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Using the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals to Teach Citizenship in Youth Soccer

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share recommendations from youth sport coaches and administrators on using the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs) for teaching citizenship through youth sport. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with coaches and administrators from one region of the American Youth Soccer Organization. Although only one of the 14 participants was aware of the UN MDGs, every one of them was able to provide at least some specific recommendations for integrating citizenship into youth soccer. Opportunities and challenges for integrating citizenship into coach education programs are discussed based on the results of the present study and related literature on teaching life skills through sport.

KEYWORDS: coaching strategies, coach education, life skills



Using the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals to Teach Citizenship in Youth Soccer

Youth sport has long been viewed as a prime venue for teaching not only sport skills, but the full range of transferable life skills. It is through guided social interaction in a fun and physically active environment that countless opportunities arise for teaching critical citizenship skills such as cooperation, ethical behavior, empathy, and conflict resolution. For example, in a recent study of 154 youth sport coaches across five sports (basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, volleyball) the coaches strongly agreed that athletes learn citizenship skills through their youth sport experience, and helping athletes develop these types of life skills was most often rated as the top coaching objective (Gould, Chung, Smith, & White, 2006). Much has been written of late on the potential of youth sport for teaching citizenship skills, referred to in the positive youth development literature as 'developmental assets' (Benson, 2007; Weiss, 2008) and in the coaching literature as 'life skills' (Gould & Carson, 2008). In an effort to formally recognize the importance of citizenship development through sport, the most recent edition of the National Standards for Sport Coaches (NSSC) (NASPE, 2006) was revised to include a philosophy and ethics domain with an emphasis on modeling and teaching positive values and responsible behavior.

Despite good intentions by the majority of youth sport coaches, athletes, and their parents, recent research shows that all too often the development of citizenship skills is still lacking (Josephson Institute, 2007; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005). Even after decades of comprehensive coach education programs (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) and extensive research on youth sport coaching (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a), there still remains a significant gap between what is espoused in coach education programs, youth sport organizations' mission statements and what is actually happening on the playing fields across America. For example, the National Federation of State High School Associations (2006) explicitly states in their mission that interscholastic sport will 'support good citizenship,' yet examples of research studies documenting how youth sport coaches actually teach citizenship skills are rare (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2006; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). Furthermore, a recent study of youth sport stakeholders' awareness of their organization's mission statement found that only half of the coaches, few parents, and no athletes were knowledgeable about the program's mission statement (Camiré, Werthner, & Trudel, 2009). Administrators simply assumed coaches would know about the mission statement, and therefore be in a position to design learning environments that were consistent with a focus on whole person development.

Although research explicitly on citizenship in sport is rare, there is a substantial body of research on related concepts such as life skills (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Danish, Fazio, Nellen, & Owens, 2002; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1990; Gould & Carson, 2008; Gould, Collins et al. 2006, 2007; McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000). Several programs and models have emanated from this body of work. Perhaps one of the most extensive lines of intervention research in this area is the work of Danish and colleagues, who have developed and tested numerous life skills programs such as The Life Development Intervention Program (LDIP), Athletes Coaching Teens (ACT) program, Success 101 course, and the Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation (SUPER) program (Danish et al. 1990; Danish et al. 2002). The primary goal of all these programs is to help



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youth athletes understand the connection between success as an athlete and success as a person. Sport simply becomes a metaphor for enhancing competence and development, not an end in itself. A critical feature of the SUPER program is the creation of 'educational pyramids,' whereby peers teach each other. The role of the peer teachers is to teach younger student-athletes sport skills, self-improvement skills, and life skills. They have conducted numerous studies on the efficacy of SUPER and have evidence to support its ability to help nurture life skills in adolescents, typically between the ages of 10-16 years (Danish et al. 2002).

More recently, Gould and colleagues (Gould, Collins, et al. 2006; Gould et al. 2007) developed a working model for coaching life skills based both on the findings of their own research and reviews of literature on this topic. The working model comprises four interrelated components: (a) philosophical foundations, (b) coach-player relationships, (c) specific life skill development strategies, and (d) environmental consideration and resource utilization. Their research with award-winning high school football coaches shows that teaching life skills to youth sport participants is a constant process that must be integrated into the day-to-day coaching activities (Gould, Collins et al. 2006; Gould et al. 2007). Coaches with strong philosophical foundations about the role of youth sport as a medium for developing transferrable life skills pay careful attention to building strong coach-player relationships within the constraints of their particular setting. Some examples of specific strategies provided by the coaches in the Gould et al. (2007) study include scheduling a weekly team unity night, connecting current players to former players who can share how football lessons transferred to their career and family lives, and regularly discussing current events in the local and national media that provided 'teachable moments' related to a wide range of life skills. Life skills are sometimes subsumed within the broader context of youth developmental assets (Gould & Carson, 2008), and share many of the same characteristics as citizenship skills (engagement, connection, responsibility, empathy, etc.). However, there does not appear to be any sport-specific studies that have explicitly used citizenship as a conceptual framework.

Recognizing both the importance of using sport to teach citizenship skills, and the lack of resources invested into providing coaches with the skills needed to integrate these lessons into their coaching practices, several global initiatives were recently launched to stimulate the development of pedagogical materials for teaching citizenship through sport. One such example occurred in late 2006 when an expert panel was convened at the United Nations in New York City to discuss and exchange proposals on pedagogical tools for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through Sport and Physical Education Training (MDG World Center of Excellence, n.d.). Experts were invited from all regions of the world, representing the education, corporate, non-profit, and non-governmental organization sectors. The MDGs are the world's quantified targets for dramatically reducing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, exclusion, lack of infrastructure and shelter – while promoting gender equality, education, health, and environmental sustainability (see Appendix A). They are also basic human rights – the rights of each person to health, education, shelter, and security. Most of the goals and targets were set to be achieved by the year 2015 on the basis of the global situation during the 1990s. Sport and physical education have been recognized for the significant role they can play in achieving the MDGs. For example, The MDGs were prominently featured when the United Nations designated 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005).



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The common link between the life skills through sport literature, National Association for Sport and Physical Education's (NASPE) National Standards for Sport Coaches and the United Nation's MDGs sport initiatives is an awareness of the important role that sport can play in developing citizenship competencies. Citizenship typically is defined as comprising three components: civic-related knowledge, cognitive and participative skills – sometimes referred to as civic skills, and core civic dispositions (Education Commission of the States and the National Center for Learning and Citizenship, 2006). These three components are equally important and interconnected, and provide the foundation for becoming an engaged citizen – someone who might be described as an effective change agent in their community. No youth sport or coaching research has specifically examined the possibility of using the UN MDGs as a framework for teaching citizenship in sport settings. The purpose of the present article is to describe coaching and administrative strategies for using the UN MDGs as a framework for teaching citizenship through youth sport. Actual strategies, as well as recommended strategies and perceptions of feasibility, are based on the results of a pilot study in a youth soccer setting. The present study and its focus on citizenship is best viewed as a complement to the line of applied research on teaching life skills through sport (Danish et al. 2002; Gould, Chung, et al. 2006; Gould, Collins, et al. 2006; McCallister et al. 2000).

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with coaches and administrators in one region of the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) in Central California. The AYSO is a nationwide youth sport organization with more than 50,000 teams and over 650,000 youth sport participants (AYSO, 2009a). Soccer was selected because research has shown it is among the most popular and fastest growing team sports for youth in America (Ewing & Seefeldt, 2002).

Participants

A criterion sampling strategy based on reputational case selection was used to identify and recruit participants in the present study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The pilot study was discussed with an administrator in the AYSO region, who then recommended coaches he believed were most likely to be integrating citizenship-type learning experiences into their youth soccer coaching. It was important to identify and recruit coaches who were considered most likely to be teaching citizenship skills. Fourteen coaches (10 male and 4 female) agreed to participate in the pilot study (see Table 1). The mean years of coaching youth sport for the participants was 10.3 (*Range* = 3-14 years). Eight participants also served as either board members or administrators in the AYSO region (*M* = 4.0 years experience). All participants were registered AYSO volunteer coaches who had completed and passed the Criminal Background Check Policy, the Safe Haven course, and the Basic Coaching Course (AYSO, 2009c). All participants signed informed consent forms, and the project protocol was approved by a university human subjects committee.



Procedures

The semi-structured interviews lasted, on average, 45 minutes (range = 20 – 60 minutes). Each interview followed the same protocol, which included two sections. The first section focused on the participant's involvement in AYSO. The results from this section of the interviews are not directly related to the current article and hence are not reported here. The second section of the interview guide focused on the participant's familiarity with the UN MDG's, actual and recommended strategies for addressing the UN MDG's through youth sport, and feasibility of implementing these strategies in youth soccer. Specifically, the interview questions for which results are reported in the present article were:

1. Are you familiar with the United Nation Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs)?
 - a. If coaches were not familiar with the UN MDGs, they were provided with an overview of the UN MDGs.
2. Can you think of ways you currently address any of the MDGs through soccer?
3. How can the UN MDGs be addressed through youth soccer?

Data Analysis

Based on a review of common methods for analyzing qualitative interview data (Creswell, 1998; Gratton & Jones, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994), the following six-step analysis process was used. First, all interviews were transcribed verbatim resulting in 69 pages of single-spaced interview data. Second, each interview transcript was read in its entirety and analytic memos were noted in the margins of the transcripts. The analytic memos contained notes about how well each statement corresponded to one of the eight UN MDGs. In this sense, the eight UN MDGs represented a provisional start list of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The third step in the analysis involved reviewing the initial coding with a colleague with expertise in qualitative data analysis and youth sport research. This form of peer review was used to address the reliability of the analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following the peer review, the transcript statements were coded into one of the eight UN MDG categories. This fourth step of the analysis was completed by creating separate Word processing files for each of the eight UN MDGs and copying and pasting data from the interview transcripts. Although the use of qualitative data analysis software programs is commonplace now, it was decided to use a manual analysis process in the present study given the relatively small amount of data and the fairly deductive coding process. This decision is consistent with recommendations in the qualitative data analysis literature (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Once all of the manual coding was completed, each of the coding files was reviewed separately by the first author and the peer reviewer (step 5). In the sixth and final step of the data analysis, two data summary tables were prepared – one for coaching strategies and one for administration strategies – in which a conclusion was written summarizing the findings for each of the eight UN MDG categories (see Tables 2 and 3). This type of data summary table is advocated in the qualitative data analysis literature and is sometimes referred to as a proposition matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994).



Results

Although only one of the 14 participants was aware of the UN MDGs, every one of them was able to provide at least some specific recommendations for integrating citizenship into youth soccer. For example, one coach suggested designating a 'goal of the week' during the season with corner flags or posters up on game days, reminding teams of the MDGs. Despite sharing their citizenship strategies, several of the participants did share concerns that others may perceive these recommendations as a 'burden' that is outside their primary role as a youth soccer coach. In the remainder of this section of the article, a summary of suggested coaching and administrative strategies for how to use the UN MDGs as a framework for teaching citizenship through soccer is presented.

MDG One: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The coaches noted that in this particular soccer region it is not uncommon for children to arrive at practices and games without having had a healthy meal. One coach stated that she always brings extra snacks to her practices and a large water jug for her players whose parents are not able to adequately provide for their own children. She also suggested a possible 'meal ticket' program run by those who directed the snack bar. Many AYSO programs offer scholarships and sponsorships for families who cannot afford registration fees. Families are able to apply as needed, thus allowing for those in lower income brackets to participate in sports. Sponsorship programs are also beneficial. Sponsorships allow for families to fund registration and equipment costs for those who are in need. One coach suggested that for children on scholarship, donations could be solicited from local grocery stores which would enable children to receive a snack after games.

Another coach explained that he started each season by encouraging parents to exchange cleats and used equipment among teammates. Children often are only able to wear their equipment for one season, due to rapid growth, yet the equipment is still usable. By switching equipment among siblings and other teammates, families are able to reduce the financial burden of having their children participate in youth soccer.

One coach also raised the issue of how to draw low-income families into the youth soccer experience. This coach suggested that leagues present non-English registration forms and have bilingual registrars. Those who do not speak English are often unaware of registration deadlines and are unable to sign their children up for sports because of this barrier. The coach strongly believed in using youth soccer to teach children citizenship skills as a way to help low income children cope with adverse living conditions:

We need to send people out to communicate to the parents. They need to advertise in Spanish. I definitely think we are not tapping into the kids we have. A lot of kids struggle and [sports] builds their confidence and they do better in school. Why wouldn't we want them in [sports]? Society would be improving on this generation of kids.



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MDG Two: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Ten coaches stated that they were very aware of the need to continually reinforce the importance of completing school. The coaches limited the length of practices in order to enable their athletes to have ample time for schoolwork. Many of the coaches ended their practices by reminding their players of the importance of completing that day's homework assignments. One coach went as far as holding designated 'homework practices.' In these practices players bring their schoolwork and they do not get to participate in the soccer activities until they have completed a certain number of pages of homework. Another coach mentioned how he teaches his athletes about the concept of continual learning, whether on the field or in school:

I talk to the kids all of the time about doing homework, and I will encourage them to go home and do their homework and I will talk to them about how soccer is a microcosm of life in general and how what they learn in soccer, they can take and apply to other areas in life.

MDG Three: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Four coaches reported that they regularly organized scrimmages against opposite gender teams throughout the season. They believed that not only did it provide for fun diversion from typical practice and game situations, but it also provided important opportunities to teach children to respect the opposite gender and that both genders are able to be strong players. Coaches noted that most players were happy to play with and against opposite gender teams. Coaches also indicated that this strategy indirectly increased access for females in sport because it allows for stronger social integration and helps build confidence while overcoming prejudices.

Four coaches also reported that there is an under-representation of the number of female referees and coaches in the region (and sport in general) in comparison to male referees and coaches. They suggested trying to recruit senior female players to coach and referee younger players. They believed this strategy would lead to increased female involvement in soccer once female athletes stop playing the sport.

MDGs Four, Five and Six: Reduce Child Mortality/ Improve Maternal Health / Combat Diseases

For the purpose of this paper, goals four, five and six were combined. The coaches and administrators did not differentiate between the three goals during the interviews, as each of the three goals relate to an improvement in health and an awareness of disease prevention and control. Three coaches stressed the importance of sport in being able to remove children from gang associated activities because sport is able to teach self-worth and the importance of being on a team. Another coach actively encouraged parental involvement at practices. He believed that both players and parents alike found this to be a fun experience, and it also showed children the importance of remaining active as an adult. Three coaches also discussed how they encouraged parents to offer healthy snacks (oranges, bananas, water and fruit based drinks) as a way to teach the importance of being health conscious. One coach suggested that all coaches, or the league administration, should distribute pamphlets that explain the necessity of staying hydrated, eating properly, and remaining physically active even when the season is over.



Although diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria are not as rampant in the United States as in some other parts of the world, the coaches still believed that it is important to teach blood safety to youth sport participants. One coach suggested that it would be easy to hold a 'shoot-out-a-thon' or hold a weekend event where for each point scored, parents would drop change into a bucket. The money raised could go to a local organization or help combat diseases.

MDG Seven: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Ten coaches reported that they instruct their teams to clean up after practices. However, one coach provided a specific example of how a parent on the team implemented a trash program. Each child was asked to pick up two pieces of trash after every game before receiving a snack. The coach believed that a simple strategy like this implemented across a league could result in thousands of pieces of trash being picked up each weekend. Another suggestion was to have coaches carry two trash sacks, one for recyclables and one for trash. These coaches believed that sporting facilities should require that both recycle and trash cans be readily available. They noted that not only is recycling good for the environment, but it could also be used as a fundraiser when bottles and cans are returned for cash value.

Another strategy coaches suggested for preserving the environment, and to save money, was to encourage carpooling for practices and games. Two also noted that administrators could decrease gas usage by placing children on teams by school district so parents are not forced to drive extensive distances for practices. This would enable coaches to hold practices which are centrally located for teammates. One administrator also discussed the importance of educating coaches and parents about environmental factors that could be dangerous to children. For example, coaches need to be aware of bad air days, extreme heat, and what to do with players who suffer from asthma. One final idea suggested by two administrators, who are also coaches, for preserving the environment is to decrease the amount of pre-packaged snacks and throw-away material. For example, coaches could suggest that after-game snacks not be individually wrapped, but instead offer fruits and vegetables, which are not only healthier, but also decrease the amount of trash. Also, coaches could encourage parents to supply their children with refillable bottles instead of bottled water.

MDG Eight: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Goal Eight acknowledges that in order for the first seven goals to be achieved, it is critical that partnerships be developed. The coaches thought of numerous things that could be done through youth soccer to help establish partnerships among local communities, other organizations, and overseas communities. For example, five coaches suggested that on the last day of the season, uniform drop-off boxes should be available. Most families with athletes probably own several year's worth of uniforms and old equipment, which could readily be put to use as league uniforms for other communities or for those in other countries. In addition to a uniform drop-off day, one coach suggested implementing an 'old equipment' drop-off day. Many retired coaches own equipment that could be cleaned up and used again. Another coach proposed holding a canned food competition where



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teams try to bring the most canned food items for a local homeless shelter or rescue mission. Yet another coach suggested using one of his practices to hold a clinic in a poorer region of town for those who are not involved in league play.

This particular AYSO region has implemented an adoption program where they have partnered larger cities with smaller communities. Through financial help and mentoring, the larger regions are able to aid the smaller regions. Financially speaking, they have teamed together in ordering uniforms to increase buying power. Finally, one of the coaches was involved in a program called People to People, which allows athletes to improve upon their leadership skills, develop a connection to other cultures and also to do a service learning project (People to People Sports Ambassador Programs, 2008). Her team adopted Hopewell High School, a public school in Kenya, where they sent their old uniforms and equipment.

Discussion

This is the first such study to directly examine citizenship and the UN MDGs in a youth sport setting, and as such can help contribute to the research on citizenship and character development through sport (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Gould et al. 2007; Gould & Carson, 2008; Lacroix, Camiré, & Trudel, 2008). However, the present research is limited and is best viewed as a small-scale exploratory project that can be used to inform future research on this topic. Future studies on teaching citizenship through sport would benefit from a more rigorous research design that uses a mixed-method protocol to simultaneously collect data from different types of sport stakeholders (athletes, coaches, parents, officials) and multiple methods of data collection. For example, data obtained from interviews or questionnaires with sport participants could be tested against actual behaviors by also using systematic observation instruments or even field notes based on direct observation (Gould & Carson, 2008). Furthermore, strategies for teaching citizenship could certainly be better understood by including data from across different types of sports and different age groups (Gould & Carson, 2008). Finally, a more desirable sampling protocol for future studies would distinguish between effective and less-effective youth sport coaches, similar to the approach used in the Gould and colleagues (2007) study on coaching life skills in youth sport. This approach would provide a better understanding of how effective youth sport coaches teach citizenship in particular youth sport settings.

While acknowledging the limitations of the present study, the results do contribute to the related literature on teaching life skills through sport. First, coaches in the present study, despite an average of 10.3 years of youth sport coaching experience and participation in a highly structured and well-established youth sport organization (e.g., AYSO), could provide relatively few specific examples of strategies they use to teach citizenship skills through sport. This finding is consistent with a recent study of high school coaches, all of whom believed sport should be used to teach positive youth development outcomes, yet few of them could actually provide specific examples from their own coaching of how to do this (Lacroix et al. 2008). Although consistent with other research, this finding is somewhat surprising in the present study given that the AYSO vision is to enrich children's lives through soccer, and good sportsmanship is one of the six pillars of their organizational philosophy (AYSO, 2009b).



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Consistent with results from other studies on citizenship type skills (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Gould, Chung, et al. 2006; Lacroix et al. 2008; Trudel et al. 2007), it appears that youth sport coaches appreciate the value of learning citizenship skills through sport but they may not be willing to give up practice time to teach these skills. Therefore, lack of appreciation for citizenship skills may not be the reason for the gap between the recommended objectives for youth sport and actual coaching practice. Gould and colleagues' (Gould, Chung, et al. 2006; Gould et al. 2007) research with award-winning high school football coaches shows that for citizenship skills to be learned through sport participation, coaches must integrate specific strategies into their daily routines. In this sense, it is not an issue of 'finding time' to teach citizenship skills. Rather, it becomes an issue of educating coaches on how to adapt their philosophical foundations to ones that include citizenship as a primary focus of the sport experience, along with sport skill development. Perhaps coach education programs could provide coaches with real examples from other coaches of how to re-structure their practices and youth sport settings so that citizenship skills are seamlessly integrated into the youth sport experience, and not viewed as an extra responsibility (see Tables 2 and 3 for examples). This is not the first call for such an approach as similar suggestions have been proposed in the growing body of research on the related topics of positive youth development and life skills (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Gould & Carson, 2008; Gould et al. 2007; Trudel et al. 2007).

Citizenship skills, as a critical sub-set of developmental assets, are consistent with the athlete-centered coaching approach espoused in the literature and our national standards (NASPE, 2006). Yet, youth sports in general received a failing grade of 'D' on the recent national report card on youth sports for its effectiveness at providing an athlete-centered coaching approach (Citizenship Through Sports Alliance, 2005). Increased coach education and certification has repeatedly been cited as a strategy for resolving this failure. However, with the current emphasis on coach certification (NASPE 2008; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) and the push towards mandating coach certification programs across the country, perhaps too much emphasis is being placed on 'certification for all' and not enough consideration is given to 'certification effectiveness'. Unfortunately program evaluation is a complex, and costly, endeavor that has largely been neglected (Lyle, 2002; McCullick, Schempp, Mason, Foo, Vickers, & Connolly, 2009; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006; Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, in press). The sparse research on the topic of coach education effectiveness shows that the quality of the coach education instructor is paramount to perceptions of program quality (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; McCullick, Belcher, & Schempp, 2005; McCullick et al. 2009). At this point published examples of how coach educators are trained and assessed are absent from the literature. Research and critical discussions on training and assessment for the individuals who deliver coach education courses is needed to extend our collective efforts to improve the impact – both real and perceived – of the coach education experience.

Taken collectively, the evidence suggests that despite the inclusion of citizenship type outcomes in mission statements, national standards, and coaching literature, coach education programs are not effective at teaching coaches how to integrate citizenship experiences into their teaching. This conclusion is supported in recent research by Trudel and colleagues (2007) who interviewed youth baseball and ice hockey coaches. They found that all coaches believed that sport contributes to the development of athlete character and positive values.



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However, although all coaches had completed formal coach education courses, none of them believed that their coach education experiences impacted how they view or teach character. All of the coaches believed that their willingness and ability to teach character and positive values through sport was wholly a function of their own personal value system and experiences. This also is consistent with other recent research showing that youth sport coaches will teach citizenship related skills if they are consistent with their philosophical foundations (Gould et al. 2007), sometimes also referred to as role frames (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). If this is a common sentiment among youth sport coaches, what role can coach education play in teaching coaches about their role in teaching citizenship skills to their athletes? It seems, then, that coach education initiatives may enhance their impact if increased focus is placed on helping coaches understand and clarify their coaching philosophies. This approach will require coaches to reflect, individually and in small groups, on why and how they coach.

Based on a review of coaching and education literature, Gilbert and Trudel (2006) suggested six strategies for integrating reflection into coach education, in the form of a reflective practicum. First, coaches should be provided a clear description of reflective practice. It seems inappropriate to ask coaches to reflect if we don't first share with them what reflection means. Sharing types, models, and examples of reflection would be helpful here. Second, once coaches have a basic understanding of reflection and a reflective practitioner, time could be allocated in coach education courses to have coaches reflect on typical coaching issues, or coaching scenarios. This is sometimes referred to as a 'critical task-based' or 'problem-based learning' approach (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009). A third strategy moves coaches from reflecting on hypothetical issues to reflecting on issues specific to their own coaching contexts. During a coach education course coaches could be asked to identify and deconstruct a coaching issue with which they have or are currently struggling to resolve. Either on their own or in small groups coaches would then be guided through the process of crafting strategies for addressing these coaching issues. Coaches may even be required to submit a written report on the issue and ideas for how to resolve it. A fourth type of reflection strategy would require coaches to practice guided reflection in the field. This strategy would require more resources, but examples of field-based guided reflection interventions include the lines of work by Frank Smoll and Ronald Smith (Smoll & Smith, 1980, 2010; Sousa, Smith, & Smoll, 2008) and Pierre Trudel and colleagues (Trudel, Gilbert, & Tochon, 2001). In both of these examples researchers teach coaches how to become more aware of their own behaviors and make positive behavioral changes to their coaching practice. The fifth strategy for integrating reflection into coach education requires connecting coaches with mentors. There is evidence that mentoring can be beneficial to developing coaches, although the quality of the mentoring experience is not always helpful and mentoring can require significant resource investment (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Nash, 2003). Perhaps the sixth strategy – increasing regular access to peers – is a more feasible way to facilitate coach networking and reflection. The creation of learning communities provides a specific example of how to increase access to coaching peers and improve self-reflection skills (Gilbert, Gallimore, & Trudel, 2009). For example, in their review of the teaching and coaching literature related to learning communities (e.g., learning teams, communities of practice), Gilbert and colleagues discussed strategies specific to five recommendations for creating effective learning communities in sport: (a) reduce the turnover frequency of at least some of the adult leaders in youth sport settings to facilitate systematic and continuous learning, (b) small 'job-teams' of coaches who coach in the same setting – for example, the same sport and competitive level, (c) published learning community protocols that guide action but do not



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prescribe 'how' to coach, (d) trained peer facilitators, and (e) commitment to working on learning goals until there are tangible gains in athlete learning.

Summary

Key areas for future research that have been expressed in the literature, and are reinforced based on the findings of the present study, are the need for (a) longitudinal studies that assess the transfer of life skills learned in sport settings, (b) the development of valid sport-specific assessment tools, and (c) context-specific case studies (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Gould & Carson, 2008). The present study may be considered a small-scale example of the latter, with the results providing a glimpse into how coaches and administrators in one particular youth sport setting view and teach citizenship. The common theme across all of the related research is that coaches must be proactive in teaching citizenship skills – sport participation alone leads neither to the development nor to the transfer of these critical skills. This clearly is an opportune time for coach education to provide direction for helping sport coaches think and teach from a more holistic perspective than is currently found in many youth sport settings. The models for teaching life skills through sport provided by Gould and colleagues (2007; 2008) are examples of frameworks that may prove useful in the design and evaluation of coach education.



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Table 1: Participant Demographic Profiles

Gender	Experience as Youth Sport Coach (years)	Experience as Soccer Administrator (years)
M	13	4
M	11	6
M	5	0
F	3	1
F	7	0
M	11	2
F	13	4
M	14	8
F	14	2
M	3	0
M	13	0
M	12	5
M	15	0
M	10	0
<i>10 males; 4 females</i>		<i>M = 10.3</i>
		<i>M = 4</i>



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Table 2: UN MDGs Coaching Strategies

UN MDG	Soccer Strategies
Poverty & Hunger	Bring extra snacks to events when parents are unable to provide Encourage parents to exchange cleats and soccer gear
Education	Schedule practices with consideration of school demands Designate regular “homework practices”
Gender Equality	Scrimmage opposite gender teams
Child Mortality	Use soccer as a platform for promoting health and making wise choices (e.g., avoid gang involvement) Frame soccer as a safe zone for children
Diseases	Teach children blood safety
Environment	Have athletes collect two pieces of trash before and after games Recycle cans and bottles Be aware of asthma, heat, and poor air days No individually wrapped snacks
Developing Partnerships	Donate team jerseys Offer a team-run clinic



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Table 3: UN MDGs Administrative Strategies

Goal	Strategies
Poverty & Hunger	<p>Provide registration fees and sponsorships</p> <p>Create meal program & food donations</p> <p>Create non-English registration forms</p>
Education	<p>Designate regular “homework practices”</p> <p>Percentage of registration fees allocated toward college scholarships</p>
Gender Equality	<p>Create co-ed leagues to promote social interaction</p> <p>Recruit female players as referees and coaches</p>
Child Mortality	<p>Promote sport & physical activity as a lifelong activity</p> <p>Promote healthy snacks</p> <p>Reinforce sports as an outlet for troubled kids</p> <p>Promote parental involvement at practices and games</p>
Diseases	<p>Use soccer as a platform to raise awareness</p> <p>Create VIP programs for special needs children</p>
Environment	<p>Provide trash and recycle bins at soccer facilities</p> <p>Encourage carpooling</p> <p>Use refillable bottles instead of throw-away cups</p> <p>Educate coaches about local environmental issues that impact soccer</p>
Developing Partnerships	<p>Hold uniform drop-off last day of season</p> <p>Organize canned food drives to help local organizations</p> <p>Create ‘adopt a region’ programs</p> <p>Send equipment and uniforms to programs in need (People to People)</p>



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Appendix A

UN MDGs (http://www.un.org/sport2005/a_year/mill_goals.html)

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Providing development opportunities will help fight poverty. The sports industry, as well as the organization of large sports events, create opportunities for employment. Sport provides life skills essential for a productive life in society.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Sport and physical education are an essential element of quality education. They promote positive values and skills which have a quick but lasting impact on young people. Sports activities and physical education generally make school more attractive and improve attendance.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Increasing access for women and girls to physical education and sport helps them build confidence and a stronger social integration. Involving girls into sport activities alongside with boys can help overcome prejudice that often contribute to social vulnerability of women and girls in a given society.

Goals 4 & 5: Reduce child mortality and improve maternal health

Sport can be an effective means to provide women with a healthy lifestyle as well as to convey important messages as these goals are often related to empowerment of women and access to education.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases

Sport can help reach out to otherwise difficult to reach populations and provide positive role-models delivering prevention messages. Sport, through its inclusiveness and mostly informal structure, can effectively assist in overcoming prejudice, stigma and discrimination by favoring improved social integration.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Sport is ideal to raise awareness about the need to preserve the environment. The interdependency between the regular practice of outdoor sports and the protection of the environment are obvious for all to realize.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Sport offers endless opportunities for innovative partnerships for development and can be used as a tool to build and foster partnerships between developed and developing nations to work towards achieving the millennium development goals. Goal 8 acknowledges that in order for poor countries to achieve the first seven goals, it is absolutely critical that rich countries deliver on their end of the bargain with more and more effective aid, sustainable debt relief and fairer trade rules for poor countries – well in advance of 2015.

