

## The Conversation Continues

I recently made some comments about how close my colleagues and I came in 2011-16 to making a useful contribution to Coach and Coaching Development. Here is a sample of some of the ongoing chats.

James Baker (Director at LTAD Network) asked - *"Hi Kelvin, what did the mental component consist of? What did that look like in terms of delivery? The systems I've worked in it's always been one of the more challenging parts to get right."*

Not the best of answers I have ever given but online chats are never easy to navigate –

"This is a limiting vehicle to even attempt to make a cogent reply on the 'Mental/ Behavioural' pillars, but I will give it a go. Think of the progress you want to impart on both the intrinsic and extrinsic journeys of the athlete. Are there opportunities to encourage development and progress in things like perseverance, fortitude, discipline, confidence, self-esteem, and resilience? The actual learning environment and learning journey created by the coach should and must allow development in these factors. If the only tools we have are (a) a list of sports-specific instructions followed by (b) an increase in the volume of the activity then the chances are slim that these traits will receive any stimulation. If we use and manipulate all the tools along the implicit-to-explicit learning continuum that ranges from experimentation, through guided discovery and to rote learning, there will be optimal chances to develop the aforementioned traits. The role of feedback plays a huge part in this development so knowing "when, what, how and how much" will assist in not only the learning of the skill but those other traits as well. I illustrated many of these learning tools in my presentation at IFAC 2021 which I think is available online.

The extrinsic journey is one where we all learn those traits that allow us to make a sound contribution to society as in our social interaction, social standards and lifestyle management. How we react with our fellow learners in pairs or teams in training is a decent example. Once we get to know the athlete as a person away from training, we might get a better picture of these traits and how to optimize their development.

The Mental/Behavioural elements of the courses are offered by way of guiding the coaches to look for and see the opportunity for input as opposed to direct 'reps and sets' of learning typified in the technical and physical pillars. The intrinsic journey will be reflected by how the session is constructed, populated with activity and progression, and optimized by the feedback given. The extrinsic journey is going to be a test of the coach's willingness to optimize the relationship with the athlete outside the direct training environment.

More importantly, the courses (and particularly the more recent versions of them) revolved around the coaches working in many practical, mentored situations where an activity was experienced from a technical, tactical, physical and mental/behavioural point of view. For example, if the activity was one of Throwing then the coaches would be exposed to creating the learning environment for each of the associated pillars. Here the Physical and Technical pillars are often entwined as the general and related movement patterns are learned. Obviously, the event (Shot, Discus, Javelin, Hammer) specific patterns can appear in this part of the journey. While these activities are going on the coaches are then exposed to looking for the opportunity for internal and external behavioural progress to be made. The internal ones are usually covered in all the learning components that are presented while the external ones are often a little more contrived e.g. empathy, sharing, support, but still as important.

I think that all these ramblings point to some very important points. Firstly, if the job is to be done right, it will take a lot longer to carry out. Secondly, we must allow coaches to not only be aware of

these elements but to practice them and be part of a quality control layer of Coaching and Coach Development.

Kelvin B Giles MA CertEd AS

June, 2023

Kbgiles@gmail.com