

# **Developing beginner-coaches: Accelerated learning, managing reflective practice, and connectivity of knowledge**

*Phil Crisp*

There are a number of perennial problems facing those within the field of coach development and learning including, but not exhaustive to, how to promote a wide range of understanding, evidence-based knowledge, and effective practice for those new to coaching. These problems can oftentimes be simplified as resource dependent, such as the lack of time, funding, and bespoke support, and thus constrain traditional approaches to developing beginner-coaches (identified as those who have less than three years' experience) (Crisp & Hamblin, 2023). Indeed, a significant influence and limitation is how formal coach learning (qualifications) in foundational, entry level stages can be essentially undertaken over rapid periods of time (days or weekends) and so limit learning. The consensus of literature argues that this type of 'level 1' foundational learning is, whilst helpful, more inconsequential as a significant mediator of effective coaching practice compared to longer lasting interventions, particularly within the recreational and community type contexts. Given this, and the aforementioned resource limitations, novel yet effective manners of mediating coach development outside of formal learning could be especially helpful. This paper outlines three particular insights through which the development of beginner-coaches can be supported, and aggregate a number of papers and studies that the author has undertaken.

The first sits within the field of experiential learning, with an outline of how student-coaches undertaking coaching with people with disabilities may support and accelerate (accelerated learning) their coaching overall. The second is in essence a reinforcement of the benefits of reflective practice, but also a cautionary tale in how it can be 'overthought' and negatively impact those who are

new to it. And the last insight also sits somewhat within this idea of 'overthinking' yet in a complimentary manner, in that it specifically relates to the way in which connections between beginner-coaches' own experience within playing sport can increase confidence, knowledge, and familiarity for their own coaching, as well as inform philosophy and values. Essentially, all of these insights could contribute to the development of beginner-coaches, in particular through the development of skills and practice for the community/recreational/youth contexts outside of formal education. These findings then contribute to our understanding of more informal coach education interventions, and the implications are discussed within this paper.