

# EXAMINING HOW ELITE S&C COACHES DEVELOP COACHING PRACTICE USING REFLECTION STIMULATED BY VIDEO VIGNETTES

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I submit this document as a coaching research abstract fitting the stream of coach developer.

## Introduction

Recent research has suggested that strength and conditioning (S&C) coach developers should consider narrative learning theory as a means to promote holistic coach development (Szedlak, Callary, & Smith, 2018). In particular, reflection can encourage narrative learning by illuminating how and why the coach develops specific behaviours and characteristics, through promoting an internal dialogue of the meaningfulness and relevance of coaching experiences. However, reflection is an internal housekeeping process, limited to what an individual currently knows and how they perceive themselves to be effective (Moon, 2004). To expand a coach's repertoire of reflection, vignettes are useful to disseminate information that could enable S&C coaches to consider new or alternative effective coaching behaviours and characteristics (Szedlak, Smith, Day & Callary, 2018). The purpose of this presentation is to explore how S&C coaches used a video vignette illustrating a holistic coaching approach in a guided reflection process to develop effective coaching practices.

## Methods

Over a four-week period and followed by an interview, eleven elite S&C coaches watched a video vignette at the beginning of each week in which an S&C coach demonstrated holistic coaching approaches. Engaged in daily written reflections in an e-diary regarding their coaching practice, they considered how it aligned (or not) with the content of the vignette. Data was analysed using a narrative analysis of form and structure (Smith, 2010).

## Results

Our results exemplified two narrative types: the performance coach and the helper coach. S&C coaches with a performance narrative reflected on their coaching practice with limited consideration of the athletes' perspective or the vignette. S&C coaches who fit the helper narrative type found that the vignette helped them to consider an athlete-centered coaching approach focusing on the athletes' well-being as well as athletic abilities.

## Discussion and conclusion

Our findings suggest that S&C coaches that fit the helper narrative type developed psychosocial behaviors and characteristics in line with a holistic coaching approach. In contrast, the S&C coaches who fit the performance narrative type engaged in limited learning and focused on what they perceived to be their main goal: developing the athlete physiologically. Practically, S&C coach developers should be aware that S&C coaches have different motives for learning from vignettes, and that some may be more amenable to learning from holistic coaching approaches demonstrated in vignettes, depending on their own values, personal characteristics and behaviors. Thus, not all S&C coaches will benefit in the same ways from vignettes as a means of learning to utilize psychosocial approaches in their coaching practice.

## References

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Presenting author's biography: Chris Szedlak is currently the Lead S&C coach at the University of Southampton and has worked with a variety of different level athletes including Olympic, and World champions for over eleven years. As well as a tutor and assessor for the United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association, the author has recently submitted his PhD thesis at the University of Chichester focusing on examining and developing effective behaviours and characteristics of S&C coaches and their influences on the athlete's development.