

## Open-Mindedness, Introspection, Feedback and Mentoring: Their Role in Coaching Expertise Development

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The purpose of this study was to delve into the impact that open-mindedness, introspection, feedback on coaching performance, identification of strengths and weaknesses as a coach and mentoring have on coaching expertise development and to provide recommendations for coaching education initiatives.

Seven elite head coaches were interviewed. A deductive qualitative data analysis was completed to uncover raw themes, sub-categories and categories of each topic of interest. Open-mindedness seems to be an essential characteristic that can be learned.

In sum, an open-minded coach will seek out more learning opportunities than a closed-minded coach and will not be afraid to seek assistance from external sources in the interest of development. Another personal characteristic used to gain expertise is introspection. Coaches use introspection primarily for self-evaluation and to gain self-awareness and use this information to grow. The coaches identified a process whereby they discover what their strengths and weaknesses are via internal and external feedback. They indicated a variety of ways in which they use this feedback to better themselves as coaches. Central to this process is the coach assesses the needs of the athletes and bases their evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses around this. The sources coaches seek and receive feedback on coaching performance from were identified as well as the process the coaches use to analyze and utilize this feedback. Mentoring was discussed from the perspective of the coach being a mentor and being mentored. The coaches have partaken in both informal and formal mentoring situations and identified the challenges they currently face being elite coaches. They have difficulty finding suitable mentors with more experience than them and are typically expected to serve in the mentor role.

We have provided suggestions for potential coaching education initiatives based on the interviewees' responses.

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