

Coach Developer Special Issue: Global Perspectives in Coach Education for the Coach Developer

Bettina Callary
Cape Breton University

Brian Gearity
University of Denver

A sizeable amount of research and theorizing exists on understanding, advocating for, and preparing quality coaches. New work in that vein continues. For example, we, Callary and Gearity ([in press](#)), will publish a seminal textbook on instructional strategies for coach education and development, in which prominent researchers and practitioners share best practices to coach development across programs in higher education, sport organizations, and special populations, with consideration of varying mediums such as face-to-face, online, and hybrid. While generating the idea for that book, we shifted our interpretive lens by focusing on coach developers, the term used by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE, 2014) and throughout the articles in this special issue to describe the varied roles played by personnel who develop coaches.

Now is a time of many firsts—*ISCJ* was the first journal devoted specifically to an international perspective of sport coaching in conjunction with the mission of the ICCE, this special issue is the first for *ISCJ*, and the focus herein on Coach Developers is also a first and reflects growing curiosity in understanding who is developing coaches. The research on and for coach developers is sparse and this special issue leads the way in formulating a consolidated effort by researchers and practitioners to examine coach developers' lived experiences. While sport coaching is undergoing the birth of its own professionalization, so too must we seek to understand coach developers and enhance their preparation. As coach education initiatives continue to become learner-centered, flexible, and co-constructed in nature (Ciampolini, Milistedt, Rynne, Zeilmann Brasil, & Viera do Nascimento, 2019), it becomes increasingly important to ensure that coach developers are knowledgeable in how to develop quality coach learning programs. In other words, if the content of coach education programs is not fixed in advance or directed in its pedagogical approach, but instead is dependent on coaches' knowledge and prior experiences coming into the programs, then we need coach developers who are confident in their expertise of professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge with the ability to facilitate coach learning. There are layers of connection between coach developers, coaches, athletes, families, their communities and others, and the rigor to which we want to have quality coaches demands that we examine these interconnections.

The interest in coach developers is at an all-time high and shows signs of continued growth. We see this in initiatives such as: the ICCE-Nippon Sport Science University's Coach Developer Academy, that has, for the past six years, provided an internationally recognised coach developer learning program; government requirements across many countries for coach developer accreditations; and the sheer number of national governing bodies' coach education programs, university coaching degree programs, and bespoke coaching courses from independent organizations and

businesses. We need to imagine, research, and create new educational structures, systems, and regulations to provide coaches with a well-rounded, holistic, and comprehensive education. It is thus critical to explore the key roles, competences, and standards for coach developers in order to cultivate quality sport coaches.

Herein lie numerous articles that foster an international understanding of coach development systems, elucidating the everyday or normative concerns relating to what, where, when, how, and critically the why, of coach developers' work. We are optimistic about the benefit to readers and the field from the diverse interpretive and critical theoretical approaches taken. Indeed, the very point of a special issue is to broaden our conversation. For example, reflection and how and why to do it will vary across the perspective taken, which is reflected in this special issue. The variety of articles showcase several different contexts and settings, exploring the personal characteristics, knowledge, power, and interactions of coach developers within the larger systems in which they work. Like sport coaches, coach developers and their cultures are not homogenous. We are building our scholarship on coach developers with attention and respect towards varying cultural values, and the intricacies of one's personal life in society. This special issue helps to build a more comprehensive, systematic, and global view.

Upon releasing the call for papers for the special issue, we received inquiries and abstracts from over 55 researchers and practitioners across nine countries. Compared with the typical *ISCJ* issue, we received a greater than average number of "Insights" proposals. As an emerging field, it makes sense that we have coach developers and researchers with important insights to share. Thus, we included a larger number of Insights manuscripts that speak to the vision of coach development. The special issue includes articles from five countries (mostly English-speaking, Western, and developed countries). While this is representative of pockets of coach developer scholarship and practice, we feared that we were privileging and reproducing the practices of select countries at a cost of omitting minority and budding coach development initiatives. Thus, we invited coach developers from nations across the globe to share brief understandings of how they work within their contexts. We are pleased that eight additional perspectives from across all continents are included in the paper "Voices from the Field."

There is much that this special issue accomplished, and yet much to be done. The published original research articles all used qualitative approaches. While we acknowledge benefits of a range of methodologies in research, qualitative methodologies lend themselves particularly well to exploring topics in-depth and garnering deep understandings of coach developers' lived experiences. These research articles, along with the remaining article types (e.g., Best Practices, Insights, and Coaching In), further the scholarly dialogue

on the work of coach developers and subsequently advance our thinking on how coaches learn. We need to be mindful that qualitative approaches, like the coach developers employing them, vary across theoretical lines. Many of the published articles show what it's like to be a coach developer, draw upon existing theoretical and instructional approaches, or critique and extend existing understandings of coach development. Going forward, we need to be bold in our theorizing and not merely use the same lenses to produce the same results. Wouldn't it be something if other fields looked to our work, for example on human learning or creative problem solving, as a sign of our intellectual force? As social and behavioural scholars, the focus of the articles is decidedly on humans and their interactions with others. A chasm still exists between the physical and human sciences; thus, we should seek to ask inter- or trans-disciplinary research or applied questions, and to provide a theoretical understanding that makes sense of diverse forms of knowledge. Whilst juggling our openness and ability to appreciate diverse approaches, we also hope this special issue acts as a springboard to dive into new territory. Going forward, we need scholars and practitioners to take up this risky call for daring scholarship, and we need editors, editorial boards, and reviewers to encourage and develop this work.

As is the case with special issues, the collective efforts of many made this vision a reality. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the steadfast contributors who worked diligently for months upon years to submit, revise, and craft well-informed articles. And a special thank you to the many reviewers and to Wade Gilbert, Editor-in-Chief of *ISCJ*, for their insight and constructive feedback. On behalf of the village who helped produce it, we're pleased to present to you this special issue on Coach Developers!

Author Biographies

Bettina Callary is a Canada research chair in sport coaching and adult learning, and an associate professor in sport and physical activity leadership at Cape Breton University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her research interests are in coach development and coaching adult (masters) athletes. She is an associate editor for *ISCJ*. She is also co-editor for the upcoming book *Coach Education and Development in Sport: Instructional Strategies*.

Brian Gearity is director and assistant professor of the master of arts in sport coaching program at the University of Denver. Along with Dr. Bettina Callary, he is co-editor of the upcoming edited book *Coach Education and Development in Sport: Instructional Strategies*. His research focuses on the sociology and psychology of sport and strength and conditioning coaching.

References

- Callary, B., & Gearity, B. (Eds.). (in press). *Coach education and development in sport: Instructional strategies*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Ciampolini, V., Milistetd, M., Rynne, S.B., Zeilmann Brasil, V., & Viera do Nascimento, J. (2019). Research review on coaches' perceptions regarding the teaching strategies experienced in coach education programs. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *14*(2), 216–228. doi:[10.1177/1747954119833597](https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954119833597)
- International Council for Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, & Leeds Beckett University. (2014). *International coach developer framework (version 1.1)*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.