ensure that sport's contribution to society is optimised throughout the member states. The central role of coaches, and the need for effective coach education and certification programmes to ensure the development and maintenance of a capable sport coaching workforce, have been recognised in many European policies and communications (see chapter 1).

The Plan for Coaching in the European Union

In the context of the implementation of the EQF and the creation of national qualification frameworks (NQFs) in 28 member states, the EU Work Plan for



Sport 2011-2014 and the EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017 (and the respective expert groups¹⁾) have clearly signalled the need for coaching qualifications to be integrated within these formal national and European structures. It is hoped that such integration will contribute to an increase in the quality and transparency of coaching qualifications and to enhanced employability and mobility for coaches.

The expert groups have concluded that the pace and success of this integration process depend on the following:

- The maturity stage of the country's education system and framework
- The role and relevance attributed by governments to sport and sport qualifications
- The existence of sufficient investment and political and organisational commitment to transform existing coaching qualifications into modern ones based on units of learning and learning outcomes
- Qualification specifications that include the professional and occupational profiles they are aimed at, along with clear indicators of the required levels of attainment (i.e., complexity of knowledge, skills, competence and responsibility), referenced to EQF and the NQF
- Greater collaboration and alignment between different sectors of education
- The creation of effective recognised prior learning systems
- The degree to which national governing bodies of sport use guidance provided by international federations and bodies such as the ICCE

The Professionalisation of Coaching

In recent times, there has been an encouraging trend to regulate and professionalise coaching in many countries. This has been spurred by directives from the European Commission regarding the regulation of sport professionals and guidance from international bodies such as the ICCE. The regulation and professionalisation of coaching has one main goal: to guarantee a minimum level of quality in the coaching workforce for the benefit of athletes and participants. Another aim is to increase the recognition and representation of coaches as qualified professionals who fulfil a very important role in society.

Different countries and different sports, however, have different traditions and expectations pertaining to coaching. These revolve around three key areas:

1. **The social status of the coach.** In some countries and sports, coaches, not just in performance sport but in any domain, are esteemed as professionals, similar to teachers and doctors. In other countries and sports, coaching is less respected.
2. **The employment status of coaches.** The proportion of volunteer, part-time paid and full-time paid coaches varies considerably between

countries and sports. Coaching has therefore been classed as a blended occupational area.²

3. **The qualification status of coaches.** It is estimated that only around four million of the nine million coaches in the European Union must meet qualification standards.³ Again, there is great variability between countries and sports. In some cases, coaches are expected either by law or social tradition to hold minimum qualifications to be able to coach; in others, such expectations do not exist.

Any attempts to further professionalise and increase the recognition of coaching and coaches must address these three areas. However, the solutions may be different in each country and sport based on their traditions, resources and needs. European legislation, international guidance such as publications by the ICCE and reference points such as EQF, ECTS, and ECVET (European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training) provide a springboard to analyse the current picture and develop a strategic plan for the future at a sport-specific level or national level.

Coach Certification

Depending on their quality and rigour, coach education, certification and licensing programmes can ensure that all participating coaches have an acceptable level of competency. A certificate or licence from an approved coach education programme ensures quality in the coach development process. The well-structured coursework and demonstrations of on-the-job mastery that are associated with certification and licensing benefit everyone in sport.

Recent exploratory work across Europe has identified several different elements that countries and sports consider when building a coach certification and recognition system:⁴

- Underpinning theories of learning, often emphasising different coach characteristics such as knowledge, competences, competencies, expertise and so on
- Coaching role: functions and tasks
- Deployment and regulatory issues

Theories of Learning

Coaching system builders have a choice with regards to the learning theories that underpin their education and qualification system. Table 6.1 offers a summary of the most common ones.

These are all viable choices to underpin a coach education system. However, recent evidence tends to suggest that a combination of approaches (depending on the context, goal and task) is most productive. The systems builder should select the approach or mixture that best meets the needs of their context and coaches.

TABLE 6.1 Learning Theories Underpinning Coach Education Across Europe

Knowledge approach	Competences/expertise approach
• The most traditional approach (and still very common in many Eastern European countries) • A focus on knowledge inputs, especially theoretical knowledge of the discipline • Criticised for providing knowledge often too abstracted from practical tasks and problems (practitioners have problems applying it)	• Typical in northwestern mainland Europe; common approach in medicine • A focus on the person, recognising his or her place in complex environments, with complex tasks • A broader view of competences that incorporates functional skills, cognitive skills and metaskills (knowledge, mental models and reasoning) and personal and social attitude • Experts solve problems and make judgments in context
Competencies approach	Sociocultural approach
• The approach driven by the United States and United Kingdom (and, it is argued, the approach that underpins the EQF⁵) • A focus on outputs, tasks and activities to do the job • Effective practice can be broken down and distilled into objective, generalisable, replicable and assessable functional competencies captured in competency statements • Criticised for underestimating the complexity and contingency of effective practice (coaching is much more unpredictable)	• Increasing influence in educational practice—both outside and inside sport coaching • Significant focus on learning in situ with ‘more capable others’ such as mentors • Very little importance attached to explicit propositional knowledge

Coaching Roles

Coaching system builders also ought to consider how the coach certification and recognition structure aligns with different coaching roles typically performed by coaches within their systems. Coaching roles entail different expectations with regards to the need and capacity of coaches to perform a certain set of functions, tasks and activities. These roles are typically linked to levels of expertise. The higher the level of expertise required to perform a coaching role, the higher the demands on the coach in terms of functions, tasks and activities.

For example, at the different levels of expertise development (see chapter 4), coaches

- are asked to think about planning over different time frames (e.g., beginners at the session level and experts at the seasonal or programme level),
- take on different levels of responsibility (e.g., beginners assist sessions, and experts develop programmes) and
- have different functions (e.g., beginners support other coaches to deliver sessions, and experts develop, review and evaluate programmes and support and manage less-experienced coaches).

The *ISCF* proposed the following coaching roles: Coaching Assistant, Coach, Advanced/Senior Coach and Master/Head Coach. Table 6.2 adopts and adapts this classification to show how coaching qualifications may align with the various levels of expertise and the generic coaching roles proposed by the *ISCF*. The existence of these roles and their nomenclature may vary from country to country and between sports, but they serve as a comparative reference point. It is also important to remember that qualifications are simply minimum standards and that expertise develops and manifests in complex ways that may be difficult to evaluate and assess within formal education channels. Table 6.3 shows the link between the different coaching functions and specific functional tasks and levels of expertise.

Aligning Different Coach Education Sectors

The Finnish Olympic Committee Education Pathway for Coaches

Lead Organisation: Finnish Olympic Committee

Start Date: Ongoing

Main Purpose

- To provide a flexible and responsive coach education pathway for Finnish coaches, aligning multiple education streams

Key Features

- Coach education is available through multiple and complementary streams
- Federations, vocational institutes and higher education institutions all contribute to coach education
- Coaches can build a personalised learning pathway, combining the three streams
- The competence-based curricula references the *International Sport Coaching Framework*

Main Achievements

- Strong alignment and cooperation between different educational sectors
- Development of a stronger motivation to personal development and lifelong learning attitude amongst coaches

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- www.olympiakomitea.fi/huippu-urheilu/osaamisohjelma/valmennusosaaminen/valmentajat/valmentajien-osaaminen

TABLE 6.2 Coaching Roles Linked to Expertise, Levels of Responsibility, Timescales and Typical Qualifications

Role title	Level of expertise ⁶	Expected coach outputs		Typical qualification*
		Degree of responsibility	Operational time span	
Coaching Assistant	Novice	Low Support the delivery of programmes assisting in sessions and competitions led by a Coach or higher Must be supervised and guided	May be able to plan and deliver single sessions or parts of sessions	Pre-entry (level 0; instructor) or level 1
Coach	Advanced Beginner	Medium Can independently plan and lead sessions and competitions Supports the development of pre-coaches and coaching assistants	Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over a season	Level 2
Advanced/ Senior Coach	Competent to Proficient	High Can independently lead sessions and competitions and entire small-scale programmes (or parts of larger programmes) Manages or supports the development of other coaches and support staff	Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over multiannual seasons or cycles	Level 3
Master/ Head Coach	Proficient to Expert	Very high Can independently lead sessions and competitions and entire medium- and large-scale programmes Manages or supports the development of other coaches and support staff	Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over multiannual seasons or cycles	Levels 4-5 (top national coaching certificate)

*Alignment based on prior experience of the ESCF writing team. It may vary between countries and sports.

TABLE 6.3 Levels of Competence, Responsibility and Expertise in Coaching^a

Primary functions ^b	Task-related competence <i>The coach is able to</i>	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient/Expert
Set the vision and strategy	Understand the big picture and align practice with local, regional and national policy and objectives				
	Develop a suitable vision for the program relevant to the athletes in it and also to institutional priorities				
	Set up a relevant strategy that supports the fulfilment of the vision				
	Make effective and informed decisions relating to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of medium- to long-term programmes of practice and competition based on institutional and athlete needs				
Shape the environment	Effectively identify and recruit athletes and staff				
	Identify, reflect on and challenge prevailing beliefs, values and assumptions within the coaching environment to establish a suitable culture				
	Identify and source the relevant resources (human and material) required to fulfil programme and participant needs				
	Employ all reasonable measures to keep athletes and staff safe from harm				

Primary functions	Task-related competence <i>The coach is able to</i>	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient/Expert
Build relationships	Lead and influence the attitudes, behaviours and understanding of key stakeholders (e.g., parents, managers) through the meaningful presentation of ideas				
	Establish and maintain an ethical, effective, inclusive and empathetic relationship with athletes, staff and other stakeholders				
	Appreciate physical, mental and cultural diversity in participants and adapt practice accordingly				
	Adhere to established codes of conduct and legal requirements in coaching				
	Educate athletes, staff and other stakeholders to enhance their contribution to their own objectives, the program's objectives and their overall well-being				
Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions	Conduct comprehensive needs analyses for individual athletes or teams in order to design and deliver tailored coaching programmes, taking into account participant needs and capabilities in the context of wider programmes, curricula, policies and targets				

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Primary functions	Task-related competence <i>The coach is able to</i>	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient/Expert
Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions	Select, design and justify appropriate pedagogy, coaching practice and communication methods to facilitate the short-, medium- and long-term learning needs of participants				
	Conduct a functional analysis of multiskill activity ^c or of their chosen sport (or sports) and identify the implications for coaching practice				
	Identify the core elements of their chosen sport (or sports) at the key stages of participant development				
	Devise, interpret and apply an appropriate curriculum for a multiskill environment or in their chosen sport (or sports) in line with participant needs and agreed-upon industry standards				
	Deliver a series of coaching sessions in the context of medium- and long-term planned programmes of practice and competition using a wide range of appropriate learning modes for participants and coaching behaviours				
	Conduct risk assessments in order to deliver safe and ethical coaching practice				

Primary functions	Task-related competence <i>The coach is able to</i>	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient/Expert
	Identify, create and manage suitable competitive opportunities to contribute to ongoing athlete development				
	Develop appropriate competition strategies to maximise chances of learning and success				
	Maintain a professional attitude toward coaching practice, athletes and all stakeholders at all times				
Read and react to the field	Conduct an insightful analysis of coaching practice to make informed judgments relating to the efficacy of the learning environment established				
	Conduct an insightful analysis of athlete performance or team performance to make informed decisions regarding on-the-spot adjustments to enhance performance				
	Conduct an insightful analysis of the programme to make informed judgments relating to the efficacy of the environment established				
	Make good in-action and post-action decisions to increase the chances of reaching objectives				

> continued

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Primary functions	Task-related competence <i>The coach is able to</i>	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient/Expert
Reflect and learn	Identify and reflect on assumptions and practices as a coach and student, demonstrating the ability to conduct informed analysis and a willingness to apply the principle of continuous improvement to his or her own coaching				
	Identify his or her own learning needs and take responsibility for the development and application of strategies for further self-development as part of an ongoing process				
	Take an objective and critical approach to problem identification and solution, using evidence-based approaches and appropriate research methodologies				
	Develop an initial personal coaching philosophy and style, recognising the need for further growth based on learning, evidence and experience				

^aGrey shading denotes no expected responsibility and expertise. Blue shading denotes progressively greater levels of expected responsibility and expertise in a particular functional task (lighter shade = lower; darker shade = higher).

^bThe capacity to engage in meeting these primary functions requires a synoptic application of knowledge, skills and professional competences, the contribution of each being dependent of the specific context and demands.

^cMultiskill activity refers to sport sessions aimed at the development of overall psychomotor skills, typically in children, sometimes referred to as fundamental movement skills. These types of activity can be done as part of a sport-specific session (e.g., multiple skills with a theme of tennis) or as outright multiskill sessions.

UEFA Coaching Convention

Lead Organisation: Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)

Country: 54 countries across Europe

Start Date: 1998

Main Purpose

- To improve the quality of coach education systems across European football member associations, thus improving the quality of coach education in each country, with the aim of developing better coaches and ultimately better players

Key Features

- Convention documentation
- Programme structure: roles, pathways, levels, recognition of prior learning
- Learning philosophy: reality-based learning
- Standardised learning content, delivery method and learning hours
- Structure for delivery: diploma programmes and further education
- Assessment, qualification requirements and licensing
- Workforce management
- Knowledge exchange
- Governance and support from UEFA

Main Achievements

- There are 54 football member associations working with the Convention
- In 2015, 215,000 coaches qualified for the Pro, A, B, Elite Youth A, Goalkeeper A, and Futsal B level diplomas
- Very positive feedback on Convention structure has been received from member associations
- An independent university gave a positive assessment of underpinning programme theories and the programme's likely impacts

For Further Information

- www.coachlearn.eu/casestudies
- www.uefa.org/football-development/technical/coach-education

Deployment and Regulatory Issues

In addition to considerations regarding coaching functions and tasks, coaching system builders also need to consider the implications of the coach certification and regulation system for coach deployment and workforce regulation. For example, who are beginner coaches allowed to work with (i.e., what kinds of participants and performers) and who are they not? At what stage is a coach suitable to lead a session or work with the very highest performing athletes? Certification qualification should state the participant population the coach is

qualified to work with and clearly describe what that certification allows a coach to do.

In the case of licensing systems that attest to the coach’s competency and right to practice, the awarding organisation must clearly specify how long the licence is valid for and the requirements for its renewal. Coaching licences may be particularly relevant for coaches earning income from their work and for those in high-risk environments.

When regulating pre-coaches, their roles need to be clearly defined, and the time spans and expectations for progression to formal coaching roles (and the associated certification) should be spelled out. This whole process should take into account any relevant national and international qualification frameworks and any legislative requirements that exist or are envisaged.

Coach certification will vary according to sport, nation and institution. Federations at the national and international levels take the lead in sport-specific certification courses. Institutions of higher education tend to focus on more universal topics such as sport science, coaching methods and theory. There also is a positive trend for such institutions to include sport-specific components. It is recommended that partnerships be forged between federations and educational institutions to maximise the quality and relevance of the courses offered. Figure 6.1 outlines a process to maximise this partnering approach to curriculum design and coach certification.

In addition to requiring the appropriate licences, those organisations that employ coaches—either as volunteers or in any paid capacity—may wish to enforce their own minimum standards for deployment before a coach is allowed

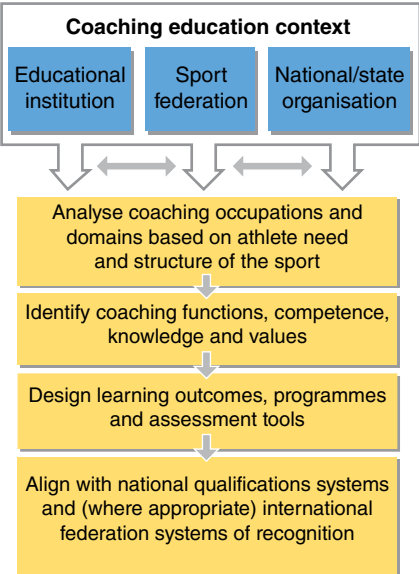


FIGURE 6.1 Curriculum design process.

to work with athletes. Examples of these used in some sports and countries include criminal background checks and basic training in equality and inclusion awareness, safeguarding and protection of vulnerable participants, first aid and safety and risk assessment. Many organisations have already embedded these additional requirements in their coaching courses and qualifications.

Coaches should be appropriately trained and qualified for the roles that they play and the domains in which they will work (or may work). National agencies and national and international federations should specify the designations (certification, licensing or both) required to fulfil specified roles, taking into account any relevant national and international qualification frameworks.

Coaching Qualifications and the EQF

Coaches deserve appropriate recognition nationally and internationally for their expertise and qualifications. Coaching qualifications should be referenced to appropriate national and international standards and benchmarks in education and vocational training.

In the European context, coaching qualifications should be referenced first to their NQF and subsequently to the EQF. Where coaching qualifications have been integrated into the existing NQF, such NQF tie-in is automatically part of the process of having the qualification endorsed by the national agency for education. Where coaching qualifications are not integrated in the NQF, or no NQF is in place, the qualification provider is encouraged to conduct a mapping exercise to award it a comparative level to either the NQF, EQF or the *ESCF*.

Some countries (United Kingdom, Poland, Netherlands) have developed national sectoral qualification frameworks that governing bodies in sport use as a reference point for the development of qualifications. These are normally referenced to their NQF, the EQF or both, thus facilitating a transparent comparison process.

This becomes a much easier procedure if coaching qualifications are designed and built based on units of learning, learning outcomes and credits. The guidance provided in chapters 3 and 4, tables 6.2 and 6.3 and figure 6.2 as well as the mapping tools hosted at www.coachlearn.eu/tools can support this process.

It is important to understand that the guidance and recommendations offered in these tables and tools are not binding or regulatory for organisations delivering coaching qualifications. The context and culture of each country and sport must be taken into account, and the solutions found must be fit for each specific situation.

For instance, table 6.4 and figure 6.2 each show a potential alignment (for mapping achievement standards to levels of expertise and for mapping qualifications for different education streams). This alignment may look different for different contexts and for different reasons.

TABLE 6.4 Alignment of Achievement Standards With Coaching Expertise

Expertise level	Achievement standards			
	National and international federation level	EQF	Higher education award	Other coach education streams
Proficient/ Expert	Level 4 or above	Levels 6-8	University degree or postgraduate degree	
Competent	Level 3 or 4	Levels 5-6	University diploma or degree	Diploma
Advanced beginner	Level 2	Level 4		Certificate
Novice	Level 1	Levels 2-3		Award

Recognition of Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience

Recognition of prior learning and work-based experience (RPL&WBE)⁷ has been a priority for EU member states and countries of the European Economic Area since 2004, and several guidance principles have been published since.⁸ RPL&WBE is seen as a way to improve lifelong and lifewide⁹ learning. At the heart of RPL&WBE is the need ‘to value and make visible the outcomes of learning at work, at home, during leisure time and in voluntary activities’.¹⁰ As described in chapter 5, coaches learn not only from formal but also non-formal and informal coach education opportunities. Formal coach certification systems, therefore, should factor in the RPL&WBE of coaches. The benefits of RPL&WBE are shown in table 6.5.

Although the benefits are clear, operating an optimal RPL&WBE system requires commitment and investment; it involves developing appropriate protocols for competence recognition, individualised and flexible study pathways and sufficient student guidance and support. Project CoachLearn has developed a full report on the state of RPL&WBE in coaching in Europe; this report includes a development tool for countries and sports wishing to review their RPL&WBE systems. To access it, please go to www.coachlearn.eu/tools.

Universal Access to Coach Education and Development

Access to coach education and development opportunities has been identified as a barrier to coaches’ achieving qualifications and licensed status.¹¹ Organisations

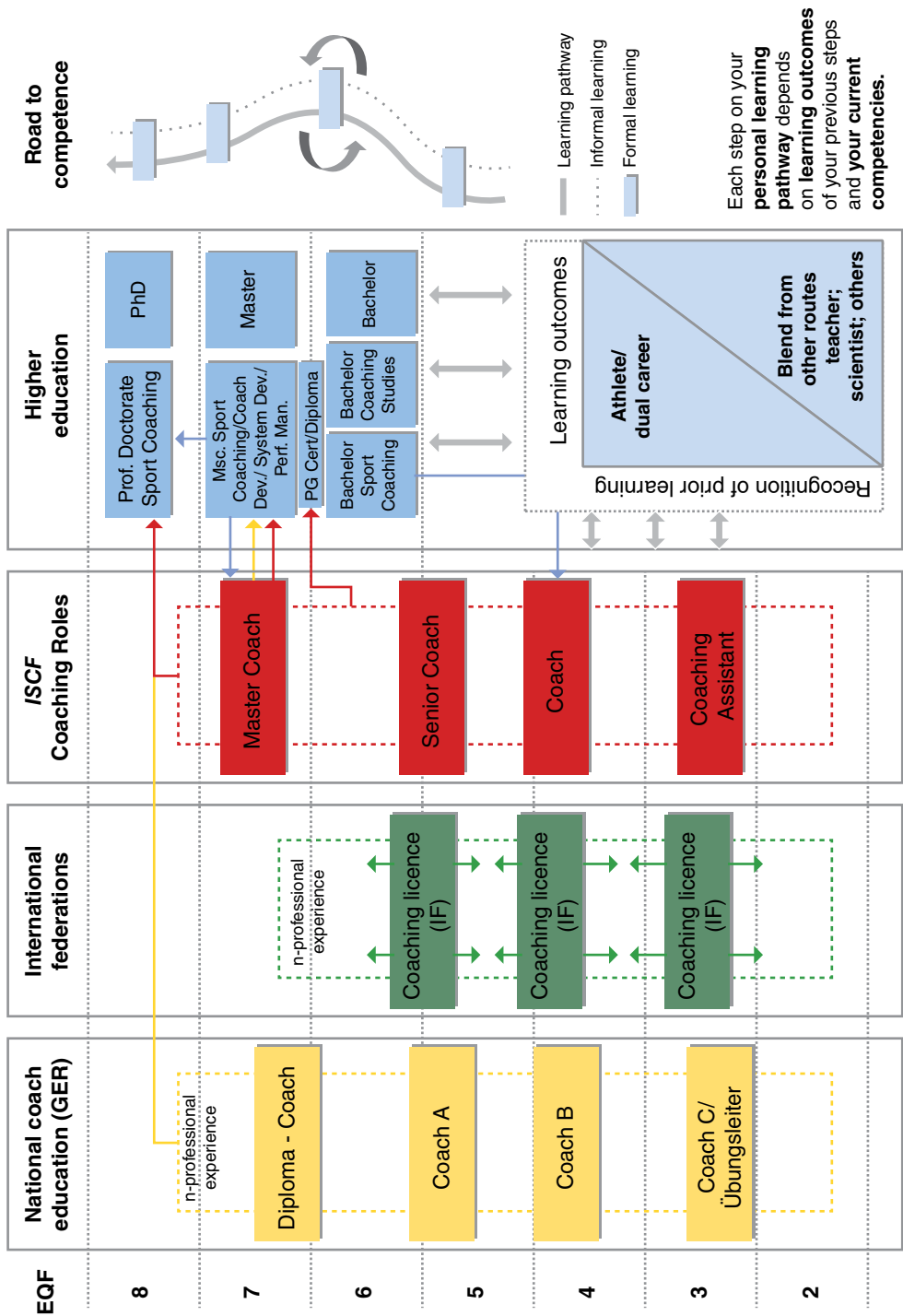


FIGURE 6.2 The process of mapping different coach education streams.

TABLE 6.5 Benefits of Recognised Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience

Benefits to society	Benefits to individuals	Benefits to educational institutions
Shortens the time spent in formal education	Empowerment	Motivated students
Could cut the expenses of formal education	Easier access and quicker completion of formal education	Increased funding
Promotes lifelong learning	Increased motivation to learn what you don't already know	Assess student baseline competence upon entry
Supports workforce mobility	Inclusivity	Provides an appropriate protocol to recognise learner's existing competence
Can increase equity	Greater flexibility and choice	
Can support workforce adaptation to new demands		

in charge of the development and delivery of coach education should strive to ensure access to education is universal and inclusive.

Increasing access may require rethinking how courses are delivered. For instance, the use of technology and a learner-centred methodology allows coaches to access part of the training at a time to suit their needs and availability. Governments and sport organisations must ensure that the cost of qualifications and licences remains affordable for the vast majority of coaches. Most coaches are volunteers. Without coaches, sport (and particularly youth sport) will not survive. It is therefore reasonable for coach education, especially in the early stages, to be subsidised or offered at a reasonable price so the cost does not deter potential coaches from completing the qualification requirements and entering the system.

Organisations governing and delivering coach education and development opportunities must ensure they are highly accessible and affordable.

¹Expert Group on Education and Training in Sport (formed as part of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014) and Expert Group on Human Resources Management in Sport (formed as part of the EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017).

²Duffy, P., Hartley, H., Bales, J., Crespo, M., Dick, F., Vardhan, D., Normann, L. & Curado, J. (2011). Sport coaching as a 'profession': Challenges and future directions. *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 5(2), 93-124.

³European Commission (2016). *Study on Sport Qualifications Acquired Through Sport Organisations and (Sport) Educational Institutes*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁴See the presentation Reflections on the Language Used to Describe Stages of Coach Development, www.coachlearn.eu/news/first-draft-of-european-sport-coaching-framework-unveiled-in-germany.html. www.icce.ws/_assets/files/coachlearn-reflections-on-the-language-used-to-describe-stages-of-coach-development.pdf

⁵Brockmann, M., Clarke, L., and Winch, C. (2008). Knowledge, skills, competence: European divergences in vocational education and training (VET)—The English, German and Dutch cases. *Oxford Review of Education*, 34(5), 547-567.

⁶Berliner, D.C. (1994). Expertise: The wonders of exemplary performance. In J.N. Mangieri and C. Collins Block (Eds.), *Creating Powerful Thinking in Teachers and Students*. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

⁷Other terms in use are *recognition of current competency*, *accreditation of prior learning*, *recognition of experimental learning* and *accreditation of prior learning and achievement*.

⁸European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (2009). *European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁹Lifewide learning recognises that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces, such as working or attending classes, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, traveling and taking holidays and looking after their own mental, physical and spiritual well-being. The time frames of lifelong learning and the spaces of lifewide learning will characteristically intermingle; who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling (www.lifewideeducation.uk/lifewide-learning.html).

¹⁰Cedefop (2009), p. 12.

¹¹Vargas-Tonsing, T.M. (2007). Coaches' preference for continuing coaching education. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 2(1), 25-36.

7

Benefits of a Coaching Framework

The *European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF)* transfers the principles proposed in the *ISCF* to the specific landscape and needs of the European Union. The relevant policies, recommendations, trends and examples of best practice are brought together to create a common space and language shared by all those working in coach education. The *ESCF* is thus an important step to support the creation of relevant, sustainable and high-quality coach education, development and deployment systems in Europe. The adaptation of the principles contained in the *ESCF*, and implementation in sport- and country-specific circumstances, offers multiple benefits that will be described throughout this chapter.



Create Consistent and Comparable High-Quality Coach Education

The ultimate objective of the *ESCF* is to further enhance the quality of coaching in different sports and countries by presenting a series of practice and research-supported principles and tools that may be applied to specific contexts. Coach education and development programmes that follow the principles of the *ESCF* will bolster their coaches' competence and knowledge, which will then benefit their athletes at all levels.

The *ESCF* and its associated tools can serve as valuable aids in designing new programmes and benchmarking or aligning existing ones (figure 7.1).

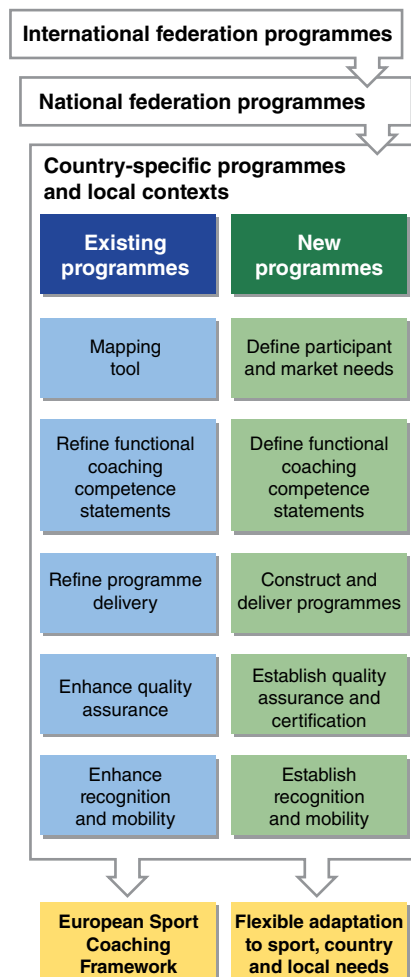


FIGURE 7.1 Applications of the *European Sport Coaching Framework*.

The *ESCF*, serving as a reference tool, can help to ensure quality and consistency in many circumstances:

- Coach education and development programme providers can compare their own qualifications with an internationally recognised framework. This may be particularly relevant to translate between different systems that operate across the continent and between various federations and higher education institutions.
- Coaching organisations and those employing and deploying coaches can more effectively assess the competences of coaches coming from different sports or nations and in specific roles. This will assist in the recognition of coaching qualifications and prior learning as well as in the identification of gaps in competency.
- Nations or federations looking to develop new systems or qualification standards can use the *ESCF* in conjunction with their NQF and EQF to help determine standards of coach qualification for each level and the necessary content to fulfil the associated requirements.
- Those who train and employ coaches can use the competences defined in the *ESCF* as an informal assessment and development tool for their coaches, leading to the identification of training needs. Coaches can use it in a similar way as a self-reflection exercise.

Evaluate and Improve Existing Programmes

The *ESCF* provides a prism through which to identify, implement and evaluate practices in coach education and development. It highlights the building blocks that affect quality, efficiency and effectiveness and provides a set of tools and concepts that can be tailored to specific contexts.

By analysing the *ESCF* blueprint and comparing it to their own programme design, sport administrators may be better able to prioritise and allocate resources in a manner that maximises their return on investment. When applied over time, quality assurance processes will underpin the continuous improvement of coaching and coach development on a systemic and sustainable basis.

Define Areas for Research and Evaluation

The *ESCF* offers clarity regarding the competences of coaches required to maximise participation and performance as well as the key components of systems that support coach education and development. This creates a potential index of areas for future research and evaluation, which will advance the blended profession toward new degrees of expertise and effectiveness.

Provide a Sound Base for Decision Making

The *ESCF* can also serve as a basis for creating, evaluating and revising regulations and laws to underpin the quality, sustainability and blended occupational nature of sport coaching. This will allow for more uniform and measured decision making by administrators, boards and authorities throughout the sport and educational communities.

Stimulate Global Exchange

The establishment of a common language will facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between partners, and even competitors, within and across countries and sports. This will in turn enhance mutual understanding at all levels and open new avenues for cooperation, as well as clear templates for the recognition of coaching qualifications between countries. Members of the sport community that stand to benefit from the *ESCF* are shown in figure 7.2.

Support and Adapt to Current Efforts

Since its publication, the *ISCF* has had a major impact in the way coaching systems and coach education and development are conceptualised worldwide. It was originally proposed that it would be reviewed and updated every four years. In working with countries and sports across the globe, the ICCE has experienced firsthand the benefits of a framework approach, yet we have also experienced the



FIGURE 7.2 Beneficiaries of the *European Sport Coaching Framework*.

reality faced by those trying to improve or develop a coaching system. Building the momentum, expertise and resources to undertake this kind of work takes time. Because of this, the ICCE has felt the need to let the *ISCF* become solidly embedded in the global community before producing an updated version.

The *European Sport Coaching Framework*, however, in addition to putting the principles of the *ISCF* into the EU context, can serve a broader function. In the work conducted on the ground, the ICCE has seen the need for the development of guidance, development and implementation tools to help those in the frontline assimilate and enact the *ISCF* and *ESCF* principles and make a real difference. For that reason, a major objective of the CoachLearn project, co-funded by Erasmus+, was to develop a set of tools to stimulate and support implementation across Europe and beyond. The tools in table 7.1 have been developed and can be accessed from www.coachlearn.eu/tools.

TABLE 7.1 Implementation Tools

Tool 1: Coaching system mapping tool	This tool will allow organisations involved in coaching to understand a coaching system. It will also support the process of mapping the system and the identification of the key stakeholders and their roles and interdependences.
Tool 2: European education landscape fact sheet and FAQ	This tool will provide an overview of the key features of the European education landscape (e.g., EQF, ECTS). It will help those embarking on the process of developing coach education programmes ensure they are aligned with European policy.
Tool 3: Participant development model builder	This tool will allow system builders to better understand the current population taking part in their sport (a model of the sport) and compare it with the desired future picture (model for the sport). The overall purpose is to determine the kinds of environments we need to create for different populations and the types of coaches (and their skill sets) that will be needed.
Tool 4: Coaching qualification curriculum builder	This tool will support coach developers to contextualise the six primary functions to different environments and domains. It will allow for the identification of the skills, competences and knowledge basis needed for a particular coach working in a particular context with a particular population of athletes. The tool will also support the development of suitable curricula.
Tool 5: Qualification mapping and conversion tool	This tool will allow system builders, coach developers and coaches to compare qualifications between sports and between countries by reference to roles in the <i>ESCF</i> , <i>ISCF</i> and EQF.
Tool 6: Step-by-step guide to RPL&WBE	This tool will provide guidance for how to set up effective and efficient RPL&WBE systems.

As both the *ISCF* and *ESCF* become embedded in real-world environments and new examples of best practice emerge, and as new research into coach education and development brings to the fore new concepts and ideas, the need for updated versions of the *ISCF* and *ESCF* will become apparent. The timing and nature of the changes to these two frameworks will be evaluated continuously and discussed with key partners and experts in the field at each ICCE Global Coach Conference.

In the meantime, from all of us at the ICCE and CoachLearn, we wish you all success for the future. Please feel free to get in touch at info@icce.ws.

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‘ . . . the establishment of the *European Sport Coaching Framework* contributes to the education, mobility and employability of coaches’.

Yves Le Lostecque

Head of the Sport Unit in the European Commission
Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Exciting things are happening in coaching. Coaches today are playing a more significant role in all of society, not just in elite sport.

The ***European Sport Coaching Framework*** is intended to further advance and strengthen the recent progress in coach development in the context of the newly established broader perspective on education in Europe. This adaptation of its global predecessor, the *International Sport Coaching Framework*, was created to enhance sport coaches’ learning, mobility and employability across the European Union through the provision of a shared reference point and language.

The ***European Sport Coaching Framework*** was developed from October 2014 through June 2017 as part of the CoachLearn project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

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