

Mastery or Mystery? The development of sports coaching expertise

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Some working definitions...

“Expert”

One who has prolonged or intense experience through practice and education in a particular field.”

“Expertise”

“the characteristics, skills and knowledge that distinguish experts from novices.”

Conceptual query...

- Are coaches ‘exceptional people’ within their domain?

(*absolute expertise*)

Kasparov, Mozart, Phelps, Woods, etc

OR

- Are coaches ‘experts’ having journeyed from novice to master?

(*relative expertise*)

Jackson, Belichick, Mourinho, Furniss, etc



Research answer...

- Study ‘exceptional coaches’

(*absolute expertise*)

Wooden, Counsilman, Summitt, Charlesworth ...

OR

- Study the journey of ‘expert coaches’ from novice to master?

(**relative expertise**)

Sutton, Grobler, Robson, Denison ...

Can we learn from the research on athletes?...

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- Are coaches born or made?
- How many years (hrs) to become expert?
- Is any other experience relevant?
- What's a good age for an expert coach?



Where else to turn for insight?...

- Gagne (1965) – learning hierarchies
- Bloom (1968) – mastery learning
- Schon (1983) – reflective practitioner
- Ericsson (1991) – studying expertise
- Eraut (1994) – professional knowledge
- Williams (1995) – declarative knowledge
- Hoffman (1998) – defining expertise
- Schempp (1998) – expert teachers (PE)
- Moon (1999) – reflection in learning
- Ericsson (2004) – expertise in medicine



Experts....

- see things which non-experts do not see.
- respond more rapidly than non-experts.
- have larger response repertoires.
- have more control of complex principles in their field.
- plan differently than non-experts.
- explain their performance differently than non-experts.



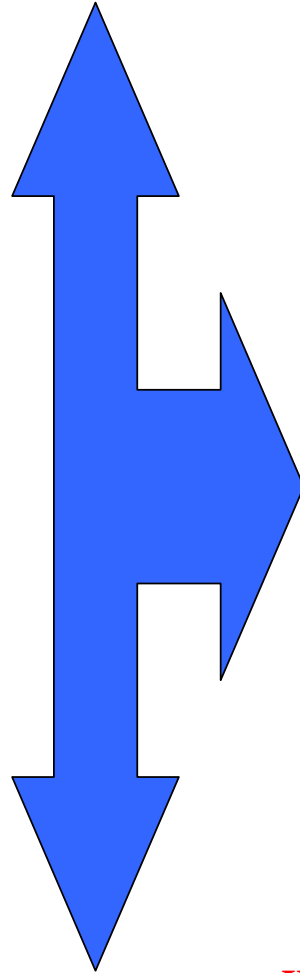
But, coaching is complex, messy and lacking a conceptual framework...

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- In which domain is the expertise being applied/developed?
- What evidence do we have for application of expertise?
- Can we examine capacity for expertise?
- How much expertise is enough?



- Novice?
- Initiate?
- Apprentice?
- Journeyman?
- Expert?
- Master?



Hoffman, R. (1998) How can expertise be defined?: Implications of research from cognitive psychology. In R. Williams, W. Faulkner, & J. Fleck (Eds), *Exploring Expertise* [pp81-100]. New York: Macmillan.

Past experience

Coaching practice

Core qualifications

Specialist qualifications

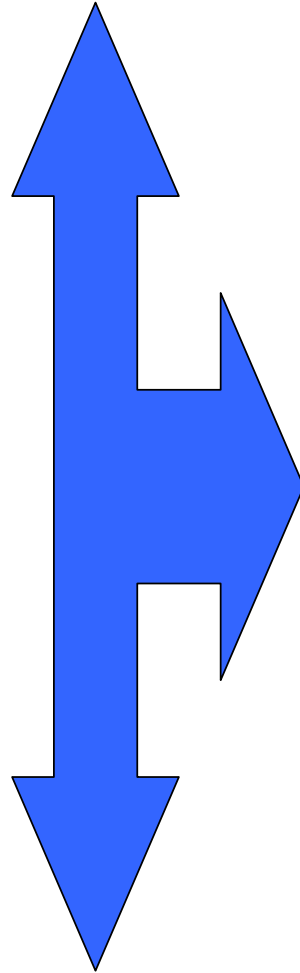
Mentoring

Self-reflection

Training

Generic education

Coach education



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Experts: Recognition-Primed Decision (RPD) Model

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- Metacognition
- Managing uncertainty
- Simulation
- Leverage points
- Declarative knowledge
- Routines
- Mental models
- Associations
- Perceptual skills

**Klein, G.A. (1998). *Sources of Power: How People make decisions.*
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.**



Implications for coach education...

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So what's in this for me?

**“For onto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”
(Matthew 25: 29)**

**“Knowledge is manifested most rigorously by what you can do, not merely what you claim to understand.”
(Dewey, 1935: p114)**

**“No-one who can rise before dawn 360 days a year fails to make his family rich.”
(Chinese proverb)**



Questions?

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