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## The process of coaching: An examination of authenticity

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THE PROCESS OF COACHING: AN EXAMINATION OF AUTHENTICITY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the

**Doctor of Philosophy in Sports Education Leadership**  
**Department of Sports Education Leadership**  
**College of Education**

**Graduate College**  
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## THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Coaching Process: An Investigation of Authenticity**

by

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The primary purpose of this project was to approach the complexity of coaching by embracing the tensions inherently found in the coaching process. In doing so, the goal was to develop a grounded theory that describes the process interscholastic team coaches' use in doing their job from a paradoxical perspective. While working to achieve that goal, the coaching process was described using language that is meaningful for practicing coaches. In addition, the nature a coaching philosophy plays in the decision-making process for coaches was also probed. The goals of this study were developed because of coaching science's failure to adequately describe the link between the inner (antecedent) and outer (behavioral) aspects of the coaching self. Said simply, researchers have failed to effectively describe what it means to coach authentically—the notion of a thoughtful practitioner (Rink, 1997). The research design included a grounded theory methodology following the traditions of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998). Participation in the study was limited to interscholastic “team sport” coaches with a minimum of five years head coaching experience. Eight coaches representing the sports of football, soccer, volleyball, and basketball were participating in the study at the time of theoretical saturation.

The theory developed because of this study highlights the paradoxical qualities of the coaching process, and is comprised of six components: (a) Personal History, (b) The Coaching Belief Triad, (c) Focus, (d) Coaching Action, and (e) Success Outcomes, (f) Tradition. The six components form a framework described in the paper as The Authentic Coaching Model. The six elements are held together by three foundational paradoxes; the paradox of authenticity, paradox of purpose, and the pendulum paradox. These three invisible forces weave through the framework creating a sense of wholeness—authentic coaching. The paradox of authenticity runs through the framework and explains how the coaches bind together the inner and outer coaching self. Most important to the notion of authenticity is the alignment between beliefs and behavior. The paradox of purpose describes the complexities coaches must traverse across the athletic environment in order to achieve success. In essence, the paradox explains why it is so difficult for coaches to get what they desire. The pendulum paradox utilizes the metaphor of a swing to help explain how authentic coaches move around the coaching process. The pendulum effect utilizes the paradoxical energy of past vs. future, inner vs. outer, beliefs vs. action, to swing back and forth gaining speed and power with each oscillation.

The present study demonstrated that the coaching process for interscholastic team coaches is inherently paradoxical—embroiled in tensions, complexity, and reinforcing cycles at its very core. Despite recognizing that the theory presented in this paper is substantive in nature, and only investigated interscholastic team sport coaches, there is high confidence that by utilizing the methodological techniques established throughout this study, it is possible to investigate other competitive contexts as well as different sport

contexts. This study demonstrated that although no two coaches are exactly alike, coaches do have commonly occurring attributes that allow researchers to classify and compare them. Continuing to investigate the commonalities among coaches, researchers can aid athletic coaching education (ACE) by describing the coaching process from a paradoxical perspective, which allows the coaching process to be viewed as an integrated whole functioning within a dynamic environment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals who have supported me during my search for authenticity. Regretfully, space limits my statement to those individuals who have made a special contribution to this project. For all who have helped shape me into the man, father, husband, teacher, friend, and coach I am today, my heart overflows with gratitude. Before proceeding, I wish to acknowledge the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the department of Sports Education Leadership for the opportunity to learn and grow.

To be a high school coach is to touch the future. My gratitude toward the coaches in this project cannot be expressed in words. You are all truly authentic. Because several of the coaches wished their identities remained private, they will not be named. That said, your passion for helping young men and women is obvious and commendable. I thank you; I am forever in your debt.

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Each member of my dissertation committee has contributed to my professional growth in many ways other than serving as committee members. Although Dr. Nancy Lough, Dr. LeAnn Putney, and Dr. Jerry Landwer all provided tremendously insightful suggestions to improve my dissertation, their non-committee assistance helped me the most. Dr. Lough, your drive and professionalism was an inspiration throughout my doctoral studies. Dr. Putney, despite serving as an outside committee member, your vibrant attitude and creative insight will forever remain in my heart. For certain, without Dr. Landwer's wisdom, support, and guidance I would not be preparing to receive my third degree from UNLV, the institution you helped to build. Sir, you are a true School Master.

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Although I am satisfied with the work I have done, I realize my quest is only beginning. I would like to close by citing a number of quotes that hang above my desk. These words helped to ground me during my quest for authenticity, and I hope will continue to ground me for many more adventures to come:

Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. (Goethe)

Enlightenment must come little by little—otherwise it would overwhelm. (Shah)

What is most obvious may be most worthy of analysis. (L. L. Whyte)

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.

(Thoreau)

Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers. (Voltaire)

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. (Einstein)

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

(G. B. Shaw)

I faced it all and stood tall; and did it My Way. (Sinatra)

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Dedicated to  
Annie  
Only You, Always

I Coach High School

Awaken, the blazing desire for success rises slowly  
Commute, enough coffee to diagram both job and passion  
Toil, six hours of routine broken only by moments of muse  
Practice begins  
Frustration sets in  
Joy, flashes of blithe but enough to remind of past glory and future hopes  
Home, meal and soothing shower then sleep  
Rhythm, Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and usually  
Saturday according to the same – the path is followed with ease  
But one day the “why not” arises, and everything begins in a new journey  
tinged with amazement

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Born to Coach

I was born to coach. The audacity and boldness of such a highly personalized statement may seem utterly out of place at the beginning of a project as important as this. Richly steeped in scholarly tradition, a dissertation is meant to be written in the conservative voice of science, a research report devoid of human emotion and self-reflection (Krizek, 1998). Nevertheless, and with all due respect to the traditions of the academic world, coaching *is* personal. For me, coaching has shaped who I am, coaching will forever be a part of what I am to become.

I was meant to coach because I came from coaches. Some of my earliest memories are watching my father instruct a group of little leaguers on how to track down a fly ball, or listening to my uncles' debate the virtues of man-to-man defense. I was born to coach in the same way countless generations of fathers, mothers, mentors, and teachers have passed down the love of what they do to countless sons, daughters, and students.

Coaching is passed from generation to generation through the passion to compete, through the love of sport, through a desire to connect the past with the future. For me, the thing that united all of those passions, especially the connection of past and future, was to follow my father's example— to coach.

Now, I stand at the nexus between two worlds; the academic and the practitioner, between theory and practice. My current position as an interscholastic teacher and coach by day and doctoral student studying sport pedagogy by night may not be a unique arrangement, but it does put me in a somewhat unusual position.

From my stance, having one foot squarely planted in each world, it has become possible to consider how each world affects the other. Like Cushion (2001), who found himself in a similar position during the writing of his dissertation, two aspects of coaching science have become apparent to me, and have gone on to influence my goals as both an evolving researcher and as a practicing coach. First, is the incredible volume of information about coaching (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a; McCullick, Schempp, Mason, Foo, Vickers, & Connolly, 2009). Second, is the personal passion and commitment to their work that both practicing coaches and coaching researchers' possess.

What has crystallized throughout my doctoral program is the realization that the products produced by both coaches and researchers alike, are directly connected to the passion they bring to their jobs. The passion is palatable, genuine, and contagious. If recognized and appreciated, that passion can be a unifying denominator for the field in general.

Gilbert (2007) recognized this passion while discussing the disconnect between scientific inquiry and coaching actions, he argued that the disconnect goes beyond just theory and practice to include the individuals that create the theory and practice. He pointed out the lack of alliance between coaches and researchers, with researchers shamelessly treating coaches as "others to be studied", instead of collaborators in the search for understanding (p. 418).

Again, as an inhabitant of both worlds, I agree with Gilbert's (2007) view, working with practitioners as active collaborators in "telling the story" of coaching is vital to the success of the field (p. 418). While recognizing it as an idealistic perspective, my goal as

a coach-researcher is to add but one small piece to the bridge that someday may help join theory and practice. Coaching is personal.

### Project Focus

Alfred Schutz (1954), credited for bridging sociological and phenomenological methodologies, which greatly influenced social science for the next half century, said, “The primary goal of the social sciences is to obtain organized knowledge of social reality” (p. 261). The goal of this project is to follow in that tradition, and utilize a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to organize a representation of the complex reality interscholastic coaches’ face on a daily basis.

Every coach, admittedly or not, is in search of the “holy grail” (Mallett, 2007, p. 419). The silver bullet that allows them to combine the elements of coaching into something that makes sense—that works for them. Researchers are no different. Despite the considerable amount of time, energy, and resources put toward the search for the holy grail of coaching, the unlinked gap remains (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b; Jones & Wallace, 2005). It is arguable that because no clear consensus about the nature of coaching exists, it has led to an absence of definitive concepts and principles reflective of the coaching process and effective practice within it (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006).

Some researchers believe the way forward for coaching science is to become more myopic. In essence, viewing the coaching process as an either/or social environment—either fundamentally stable or continuously changing. For example, it has been suggested that the coaching process is “chaos” (Bowes & Jones, 2006), “opportunistic improvisations” (Cushion, 2007), even a “hydra-headed monster” (LeUnes, 2007). A

series of trial and error endeavors incapable of ever being fully captured, and forever beyond our ability to tame. At the opposite extreme, the process of coaching has been described as “episodes” (Lyle, 2002), “constructs” (Horn, 2002, 2008), and “variables” (Brewer, 2007). This other perspective views coaching as many pieces of a grand puzzle which if strung together properly form a yet understood wholeness.

This, at times extreme, disconnect between researchers when describing the process of coaching is amplified when comparing the perceptions between practicing coaches and scholars. For example, the legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden would never describe coaching as a hydra-headed monster. For Coach Wooden, “coaching is love” (Wooden & Tobin, 1988, p. 60). In an attempt to describe his perspective of success and coaching, Coach Wooden created his now famous Pyramid of Success. The terms Coach Wooden included in his model included: sincerity, adaptability, resourcefulness, patience, integrity, and faith.

Addressing these perceptual disconnects between coaches and researchers should be an immediate goal for coaching science. The task for coaching theorist is “to better illustrate the coaching process in terms of remaining true to its dynamic, complex, messy reality, while presenting it in an accessible format so that coaches know where and how such information can fit into what they do” (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 84).

It is my hope, this dissertation will lead to better insight concerning the why’s and how’s of the coaching process. Beyond the why’s and how’s, a concentrated effort is made to better understand coaches on a more personal level. How do the elements of selfhood form, or deform, allowing a coach to relate to athletes, sport, team, and world?

There is a need for coaching science to turn attention to the connection between the inner and outer self of coaches—a coach’s philosophy.

The fundamental goal of this project is to approach the complexity of coaching by embracing the tensions inherently found in the process, as opposed to fighting the “hydra-headed monster”. To be more specific, the purpose is to explore and describe the process interscholastic team coaches’ use in doing their job. While striving to fulfill the overarching purpose of this project a number of sub-goals are also important:

- Describe the coaching process using language that is meaningful for practicing coaches
- Explaining how different coaches maneuver through the process of coaching
- Probe the paradoxical nature a coaching philosophy plays in the decision-making process for coaches

### Embracing Contrast

My life as both a coach and as an evolving researcher has been a wonderful journey of contrast. Both research and coaching is a collaboration of joy and sorrow, understanding and bewilderment, action and reflection, past and future. In fact, at the very heart of competitive athletics is both winning and losing. To borrow a line from one of my educational heroes Parker Palmer (2007), “In certain circumstances, truth is found not by splitting the world into either-ors but by embracing it as *both-and*” (p. 65, italics original). For me, the world of coaching can be viewed as one of those circumstances.

Jones and Wallace (2005) described in their aptly titled study, “Another Bad Day at the Training Ground: Coping with Ambiguity in the Coaching Context”, both coaching

and coaching research demand a sense of humbleness. Humbleness is one key factor that allows a coach to embrace contrast—join tensions. Like so many others, I experienced the humbleness coaching requires very early in my coaching career. It came after a particularly bad day at the training ground.

An old and wise football coach explained to me, when you are so frustrated that your blood pressure rises to the point you see stars, you realize then the limit to your power as a coach. It is in those moments of ambiguity—seeing stars—the enemy seems everywhere: in the athletes not executing the skills you spent countless hours drilling, in the cruel bounce of the ball, or in the inner anguish of hours, days, even years spent away from family and your own children. In those moments, humbleness and humility is demanded.

Coaching is a complex, multifaceted, and socially intricate endeavor. For a researcher or coach to think in terms of complete understanding about a process as complex as coaching, not only is that naïve but also dangerous (Cushion, 2007; Gilbert, 2007). Some have gone so far as to claim coaching science will never get a firm grip on either the coaching process or its practitioners (LeUnes, 2007). Thus, it would be arrogant and extremely naïve for me to even suggest that I have the ability to comprehend fully the process of coaching. This project is a qualitative first step toward understanding.

### Elements of Athletics

At the most basic level, there are three essentials to the interscholastic athletic process: sport, athletes, and the coach. As I will illustrate in my literature review, the first two have received the bulk of scientific inquiry. The third essential has received only

superficial investigation to date. This is especially true at the interscholastic level when compared to youth and elite coaches. If a goal of coaching science is to provide information that will facilitate coach development (Gilbert, 2007), which in turn provide *coaches* the ability to navigate the complex act of coaching, it is the tension between these three essential elements that must be traversed.

Sport provides the context for the process, and has a unique power all to itself. Each particular sporting context offers lessons to be learned, opportunities to interact with a world beyond our ultimate control. Sport has been described as a microcosm of life (Eitzen, 2005), and at the interscholastic level allows participants the opportunity to experience the drama future lives may hold.

The specific lessons a sport illuminates obviously depends on the competitive intensity placed on the game. The developmental focus of youth sport is very different from the winner-take-all approach for elite athletics (Cote & Gilbert, 2009). Interscholastic sport seems to fall somewhere in the middle.

The evidence is clear, most coaches have spent a large part of their lives participating in the sport they later decided to coach (Gilbert, Cote, & Mallett, 2006). For many coaches, like myself, there is devotion for the games we grew up playing. Sport drew us in to its power, shedding light on our unique talents, and ultimately allowing us to shine as leaders. However, having devotion toward a sport does not exclude an individual from the frustrations involved with teaching it to others. As I said, sport has a power all to itself. The large collection of books, videos, and magazines found on every coach's bookshelf, is testament to the complexity of the sporting context. Despite the personal experiences of playing, and the devotion to continued professional development,



complete understanding of a particular sport's essence, spirit, and strategy may be beyond any coach.

The second essential element of the interscholastic athletic process is the participants in the sport—athletes. Athletics, at any level, is a social action system constructed by a multitude of people who utilize the sporting context as arenas to achieve both individual and collective goals. The giants of coaching science Chelladurai (1978, 1990), Smoll and Smith (1989), Lyle (1999, 2002) have all recognized the importance and independence athletes exert on the process of athletics.

The current trend in coaching education programs is to highlight the role the coach plays in the physical, emotional, and social development of the athlete (NASPE 2006, 2008). Unfortunately, what many coaches take away from the countless theories and leadership training techniques—all presented as the latest and greatest method to work with athletes in a clearer more whole manner—is the apparent need to be psychologist, physician, counselor, biomechanics expert, parent, philosopher, and businessperson all wrapped into one. For many coaches this task seems daunting at best and impossible at worst.

If understanding the athletic process was merely a matter of gaining knowledge about a sport and appreciating athletes, there may be hope for coaches learning how to orchestrate their way through the swampy terrain of their job (Cushion, 2007; Mallett, 2007). Coaches could try to keep up with the evolving strategies and tactics of their sport through continued professional development, at the same time, learn more leadership techniques to stay ahead of the athletes' physical and mental development. However,

there is a third, often overlooked, element that adds to the complexity of athletics.

Athletics is also about the coach.

Interscholastic athletics involves the sporting context being projected through the coach and ultimately understood by the athlete. This idea of action going through coaches, has given rise to the notion of an inner and outer coach, or what Horn (2002, 2008) called antecedent (inner) thought and behavioral (outer) coaching action.

I was exposed to this idea of an inner/outer coaching self as an undergraduate during my student-teaching practicum at a local high school. As a twenty-one year old full of bravado, majoring in physical education but aspiring to be a *real coach*, I went and found the varsity football coach. I asked, with the humbleness of a grizzly bear, if he needed me to help with the freshman football team. After Coach Block looked me over, he said the first words I would hear as a coach, “If that is what *you* want to do, ok with me. Some advice... keep it simple, be yourself, and they will play for you”.

Those words began for me a journey through the world of coaching that has brought me to this question: how does someone coach authentically? Plato may have said it best; *the first and best victory is to conquer self*. Keep it simple and be yourself seems like uncomplicated advice, the only thing I know for sure from my twenty-plus year journey as a coach is... a lot easier said than done, Coach Block.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Bus Ride Home

Feeling the jerk of motion as the wheels pull away from the curb, sliding deeper into the green vinyl high-back seats, the bus ride home is a unique constant for interscholastic coaches. Be it either a shield from defeat or a haven to rejoice victory, the bus itself acts as a cocoon. Just as a cocoon is an intermediate between two worlds, the bus ride home allows for the joining of opposites. Like many coaches, I use the ride home to bring into focus the failures and successes of the past with the hopes and realities of the future. The bus ride home is the middle passage between two points, when the past becomes the future. Every coach has these moments of reflection when thoughts lead to action, when choices become verdict. As a researcher, I hope to utilize this chapter in much the same way. This chapter will serve as a bridge between the coaching science research that has influenced and guided my doctoral studies, and the questions this project ultimately addresses.

What follows is not so much a critique of coaching literature, as it is a reframing of the perspectives in which it was first presented. My argument is this: coaching science is a diverse and divided discipline that studies tensions central to the paradoxical nature of athletics, in which questions of the coaching process arise. These tensions are both ontological, i.e., tensions inherent to athletics, and epistemological, i.e., tensions inherent in the ways we construct knowledge about athletics. These tensions can, do, and should spill into particular aspects within the coaching process. Therefore, the most fundamental

contribution coaching science can make lies in establishing a space for coaches, a philosophical space that takes paradox seriously and avoids its simplistic resolution.

The complex nature of athletics requires scientific perspectives that allow coaches to join the powers of *both sport and athletes*. Cassidy (2007) has suggested that coaching science would benefit from looking at how those working in the “parent disciplines” have dealt with the complexity of practice and process (p. 426). The parent disciplines for much of coaching science include; pedagogy (Nash & Collins, 2006), psychology (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999), sociology (Jones, 2006), and organization/leadership theory (Kellett, 1999).

All of these broader fields have begun to incorporate both methodologies and perspectives that embrace the notion of paradox. If coaching science hopes to continue the advances it has made in the past 30 years (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a), it too must embrace the paradoxes of coaching.

### Defining Paradox

A paradox denotes contradictory yet inter-related elements, components that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing together (Lewis, 2000). Most often expressed as a pairing, paradoxes describe two opposing claims or forces, though threesomes—the mysteries inherent to theology, the complexities associated in a *ménage-a-trio*—can serve as paradoxical expressions as well (Proctor, 1998). Typically, there are three forms of paradox: the general, rhetorical, and the logical.

In most situations, “paradox” is an umbrella term. The general usage of the term points toward an interesting and thought-provoking contradiction, something that grabs

our attention, a puzzle needing a solution (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). The notion of athletics—a combination of three independent yet connected forces of sport, athletes, and the coach—introduced in the previous chapter is an example of the general usage of the term paradox.

While studying management theories Marshall Poole and Andrew Van De Ven (1989) suggested the term *social paradoxes* to describe a subset of paradoxical analysis that involves the interaction between individuals, groups, and context. This idea lends itself well to the inquiry of coaches, athletes, and sport.

In rhetorical studies, a paradox causes the audience to question set beliefs or forces a re-thinking of pre-existing assumptions. For example, “I can resist anything except temptation”, this statement appears contradictory on the surface, yet evokes a truth nonetheless. Coaches utilize this rhetorical technique when they use expressions like, “there is no I in team”, “the best offense is a good defense”, and “no pain no gain”. These examples may seem trivial and insignificant, but the point remains, rhetorical paradoxes can expose tensions inherent to athletics and force us to question our beliefs.

When used to examine logic, paradoxes serve a much narrower purpose. A paradox leads an audience toward two (or more) contrary propositions using apparently sound arguments for both. Viewed singularly each proposition is incontestable, but taken together they seem inconsistent or incompatible. One of the most famous paradoxes of logic, first studied by philosophers around 400 B.C., is the Liar’s Paradox (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). The simplest version of the liar’s paradox is, “I always lie”. How is this statement to be understood? The statement appears true and false, believable and

unbelievable. The dilemma of the liar's paradox is that the statement shows how common beliefs about truth and falsity can actually lead to a contradiction.

Another example of a logical paradox is Chelladurai's (1978) description of coaching behavior as either autocratic or democratic. Viewed separately these descriptors make perfect sense and have helped countless researchers analyze the coaching context. On the other hand, how should the notion of a coach's style be understood? Is coaching style an either-or binary concept? Palmer (2007) points out, the problem is compounded by the fact that this either-or mode of knowing has become common in nearly every area of science, "even though it misleads and betrays us when applied to the perennial problems of being human that lie beyond the reach of logic" (p. 65).

Most coaches view their reality, and their behavior within that reality, as both autocratic and democratic. Would it serve coaching science better to think of coaching style not as true or false, but rather as a profound truth of joined opposites? Again turning to Palmer, "in certain circumstances, truth is a paradoxical joining of apparent opposites, and if we want to know that truth, we must learn to embrace those opposites as one" (p. 65).

The three types of paradox (general, rhetorical, logical) provide opportunities to discover different assumptions about our world. Paradoxes can help shift perspectives, identify problems, and focus inquiry in fundamentally different ways. This in turn, forces scientist and practitioners to re-examine the questions of "why" and "how".

Over twenty years ago, with an emphasis in organizational and leadership theory, Cameron and Quinn (1988) claimed by exploring paradoxes researchers might move beyond oversimplified and polarized notions to recognize the complexity, diversity, and

ambiguity of a social world. Hargreaves (1995) argued true reform in education would only come through critically examining paradoxes found among schools, teaching, and teachers. I argue that same time has come for coaching science.

### Working with Paradoxes

This section outlines four methods for working with paradoxes. The methods frame a review of past literature, and set the stage for describing the specific methodologies this project utilized while investigating the coaching process. The framework presented below is adapted from work by Poole and Van De Ven (1989), which they claim represent a “logically exhaustive set of relationships opposing terms can take in the social world” (p. 565).

Viewed in simplest form, the following examples are the four methods for working with social paradoxes. (1) A and B can be separated and their contrasts appreciated. (2) A and B can be situated at different levels or locations in the social world. (3) A and B can be separated temporally. (4) The development of a new perspective can eliminate the opposition between A and B. The terms that I use to reference each method follow respectively: (1) assimilation, (2) spatial separation, (3) temporal separation, and (4) production.

### Four Methods to Address Paradox

#### *Assimilation: Accepting and Using Paradox*

The first method for working with a paradox is to accept the tensions and use the paradox to further theory development. This does not mean complexity is ignored. Rather, paradoxes can stimulate understanding, debate, and/or theory justification.

Researchers can utilize paradoxical assimilation by either active or passive means. An example of active assimilation is seen in Lyle's (1999, 2002) mega model of coaching. Toward the passive end of the spectrum is Horn's (2002, 2008) working model of the coaching effectiveness.

#### Coaching process diagram—Lyle (2002)

In a conscience manner, Lyle (1999, 2002) set out to identify a model of coaching that embraced the wholeness of the process. He actively decided to include complexity in his model after criticizing others for viewing coaching through very limited perspectives. Lyle (1999) argued that others were paying too much attention to the instructional role of coaches, and he thought researchers should “embrace the entirety of the coaching process” (p.14). In his attempt to rectify the problem, Lyle created a model of coaching that included over forty distinctive elements, describing fifteen of the elements as essential “building blocks or starter concepts” (Lyle, 1999, p.20). The model did acknowledge external constraints and recognize the coaching process as a cyclical series of interpersonal relationships that are subject to contextual factors. However, the sheer size of the schematic, in terms of elements and the number of relationships between elements, have caused some to question the usefulness of the model (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004).

Without debating the merits of Lyle's schematic, it is important to recognize, he attempted to work with paradoxical dilemmas by actively assimilating them into his theory. One of the first dilemmas he discussed specifically was the cost vs. benefit tension coaches must balance while doing their job. Lyle (1999) said, “given the sheer volume of data management implied by systematic practice, the coach has to weigh up



the cost-benefit of very detailed regulation of the process against time spent on other direct intervention strategies” (p. 21). In essence, he acknowledged the paradox coaches face in deciding which parts of the coaching process to focus their attention on. Lyle’s solution to this, and other paradoxes, is to describe the coaching process as a self-regulating system. By taking this stance, he furthers the assimilation paradigm by implying that the coaching process itself assimilates paradox.

Working model of coaching effectiveness—Horn (2008)

A more passive approach to assimilating paradox can be seen in Horn’s (2002, 2008) working model of coaching effectiveness. Horn (2008) describes the basis of her model as the interweaving of three foundational theories of coaching. These foundational models include those proposed by Chelladurai (1978, 1990), Smoll and Smith (1989), and Mageau and Vallerand (2003). While explaining the conceptual underpinning of her model, Horn (2002) provided a list of seven other theories that, “*may* inform our research on coaching effectiveness” (p. 312, emphasis added).

Horn (2008) describes her model as a comprehensive outline for the antecedent factors that affect or determine coaches’ behavior, as well as, the way in which a coach’s behavior can affect the performance and growth of athletes. Therefore, Horn acknowledges a fundamental paradox of the coaching process, which is, the connection between the inner thoughts (antecedent) and outer actions (behavioral) of a coach. Horn explains this paradox in a much more implicit manner than the Lyle example mentioned previously. The terminology Horn uses to illustrate the working model is much broader and encompassing. For example, Horn applies terms such as organizational climate, personal characteristics, and socio-cultural context to describe very large aspects of a

coach's antecedent thought. She goes on to explain that coaches' behavior *may be* mediated by factors broadly defined as coaches' expectancies, values, beliefs, and goals. How these rather abstract elements interact, and the necessity of these elements in the overall process, she leaves for the reader to decide.

### Summary

A great deal can be learned when contradictory propositions and theoretical tensions, which appear incompatible, are brought together. It is true, theories that investigate the coaching process attempt to capture a multifaceted reality with an internally consistent statement, but it is also true, by nature, theories are incomplete. A good theory is a limited *and* precise picture (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). Theories do not attempt to cover everything and would fail to meet the parsimony criterion if they did. Researchers should work toward cognitive consistency, but recognizing that paradoxes do exist, is also important. Through active or passive assimilation of paradoxes, researchers make us aware of inconsistencies and allow others to study the forces between opposing elements.

However, the assimilation of paradox has a cost. Assimilating paradox allows researchers to dig in their heels on opposing sides of a particular theoretical tension. The result of this is often specialized versions of theories that at best hinder the recognition of relationships, and at worst, can retard the connection between theory and practice.

It may not be easy to accept a paradox, but it is often a positive step in the evolution of a field. The most notable example is the nature vs. nurture paradox in the study of human development (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). When researchers acknowledge theories need not be completely consistent, then seemingly opposing viewpoints can inform one another. "Models are, after all, just models, incapable of fully capturing the buzzing,

booming confusion, no matter how strongly logical arrogance tries to convince theorist otherwise” (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989, p. 566).

### *Spatial Separation: Clarifying Levels of Analysis*

The second method for working with paradoxes involves illuminating the different levels of connection. Examples of level distinctions can include part-whole, micro-macro, or individual-society. Researchers utilizing this approach of analysis attempt to specify, as precisely as possible, how the elements they have identified interact and interrelate with each other. A well-known example of this approach is Chelladurai’s (1978, 1990) Multidimensional Model of Leadership, which led to the development of the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

#### Multidimensional model of leadership—Chelladurai (1990)

When investigating social phenomena, it is never easy to weed through inter-level relationships. This is especially true when the area of inquiry is as vast as the world of athletics. The multiple context in which athletics can be viewed (e.g., team sports, individual sports, elite, developmental, recreational), as well as, the different outcome measures involved with athletics (e.g., win/loss records, player satisfaction, years coaching) makes investigating the structural elements of athletics very difficult. Chelladurai and colleagues have provided a sound overview of coaches’ interaction with both athletes and the sporting context itself.

Viewing Chelladurai’s work from a paradoxical perspective, it becomes apparent the fundamental tension the Multidimensional Model of Leadership addresses is the question of *needs vs. wants*. Chelladurai (1990) explains that coaching effectiveness is a function of three interacting aspects of leader behavior. He defines the three aspects as *actual*,

*preferred*, and *required*. In essence, the situational context determines the *required* (needed) behaviors which directly influence the *actual* behaviors the coach exhibits as well as the behaviors the athletes *prefers* (want) to see exhibited. The basic premise of the Multidimensional Model is that in order to obtain positive outcomes, including group performance and athlete satisfaction, congruence must exist between the three levels of leader behavior.

Chelladurai's theory has proved to be a seminal contribution to coaching science (Horn, 2008), however, difficulties are inherent when building any multi-level theory. For example, because it was originally designed from a scale that assessed managers in a business context, some authors have questioned if the Multidimensional Model of Leadership accurately represents what coaches do (Cote, Yardley, Hay, Sedgwick, & Baker, 1999). Particularly, it has been shown that coaches' behavior plays a very important role in competition (Cote, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b) and in organization (Cote, & Salmela, 1996), which neither are addressed by the Multidimensional Model of Leadership or the LSS instrument (Cote, et al., 1999).

### Summary

Spatial separation of the forces involved in a social phenomenon help to provide valuable reference points. However, the Multidimensional Model of Leadership reiterates the notion mentioned in the previous section; inherent complexity of any social process guarantees that theories cannot provide complete representations. If a theory focuses on a particular reference level, gaps in the theory will inevitably be exposed. Chelladurai's model focused on the interaction of coaches' behavior with athletes and the sporting environment in general terms. Researchers now acknowledge the need to

investigate the interaction between coaches' behavior and different reference levels such as team vs. individual sports, competition levels, male vs. female coaches, and specific sports (Baker, Yardley, & Cote, 2003; Zhang, Jenson, & Mann, 1997).

In an effort to fill theoretical gaps, future research efforts associated with a spatial separation approach must investigate the reference levels not addressed by the initial theory (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). Through the continual pushing of theories toward broader levels of analysis, coaching science can help practitioners determine not only level distinction, but also spatial separation of paradoxical explanations. For example, Explanation A might hold true for macro levels of sport, while Explanation B is true for micro levels of sport. Baker et al. (2003) provide a more specific example; significant differences do exist between team sports and individual sports in the way coaching behavior influences players' satisfaction. Studies that further define spatial separation have, and should continue to have, a major impact on the practical application of coaching theory.

#### *Temporal Separation: Taking Time into Account*

Investigating the role of time is a third way of working with paradoxes. Several types of temporal relationships exist. A) One side of a paradox can set the stage under which the other side operates, as in Horn's (2008) formulation of effective coaching, in which behavioral antecedents set the stage for coaching action. B) One side of a paradox may create the necessary conditions for the other side to exist. An example of this type relationship is Gilbert and Trudel's (2001, 2006) interpretation of the reflective process, in which issue setting is the precipitating event for strategy development. C) There may also be mutual influence over time with each paradoxical force swinging to the forefront

of control, as in d'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier, & Durand (2001) description of the coaching process, in which they described a sequencing of action involving both coaches and athletes working together. After reviewing Horn's (2002, 2008) working model of coaching effectiveness in the Assimilation Section, the remainder of this section will focus on reflection (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001) and the coach-athlete course of action model (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 2001) respectively.

#### Process of reflection—Gilbert and Trudel (2001)

Over the past two decades, the notion that coaches are reflective practitioners has gained considerable popularity (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009). Much of the research into coaches' reflective practice can be attributed to Wade Gilbert and Pierre Trudel (2001, 2004b, 2005, and 2006). Reflection is the process that mediates experience and knowledge and, according to Schon (1983), is therefore at the heart of all experienced-based learning theories. Gilbert and Trudel (2001) used Schon's theory of reflection to explain how coaches solve problems through a reflective conversation. A repeating spiral of problem recognition, strategy generation, experimentation, and evaluation characterize a reflective conversation. A coach identified dilemma or problem triggers this iterative conversation, and influences the way a coach views his/her professional roles, referred to as a role frame (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004).

Gilbert and Trudel (2001) used a temporal orientation to help differentiate three types of reflection: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and retrospective reflection-on-action. In essence, a coach initiates the reflective conversation based on the temporal separation of action. If the coach reflects while the identified dilemma is still occurring and the outcome is still uncertain, it is considered in-action. However, coaches often

initiate reflection outside the immediate action, but still within the opportunity to affect future action; this refers to reflection-on-action. For example, while driving home after a game the coach considers physical conditioning as the cause for a player's poor performance, the coach can attempt to remedy the dilemma before the next game. Retrospective reflection refers to a reflective conversation that occurs outside the action-present, and therefore cannot affect the situation. This type of reflection is when a coach reflects after the season has ended.

As described above, the reflective process deals with how and when practitioners concentrate about their past as a way of influencing future experiences. From a paradoxical perspective, the reflection deals with the transitions between the past and the future. In effect, describing a link between thinking and action. Indeed, reflecting on one's practice is not an easy or quick exercise (Cassidy et al., 2009). Cassidy and colleagues have highlighted several concerns with regard to the process of reflection including, the possibility of over analyzing a dilemma and consequently losing the flow of the intended action. Another issue relates to under analyzing an issue, which may lead to action based on convenience. Some coaches "begin to value unproblematic knowledge preservation, then uncertainties become a threat or an admission of weakness, and therefore something to be avoided" (Cassidy et al., 2009, p. 22).

#### Course of action model—d'Arripe-Longueville et al. (2001)

A group of researchers led by Jacques Saury has used a different type of temporal separation to investigate the process of coaching. In particular, d'Arripe-Longueville et al. (2001) used an ergonomic research approach to study the sequencing of actions between a coach and a group of elite archery athletes. The ergonomic approach

employed by Saury and colleagues (e.g., d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 2001; Saury & Durand, 1998) incorporates a temporal perspective in two ways. First, these studies sequence the actions of participants into a collective course of action as the parties work together in a sport setting. In effect, describing how the paradoxical elements of coach and athlete alternate actions back and forth, as they move toward greater levels of efficiency. Secondly, the methodology of ergonomic research itself implies that “cognition must be studied *in situ* and that the points of view of actors have to be considered” (p. 277).

### Summary

Temporal separation can be a useful way of uncovering interesting tensions within a social phenomenon. Essentially, temporal separation considers the proverbial *chicken or the egg debate*, which has been around since before Aristotle. By theorizing a temporal order, researchers can look for anomalies, points in time when the theory does not seem to fit.

In most temporal models, action is easier to portray than thought. This is true simply because action is easier to observe than an individual's motives and tacit level beliefs. Consequently, these types of theories tend to reflect a bias for action (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). However, as the research on reflection (Gilbert and Trudel, 2001) has shown, if transition points between paradoxical tensions such as past vs. future are embraced, a great deal can be added to our understanding of the coaching process.

### *Production: Introduce New Assumptions to Resolve the Paradox*

Working with paradoxes by either temporal separation or level distinctions leaves both sides of the paradox intact. Essentially, separating the opposing elements determines the



paradox and, at the same time, specifies how one force influences the other. However, it is also possible that the paradox stems from a conceptual limitation or flaw in theory (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). The fourth and final method for working with a paradox, production, overcomes these limitations by constructing new assumptions or describing a novel perspective for the dilemma in question.

Many authors can surely attest, developing a wholly new conception of a paradoxical relationship is not easy. When perspectives radically shift subsequent approval by colleagues, not to mention issues related to funding and support (Gilbert, 2007), are hard-won battles. The new theoretical conception may appear to oversimplify some paradoxical tensions or ignore issues that originally gave rise to the previous positions. These risks are the price theorists pay for theoretical advance (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989).

Theories that have approached the complexities of coaching from a production perspective include; structured improvisation (Cushion, 2001; Cushion et al., 2006), socially skilled leadership (Kellett, 1999), and orchestration theory (Jones & Wallace, 2005). From the above list, the Robyn Jones and Mike Wallace theory of orchestration is the most developed and vividly illustrates the production method of working with paradoxes.

#### Orchestration theory—Jones and Wallace (2005)

Robyn Jones and colleagues (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002) has been at the forefront of bringing a sociological slant to the coaching science landscape. Using an orchestration metaphor, Jones and Wallace (2005) provide an alternative to the rationalistic assumptions on which dominant

conceptions of the coaching process rest. After highlighting the complex nature of coaching, they argue that the traditional view of the coaching process as a knowable sequence of events in which a coach is presumed to have command over, is unrealistic.

Orchestration theory recognizes a fundamental paradox that always exists when goals are set in a social system; universally accepted organizational goals must co-exist with individual actors, and, these actors nevertheless possess sufficient agency to choose their own goals. Add to this the fact that goals, both individually and collective, can change as the environment evolves, and the complex nature of coaching only increases. This complexity of official goals vs. individual desires tends to generate difficulties in unifying any team behind a cohesive and fully shared strategy (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Viewing coaches as orchestrators acknowledges that the coaching process offers only modest possibilities for control, comprehension, and expression because of so many competing goals. In their model, Jones and Wallace (2005) stress the need for coaches to accept the social constraints inherent to the job, and focus on learning how to “cope with relative uncontrollability, incomprehensibility, contradictory values and novelty as normal parts of everyday coaching life” (p. 128). Orchestration is more about flexibility and unobtrusive engagement with athletes, than rigidity and control. “It [orchestration] operates as much by channeling athletes’ agency through encouragement and incentives as by delimiting their agency through sanctions” (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 129).

### Summary

Work by Jones and colleagues (Cassidy et al., 2009) provides an alternative view of coaching, away from the traditional bio-scientific, product-orientated discourse, and toward a view that accounts for the social, cultural, and pedagogical aspects of coaching.

In its very boldness, the production method of paradox resolution brings with it unknown and uncertain entailments. If there is limited elaboration and/or insufficient empirical follow through, the new interpretation will face a dangerous and difficult acceptance. Presenting a partially produced explanation will only lead to a further divide between theory and practice.

However, approaching paradox from a production perspective can add to the synthesis of ideas. Using this approach can uncover paradoxes that may have gone unnoticed as a field struggles with inherent tensions. Theoretical tensions, once characterized, can establish criteria for explaining new typologies and taxonomies (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). Conscious comparisons of existing theories can stimulate the production of new ideas and perspectives, and with any luck, produce an energy that thrust both researcher and practitioner forward.

## The Paradox of Self

### The Need to Consider Coaches' Beliefs

I mentioned in the introductory chapter that of the three fundamental elements of athletics—sport, athletes, and the coach—science has neglected *the coach* most often. What I meant by that statement is researchers have failed to describe adequately the link between the inner and outer aspects of what it is to be a coach. Said another way, researchers have failed to effectively describe what it means to coach authentically. According to Rink (1993), authenticity refers to the level of consciousness and participation with which an individual experiences an event—the notion of a thoughtful

practitioner. An authentic experience deals with a person's ability to connect their past, their present and their future into a wholeness of action.

As Rink (1993) points out, it is sometimes easier to understand authenticity in terms of what it is not. A child cutting out a turkey from a given line drawing is not an authentic art experience. Authentic artists bring a sense of themselves, an internalized view of purpose and self, to their art. In coaching, an authentic experience would involve the coach first recognizing the boundaries of an incident, and after taking in a great deal of information about the context, the participants, and their own self-beliefs, would then deliberate that information for the best plan of action.

Pajares (1992) explains that the connection between an individual's internalized beliefs and their outward behavior is a major thrust to human beings' earliest philosophical contemplations. In a general sense, researchers have now learned enough about specific types of self-beliefs to make their exploration feasible, and useful, in coaching science.

For example, Feltz and colleagues (1999) conception of coaching efficacy has had a major impact on coaching theory. Gilbert and Trudel's (2004) description of coaches' role frames is another example. In fact, as described in the Working with Paradoxes section of this paper, Horn's (2002, 2008) working model of coaching effectiveness used assimilation to incorporate numerous self-beliefs as antecedents to coaching behavior. Horn (2008) defined antecedent thoughts as the, "cognitions, thoughts, beliefs and or perceptions that coaches have prior to, or during, practice or competitive events, and how such cognitions or thoughts are used to guide their actions or behaviors in actual field situations" (p. 8).

Although, research on particular elements of coaches' self-beliefs has increased in recent years (see Horn, 2008 for review), colleagues and I have suggested that another, more encompassing perspective of coaches' beliefs is still needed (Barnson & Watson, 2009). We suggest this new conception should combine elements of coaches' antecedent thoughts into a belief system or coaching philosophy. We contend that a more comprehensive view of coaches' beliefs will lead to a better understanding of the links between the elements of the coaching process. We base this suggestion on the assumption that beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives (Bandura, 1986; Dewey, 1933; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968).

#### *Defining a Coaching Philosophy*

Most would agree that coaches' personal principles, values, perceptions, and judgments have a big impact on what coaches do, and how they do it (Cassidy et al., 2009). Countless coaching texts have referred to these attributes as a coaching philosophy (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 1997; Lyle, 1999; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). Therefore, in the broadest form, I have defined a coach's philosophy or belief system as a set of beliefs that guide a coach's individual practice (Barnson & Watson, 2009).

Acting as a lagging variable, a coach's philosophy facilitates decision-making by providing a general blueprint for future sport success. A belief system supports a coach's need to focus and simplify the myriad of problems they face at any given moment. Deriving from both the general and specifics of a coach's past, a coaching philosophy drives future action, and becomes a unique configuration of beliefs best understood by that coach. This configuration of self-beliefs also allows a coach to interpret, reinforce,

and articulate for athletes the path he/she believe will lead to future success (Barnson & Watson, 2009). A coaching philosophy acts as a bridge from elements at a more tacit level of consciences to elements that are more explicit and observable.

According to Lyle (1999), if we are to better grasp coaching practice, exploring the aspects that make up a coaching philosophy is not an “optional extra” (p. 45). Despite Lyle’s call over a decade ago for more detailed investigations into the belief systems of coaches, relatively little research beyond the superficial and conceptual (e.g., Barnson & Watson, 2009) has been done to establish and locate definitive philosophies within the overall coaching process.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a methodological framework for the study's design, the sampling approach, procedures for data collection and analysis, and the ethical considerations inherent in conducting research on human participants. In doing so, I explain a grounded theory approach following the traditions of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998), which allow for the investigation of high school coaches and the process of coaching they use on a daily basis.

In the most general sense, the coaching process is a decision-making process set within the constraints of a highly complex social and dynamic athletic environment (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cratty, 1970; Cushion, 2007; Lyle, 2002). I mentioned in the previous chapter that the notion of authenticity (Rink, 1993) could help guide this investigation toward a deeper understanding of that process. Authentic coaching involves the coach first recognizing the boundaries of an incident, and after considering information about the context (sport), the participants (athletes), and their own self-beliefs, would then deliberate the best plan of action before implementing it. The purpose of this study is to develop a theoretical framework that both describes and explains the process coaches use to coach authentically. The following questions guided the investigation:

1. How do different coaches maneuver through the coaching process in an authentic fashion?
  - a. What influences a coach to recognize the boundaries of an incident?

- b. How do a coach's antecedent (inner) beliefs connect to his/her observable (outer) actions?
- c. What do coaches use to organize information leading to decision-making?

### Research Design

Three guiding principles were used to determine the most appropriate research design for this study. First, scientific knowledge begins with ontological assumptions about the nature of reality, and articulating those assumptions should occur prior to exploring a phenomenon (Flick, 2006; Weed, 2009). Second, the notion of match between research questions and the research methodology should be determined (Glesne, 2006). Third, the research design should fit the personality, background, and values of the researcher and participants (Glesne, 2006).

The general perspective of this study was that of a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the meaning study participants ascribe to their experiences. Qualitative methods focus on how “individuals or members of society apprehend, understand, and make sense of social events and settings” (Gephart, 1999, p. 5). The aim of qualitative researchers is to interpret, discover, and allow for the emergence of data and themes by interacting with subjective phenomena. In doing so, researchers provide rich descriptions that would not be possible with quantitative analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Qualitatively exploring the experiences, beliefs, and behaviors of participants enables theory generation, in contrast to, quantifying the impact or assessing directionality of variables.



The particular qualitative approach this study employed was grounded theory. Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later modified by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), grounded theory is a compromise between deductive and inductive logic in that it values experiences and discovery yet goes beyond data collection and subjective observation to facilitate generalization and theory development. A more specific description of grounded theory, and the particular variation used by Strauss and Corbin, is discussed in the next section.

### Ontology and Epistemology Considerations

According to Weed (2009), ontological and epistemological assumptions underpin any discussion of methodology, and researchers should elaborate these assumptions prior to the onset of a scientific inquiry. Ontology deals with questions of reality and asks, “What is the nature of the social world?” (p. 504). Ontological assumptions go on to inform epistemological questions of knowledge that ask, “Can knowledge be separated from the process of its production?” (p. 504).

Although not mentioned in the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) monograph, many authors have since addressed the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the methodology leading to three “variants” of grounded theory (Weed, 2009, p. 507). The three variants are often associated with the researchers that first introduced each particular perspective, and include; positivist/Glaserian, post-positivism/Straussian, and constructivist/Charmazian.

The current study followed in the post-positivism tradition introduced by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Post-positivists recognize that directly measuring some aspects of the

social world is not possible. Consequently, researchers must embrace, to a degree, the subjective views of participants while at the same time retaining an objective approach that is free from bias (Weed, 2009). Essentially, Strauss and Corbin (1994) argue for a methodology that embraces a paradoxical view of inquiry. They suggest grounded theory is *both* interpretive *and* concrete. “Interpretive work and interpretations must include the perspectives and voice of the people who we study” (p. 279).

The reason this project followed a Straussian grounded theory approach is, like other post-positivist, I believe there is a sameness in our uniqueness as coaches (Cushion et al., 2006; Rink, 1993). Coaching is paradoxical. There are both common and unique aspects to being a coach. To say that reality is the same for every coach would be to ignore obvious multiple context of sport and the situational nature of decision-making. To suggest that all aspects of coaching are unique would be to ignore the shared realities of athletics, environments, competition levels, and athletes.

I mentioned in the introductory chapter, coaching and coaching research requires a sense of humbleness. Attempting to reduce coaching to a cookbook formula of techniques is simply naïve. It is just as foolish to suggest that coaches should do away with attempts to create principled and guided practice. Doing away with either the sameness or the uniqueness inherent to coaching would surely condemn the field to a perspective of chaos. Coaching is paradoxical.

#### Research Focus—Methodology Match

Ultimately, the research question (focus) should determine the most appropriate research methodology (Shulman, 1986). The focus of this project was primarily the coaching process. It was important to utilize a methodology that supports the

investigation of process as opposed to one that addresses people (ethnography), events (phenomenology) or places/units (case study). The analysis of process is a distinctive feature of grounded theory (Dey, 1999). Struass and Corbin (1990) define process as the linking of action sequences over time. They explain, “Action and/or interaction lie at the heart of grounded theory”, and, “process is an essential feature of grounded theory analysis” (p.157).

Gilbert and Trudel (2004a) contend qualitative methodologies are gaining popularity among coaching scientist. They and others (Cushion et al., 2006; Jones, & Wallace, 2005; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Voight, 2007), suggest that due to the lack of conceptual agreement concerning the coaching process, a wider variety of qualitative methods should be utilized in the future.

Initially, an ethnographic case study approach was considered for this study’s design, mainly because of a case study’s ability to describe how coaches make sense of their multi-layered personal experiences (Merriam, 1998). However, using a case study approach was ultimately rejected in favor of a grounded theory approach because empirical evidence related to the philosophic perspectives of coaches is lacking in the coaching science literature (Cassidy et al., 2009). By adopting a grounded theory methodology, which ultimately leads to theory development, I hoped to facilitate the production of a much-needed theory that is related, in some degree, to the concept of a coaching philosophy.

### Personal Fit

Glesne (2006) points out the need for researchers to feel a personal connection to the methodologies they ultimately use. For me the connection to grounded theory came early

in my doctoral program. As a practicing coach who was also learning the intricacies of scientific research, I saw a similarity between my actions as a coach and the methods of inquiry introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967). At a basic level, the two methodologies mirror each other. Collect data from the field (inductively and deductively), analyze it, collect more data, analyze the new data in light of the old, form a theory on how best to accomplish a goal within a social process, and then descriptively explain to athletes (and others) how the theory is implemented.

The further I advanced into my program, learning about the minutiae and different variations, the more I felt a personal fit to grounded theory. As a coach, I view my actions and strategies as an attempt to build lasting skills and habits among my athletes. I also recognized this similar perspective in the fundamental idea behind grounded theory. “Theory based on data cannot be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory. Since it [theory] is intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 4).

My goal as a coach is to affect and help those I coach. That goal is no different as a researcher. I derived the research questions for this study from my view of the world. My commitment to coaching and coaching science has greatly influenced that worldview. I plan to bring that same sense of allegiance to my application of grounded theory. Some scholars suggest that others are merely “dabbling” in grounded theory methods, and lack a “real commitment” to its appropriate application (Weed, 2009, p. 503). For me, that is not the case.

## Post-Positivist Grounded Theory—Straussian

Dey (1999) argues as many interpretations of grounded theory exist as are grounded theorists, and it is important to note that this range of interpretations derives largely from a difference in ontological and epistemological perspectives. Weed (2009) refers to this difference in perspective as theoretical sensitivity. As part of the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) explanation of grounded theory the authors argued, “initial decisions are not based on preconceived theoretical frameworks” (p. 45). Theory is to be *discovered* from the data. The notion of discovering theory was initially interpreted to mean, researchers should enter the research area from a tabula rasa perspective, free from *any* preconceived theoretical frameworks.

During the evolution of the original grounded theory approach, Strauss began to question if the generation of new theory required the disregard of prior theories. As the original authors continued to refine the methodology, their differences in theoretical sensitivity ultimately led them to part. In the subsequent Straussian variant, a shift in perspectives from discovery to verification is the most striking contrast (Dey, 1999).

A key question often asked of grounded theory is, if data collection is guided by the emerging analysis, what guides initial data collection? Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that researchers do not, and should not, enter a research area as a blank slate. This particular view of theoretical sensitivity acknowledges that researchers enter a study with an awareness of the area, which may include sensitizing concepts that act as a point of departure to form interview questions and initial data collection (Weed, 2009). However, any preconceived concepts are a place to start, not a place to end. Fundamentally, the Straussian approach calls for the discovery of theory through the continual verification of

new data, which may include data from previous reviews of literature and simple conceptually generated models.

Choosing a post-positivist grounded theory approach in the current project was important for two reasons. First, as part of the dissertation process, I was required to conduct a literature review. For researchers in my position, Strauss and Corbin (1994, 1998) suggest employing a strategy they called memo writing as a way of insuring an accurate analysis of the emerging data. Memo writing allows researchers a way of recording and monitoring their preconceived biases. A more specific discussion describing how this project addressed memo writing and researcher bias is found in the Theoretical Sensitivity section of this chapter.

The second reason for utilizing a post-positivist approach was that it allows a researcher to build upon previous work. I mentioned in the literature review that a colleague and I have published work related to the belief systems of coaches (Barnson & Watson, 2009). The purpose of that paper was to introduce the idea that coaches utilize a triad of beliefs. We argued, these systems of beliefs form a success orientation and ultimately influence coaching behavior.

The notion of coaches having a belief triad grew from a series of pilot studies conducted throughout my doctoral program. The culmination of that work was a conceptual beginning for this dissertation, and subsequently had an influence on methodological decisions. For example, interview questions were modified to allow for a deeper analysis of participant antecedent thoughts. In addition, while conducting the pilot studies I was also able to learn techniques for coding strategies that will aid in

language analysis. Consequently, rather than entering the field as a blank slate, I entered the field with an open mind but not an empty head (Weed, 2009).

### Core Elements of Grounded Theory

Weed (2009) described the appropriate use of grounded theory in sport and exercise science. He outlined eight core elements “without which a study cannot rightly be claimed to be grounded theory research” (p. 505). Weed contends that the quality of grounded theory research should be judged by the appropriate application of these elements. The core elements outlined by Weed serve as a guide for the remaining sections of this chapter. The eight elements essential for grounded research are: an iterative process, theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity, codes and concepts, constant comparison, theoretical saturation, validation measures, and substantive theory.

#### An Iterative Process

The hallmark of grounded theory is that it is an iterative process. An iterative process refers to a progression of action marked by repetition. Iteration is what separates grounded theory from other qualitative methodologies. Grounded theory is not linear; all of the elements that are essential to the methodology are connected and interrelated. For example, choosing participants is intimately connected to data collection, which is related to data analysis, leading to verification, and back to the collection of further data. Instead of thinking of grounded theory as linear, it would be more appropriate to consider it as an interwoven spiral of actions looping back onto previous elements until saturation has been achieved (see theoretical saturation below).

One way of assessing the quality of a grounded theory study is to ask the following question: “Is the study designed to support iterative data collection and analysis in a context of theoretical sampling?” (Weed, 2009, p. 509). The paradoxical quality of the iterative process often creates a dilemma for researchers attempting to design a project. Aspects of data collection *and* data analysis are meant to be combined into a wholeness. Flexibility *and* rigor are both key aspect of the iterative process.

Participants and environments are constantly changing, and the design of a grounded theory study must allow for the re-evaluation of previous data in light of new data. For example, as new insights are discovered, interview questions may need to be altered to allow for a deeper investigation into an emerging concept. It may even be necessary to re-interview participants in order to verify new insights. In the current study, the iterative nature of data collection and analysis can be seen in the Research Notes and Memos (see Appendix A for sampling). A close examination of the Research Notes and Memos shows how coaches were re-interviewed as new information became known, which lead to even further iterations of observation and analysis.

### Theoretical Sampling

Grounded theory utilizes an iterative process to determine the sample population according to issues as they emerge from data analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe this process as theoretical sampling, “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 45). The aim of theoretical sampling is “to refine ideas, not to increase the size of the original sample” (Weed, 2009, p. 505).



Grounded theorists continue to collect and analyze data until theoretical saturation is reached, which is why an exact sample size is usually not provided at the onset of a study. However, as a general rule, Creswell (2008) recommends that procedures should be considered that would allow for 20 participants. The current study utilized a method of *snowballing* to accomplish Creswell's recommendation. According to Flick (2006) snowballing is the strategy of using one participant to gain access to another participant. The strategy involves asking each participant to refer the researcher to other participants that meet the study criteria and research interests (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998). By utilizing the familiarity and relationships between local coaches, it was believed recruitment and access to subsequent participants would be facilitated.

The outcomes generated from a single grounded theory study should not be generically applied across other settings (see Substantive Theory section below). It is a theory grounded in a substantive area (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, it was important from the onset to outline the setting as richly as possible.

The current study utilized head coaches of team sports at the high school level (grades 9-12). The team sports included men's football, women's volleyball, men's & women's basketball, men's & women's soccer. Sports with an individual component (e.g., wrestling, track/field, tennis, and golf) were not included. Besides limiting the scope of the project, team sports encompass the highest participation rates among high school sports (NASPE, 2008). The setting was also limited to varsity level sports from one school district. The participating school district had over 30 comprehensive high schools, and was the only district in a large southwestern city. The organization that governs athletics for the local school district classified each member school based on school

population and competitive level, 4A being the highest classification. All study participants coached at this 4A level.

Since the focus of this study is the process of coaching, it was important to recruit coaches who allowed access to a wide range of team activities. These activities included: practices, games/matches, pre and post game meetings, and planning sessions. One coach from each sport was recruited as the *opening* coach in that particular sport chain. The criterion used for recruiting these opening coaches, as well as any subsequent participants, was based on a minimum of five years head coaching experience in the local school district. It was assumed, by recruiting experienced coaches, they would be better able to verbalize their antecedent thoughts, and were better situated to provide a historic perspective on any changes to their coaching practice. It was also believed, by recruiting coaches with a minimum of five years experience in the local school district, it would increase the likelihood of snowballing new participants into the study.

### Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is concerned with what assumptions a researcher brings to a research area. Qualitative researchers must remain open-minded and flexible throughout the research process (Merriam, 1996), this is especially true for grounded theorist. A post-positivist (Straussian) approach acknowledges researchers enter a site with an awareness of the area but, importantly, without any set notions about what they might discover. Unlike quantitative studies that utilize standardized instruments, qualitative investigators are considered the primary instruments. Therefore, they should employ strategies that allow for the noting of thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and ideas in an ongoing manner (Flick, 2006).

In an effort to increase transparency and allow others to evaluate my influence on the research outcomes, a log was kept throughout the research process. See Appendix A for a sample of memos taken both prior to the start of the study and during data collection.

The log includes all observations, meetings, interviews, and correspondence with participants. It should be noted, an attempt to recognize and record research biases were also included as NOTES throughout the log. The notes were a way of continually describing my roles, values, and actions throughout the data gathering process.

To foster the iterative quality of theoretical sensitivity, an ongoing review of related literature also took place throughout the research process. For example, at one point during data collection (see Appendix A), it was necessary to explore the notion of a coaches role frame (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). This particular examination of literature aided in the refinement of interview questions and model making. It was also necessary to re-examine literature previously viewed (see Chapter 2) regarding how individuals and groups deal with paradoxical dilemmas. Other areas of review included: communication strategies for coaches, methods coaches use to initiate change within their teams, political factors that impact the coaching process, and leadership strategies.

### Coding and Concepts

Coding refers to the mechanical task of assigning labels to data as a way of facilitating analysis (Dey, 1999). Coding strategies provide the qualities of rigor, discipline, and thoroughness often associated with grounded theory. In the Straussian (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) approach to grounding data, three phases encompass the coding process. These phases are divided into open, axial, and selective coding.

The first phase, open coding is defined as “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data” (p. 61). Axial coding follows open coding and is, “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in a new way after open coding, by making connections between categories” (p. 96). The final phase, selective coding is defined as “selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement (p. 116).

Weed (2009) points out the need for researchers to specify how they view the phenomenon being studied, and how they move from one stage of coding to the other. For the current study, an incident-by-incident orientation was used to code both field observations and interviews. See Chapter 4 for a complete explanation of coding procedures.

Initial data was bracketed using a temporal sequencing—Past, Present, Future. Elements that helped to establish context were classified as Past elements. For example; personal background, mentorship impact, coaching efficacy, internal/external role framing, and success/failure history. Any current action exhibited by the coaches was labeled as Present. Examples of present elements include; reflective moments, communication with athletes, and in-practice behaviors. Future elements comprised outcomes and consequences related to previous coaching action. For example; goal setting, athlete perception, athlete behavior, and goal accomplishment.

The Past—Present—Future coding paradigm follows closely with the paradigm described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as conditions—interaction—consequences. One argument for utilizing such a coding framework is it assists in the formulation and

integration of the research narrative. The coding paradigm helps tell a “story” or a “descriptive narrative about the central phenomenon” (Dey, 1999, p. 214).

### Constant Comparison

Constant comparison is what ties together the analytical process in grounded theory (Weed, 2009). The looping of analysis between data, codes, concepts, memos, and literature is a way of continually checking that the emerging insights are grounded in all parts of the research process. Furthermore, as data is sampled in second, third, and fourth iterations the comparisons serve as a way of insuring relevance and continuity of analysis over time. This can help bring a sense of triangulation between participants, data, and concepts. This notion of connection between elements is commonly referred to as *fit* in grounded theory literature, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

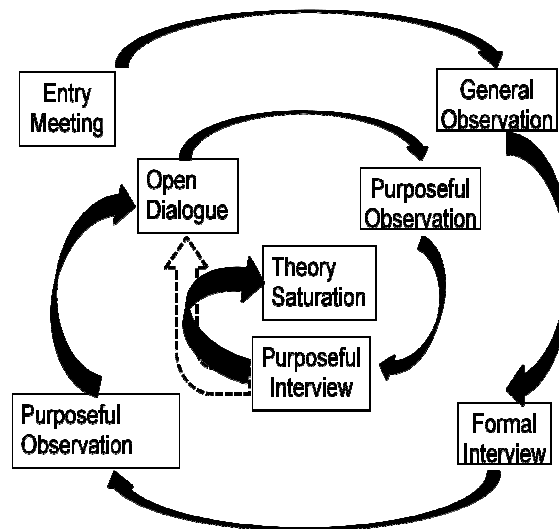


Figure 1. Data Gathering Spiral.

Figure 1 illustrates the data gathering spiral that served as a framework for this study. As the diagram shows, after the initial entry meeting with each coach, a series of observations and interviews were conducted beginning with a general observation (e.g., team practice or planning meeting) as a way of becoming familiar with the research setting. After establishing rapport and getting a sense of context, a formal interview with the coach was conducted. All interviews were conducted solely by myself, which aided in the continuity of data collection and analysis. An interview guide was used as part of the formal interview protocol (see Appendix B).

Based on analysis of the formal interview data, purposeful observations followed as the next step of the iterative research process. Woven into the purposeful observations were opportunities for open dialog between the coach and researcher. This open dialog most often occurred in an informal manner, and allowed for deeper questioning and insights into the antecedent thoughts of each coach. The open dialog also allowed for a sense of partnership between the participants and myself, which aided in the telling of “their story” (Gilbert, 2007). Purposeful interviews addressed specific issues as needed, and will be discussed further in Chapter 4. A purposeful interview guide was initially used to aid in the exposure of topics, but became less necessary as rapport with each participant increased. See Appendix C for an example of the Purposeful Interview Guide.

The dashed arrow shown as part of the Data Gathering Spiral (Figure 1) represents an iterative loop built into the design of the study. During this stage of the research process, either, it was determined that theoretical saturation had occurred leading to the recruitment of a new coach, or data collection looped back leading to further data

collection and analysis. Further discussion of both formal and purposeful interview data collection and analysis, will be addressed in Chapter 4.

All formal interviews taken during the study were transcribed verbatim (see Appendix D for sampling). The rationale for a verbatim record was to help maintain research thoroughness and to aid in data analysis. Any personal information was coded in a manner that insured participant confidentiality (i.e., FB-A was used for the opening coach in the football chain). All materials associated with this project (e.g. transcripts, field notes, researcher memos, audio files, etc.) were coded with a number that corresponds to the date and time of its creation. Raw materials were stored in a locked filing cabinet. To insure the security of any material stored on a computer, a password protected personal laptop computer was used, and all information was saved daily to a secured flash drive. All raw data and records will be maintained for seven years post dissertation and then shredded to protect participant's confidentiality.

### Theoretical Saturation

As indicated in Data Gathering Spiral (Figure 1), the iterative process continues until a point of theoretical saturation is reached. Charmaz (2006) maintains that saturation has occurred when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insight. It is important to note, theoretical saturation deals with the completeness of concepts not the amount of data collected. "It is the capacity of the data to generate new ideas that is exhausted here, and not the accumulation of evidence to support those ideas" (Dey, 1999, p. 116).

The notion of when to stop is an important element of grounded theory. This issue is only compounded when the study is a doctoral dissertation such as this project.

Deadlines are set, and issues surrounding doctoral committees become vital. For those reasons, and in light of an understanding for theoretical saturation, it was estimated that this project could be completed within the time frame of two high school athletic seasons, approximately five months. Data collection began in late July and ran through mid January. A complete breakdown of activities is reported in Chapter 4.

#### Validation Measures—Fit, Work, Relevance and Modifiability

Weed (2009) succinctly argues that *validity* and *reliability* are inappropriate measures of quality for grounded theory research. His rationale is, those terms are too closely related to quantitative research methods and bring with them preconceived notions related to ontological realism. Hence, the terms fit, work, relevance, and modifiability have been adopted as more appropriate notions to assess grounded theory (Sparkes, 2002). For example, “fit” is related to how closely the concepts generated through constant comparison and theoretical saturation fit the incidents and phenomena they represent. The use of quotes taken directly from participating coaches was used to demonstrate the appropriate connections between concepts and data, and therefore, aid in establishing fit.

“Work” refers to the ability of a grounded theory to conceptualize or explain the phenomena under investigation. The “relevance” of a theory relates to the extent to which the theory deals with the real concerns of those involved in the process under investigation. Finally, a grounded theory is considered “modifiable” if the generated theory can be extended to accommodate new insights in the future.

In an effort to achieve all measures of quality for grounded theory, this project utilized a system of peer reviews. Ongoing support from my dissertation committee along with



colleagues both internal and external to the field of sport science was used to evaluate all aspects of this project.

From a personal perspective, my expectation for this project was for it to produce relevant and practical results. I agree with the coaching scholars listed below, the field lacks a sound and “grounded” theory of authentic coaching.

- “The existing research operates almost totally without philosophical or theoretical base.” (LeUnes, 2007)
- “Methodology that incorporates significant probing, alternative giving, and in-depth discussion of decision’s coaches make are essential.” (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006)
- “We need to model the intentions and then identify the factors that impact those intentions.” (Lyle, 2007)
- “Based on previous research effort, it is evident that very little is actually known about what an effective coach’s behavior looks like in action.” (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004).
- “There is a need to look deeper into the patterns and perspectives that coaches use. (Jones & Wallace, 2005)

### Substantive Theory

The final essential element of grounded theory deals with the notion of transferability. It is necessary for researchers to recognize that any theory developed through a grounded theory approach is substantive, and should not be implied beyond the area it was grounded in. That said, it is possible to move a grounded theory to a macro or generic level of application, but that entails linking a series of substantive theories to create a

formal grounded theory (Weed, 2009). The current project was not attempting to accomplish that goal, and the substantive nature of the methodology outlined in this chapter is acknowledged. Namely, methodologies that help describe the process interscholastic team sport coaches use to accomplish their job on a daily basis.

To reiterate from the previous section; the field of coaching science lacks a sound conceptual base, consequently, causing a disconnect between theory and practice. The current project helps to bridge that gap by making significant contributions to:

- Coaching Taxonomy – Frameworks that describe the complexity of the coaching process
- Coaching Education – Expanding coaches' understand of the decision-making process
- Coaching Research Methodology – Fulfilling the call for exploratory research into the coaching process, and, expanding knowledge of coaching at the interscholastic level

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

#### Back on the Bus

Back on the bus. The emotions of victory were as usual, pushing my ability to analyze to the periphery. I could still feel the panic that happened only minutes before on the field. Who is the right player for this situation? What is the right decision? Do I call a time-out? What play will work? I became aware of just how much energy had been spent, the cost of battle, as I felt my t-shirt sticky with sweat. The cooling wind blew through the half-open window, as I slipped down the high-back seat and tried, yet again, to figure it out. The basic question was always the same. Not, what did I do? Rather, how did I do it? If I could have found the mysterious place, the corner of my mind that houses those correct decisions. Then, I could have tapped into them and maybe the next game would not be as tough. But, this mental dance always ended the same. The exhaustion, both physical and emotional, was too strong. It was so easy to close my eyes and rest. Today we won!

I have argued that in many respects grounded theory analysis is similar to the process of coaching. The iterative nature of analysis can, at times, leave the consumers of grounded theory asking the question, where did this theory come from? Grounded theory analysis is at a minimum difficult to describe, and at worst leaves the impression of divine intervention. Consequently, the notion of transparency must be at the heart of any grounded theory.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a transparent view of data collection and analysis. The chapter begins by establishing the substantive context, which includes

describing the research setting and coaches. Next, the multiple sources of evidence utilized in the study are discussed, and a breakdown of data collected for each coach is provided. Following that is an outlining of analytical procedures used to investigate the authentic practice of coaches. Lastly, I present an overview of foundational concepts discovered during the study including a framework describing the multi-paradoxical quality of authentic coaching.

## Establishing the Substantive Context

### Research Sites

Early in the study design phase, a decision was made to limit the investigation to interscholastic “team sport” coaches with a minimum of five years head coaching experience at their current school. Besides the reasons mentioned in the previous chapter regarding limiting the scope of the study and team sports encompassing the highest participation rates among high school sports (NASPE, 2008); I also believed, focusing on team sports would highlight the complexity of the coaching process. For example, participants in team sports not only maintain individual goals, but the team sport context requires an equal sense of collective goals (Jones & Wallace, 2005). That duality of goals does not exist, to the same degree, in an “individual sport” context.

Another early decision was to investigate a number of different team sports. The reason for choosing a multitude of sports was an attempt to view the coaching process through a wider lens. In essence, I hoped comparing/contrasting coaches both within the same sport context, as well as between sport contexts, would result in a richer understanding of the coaching process. This led ultimately to the investigation of six

different sports. The sports included men's soccer (SM), women's soccer (SW), football (FB), women's volleyball (VB), men's basketball (BM), and women's basketball (BW). The study took place during the fall (FB, SM, VB) and winter (BM, BW, SW) seasons.

Five different high schools were represented in the study. The intent was never to choose sites that conformed to a representative sampling of school types. Theoretical sampling decisions were based solely on coaches, not schools. However, it should be noted the five schools did differ in a number of qualities. One quality was socio-economic status (relative to other high schools in the same school district). Two of the schools matched an upper socio-economic archetype, two schools would fit the middle socio-economic range, and one school matched a lower socio-economic level. In addition to socio-economic status, a difference in student enrollment between schools was also evident. Over a thousand more students separated the largest school from the smallest. According to school district records the average enrollment for all five schools was 2,687 (R= 1,982 - 3,063).

Another distinctive difference between the five schools was the point of evolution each had reached regarding their overall athletic departments. Two of the schools were over a decade old and had earned numerous Regional and State Championships in multiple sports. The other three schools were newer, and still seemed to be building a sense of athletic identity. One of the newer schools had never won a State Championship in any sport; another had earned their first State Title the year prior to the study; the final school won its first team sport State Championship (study participant) during the study.

### Participants

It is important to recognize from the onset, the coaches who participated in this study were collaborators in every sense of the word. Their desire to participate along with their interest in learning more about the theory and practice of coaching was not only appreciated, but also commendable. Every coach demonstrated a willingness to open different aspects of their coaching lives to me, which only confirmed for me, the true spirit of interscholastic athletics.

Eight coaches were participating in the study when theoretical saturation was achieved. Initial recruitment of coaches began by contacting the most experienced coach in each of the three fall sports, logistical considerations were also considered during this initial recruitment phase. First contact was made by either telephone or email, and each coach was briefed on the purpose of the study. Recruitment of coaches from each of the three winter sports occurred in the same manner, and took place approximately 2 weeks prior to the beginning of their season.

During the fall season, a second football and men's soccer coach was recruited into the study using the snowball technique described in Chapter 3. This was necessary to facilitate the constant comparative aspect of data analysis, and allowed for a simultaneous comparison of two coaches from the same sport. Both of these subsequent coaches met the criteria of a minimum five years head coaching experience at their current schools. Table 1 displays a breakdown of demographic information for each coach in the order they were recruited into the study.

During the study design phase, a decision was made to only recruit experienced coaches. The rationale for this decision was that experienced coaches would be better able to articulate their antecedent thoughts, and would be capable of relating a historical

perspective concerning their coaching practice. It was also assumed, experienced coaches would be more likely to exhibit authentic practice than would less experienced coaches.

Table 1 **Coaches Demographic Profiles**

Coaches	Age	Gender	Sport	Yrs. Coaching (HC & AC)	# of sports have been HC	Yrs. HC (study sport)	Yrs. HC at current school
VB-A	33	Female	Women's Volleyball	9	1	5	5
SM-A	39	Male	Men's Soccer	16	3	7	5
FB-A	51	Male	Football	27	2	24	15
FB-B	39	Male	Football	16	5	14	5
SM-B	48	Male	Men's Soccer	28	4	8	6
BW-A	42	Female	Women's Basketball	18	2	18	11
SW-A	37	Male	Women's Soccer	14	2	12	6
BM-A	40	Male	Men's Basketball	23	3	12	8
Average ( <i>M</i> )				18.9	2.8	12.5	7.6

Note: HC = Head Coach, AC = Assistant Coach

The choice to use experience as the primary criteria for participation in the study highlights the conscious avoidance of issues surrounding how to defining expert coaches (Cote & Gilbert, 2009). In a study that they identified as preliminary, Cote and Gilbert defined coaching effectiveness/expertise as, “The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching context” (p. 316).

Despite recognizing the need and importance of continuing to research ways of identifying expert coaches, attempting to link the constructs of authenticity and expertise is beyond the scope and purpose of this project. That said, the participants in this study were very accomplished coaches. Table 2 outlines sport-specific accomplishments for each coach over his/her career.

Table 2 Coach Sport Specific Accomplishments

Sport-specific Outcome	Coaches								Totals
	SM-A	SM-B	FB-A	FB-B	VB-A	BW-A	SW-A	BM-A	
Coach of the Year Awards	2*	1	2	2	1*	12*	2	2	24
League Championships	1*	0	6*	1	4*	12*	6	1	31
Regional Championships	1*	0	5	0	1	7*	3	0	17
State Runner-up	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
State Championships	1*	0	1	0	0	6*	3	0	11

(\*) = during the course of study

Note: Accomplishments are as a Head Coach during all years.

### Data Collection

Consistent with the iterative nature of grounded theory, multiple sources of evidence were used to collect data (see Table 3). For a detailed description of how the different sources of evidence were linked together into an iterative research design, see the Constant Comparison section in Chapter 3. Through the utilization of multiple sources of data and comparing one source to another, a sense of fit was achieved. The combinations of diverse methods of data collection is also critical when examining cognitive structures, such as belief systems, and help to address some of the limitations of relying on verbal self-report instruments and surveys (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004).



Table 3 **Description and Purpose of Data Collection**

Source of Evidence	Description	Purpose
Formal Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-time interview</li> <li>▪ Structured interview guide</li> <li>▪ Shortly after entry into study</li> <li>▪ 30-45 minutes</li> <li>▪ Transcribed verbatim</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain demographic info.</li> <li>• Establish rapport and trust</li> <li>• Begin to investigate antecedent beliefs</li> <li>• Help to establish a common language between coach and researcher</li> </ul>
Purposeful Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre- and/or Post-observation event</li> <li>▪ Semi-structured interview guide allowing for follow-up questions</li> <li>▪ 15-30 minutes</li> <li>▪ Transcribed theoretically sensitive outtakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative analysis between coaches</li> <li>• Obtain new or current information</li> <li>• Validate observational data</li> <li>• Gain further insight into coaching beliefs and actions</li> <li>• Provide opportunity for <i>in situ</i> questioning and in-practice reflection of possible alternatives</li> </ul>
Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informal/casual conversations</li> <li>▪ 15-90 minutes</li> <li>▪ Transcribed theoretically sensitive outtakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member checking, validate data and interpretations</li> <li>• Maintaining rapport</li> <li>• Follow-up to previous interviews</li> </ul>
E-mails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Single question correspondence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as Purposeful Interview</li> </ul>
General Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-participant observer</li> <li>▪ 1-3 hours</li> <li>▪ Field notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become familiar with context/coach or re-establish presence at research site</li> </ul>
Purposeful Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as General Observations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memo writing and open coding of events</li> <li>• Constant comparative analysis</li> <li>• Validate emergent propositions</li> </ul>

Values and beliefs are often at a tacit level of awareness (Pajares, 1992). Therefore, belief systems and philosophies had to be inferred through the coaches' use of language and their own explanation of coaching actions. Transcripts, either taken verbatim or theoretically sensitive outtakes, from all types of interviews were coded to identify potential antecedent thoughts (see Appendix D for sampling).

Besides interview transcripts, other products of grounded theory research included memoranda and diagramming (Glaser, 1978). Strauss and Corbin (1990) identified memo writing as the core stage of grounded theory. In the current study, I utilized memos and diagrams in a variety of forms. I began recording personal thoughts and points of interest before the actual start date of the study (see Appendix A). This logging of memos allowed for the monitoring of researcher biases through the duration of the study. The majority of memo writing occurred during observations in the field, and took the form of notes (see Appendix E for samples).

During the axial coding phase I utilized a method of protracted memo writing I referred to as *Synthesis Thoughts* (see Appendix F for sample). These expanded memos provided an analytic handle on the enormity of material and a means of struggling with, discovering, and defining hidden or taken-for-granted processes and assumptions within the data. The Synthesis Thoughts also acted as a form of self-debriefing, allowing for reflection and a refocusing of emerging concepts.

In total, 63 events were observed, and 68 interviews were conducted. All coaches completed a formal interview shortly after their recruitment into the study, as well as an exit discussion. Exit discussions occurred with individual coaches at different points of

the study, and acted as a member check for validating data and interpretations up to that point (see Appendix A). Table 4 shows a breakdown of data collected for each coach.

Table 4 Sources of Evidence per Coach

<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Coaches</b>								<b>Totals</b>
	<b>SM-A</b>	<b>SM-B</b>	<b>FB-A</b>	<b>FB-B</b>	<b>VB-A</b>	<b>BW-A</b>	<b>SW-A</b>	<b>BM-A</b>	
<b>Interviews</b>									
Formal	<b>1</b> (.5)	<b>1</b> (.75)	<b>1</b> (.5)	<b>1</b> (.5)	<b>1</b> (.75)	<b>1</b> (.75)	<b>1</b> (.5)	<b>1</b> (.75)	<b>8</b> (5)
Purposeful	<b>3</b> (1)	<b>3</b> (.75)	<b>2</b> (1.25)	<b>4</b> (1.75)	<b>3</b> (1.25)	<b>3</b> (1)	<b>2</b> (.75)	<b>1</b> (1.5)	<b>21</b> (9.25)
Discussions	<b>4</b> (1.25)	<b>4</b> (1.25)	<b>3</b> (1.75)	<b>6</b> (4)	<b>1</b> (.5)	<b>2</b> (1)	<b>1</b> (.25)	<b>3</b> (1.75)	<b>24</b> (11.75)
E-mail	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Observations</b>									
General	<b>4</b> (8)	<b>2</b> (2.25)	<b>2</b> (5.5)	<b>2</b> (3.5)	<b>2</b> (5)	<b>2</b> (3)	<b>2</b> (3)	<b>1</b> (1.5)	<b>17</b> (31.75)
Purposeful	<b>6</b> (10.5)	<b>5</b> (9.75)	<b>8</b> (18.25)	<b>9</b> (20)	<b>5</b> (10.75)	<b>7</b> (13)	<b>4</b> (7.5)	<b>2</b> (1.5)	<b>46</b> (91.25)
<b>Totals</b>	(21.25)	(14.75)	(27.25)	(29.75)	(18.25)	(18.75)	(12)	(7)	

**n** = number of events

(*n*) = cumulative hours

### Data Analysis

Two operations are essential for the development of theory using grounded theory methods of analysis: asking questions and making theoretical comparisons (Chen & Boore, 2009). As outlined in Chapter 3, this project utilized a Straussian grounded theory approach to make systematic comparisons of data along with recursive questioning strategies. The Straussian approach consists of three coding processes: open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Taking the lead from Chen and Boore (2009),

two prominent grounded theorists in the field of nursing and health science, a framework was developed that helped guide the coding and category analysis for the current study. Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the analytical procedures used in the current study, and will serve as a guide for the remainder of this section.

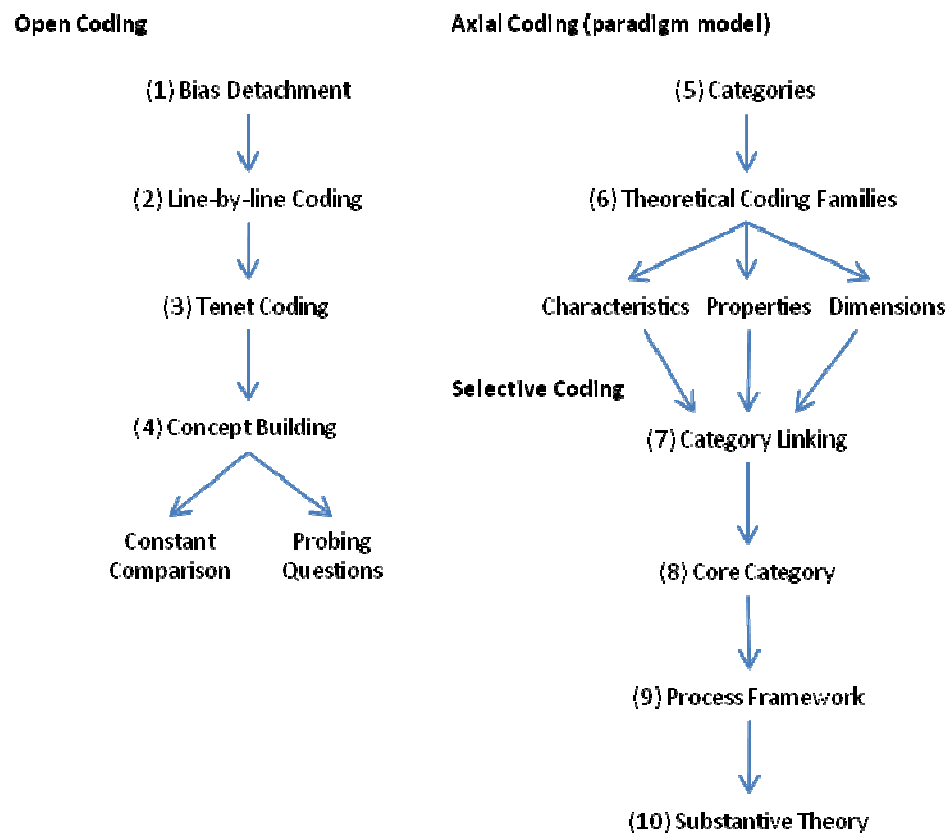


Figure 2. Analysis Procedures Framework

The coding procedures shown in Figure 2 are not discrete activities, but rather are interwoven with each other. The steps are described as follows:

- 1 *Bias Detachment* was a conscious viewing of data with fresh eyes. It included a temporary suspension of comparisons of both a priori knowledge and other study participants.

- 2 *Line-by-line Coding*, also referred to as *in vivo coding*, was the procedure that began the direct analysis of interviews and field notes. By utilizing key terms and phrases in the coaches own words, an attempt was made to understand and describe their world as accurately as possible.
- 3 *Tenet Coding* created shorter word phrases from the *in vivo coding*. By combining similar codes, phrases were developed that captured the main idea of what a coach said.
- 4 *Concept Building* raised tenets to higher order concepts through the iterative usage of constant comparison and probing questions.
- 5 *Categories* were named attempting to stay as true to the initial *in vivo coding* as possible.
- 6 *Theoretical Coding Families* were identified. Different groupings of concepts were isolated and reconnected in different ways. This recursive examination of concepts helped to describe the characteristics, properties, and dimensions of categories.
- 7 *Category Linking* developed connections between theoretical groups.
- 8 A *Core Category* was defined.
- 9 The *Process Framework* was described through the expansion of a theoretical model.
- 10 *Substantive Theory* development was achieved which centered on the qualitative ideas of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability.

Shortly after beginning field observations it became obvious that issues of bias, or what Gilovich (1991) described as a natural tendency in human reasoning to see what is expected, was a real concern for me as a researcher. To counter this tendency, I had to make a conscious decision to see each new coach with fresh eyes. In other words, by purposefully suspending any comparisons of new participants to other coaches in the study or from my personal past, I could recognize the data occurring in the present. By concentrating on accurately capturing the language and actions of the new coach, theoretical sensitivity was applied to whatever category the action best fit. Constant comparative and questioning techniques then helped to refine and name concepts.

After collecting a substantial amount of data, axial coding procedures helped to refine concepts into theoretical categories. The creation of in-depth descriptions of categories led to the final stage of analysis, selective coding. The process was selective in that the observations and interviews of coaches became more focused on specific coding families with the purpose of linking categories together. With further coding of new events, as well as re-examination of previous data and literature, the identification of core categories and the development of a graphic representation of the coaching process were completed.

It is important to note two issues: (a) the actual analysis was a highly recursive process rather than a linear one. Forcing a linear view of analysis is often cited as one of the pitfalls of grounded theory research (Elliott & Jordan, 2010). Throughout the study, it was common for multiple concepts to be under examination at the same time. (b) The originally proposed paradigm model of past-present-future, was helpful and productive but also insufficient to the emerging data. Specific data emerged during the course of the study that pointed to other paradoxical interactions, subsequently requiring other paradigm models to be included in the substantive theory. The multi-paradoxical quality of the coaching process will be exposed in the following section

### Exposing the Paradoxes of Coaching

In this final section, I have tried to find a way to simplify the data collection and analysis process, and then expose the basic concepts at the foundation of authentic coaching. The simplest way to view this research project is an iterative process of developing ideas, testing those ideas against previous data, revising the concepts,

building frameworks, seeing the ideas break under the weight of new evidence, and rebuilding the concepts again. That process was looped back and forth countless times until the concepts fit together into a coherent framework.

While I cannot detach my own thoughts and biases from the research, the conclusions in the final framework did meet a rigorous standard of review. Soliciting feedback from others was a consistent and critical strategy used throughout the analysis process. This strategy, often referred to as peer debriefing (Flick, 2006; Merriam, 1998), included seeking feedback from individuals familiar with the study and others less familiar. Both the formal and less formal debriefing sessions served as a “devil’s advocate”, asking in-depth questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations (Creswell, 1998, p. 202).

Figure 3 is a framework of foundational paradoxes and acts as a preview of concepts that will be expanded further in the following chapter. Essentially, authentic coaching is the convergence of three paradoxes: the paradox of authenticity, the paradox of purpose, and the pendulum paradox. The process of coaching authentically involves the seamless joining of five distinct elements: 1) personal history, 2) belief triad, 3) focus, 4) coaching actions, and 5) success outcomes. These five elements make up the inner and outer aspects of the coaching-self. Achieving congruence between the inner- and outer-self brings a sense of authenticity, and helps bind the elements together. Wrapping around this entire process is a temporal concept I have named the pendulum paradox, which sheds light on how coaches maneuver through the process of authentic coaching.

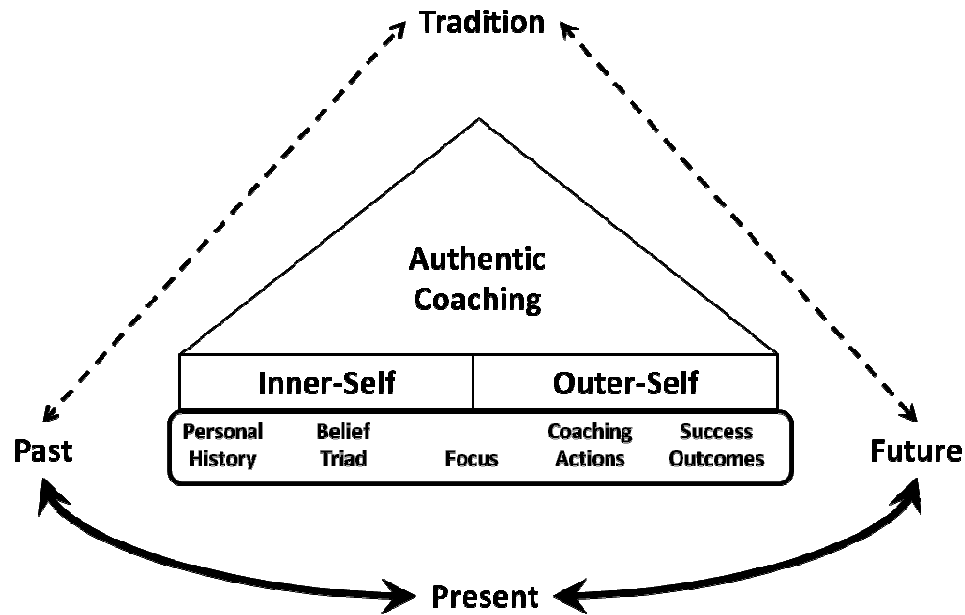


Figure 3. Coaching Paradox Model

**Personal History.** Coaches do not operate within a vacuum. Events and experiences like coaching apprenticeship, efficacy beliefs, as well as a coach’s own athletic and educational experience are very important. Personal history provides reference points for future decisions. For authentic coaches, personal history does not necessarily mean ancient history; rather coaches often push an event currently underway to the past tense as a kind of “re-set button”. By hitting the re-set button, they can use the event as a reference for what has been done, on the path to what will be done.

**Belief Triad.** If, at its essence coaching is a decision-making process, the obvious question becomes, what are the decisions about? Throughout this project, it became clear to me that coaches make decisions related to success. More specifically, how success is to be defined (beliefs), and what needs must be met to achieve success (actions).

Authentic coaching involves the blending of beliefs with actions. To coach authentically



requires a deep and personal understanding of three specific beliefs or what I came to call the belief triad. Using their personal history as a reference, authentic coaches arrange the three beliefs into a specific philosophy that fuels their passion for coaching and guides their decisions. The belief triad specifically relates to how the concepts of individual-talent, team cohesiveness, and sport strategy come together to form an athletic wholeness.

**Focus.** Two coaches walk into a gym, what do they see? Instead of the start of a bad joke, this question illustrates the essence of the concept I have called focus. It is obvious the two coaches will see different things, even if they are watching the same activity. For example, one coach sees the team working a zone defense; the other notices the tallest player cannot go to his left. The reason the two coaches see different things is because what we focus on in the present tense is a blend of our inner- and outer-self. Focus refers to bringing an issue to the foreground of a coach's consciousness. Focus initiates coaching action by relating our past beliefs to our future desires. For authentic coaches the present tense becomes what a coach decides (or, in some cases is forced) to focus on. Focus allows a coach to place boundaries around a given situation.

**Coaching Action.** Imagine being commissioned to take a photo of lightning. Almost immediately, the difficulty of the task becomes obvious. This assignment not only requires a keen understanding of the mechanics involved with photography such as aperture, illumination, and shutter speed. But, you must also acquire insight into the awesome and unpredictable temperament of Mother Nature herself. To complicate matters even more, you must be willing to place yourself at the center of the storm. Joining these forces and actually catching lightning requires commitment, patience, pride, and most of all passion. The term coaching implies action, work, and complexity.

Authentic coaching implies passion. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the question, what is authentic coaching? By approaching it from a paradoxical perspective, four elements became evident. At the most general level, coaching involves four distinct actions: 1) teaching 2) motivating 3) organizing 4) politicking. Each of these actions consists of a fundamental paradox that helps to define the activity. The paradoxical nature of these actions also helps to explain the complexity of the coaching process—the difficulty of catching lightning.

**Success Outcomes.** Attempting to develop a theory of authentic coaching that does not incorporate the notion of success, is like trying to ignore the elephant in the room. One of the coaches in the study possibly said it best, “As long as there’s a scoreboard on that field, winning matters” (FB-A, 8-2-10). The most interesting discovery concerning success was that the coaches in the study did not view winning as the ultimate goal for the coaching process. At least half of the famous quote is true, winning isn’t everything. The ultimate goal for authentic coaching seems to be to create a sense of wholeness—tradition. The successful balancing of paradoxical forces involved with each of the four coaching actions (mentioned previously) creates a distinctive outcome. The concept I have referred to as success outcomes, represents the products of those coaching actions.

**Pendulum Paradox.** Ask most coaches what invisible force they want on their side, and the answer you will probably hear is “luck”. Without downplaying the incredible power of providence, ask authentic coaches the same question and the data suggests you will most likely hear them praise the power of “momentum”. The pendulum paradox helps explain how authentic coaches maneuver their way through the complexity of the coaching process. Unlike the common conception of process, plodding along step-by-

step, authentic coaches utilize the paradoxical energy of past vs. future, inner vs. outer, beliefs vs. action, to swing back and forth gaining speed and power with each oscillation. The pendulum paradox also helps tie together the ultimate goal of authenticity, said most simply, tradition.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCEPT GROUNDING

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to expound upon the concepts introduced in the previous chapter, ultimately leading to a fuller conception of authentic coaching. The chapter is separated into six sections: Personal History, Coaches' Inner-Self, Focus, Coaches' Outer-Self, Success Outcomes, and The Pendulum Paradox. In an effort to think evolution not revolution, I also link other researchers' conclusions to the findings from this study when appropriate.

To help clarify the concepts discovered during this investigation, the coaches who participated in the study are referred to as authentic coaches. That is not to say, the study participants are ideal representatives of authenticity. Rather, as will be demonstrated throughout the numerous examples in this chapter, each study participant did display qualities of authenticity that could be isolated and described.

#### Personal History

##### Shaping the Inner-Self

Shortly after beginning fieldwork, one of the first concepts to crystallize for me was how important the past plays in shaping both the inner and outer coaching self. Authentic coaches do not operate in a vacuum. The importance of past events and experiences in shaping antecedent beliefs and allowing coaches to learn is well-established (Feltz et al., 1999; Gilbert, Lichtenwaladt, Gilbert, Zelezny, & Cote, 2009; Gilbert, & Trudel, 2001; Horn, 2002, 2008; Nash & Collins, 2006). The coaches in this study confirmed that

research. However, it was surprising to find how the authentic coaches utilize the past as a kind of re-set button for the coaching process. In essence, by pushing an event currently underway to the past tense, a new beginning was established. This new beginning allows coaches to re-establish a sense of authenticity in their coaching.

Personal history acts as a foundation for the antecedent elements of the authentic coaching process. Events and experiences like coaching apprenticeship, efficacy beliefs, as well as athletic and educational experience are reference points for future decisions. In an article that attempted to clarify coaching expertise, Nash and Collins (2006) stated, “coaches have often attempted to put themselves in the athletes’ shoes or related to their own memories as an athlete to understand behavior *from within*” (p. 471, emphasis original).

“I think my philosophy and the way I coach is a collection of the coaches I had as a player. My dad, he obviously taught me football, but playing baseball for certain coaches had a big influence too” (FB-B, 8-28). Throughout the study, every coach reiterated the tenet from the above quote. The coaches repeatedly expressed how memories of their own athletic and educational experiences influence how they coach on a daily bases. “I took a lot from my two junior college coaches. A lot of what they did, their philosophies, just appealed to me and opened me up, making me a better player then, and coach now (VB-A, 7-27).

Coaching apprenticeship and learning from mentors was another common tenet mentioned by all of the coaches. “I was an assistant coach for a very long time, and that experience really taught me what I wanted, and didn’t want, to be like as a head coach” (SM-B, 9-15). Interestingly, as the previous quote reveals, mentors also help the coaches

by teaching them what not to do. For example, “My high school coach was horrible. One of the worst people I have ever been around, I don’t know if that is why I am a coach, I just knew I didn’t want to be like him” (FB-A, 8-19).

### A New Beginning

As I pulled into the school parking lot to watch another of Coach FB-B’s practices, I realized that after two weeks of intense observations and productive interviews I was feeling very comfortable with him, his old-school coaching style, and the typical high intensity rhythm of his practices. This being the first practice after an unexpected loss, I was bracing myself for more than the usual amount of emotional outburst from Coach FB-B. I assumed the team’s “bone-head mistakes” (FB-B, 8-28) during the previous week’s game would lead to fireworks of passion in an attempt to stop the bleeding of an early season setback.

Instead, what I heard as I walked onto the field to take my customary spot of shade under one of the towering light standards was laughter. Even more unexpected was what I saw. There was a young man in tennis shoes and street clothes kicking ball after ball down the field while Coach FB-B stood nearby asking him how to say “good job” in German. I had never seen this athlete before, and he was definitely not the team’s regular kicker. The young man’s natural kicking ability was only fair, but that did not seem to sway Coach FB-B’s enjoyment in the situation. At one point, Coach FB-B did have the team’s regular kicker join the new player with the instruction to “teach him how to kick a squib kick”. As the kicking drill ended, I noticed Coach FB-B pull the new kicker off to the side and talk to him in his usual fatherly speaking style before ultimately dismissing him from the field.

Without skipping a beat, practice went on but with a noticeable difference in atmosphere from what I had arrived expecting to see. The heaviness and despair that hung over the team just days before had been lifted, replaced with confidence, enthusiasm, and humor. The only marked difference from any of the previous practices was the temporary appearance of the mystery kicker.

After practice, I got the opportunity to talk with Coach FB-B and my immediate question was the obvious, who was that kid? He explained that the young man was a foreign exchange student from Germany who had just enrolled in school. When I questioned his decision to let any new player come out for the team at this point in the season, let alone a student who had never even seen an American football game, he said simply, “I have had some good experiences with foreign exchange kids in the past” (FB-B, 8-30).

He went on to explain that over the weekend he had also concluded that the team, a very inexperienced group in his eyes, needed a new beginning after the previous week’s tough loss. When the opportunity presented itself to not only bring on a new player, but a player who might bring some cultured depth and character to the team, he took it as a way of “hitting the re-set button” (FB-B, 8-30).

#### The Re-set Button

It makes sense, if a coach’s personal past is so important in shaping who he/she is on a daily basis, why would coaches not attempt to utilize the same method to influence the athletes they are currently working with, and in doing so, move them toward their own future success. Authentic coaches accomplish this movement toward success by pushing

current events to the past. As the previous scenario described, it is like hitting a re-set button to the coaching process.

As part of the formal interview (see Appendix B) each coach participated in, the first question asked was, what is coaching? All of the study participants described coaching as a process or journey, “Coaching is a journey where you are developing an athlete to try and get the best out of that athlete” (SM-B, 9-15). One way of navigating any journey is by specifying a beginning and an end—point A and point B. For authentic coaches the beginning of the journey is the past and the end is the future. In essence, point A is where we have been, and point B where we want to go.

Using the past as a point of reference seems to apply for both long term planning, as well as, minute-by-minute on field decision-making. A good example was how men’s soccer coach SM-A prepared his team for the second half of a game against their biggest league rival. Entering the second half with a surprising two-goal lead SM-A told his players, “we have to put that half behind us and start running our switches the way we are capable of doing” (SM-A, 9-28). What this example demonstrates is by pushing the present, in this case a two-goal lead, to the past it allows the re-establishment of core beliefs that he felt would move the team to future success. By hitting the re-set button, authentic coaches use past events and experiences as a reference for what has been done, on the path to what will be done.

#### Coaches’ Inner-Self—Belief Triad

##### Welcome to the Club

“How do you feel?”



Not having had time to fully process the situation during the short walk between the principal's office and my classroom, my off the cuff answer was, "Like I got kicked in the stomach".

"Yep, that's how it feels", replied Coach Block. He went on to explain in his usual get-to-the-point manner, "there are two types of coaches, those that have been fired, and those who will be fired. Welcome to the larger group."

I have to admit, those words did little to lessen the sting of being told my services as a high school coach were no longer wanted. Over the next few days, I wandered through my daily teaching duties trying to wrap my mind around why I had lost my first head coaching position after only two seasons. During that time, Coach Block was the ever-vigilant sounding board, allowing me to vent, process, and come to terms with my professional plight. After concluding that coaching was indeed my personal calling, my thoughts turned to the future. Returning to Coach Block, I asked, "What do I do different next time?"

That question seemed so complex and daunting, I truly had no idea how Coach Block might respond. What my mentor said to that seemingly unanswerable question stuck with me for the next 18 years, and I now realize fueled my desire to understand the coaching process. "You have to figure out what you believe in, and then make them believe it too."

A profound truth from an authentic high school coach.

### Exploring the Inner Landscape

Coaches have beliefs. This is not a revelation, but rather, a given. It is not a coincidence; the phrase most repeated by the coaches in this study was "I believe".

Authentic coaching involves the attentive blending of beliefs with actions. Rink (1993) describes this process as “full attention”, or participation of the “whole individual in generating meaning from an experience” (p. 312). The simplicity of Rink’s statement is quite appealing. Authenticity is giving full attention. However, those that have coached know, authentic coaching is a lot easier said than done. What beliefs matter most? How does one belief interact with another? Does a dogged following of one point-of-view rather than the robustness of having many beliefs lead to “full attention”?

These questions highlight the difficulty for both engaging in the act of coaching as well as investigating the act of authentic coaching. To complicate matters, beliefs are tacit by nature. Answering questions about beliefs requires a charting of a coach’s inner landscape, the values and attitudes hiding in the shadows of a coach’s mind. The following section explores coaches’ inner-selves—how beliefs are orientated to form a coaching philosophy—that ultimately guides authentic action.

A foundational premise of this study was to view coaching as decision-making. That premise is the predominate view of most coaching researchers (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cratty, 1970; Cushion, 2007; Lyle, 2002). After accepting, at its core coaching is a decision-making process, the obvious question becomes, what are the decisions about?

“I believe you must have a philosophy if you want to be a disciplined and successful team. There needs to be some type of structure to what you are trying to do” (BW-A, 11-15). Throughout this project, as I collected and analyzed more and more data, it became clear to me that coaches make decisions related to success. More specifically, how success is defined (beliefs) and what must be done to achieve success (actions). The quote at the beginning of this paragraph, illustrates Coach BW-A’s belief that success is

defined by discipline, and the need for thoughtful and structured practice as a means of achieving it.

Numerous scholars have recognized the difficulty of investigating belief systems, mainly due to their tacit nature (Bandura, 1986; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Lyle, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Rink, 1993). Despite that realization, many of those same scholars acknowledge beliefs will ultimately prove the most valuable psychological construct to coaching and teacher education.

Following the lead of previous research efforts, both by myself (Barnson & Watson, 2009) and other scholars (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001), I went searching for the beliefs that matter most to coaches by scrutinizing the obvious—observable behavior. The observations that proved most insightful were the clichés coaches used during interviews and the displays of emotion they exhibited during their coaching practice.

#### *Clichés—You Can't Make Chicken Salad Out Of...*

Clichés are as much a part of athletics as the smell of fresh cut grass or the sound of sneakers on hardwood. As I discussed in Chapter 2, clichés serve as rhetorical paradoxes. Clichés can cause an audience to question set beliefs or force a re-thinking of pre-existing assumptions.

Clichés also indicate a truism. They can represent an action, idea, or belief that is expected based on prior personal history. Regarded as insightful when first said, most clichés lose their force through overuse.

Approaching this study from a paradoxical perspective put me on the lookout for clichés. I was not disappointed. In interview after interview, coaches used clichés to explain why they behaved in a particular manner. For example, “I believe in being a

players-coach” (FB-A, 8-2); “just play our own game” (VB-A, 10-13); “think outside the box” (SM-A, 11-20); and “he is a team player” (FB-B, 9-9). In the end, the predictability of what cliché a coach would use, helped me to identify theoretical saturation. The three most common clichés used by the coaches in the study included:

- There is no “I” in “TEAM”
- A donkey has never won the Kentucky Derby
- Failing to plan, is planning to fail

#### *Emotional Displays—The Genesis to Passion*

Following FB-A’s team during their customary quarter mile trek between practice fields eventually became normal, but that day being the first practice of the season, it just seemed like random commotion. I learned later that Coach FB-A purposely utilized the unique configuration of playing fields at his school to “kill two birds with one stone” (FB-A, 8-19). Having players run from the baseball field to the football stadium, a quarter mile apart, to begin each new drill “allows us to get our conditions in during practice”. Taking it one-step further, Coach FB-A also had his coaches utilize gas-powered golf carts, this allowed the coaches to get to each new location so quickly they had plenty of time to set up the next drill, and be “ready to go when the players arrived.” According to FB-A, “Using the carts forces the players to, get on their horse, if they want any time to relax before the next drill begins, they better hurry. Organizing practice the way we do really helps keep the intensity of practice up, which has always been our style of play, high intensity” (FB-A, 8-19).

However, that day was the first time I was observing one of Coach FB-A’s practices, and my head was spinning in an attempt to figure out just how all of the activity fit

together. The team had just moved to the football field for the third time in the practice, which meant I was in the process of arranging my study materials for the sixth time.

“Are you kidding me!” (FB-A, 8-12), stopped all activity on the field. With a booming voice, strengthened from 25 years of coaching experience, Coach FB-A barked again, “This can’t happen!” Picking up an arm shield normally used to protect players from each other, Coach FB-A threw it half way across the field making it a flying projectile as players scrambled to clear its path. This sudden outburst of emotion sent the very clear message to everyone within earshot, everything and everyone has a place and controlling the flow of action within that space is of vital importance.

During the post practice interview FB-A explained how at the time of the emotional eruption he needed to convey the point that there is a plan to every practice and ultimately every game. If a player mindlessly forgets to leave an arm pad on the upper field, that seemingly mundane mistake has an impact on the next aspect of practice, breaking the flow of practice, and possibly the success of the moment. In essence, it is like throwing a wrench into the gears of their finely tuned machine. “I believe my number one role in our success is to be organized” (FB-A, 8-12).

Expressions of emotion, both positive and negative, proved to be very good indicators of coaches’ belief systems. This idea of beliefs being connected to emotions is in-line with Pajares’ (1992) conception of beliefs. Pajares argued, beliefs have a strong affective and evaluative component, and this combination of emotion and wisdom can determine the amount of energy that a person will expend on an activity and how they will expend it. In other words, a coach’s beliefs often manifest themselves as passion.

Possibly the most obvious example of the belief-passion connection came from the other football coach in the study while addressing his team after a particularly emotion filled practice. Coach FB-B's speech addressed the belief-passion connection both in tone as well as tenet. In an attempt to explain his numerous explosions of frustration that occurred during practice, he said, "Look gentlemen, the only, I repeat only, way we will achieve our goals is to play as a team. Having each other's back is the only way we succeed. It is my job to remind you of that every day until we get it. As long as I am yelling at you and pushing you, I got your back. When I stop yelling and cursing and pushing you to play together, that's when you should worry. As long as I am on your case, I still care, I got your back" (FB-B, 9-18).

### Coaching Belief Triad

In Chapter 1, I argued the complexity of athletics is due, in part, to the paradoxical dilemma of combining a sport, athletes, and the coach; each dimension having a unique power in and of itself. If you accept, the coach acts as a bridge connecting sport with athletes. Then, the question becomes: How do coaches arrange their beliefs to act as a unifying force connecting *both* sport *and* athletes?

At the very heart of the theory proposed in this paper is that authentic coaches have a deep and personal understanding of three specific beliefs. Authentic coaches believe, if complete success is to be achieved they must work to develop; the talents of individuals, *and* team cohesion, *and* the sport scheme. When put together, these three beliefs create a roadmap to success. Arranging the beliefs into a coherent wholeness helps to determine a coaching philosophy, or what I came to call the coaching belief triad. Using their

personal history as a reference, authentic coaches organize the three beliefs into a specific vision that fuels their passion for coaching and guides their decisions.

In a practical sense, the belief triad is a paradoxical solution to the complexity of athletics. All team sports by design require the participation of multiple athletes. Yet, at any given moment, only one individual can control the object of action. In addition to the team and individual aspects, the competitive nature of interscholastic sports require strategy, this is usually enforced by the rules and customs of each particular sport. Using basketball as an example, the game is played with five athletes on the court with a minimum of two needed to inbound the ball, yet only one player at a time can control the ball and score a basket, and the rules of the game require a certain amount of time per possession forcing teams to create a strategy of play.

I return to the question posed at the beginning of this section: How do coaches arrange their beliefs to create a sense of wholeness. The coaches in the study approached this paradox from the temporal separation perspective (see Chapter 2 for a detailed description of temporal separation). Essentially, the coaches prioritized the three dimensions of the belief triad, and through sequencing the connections over time, combine them into a wholeness of philosophy. “I learned a long time ago, building personal relationships with my players is the best way to have team chemistry” (BM-A, 12-18). “I believe you have to develop trust and a team attitude before you can get into the X’s and O’s of the game” (BW-A, 11-15). For the coaches in the study, personal history showed them how conscious attention to one dimension naturally led to another dimension.

Therefore, the primary goal of authentic coaching becomes, creating and executing a plan that incorporates beliefs about the development of team, individual-talent, and scheme. The intersection of all three beliefs becomes the belief triad, as shown in Figure 4.

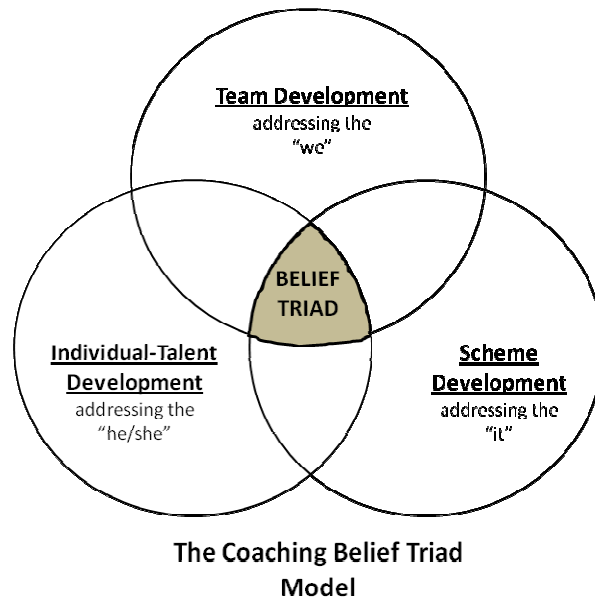


Figure 4. The Coaching Belief Triad Model

The three dimensions when arranged collectively into a coaching belief triad help to explain: a) how a coach references past successes/failures; b) what problems within the sport environment he/she will focus his/her attention; c) why an individual coach will demonstrate a particular behavior or coaching style; and d) ultimately, what behaviors the coach hopes to see from his/her athletes.

The next section outlines how the study participants arranged their beliefs into a coaching philosophy—a coaching belief triad. Because coaches prioritize their beliefs in different ways, the data revealed three different archetypes; Conductors, Managers, and



Architects. It is important to note, each archetype is an aggregate of multiple coaches. The descriptions highlighted at the beginning of each section consist of three sentences, each sentence representing a belief from one of the essential dimensions depicted in Figure 4. The archetypes were developed by synthesizing data over the duration of the study, and multiple study participants fit each archetype.

### Belief Archetypes

#### *Conductors*

Success starts with motivating and teaching a group to display a common set of intangible values—toughness, character, excellence, discipline. This shared vision will then enable players to develop their individual talents and skills at a faster and faster rate. Ultimately, the environment grows from a simple system to one that is more complex.

Conductors concentrate, first and foremost, on team development. A conductor is a coach who believes in guiding, directing, and/or influencing the attitude of the group. These coaches attempt to discover what is universal among group members and capitalize on that collective quality as a way of bringing everyone closer to a common goal. After sensing a group bond has been established, the coach's attention then focuses on building individual talent, often using peer pressure as an effective strategy for getting athletes to improve their skills. For the conductors in the study, incorporating out-of-the-box playing strategies or techniques were last on their list of priorities. The conductors were more inclined to have traditional game plans, and utilize simple practice organization.

Among the study participants, Coach FB-B and BW-A fit this archetype. During Coach FB-B's initial interview, he repeatedly portrayed his players as "inner city kids" (FB-B, 8-28), and by consistently painting a picture of that image, created a sense of commonness among his entire program. Throughout the course of the study, it became

clear Coach FB-B passionately believed his players possessed a certain toughness gained through growing up in a “rough area” (FB-B, 10-13). Fostering that toughness was the primary focus of his coaching, and the belief in that common theme guided his decision-making on a daily basis. His strict disciplinarian behavior and coaching style grew from the idea that, “unfortunately in the inner city, coaches are father-figures. Some of these kids don’t see their moms for weeks on end, and they don’t have fathers at home” (FB-B, 10-20). Despite rationally knowing not all of his players came from broken homes, he used the “inner city” image to create a connection among all the individuals (including assistant coaches) in the program.

The sport cliché that would resonate with conductor coaches, and used by both conductors in the study, was; *united we stand, divided we fall*. Conductors employ a “we” approach to coaching. “The only way we will achieve our goals is if we play together as a team” (FB-B, 9-18). “Overall our kids are really good as a team. When you pull them apart as individuals, they are not the greatest basketball players. They are good, solid, fundamentally sound players when they are together (BW-A, 11-15). In fact, during interviews the pronoun most often used by the conductor coaches was “we”. For example, “We really stress from the very beginning, we are going to go somewhere that we can succeed” (BW-A,11-15).

Conductors believe they have a responsibility to inspire an attitude of common purpose among team members. Both Coach FB-B and BW-A accomplished this by taking a thematic approach to coaching. This is evident in the way Coach FB-B utilized the theme of “toughness” in the previous example.

The themes emphasized by both coaches were meant to create a particular standard of behavior among the athletes. The identified themes included, but were not limited to; commitment, clear communication, pride, trust, common appearance, and hustle. When asked how she defined program success BW-A response was, “Sacrifice, commit, and dedication those are just huge things for us” (12-1).

The term *conductor* was chosen for this archetype because of the parallel that can be drawn between this type of coach and the leader of a musical orchestra. One of the most important responsibilities for the conductor of an orchestra is to interpret and inspire a common theme for the music. Creating a common connection encourages each individual musician to approach the concert from the same emotional state, and produce a sense of harmony. Likewise, a conductor coach strives to inspire his/her athletes to recognize common themes and the importance inherent to functioning as a team toward achieving success.

### *Managers*

Success comes from recognizing, utilizing, and improving players’ talents and skills. After considering the fundamental skill sets and talents of each player, a suitable game strategy or system of play establishes responsibilities for key team members. Over time, the execution of specific skills and roles within the sport scheme will enable the group to build a sense of confidence, fun, and team.

The second archetype centers on the belief that success is achieved through the development of individual athletes, and by highlighting the unique talents each player has overall success is eventually achieved. Referencing the leadership models described in many business research contexts, I referred to these coaches as managers. Managers attempt to find the right person for the right job, in essence, getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and everyone in the correct seats (Collins, 2001).

Managers strive to discover the value and uniqueness in each individual, and then integrate the eccentricities each player brings to a sport situation, into a sport scheme or system. “I believe as a coach you should use what you have. It is important to take your athletes and build a system around their talents” (VB-A, 7-27). By working to improve individual skills, and establishing an atmosphere where athletes strive for personal best, managers hope to build upon individual achievements and compound those into greater program success over time. The sport strategy is set only after identifying the unique talents of each group member.

Managers hope, through a compounding of individual achievements over time, team cohesiveness will eventually take hold. For example, “As far as playing soccer, I believe you have to start out calm, you can’t be all hyped up because of the endurance that is needed in games and for the whole season. I think it is important to build excitement toward the end. That is when emotions are going to really help. (SW-A, 11-15).

In the study, Coach SM-B, BM-A, SW-A, and VB-A were identified as managers. Approaching their job from an athlete-centered approach, the manager’s use of language often took a “he/she” perspective. When asked how he measured success, coach BM-A said, “The best feedback I get is when a player comes back to just check in. My goal is to get each kid to reach his potential. When they come back, it tells me I reached that kid, I touched his heart and had an impact on his life” (12-17).

If conductors use a qualitative thematic approach to success, managers apply more of a quantitative perspective to defining success. The managers in the study would quantify different aspects of practice and games as a way of measuring athlete potential. “We chart everything in practice and games. It helps me stay on top of things and know who

needs what kind of work” (VB-A, 7-29). During his formal interview, Coach SM-B went to great lengths to explain quantitatively how his program has grown in the number of athletes trying-out. For him the growth in numbers was a key indicator of success.

All of the managers ascribed to the ideal that you cannot succeed without talent, “you can’t make chicken salad out of chicken shit” (BM-A, 12-17), believing it was their responsibility to identify and utilize the special skills of their athletes and continually challenging them to excel in their own way.

The belief of managers to utilize talent goes beyond just athletes to include people who support athletes—assistant coaches, administration, parents, trainers, etc. Empowering others was an obvious tenet among all of the managers in the study. For example, “I am fortunate enough to have a fabulous JV coach that handles most of the day to day managing of everything” (SW-A, 11-15). Another example was provided by SM-B, “I told myself a long time ago, if I ever got to be a head coach I was going to let my assistant coach, actually coach. Now I am not saying I let him go out and do whatever he wants to do, but I do let him do what he does best” (SM-B, 9-15)

Managers very much function as a guide-on-the-side; recruiting the best and creating situations by which each athlete can achieve his/her best. Monitoring the progress of athletes helps to determine the best sport strategy as well as each player’s role within the strategy. Over time, repeated successes build confidence among group members and lead to a positive group affect.

### *Architects*

Success begins with designing the athletic environment, by organizing systems and strategies that control/arrange the playing atmosphere. This controlling of the environment in turn leads a group to adopt common themes (ex., passion, hustle, loyalty, and appreciation) or the intangibles

that bond a team together. Ultimately, the environment sets the tone for the improvement of specific skills for individual players.

The third archetype is coaches concerned with creating a uniqueness of technique, strategy, or organization with the hope that by developing the scheme it will provide a competitive edge over opponents. Because of their emphasis on designing a unique environment or playing style, these coaches are referred to as architects. Essentially, architects seek success first through manipulating the X's and O's of the game. By concentrating on the "it" of their particular sport, themes (such as, intensity, hustle, appreciation) will eventually become common and ingrained as a team style—ex. "Rebel Basketball" or "Fighting Irish Football". In the end, the evolution of a group attitude, caused initially by the unique structure of the sport scheme, will foster specific skills from individual athletes.

A comment by Coach FB-A during his exit interview really helped crystallize the notion that a belief triad is an evolution of beliefs over time, with one belief leading to another. His comments also help describe the typical architect philosophy. "It is funny how going through this season I have totally changed. I think it has to do with when you first asked me about my beliefs. It was before the season had started and I hadn't coached for 9 months. Now after 7 weeks of the season, I am concentrating more on the individual players. Maybe, at the beginning of the season I am more of an organizer, and at the end I am more personal with the players. It is like now I am trying to help them be perfect. It is weird; you would think that I would stay the same and say the same thing as I did before." (FB-A, 11-20).

Two study participants matched this belief system, Coach FB-A and SM-A. Both of these coaches were considered innovators within their respective sport communities for

incorporating unusual game strategies. Coach SM-A's team routinely frustrated opponents by incorporating strategies uncommon to the local soccer scene. The resulting frustration proved an advantage for SM-A's team by forcing opponents to play outside of their own comfort zone, it also provided a sense of "pride in what we do" (SM-A, 8-27) for SM-A's team.

For the architects in the study, their desire for creativity, efficiency, and routine were not only observed during in-game strategy, but also evident in the type and character of practice organization and drills. Returning to the scenario presented earlier in this section in which Coach FB-A's utilization of multiple practice fields and gas-powered golf carts was clearly a unique and innovative design strategy. The idea of routine and efficiency was evident throughout Coach FB-A's program. In an interview at the end of his season I asked what he felt was his best coaching decision of the season? He quickly answered, "Definitely moving our Monday practices from 2:00pm to 5:00pm, it gave our kids such an advantage. They were able to get homework done, watch extra film, and just hang out together" (FB-A, 11-20). Again, this decision demonstrated an overall architect belief system in which structuring the environment leads to a wholeness of success.

If conductors believe in first moving the group toward a common affective state, and managers feel it is important to push individuals toward their personal potential; architects believe in designing the environment as the key to their success. "Failing to plan, is planning to fail" (SM-A, 11-20). Thus, architects seek to intervene in the flow of events to produce a desired effect, weaving a tapestry from the possibly mundane aspects of coaching, into a unique and potentially successful whole.

## Focus

### The Present Tense

I have reiterated numerous times, accomplishing authenticity is not an easy endeavor. To achieve a sense of trueness to ones inner and outer-self, coaches must connect the certainties from their past with the uncertainties of the future. While analyzing data, it became apparent that Focus acts as a bridge connecting both past and future. In the most general sense, Focus is the realization that action is required.

Returning to the example in the last section, Focus was when Coach FB-A recognized the arm shield lying on the wrong practice field. Focus was his spark of passion, the moment he connected his belief in the necessity of strategic planning, with the action of throwing the arm shield across the field. Spontaneous theatrics was clearly not his intention, but rather, his intent was to teach the athletes about his own beliefs, which *he* knew, would lead to future success for all.

As more and more data were analyzed, I was forced to acknowledge the possibility of two coaches focusing on different things even while participating in the same activity. It was then, that Focus became an important concept to study. Three questions guided the investigation into the intricacies of Focus. (a) How does Focus aid authenticity? (b) What does a coach perceive during Focus? (c) Can a coach be forced to Focus? The remainder of this section looks at those questions, using them as the guiding framework.

#### *A Leading/Lagging Variable*

Attempting to understand how Focus aides authentic coaching led me to review literature from other fields, specifically organizational theory. Miles, Snow, Meyer, & Coleman (1978) introduced the notion of a leading and lagging variable as a way of



connecting two seemingly opposing requirements within a process. While describing the process of organizational adaptation, the researchers used a construct they referred to as an administrative system to act as a bridging mechanism. An administrative system allows organizations to *both* monitor past activities *and* at the same time have the freedom necessary to recognize future innovations.

Using the same paradoxical idea I contend, Focus acts as *both* a leading variable to future coaching action *and* a lagging variable to past beliefs. As a leading variable, Focus ties together the elements that make up the inner-self, and is most connected to the coaching belief triad. The belief triad, a personal theory of success, guides a coach to the moment of Focus. In that moment the myriad of possible issues coaches face, become crystallized into a single intention. At that same moment, Focus is also a lagging variable to coaching action. Coaching action is the consequence of Focusing on a particular issue. As a lagging variable Focus initiates action. Focus aids authentic coaching by being the element that brings an issue to the foreground of a coach's consciousness, and brackets the situation between the past and the future.

### *Field of Vision*

Maintaining my decorum as a scientist was nearly impossible as the final whistle blew ending Coach SM-A's game. Watching the team run off the field, I felt the same excitement as the players, knowing they had just won their 11<sup>th</sup> straight game to remain undefeated on the season. Having observed Coach SM-A five times in the previous nine days, I was comfortable with his architect philosophy and systematic coaching style. That is why it caught me off guard when he broke routine and had the team meet for their customary post-game talk at the far end of the field away from parents and fans. Moving

myself into position, I could hear him first praising the players for winning, but then was surprised to hear the unusual amount of emotion in his voice, possibly even anger, as he ended his speech saying, “Rebel Soccer (not actual school name) requires discipline, today ended us playing out of control, tomorrow you will learn discipline, or else.” (SM-A, 10-21.)

Waiting for Coach SM-A to finish his responsibilities, I was curious to ask him about the emotion and the vagueness of his last statement to the team. “I wanted to give them something to think about” (SM-A, 10-21). He went on to explain, “Did you see all of those yellow cards out there today? And, when I saw the referee pull out that red card, I knew we can’t continue to be successful playing undisciplined like that. Jose, was the second kid to get red-carded in our last three games. When I saw that I just knew.”

Later in the interview, I ask what his plans were for the following day’s practice. “I have a few drills that put the kids in tough spots. It forces them to control their emotion, that’s what we need, to play hard but under control. I made the “or else” comment because I wanted them to think about it, even be a little scared going into tomorrow’s practice, they know by now I mean what I say” (SM-A, 10-21).

This example helps answer the second question related to Focus: What does a coach perceive during the process of authentic coaching? Coach SM-A’s comments help to explain Focus as a coach’s field of vision. In that context, vision means *both* a guiding philosophy *and* visual perception. At the time of the incident Coach SM-A’s team was midway through the season; in many ways the system of play was in place. As an architect, SM-A’s attention was turning towards connecting the sport scheme with the intangible qualities that would propel his team’s success forward. SM-A passionately

believed “discipline” was a necessary ingredient to the overall system. Therefore, what he saw—his perception was the referee penalizing his players for out of control behavior. That total field of vision, both inner and outer, compelled him to action.

For a coach to be authentic, he/she needs to Focus through beliefs. Using their belief triad as a guide, authentic coaches look for issues that will evaluate the status of their beliefs. In the case of SM-A, Focus confirmed that his belief triad was in need of adjustment and action. He saw that his primary belief in scheme development was established. However, in order to create a wholeness of philosophy, he also believed that “Rebel Soccer” must instill discipline and self-control in the players. Therefore, according to the sequencing of his belief triad, SM-A was coaching authentically when he crystallized on the issue of penalty cards during the game.

#### *Forcing Focus*

Turning to the final question, can a coach be forced to Focus? The evidence was very clear; coaches can be forced to Focus on an issue. An argument could be made that Coach SM-A was forced by the referee to recognize the out of control behavior of his athletes. Moreover, in that case having Focus forced upon him was a positive thing in that it brought to light a discrepancy in his belief triad.

A more obvious example of forced Focus comes from Coach FB-B. “I have to deal with a different problem every day. I am not talking about little issues, my administration comes to me every day and throws a different problem in my lap. I can’t just coach the way I want” (FB-B, 9-9). This example shows that coaches can be directed to Focus on an issue. Throughout the study, coaches consistently discussed their frustration in having problems and issues thrust upon them by multiple sources. Coach

BM-A discussed having to deal with a player getting “kicked out of his house” (12-18). He continued, “That was not in the plan for our season. Show me the book that tells you how to deal with that one.”

Being forced to Focus can be a source of frustration for coaches. The impact forcing Focus has on authenticity becomes the next obvious question. Does forced Focus inhibit authenticity? Unfortunately, that question involves the issue of inauthentic coaching, and after great deliberation, it was determined inauthentic coaching was outside of the scope of this particular study. I recognize it is a very important issue, and is related to the topics discussed in this paper, but investigating the construct of inauthentic coaching would have caused the paper to become unmanageable. I will return to this point in Chapter 6 under the topic of future research.

### Coaches’ Outer-Self—Coaching Action

#### What Coaches Do

I use the term coaching action to describe the observable acts of a coach. Since authentic coaching involves the alignment between the inner and outer aspects of the coaching self, identifying coaching actions was a necessary and obvious stage of this project. My investigation into coaching action very much followed the coding paradigm of open, axial, and selective coding described in Chapter 4 (see Figure 2).

With each new phase of coding new concepts emerged which ultimately led to a fuller picture of authentic coaching. The open coding phase helped to identify the principal categories of action associated with interscholastic coaching. During the axial coding phase, the coaching actions categories were examined from a paradoxical perspective,

which helped define and characterize what coaches do. This defining of opposing forces ultimately led to the identification of the paradoxes of coaching action, which will be developed further during the final two sections of this chapter. In the final stage of coding, selective, I was able to step back and review the coaching actions in light of the data associated with coaches beliefs, and from that, draw comparisons between what coaches believe and what coaches do—authentic coaching.

I was recently reminded by a colleague to think evolution not revolution. What I took from his advice was to remember that theory development usually occurs by making connections to previous established concepts, as oppose to a complete transformation of ideas. It is from that context, connectedness, that I approached the topic of coaching actions. Throughout this section, I hope to build upon other researcher's examinations of coaching behavior, and further develop the theory that authenticity is the connection of the inner and outer coaching self by examining coaching action from a paradoxical perspective.

### Open Coding Coaching Action

The open coding phase of my investigation began with a review of coaching science literature, most notably research utilizing observation systems such as Coach Behavior Assessment System (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll & Smith, 1989) and the Arizona State University Observation Instrument System (ASUOI, Lacy & Darst, 1989). During this literature review I concentrated on studies that incorporated a team sport perspective. Examples include; Volleyball (Isabel, Antonio, Antonio, Felismina, & Maichel, 2008; Lacy & Martin, 1994), Soccer (Cushion & Jones, 2001; Potrac, Jones, c& Armour, 2002), and Basketball (Lacy & Goldston, 1990).

Based on a concurrent review of literature, direct observations in the field, and analysis of purposeful interview transcripts, four coaching actions were identified: (a) teaching, (b) motivating, (c) organizing, and (d) politicking. Table 5 outlines and describes the four coaching actions. It is important to note, each study participant was observed performing each of the behaviors identified in Table 5 at some point in the study. Examples of how coaching behaviors were recorded during observations can be seen in the sampling of field notes, see Appendix E. Along with directly observing these behaviors in the field, I utilized the study participants as member checks (Flick, 2006; Merriam, 1998) to corroborate the behavioral codes. During purposeful interview sessions, coaches were asked to review coded behaviors and confirm the tenets of coaching actions.

#### Axial Coding—Paradoxes of Coaching Action

After the open coding phase of analysis and the identification of the four principle coaching actions, my attention turned to the axial coding phase. The purpose of this stage of analysis was to develop theoretical coding families by viewing each action from a paradoxical perspective. To carry out axial coding, further iterations of field observations and purposeful interviews were required. Essentially, during subsequent fieldwork, coaching actions were recorded and then the coaches were questioned regarding the nature of behaviors witnessed during that event. The purposeful interviews centered on the question: What did you want to accomplish by... (providing a specific example of observed coaching action).

Table 5

**Observed Coaching Actions and Descriptions**

<b>Coaching Actions</b>	<b>Behavioral Codes</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
<b>Teaching</b> —actions directed at helping players to become more skilled, more proficient, or more knowledgeable	Pre-Instruction	Information given to players preceding the desired action to be executed
	During-Instruction	Cues or reminders given during execution of skill
	Post-Instruction	Corrections, re-explanation, or instructional feedback given after execution
	Questioning	Probative inquiry concerning strategies, techniques, assignments
	Manipulation	Physically moving players
	Modeling	Demonstration by coach of the proper skill, strategy, or technique
<b>Motivating</b> —actions meant to create, maintain, or change the particular emotional state of players	Interjection	Verbal statements intended to intensify the efforts of players
	Praise	Verbal or non-verbal compliments, statements, or signs of support
	Scold	Verbal or non-verbal expressions of displeasure
<b>Organizing</b> —actions of planning, design, and strategizing	Management	Verbal or non-verbal behaviors related to coordinating players
	Arranging	Laying out of the practice or game environment, including technology
	Planning	Development of a practice or game plan, including scheduling
<b>Politicking</b> —Actions directed at influencing, persuading, and governing non-team members (individuals and groups)	Meeting	Engage with the intent of passing information
	Oversee	To administrate or direct
	Rally	To unite, gather, energize

Built into the purposeful interview protocol (see Appendix C) was the opportunity to provide coaches with an alternative scenario. In essence asking coaches, why did you decide not to... (explain alternative option). Alternative scenarios were often based on observations of other coaches in the study, which included both coaches from the same sport and different sports. Analysis of coaches' responses to the alternative scenario allowed for further comparisons, and was in-line with the grounded theory methodology outlined in Chapter 3. Every attempt was made to conduct the purposeful interviews as close to the event as possible, which aided the recall of coaches.

Following is a breakdown of how each coaching action was viewed from a paradoxical perspective. Included with each analysis is a graphic representation that captures the opposing forces involved with each action. Also included are quotes taken from the purposeful interviews and field observations. These quotes are meant to support both the open coding analysis, as well as the axial investigation into the paradoxical forces involved with each coaching action.

### *Teaching*

All of the study participants identified teaching as a primary coaching action. The fact that all participants were certified interscholastic teachers could have influenced their descriptions and language usage. However, previous studies on coaching have also established that coaches at all levels (youth through elite) view teaching as one of their primary roles (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b; Kwon, Pyun, & Kim, 2010).

During open coding, I defined teaching as any act directed at helping players to become more skilled, more proficient, or more knowledgeable (see Table 5). During



axial analysis, two opposing forces were identified as important concerning the teaching behavior of study coaches. The paradoxical dilemma involved balancing *needs* and *wants*. More specifically, the physical, mental, and social needs each particular sport requires, versus the wants and desires of athletes (see Figure 5). Coach BW-A possibly described this paradox best, “There are things they want to do and things they need to do, my job is to make those two things the same” (12-1).

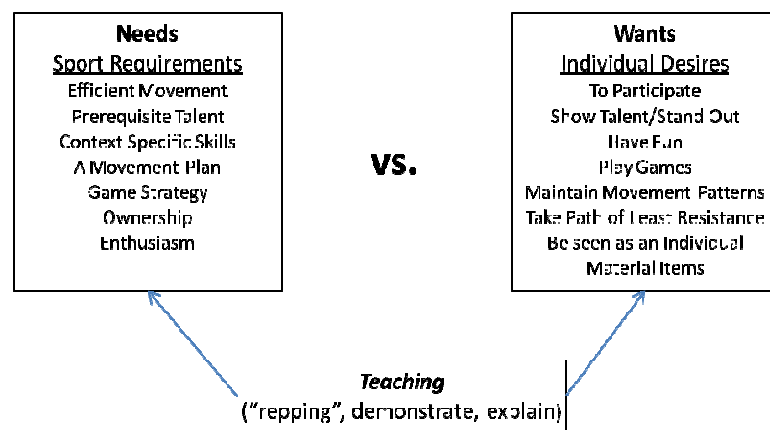


Figure 5. Teaching Action Paradox

Instructing a player to use her left foot to kick a soccer ball because it is more efficient for a given situation (need), despite her natural tendency to use her right foot (want), is an example of the needs versus wants dilemma (SW-A 12-7). Another example of a coach attempting to balance the need versus want dilemma can be seen in Coach SM-A’s decision to participate in a scrimmage game. I coded his action as modeling. When I asked why he decided to join the play his response was, “It is important the kids actually see how that position is supposed to move. I needed to show them, this is where you are supposed to be. Sometimes the kids want to do their own thing out there. When I say get

to that spot on the field, I mean get to that exact spot” (SM-A, 8-18). Later in the interview Coach SM-A also mentioned, “I have found that the kids enjoy it when I get out there and mix it up with them” (8-18). The basic tenet of Coach SM-A’s decision to participate in the scrimmage game was to both pass on needed information to his athletes and at the same time fulfill the desires of the athletes to have fun with their coach.

One of the primary terms associated with the teaching action paradox was *fundamentals*, and was often coded as a description of the needs element of the teaching paradox. For example, when I asked the women’s volleyball coach to explain why she had her team perform a drill that forced players to dive on the ground, her response was, “Bottom line you teach the fundamentals, because if you don’t have fundamentals where are you going to go from there? But then, you take those fundamentals and you create an offence and defense that works for those kids. I hate to run a rotate defense, but I had to teach it because I have a setter that is lazy. She doesn’t want to dive. She doesn’t want to read and anticipate” (VB-A, 7-27).

I also approached the teaching action paradox from a slightly different point of view. Instead of only questioning coaches about actions I had observed, I also asked about behaviors I did not observe. For example, during an interview I asked Coach FB-B why he did not encourage or teach his players to be more enthusiastic during practices. My specific question was, “Why don’t I see you encouraging the whoop and hollering behavior during practice?” His response was, “I don’t think I either stop it or encourage it. I think enthusiasm comes from an internal sense of pride and commitment. My job is to teach them to execute not how to have fun. Sure, I know they want to have fun, whoop and holler. They can do that all they want as long as they do their job too. We as

coaches have struggled with that a lot here. Having them come out and want to be there. Sometimes it is like we are making them be there. The teams that I have had in the past that have done that kind of behavior I didn't make them do it or not made them do it. I think when you do what you are supposed to do, it becomes fun" (FB-B, 10-13). What the example from Coach FB-B demonstrates is his acceptance of the opposing forces of needs and wants involved with coaching. The basic tenet of his statement was that authentic coaching is a constant struggle of balancing needs and want.

### *Motivating*

During the open coding process, motivating was defined as actions that created, maintained, or changed the emotional state of athletes. While examining the paradoxical qualities of motivating, two opposing forces became critical, player *confidence* and *fear*. Confidence is related to a coach's perceived sense of player security, with the concept of fear representing the opposite of security (see Figure 6).

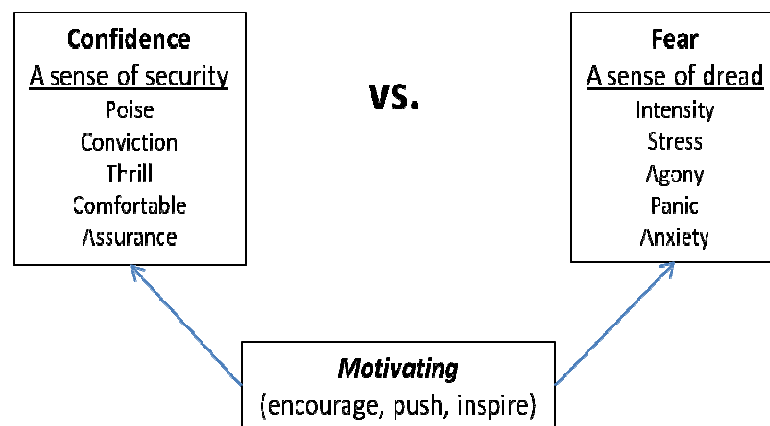


Figure 6. Motivating Action Paradox

During the open coding phase of analysis, the contradictory nature of praising and scolding became obvious, which lead to questioning coaches about the intent of their behavior. Again, the purposeful interview format of asking the question, what did you want to accomplish by..., proved very helpful. For example, after asking Coach SM-B why he gave such an emotionally charged pre-game speech, which included both praising and scolding behaviors, he responded, “I want them to have the fear of losing and the confidence to go out there and win” (8-15).

What became clear through the analysis of the purposeful interviews, as well as direct observations in the field, was when coaches perceived an imbalance between the levels of confidence and fear they would motivate in hopes of bringing an emotional equilibrium. This was true for individual players or the team as a whole. For example, “You have to get the kids bought-in, and the only way to do that is both pumping them up and causing a little fear in the same breath” (FB-A, 11-20). “For soccer, I believe you have to be a lot calmer and you can’t be all hyped up because of the endurance that is needed. We try to be real level and have almost a Zen-like approach to it” (SW-A, 11-15). “I don’t want the girls to be too high or too low going into the play-offs, we are always trying to adjust them, tweak them emotionally (VB-A, 8-24).

Each coach was observed motivating, and each cited the importance of creating a balance between player confidence and fear. Coach SW-A’s statement best typifies the tenet of all the coaches, “I think there is fear involved in playing any sport, I also think you can be too confident. Being over-confident is just as bad as being afraid” (12-7).

One of the interesting techniques many coaches used to motivate their teams was coded as “rituals”. What made this concept interesting is how it can be theoretically

linked to the concept of re-set, described in the Personal History section of this chapter. Rituals consisted of ceremonies or routines meant to bring players back to a previously established emotional state of confidence or fear.

An example of using rituals as a motivating tool can be seen in the pre-game routine of Coach FB-A. The ritual would begin with players watching a highlight film of outstanding plays from the previous week's game. As soon as the highlights ended, the video would switch to George C. Scott's opening monologue to the movie *Patton*. Throughout the movie clip, the players would perform a series of activities ranging from clapping to chanting, all done in unison at predetermined portions of the monologue. These activities escalated in enthusiasm to the point when the video ended, and all of the players were standing as a single unit, yelling at the top of their lungs.

When I asked Coach FB-A to help me understand the intent behind the activity, he said, "Our pre-game ritual has been the same for years. Watching the highlight video really gets the kids pumped. I like showing the speech from Patton because it forces the kids to let go of all the crap that might have happened during the previous week. Patton's message is about concentrating on what's important now. Plus if you aren't excited and ready to go play football after you hear that speech, you're probably dead" (FB-A, 9-3).

### *Organizing*

Organizing refers to actions of planning, design, and strategizing (see Table 5). Organizing has been recognized as a key dimension of coaching behavior since Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Multidimensional Scale of Leadership. During the open coding phase of analysis, the data revealed that the coaches associated

their organizing action with two themes, designing order within the environment and providing a competitive advantage.

Actions that give a sense of order can be seen in how Coach VB-A organized her practice by placing cones to mark certain court locations. Another example was Coach BW-A's writing and usage of a practice plan. A more extravagant example of organizing environmental order was Coach FB-A's utilization of motorized carts and three different areas of his school campus, each separated by hundreds of feet, as a way of controlling the flow of players.

Organizing to provide a competitive advantage is related to the strategizing and scheme development. I argued in Chapter 1 and again in the Coaching Belief Triad section of this chapter, that the competitive nature of interscholastic sports requires strategy development. Any actions of the coaches associated with scheme or strategy development was coded as part of the organizing action category. The coaches in the study often referred to this type of action as "the X and O's of the game" (BM-A, 12-19). Specific strategic behaviors noted among all coaches included; talking to assistant coaches about game tactics, watching game video, and diagramming plays.

Following the same procedures of axial coding described for teaching and motivating, it was determined that the fundamental paradox that defines organizing actions is a balancing of *novelty* and *routine*. Novelty refers to creating something that is unusual, new, unexpected, or unique to the particular sporting environment. Routine refers to designing a sense of sameness, regularity, or habit (see Figure 7).

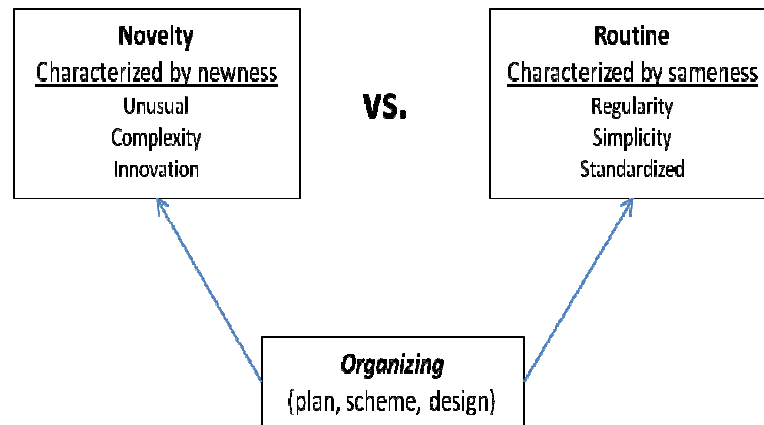


Figure 7. Organizing Action Paradox

“I am constantly adjusting the way we organize thing. Even if it is a drill in practice, changing a little thing makes it a whole new drill, it keeps the players interested, and makes them better. Sometimes I go overboard and make things too difficult, then I will scale it back” (SM-A, 11-13). Coach SM-A’s statement highlights the basic tenet of the organizing paradox, which is, finding the right balance between innovation and standardization.

Another example of this paradox can be seen in Coach BW-A’s answer to the question, why did you organize a very simplistic offense compared to other coaches. “The game of basketball is complex enough without running 20 different offenses. We organize our girls with a basic high/low offense and stress good spacing. We add little things as the season goes on, but we start out basic and get more complex over the season” (BW-A, 11-15).

As the Coach BW-A example illustrates, organizing strategy and playing scheme often illuminates the organizing action paradox. The coaches in the study often placed a great deal of time and energy into organizing. The importance placed on this activity

may have been due to the competitive nature of interscholastic athletes. Nevertheless, all of the coaches worked to balance the organizing paradox by constantly adjusting the level of complexity or simplicity of the game strategies.

For example, FB-A designed an extremely complex offensive scheme that included multiple ball exchanges between multiple players within the same play. To an outside observer each play looked like a “Chinese fire-drill”. The complexity of his scheme required an immediate and consistent emphasis on organizing actions from the very start of the season.

In contrast, FB-B approached the organizing paradox by planning a very simple, straightforward, and traditional offensive scheme. This emphasis on simplicity allowed FB-B teams to isolate opposing players they felt were not “tough enough”, and overpower them with numbers. It also allowed coach FB-B to concentrate more of his coaching actions on issues of motivating and teaching.

### *Politicking*

Throughout the study coaches were observed working to influence, persuade, and govern individuals and groups of people outside of their immediate team. “I talk to my school administration every day, constantly letting them know what we are doing” (FB-A, 11-20). “We are always working with the parents, helping them organize different events for the team” (VB-A, 10-13). This type of action was categorized during open coding as politicking.

From a paradoxical perspective, when coaches engaged in politicking they were trying to combine the *internal* with the *external*. Internal usually referred to the team or a core



group of team members. External was any entity a coach perceived as periphery to the team (see Figure 8).

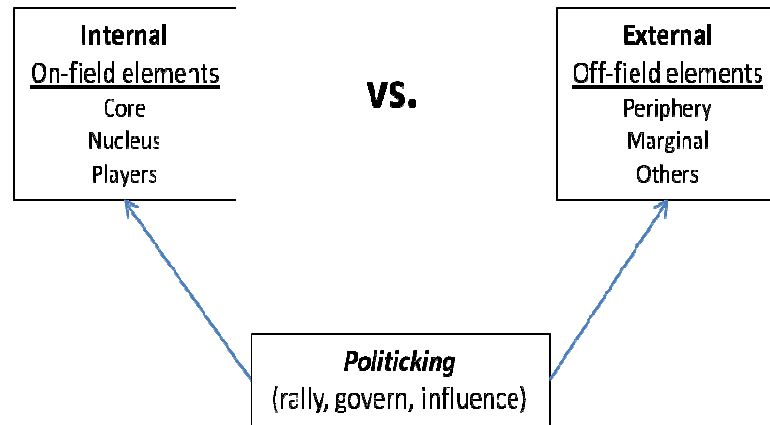


Figure 8. Politicking Action Paradox

The purpose of this type of coaching action was to create movement between the two groups, with the ultimate goal of joining the groups as part of a common cause. Coaches worked to move both the interior toward the exterior, and vice versa. For example, in an attempt to move the outside toward the inside, every coach was observed trying to “win over” game officials. While sitting with Coach VB-A before her volleyball match was to begin, she unexpectedly blurted out, “My job just got a whole lot harder.” Asking her to explain what the problem was, she said, “Did you see the referee who just walked in? He is horrible. I am going to have to spend the next half hour schmoozing him and making sure he understands how we rotate our players into the game” (VB-A, 10-13).

Talking to the press was also coded as politicking, as was the case for FB-B. Minutes before his game was to begin, while his players were still warming up, it was noted that

Coach FB-B spent 15 minutes talking to a local television reporter. When I asked why he decided to spend that valuable time away from his players, he said, “the more positive ink we get, the harder our kids will play. It never hurts to have a reporter on your side” (FB-B, 9-11).

An example of movement from the interior to the exterior included, Coach BM-A’s organization of a community outreach event bringing his players to a local hospital. Another example of this in to out movement was seen in the way numerous coaches gave their athletes progress report sheets to be filled out by their teachers. When I asked SM-A why he decided to do this his response was, “it forces the players to go talk with their teachers. I could just look up the grades myself on the computer, but I hope by doing it this way the teachers will see our kids in a different light. It is a lot of work on my part, but I think it is worth it” (SM-A, 11-20).

As the axial coding procedures progressed, it became clear politicking should be viewed as an outlier within the continuum of coaching action. What I mean is, coaches worked at politicking by connecting it to other coaching actions. For example, coaches “won over” referees by *teaching* them as was the case in the VB-A example. Or in the case of FB-B’s politicking of the local television reporter, he described his behavior as “really it’s just *motivating*”. Additionally, in the SM-A example of bringing his team to a local hospital, players became a part of the larger community through *organizing* the event.

Linking political action with organizing can also be seen in the SM-A progress report example. Building off his comment, “It is a lot of work on my part”, I asked him to explain what work was involved. His response was, “It means I have to plan when it is

going to happen, print up the progress forms, and organize the players. I guess it is motivating, too because I got to scare the crap out of them to get the sheets back” (SM-A, 11-20).

### Selective Coding—The Paradox of Authenticity

The purpose of the selective coding phase of analysis is to make connections between theoretical groups. To this point, I have highlighted four theoretical concepts as important to the coaching process; 1) Personal History, 2) A Coaching Belief Triad, 3) Focus, and 4) Coaching Actions. Before turning my attention to describing how the coaches in this study linked these core categories together, it is necessary to pause and set the stage for the remainder of this chapter.

Three fundamental paradoxes will be exposed over the next three sections respectively; the paradox of authenticity, the paradox of purpose, and the pendulum paradox. The remainder of the current section focuses on the topic of consistent alignment between the inner and outer coaching self, leading to a description of authentic coaching. In the following section, the topic of success outcomes will help bring a sense of wholeness to the four coaching actions described earlier. During the final section of this chapter, I will illustrate the manner in which coaches move through the coaching process by introducing the notion of a pendulum paradox. By exploring these three paradoxes, I hope to provide an alternative model to the coaching process. The model of authentic coaching I seek is one that embraces opposites and guides coaches to a deeper understanding of not only what they do, but also why and how they do it.

#### *Consistent Alignment*

If I were forced to describe authentic coaching in terms of a rhetorical paradox I might say, coaches are authentic when they *both* do what they believe will lead to success *and* believe what they do will lead to success. A simpler way of describing authentic coaching is a direct, obvious, and coherent link between beliefs and actions. An even simpler way of explaining authentic coaching is consistent alignment.

In the final stage of data analysis, selective coding, I was able to step back and review the data in its entirety. I began this process by comparing data concerning coaching actions in light of the data associated with coaches beliefs, and from that, I was able to draw comparisons between what coaches believe and what coaches do. What became obvious as this selective process progressed was the presence (or absence) of alignment between each coach's predominate belief and the coaching action they engaged in the most.

To explain the paradox of authenticity in straightforward terms:

- Conductors—Motivate
- Managers—Teach
- Architects—Organize

For example, while observing a FB-A practices, I noted 23 different coaching actions of which 16 were coded as organizing. After the practice, I questioned him on the topic and he confirmed my perception of organizing actions dominating his behavior by say, “I think my number one role is, and I don’t mean to pat myself on the back but I think I am really good at it, is being organized. What you saw sounds about right. I am an organizer” (FB-A, 8-9). The quote above shows, as well as the data reviewed in the Belief Triad section of this chapter, Coach FB-A fits an Architect belief archetype.

Having that particular belief system means he viewed success as predominately emanating from a control of the environment and organizing strategies that control the playing atmosphere.

Coach SM-A, another Architect, during a 30-minute inter-squad game was observed engaging in 12 organizing actions compared to 3 acts of instruction and 2 acts of motivating. The organizing actions included; arranging the playing field, picking teams members, arrangement of cones on the field to centralize the movement the ball, substituting of players, and verbal acts of strategizing. When I brought this observation to his attention his response was, “The more I have coached the more I realized there has to be structure and organization. Sure you can have some talent and make that talent even better while they are with you, but if you don’t have structure you have a big problem. If you have a structured system you can teach kids to play really well within that system” (SM-A, 10-20).

Coach BW-A also demonstrated this notion of belief-action alignment when she engaged in 12 motivating actions in a 30 minute period of practice. Her obvious focus on motivating was very much in-line with her Conductor belief archetype. I questioned her about what I observed by asking her the question, is there an off-switch to the intensity? Her response was, “No. Like I told you before, my job is to teach discipline. There is no grey area. You have to have consistency with kids. I think overall coaches have a hard time with that. Kids recognize no discipline right off the bat. Kids don’t like inconsistencies” (BW-A, 12-1).

To round-out the belief archetypes, Coach SW-A’s believed success was primarily a result in recognizing, utilizing, and improving players’ talents and skills. His belief

orientation typified the Managers archetype. As a researcher, I often found myself getting frustrated while observing Coach SW-A's actions during practices. During my first few observations it seemed very little coaching action was happening to actually record. The players were doing most of the organizing, setting up the field, and moving around equipment. Any motivating actions were usually attributed to his assistant coach. Coach SW-A seemed to "do" very little. This is where the iterative nature of the study served as an asset. Through repeated observation, I came to realize he was teaching individual players constantly throughout the practice: Making a brief comment as a girl dribbled her ball past him, instructing another girl while she got a quick drink. During one practice, I noted that he provided individual instruction to all 17 girls on the field within a 30-minute period. His actions were subtle and usually quick, but were teaching actions nonetheless.

Still referring to Coach SW-A, the following quote adds support to the notion that authenticity involves the consistent alignment between beliefs and actions. During his formal interview taken when he was recruited to participate in the study, I asked him to describe another coach past or present that did not seem to have the same philosophic beliefs as he did. "Probably the biggest difference between me and other coaches is probably their approach to dealing with the kids. For the person that I am thinking of, I think his focus was not on working with everybody. Now that is hard to do. I try to make a concentrated effort to focus on everybody. Well, at least I try to. Now this person I am thinking of was ten times the tactical coach I will ever be. They knew more about soccer than I could ever dream about knowing. But I would say our player-management was not the same.

As I stated at the beginning of this section, the selective coding process allowed me to view the wholeness of the data generated during this project. It was by viewing the totality of notes, observations and interview transcripts that I came to the conclusion, authentic coaching is a decision-making process in which coaches attempt to attain success through a congruent intentional philosophic approach; a trueness to ones beliefs. The identification and utilization of a coaching philosophy, also referred to as a coaching belief triad, helps coaches to focus on consistent actions.

Despite the fact this was not a quantitatively designed study, I feel very confident in saying, the coaches who participated in this study were authentic. The coaches' beliefs and actions were aligned on a consistent basis—they balanced the Paradox of Authenticity.

### Success Outcomes

#### The Kruger Principle

The term coaching has always implied work. In the prior section, I highlighted the four actions coaches engage in, and the paradoxes that define those actions. I also argued that authentic coaching should imply work that is aligned consistently with a coach's primary belief. However, as this study progressed it became apparent that authentic coaching is not simply working for the sake of work. Authentic coaching is a result-orientated endeavor. Authentic coaching is work with a purpose. Coach FB-A possibly said it best, "As long as there's a scoreboard on that field, winning matters" (8-2).

As I analyzed more and more data, a picture began to form concerning the outcomes of coaching action. That picture of success involved two elements. The first element

dealt with the idea that each coaching action produces a different outcome. For example, the study participants expected a different result when teaching than when they were engaged in motivating, and still different when organizing or politicking. The second element of success was that through a compounding of these specific outcomes over time, an even higher level of success is ultimately reached. This second tenet clearly added the concept of future to the authentic coaching process. I came to call this picture of success the Kruger Principle.

The name refers to Coach Lon Kruger, the current men's basketball coach at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Coach Kruger is recognized as one of college basketball's greatest change agents after becoming only the second coach in college basketball history to lead four different schools to multiple NCAA Tournament appearances. In his 20 plus years of head coaching experience, at both the collegiate and professional levels, he has earned over 525 wins.

I was fortunate enough to meet Coach Kruger when he agreed to participate in a pilot study I was conducting as part of my doctoral program. In preparation for our meeting, I prepared an extensive list of coaching related questions. Imagine my excitement as a new doctoral student, having the chance to pick the brain of such an accomplished coach.

At one point in the interview, the discussion turned to the topic of success. I asked how he measured the success of his teams. He responded, "Success is when we have built a family through our players disciplined execution of Runnin' Rebel Basketball" (personal communication, September 25, 2007).

He went on to explain that success to him was a process, with the ultimate level of success being a collection of smaller successes. He described those smaller successes as



family, discipline, execution, and the “Rebel Basketball” way. At the time, I remember being very surprised, that Coach Kruger never mentioned winning in relation to success. When I pressed him on that point, his response was very matter-of-fact. “We don’t really talk about winning. Winning is a product of execution. We want to build a tradition of excellence in everything we do.”

That conversation with Coach Kruger stayed with me. When the topic of success emerged in the current study, my thoughts turned back to the interview with Coach Kruger. Comparing his words with those of the coaches in the study, I began to see similarities. Terms with the same basic tenets as family, discipline, execution, and “our way” kept surfacing in the data. Moreover, like Coach Kruger, the coaches were hesitant to make winning the ultimate goal of coaching.

What the Kruger Principle came to represent is the multiplicity of outcomes involved in the authentic coaching process. Success is not simply winning. Success involves each of the four coaching actions. In fact, as I will explain, the coaches in the study identified winning most often with their actions of teaching. Moreover, the compounding effect of each success outcome, over time, provides for an even higher level of success.

Through observations and purposeful interviews, four tenets of success emerged from the data: 1) execution, 2) discipline, 3) a unique system, and 4) spirit. Through the constant comparative analysis and placing the terms into coding families, a link between each success outcome and a particular coaching action became obvious (see Figure 9). Below is a small sampling of quotes I used during the selective coding phase to support the connection between coaching actions and success outcomes.

Execution—Teaching

- “We teach our kids to go at full speed all the time. If we can teach our kids to execute, go full speed every play, we will win” (FB-B, 10-12).
- “Like that girl (pointing), she has learned so much in the past year, she really absorbed the different skills she needs to know. Her level of improvement is off the charts. I know she will be a big part of the success we have this season” (VB-A, 7-29).

#### Discipline—Motivating

- “I think discipline comes first. You will not achieve anything if you are not disciplined. Discipline is respect. You must give respect and you must also demand respect” (BW-A, 11-15).
- “You must learn what makes a kid tick. Pushing his buttons sometimes can make him tougher, and to be successful at this level you must have tough kids” (SM-B, 8-15).
- “I think there is fear involved in playing any sport, I also think you can be too confident. Being over-confident is just as bad as being afraid. I have found those intangible things play a big role in the level of success your team reaches” (SW-A, 12-7).

#### Unique System—Organizing

- “We have developed a unique style that is different than most teams. It may look complex from the outside, but our kids really work at it” (SM-A, 8-30).
- “We do this thing called the “Rebel Promise”, it helps every kid, and parent buy into the system” (FB-A, 9-22).

#### Spirit—Politicking

- “Having the entire school on your side, excited about coming to watch the team play, school spirit is huge in determining how far you’re going go as a team” (BM-A, 12-19).
- “I really believe this, in public education your only as good as your administration, in private education your only as good as your boosters, you have to adapt to that” (FB-A, 8-2).

Figure 9 is a model meant to show the wholeness of coaching action. Each coaching action identified during the open coding phase of the study is coupled with the opposing forces that helped to define the paradoxical qualities of that behavior. Success outcomes are linked to each coaching action and represent the products of achieving a balance between the paradoxical forces. The model also introduces the notion that the collective association of success outcomes leads to an even higher sense of success—tradition.

### Tradition

The second element of the Kruger Principle deals with combining the specific success outcomes over time, and through a compounding effect, the individual successes are the means to an even greater end. The term I chose to represent this ultimate level of success is—Tradition.

I defined the concept of tradition as a continuing pattern of both past beliefs and past actions. Viewing tradition in this manner draws a direct parallel between it and the notion of authenticity developed in the last section. Authentic coaching is the consistent alignment of beliefs and actions; Tradition is the continuation of beliefs and actions over time.

There were two reasons for choosing the term tradition to symbolize authentic coaching success. Tradition has both a temporal connotation, and a reference to

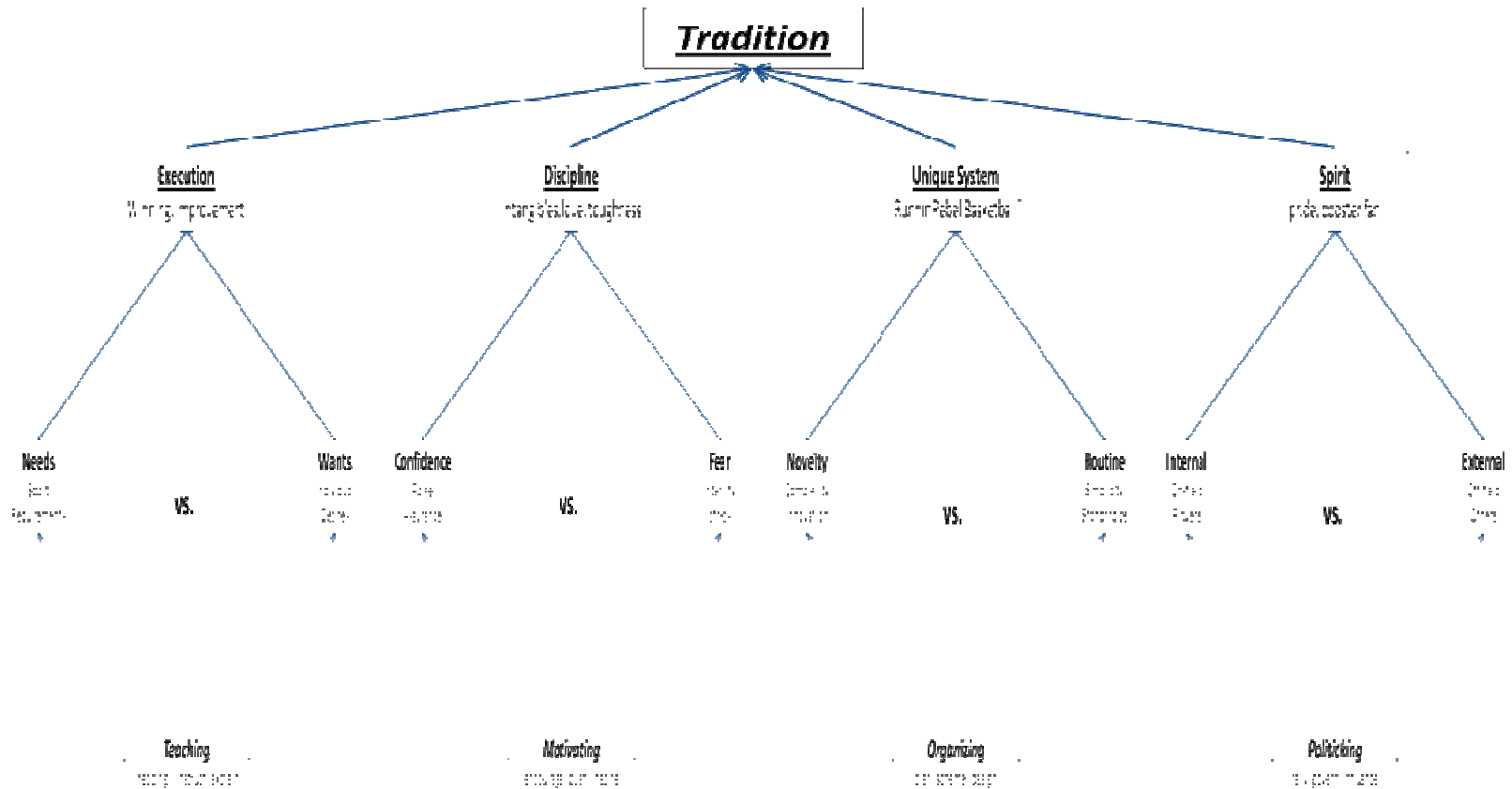


Figure 9. The Coaching Action Model

paradoxical forces. First, tradition involves a continued pattern of behavior established in the past. This view of tradition brings to the foreground both past and future elements. The second reason for choosing the term tradition was, tradition involves *both* beliefs *and* actions. As with all paradoxical thinking, Tradition is not an either/or condition. It is not a matter of either having or not having tradition. Tradition is a collection of success outcomes, and is more relative to time and degree. Tradition builds over time.

The following example is from a discussion with Coach SM-A on the topic of tradition. This example illustrates how the concept of tradition is related to coaching beliefs and actions. Please recall, I established that Coach SM-A fit an architect belief system, meaning his beliefs centered on building success through the designing of the environment. “Tradition comes out of what players and coaches develop during early workouts. It can be something as simple as a warm-up routine, a team prayer before games, pre-game sandwiches, or even players going to a local fast food restaurant after a game to just hang-out. With tradition, a program has history. A program with history will then have alumni. Players that are on the current squad have higher expectations not only from their teammates, but also from those that came before them. Tradition is what links past, present, and future together” (SM-A, 10-13).

#### Catching Lightning—The Paradox of Purpose

Having lived my entire life in the Southwestern United States, I cannot think of a more awe-inspiring sight than a summer thunderstorm rolling across the dry desert sand. Watching as bolts of light explode across the sky, the deafening cracks of thunder cause both exhilaration and panic in the same moment. That is why, while walking my daughter through our neighborhood library, I stopped to admire a local artist hanging the

most vivid photographs of lightning I had ever seen. The vibrant images of light darting across a midnight sky were simply beautiful. Striking up a conversation, I asked the young man, “just how complex is it to take a picture of lightning?” With certainty in his voice he said, “It is not complex, it is just difficult.” He went on to explain, “Anyone can learn what they need to know, fitting it all together and putting yourself in the position to catch the shot, that is the difficult part.”

That conversation about catching lightning stuck with me. The more I observed different acts of coaching, and the more I discussed the details of their craft with the coaches in this study, the more I saw a similarity between what that young artist described as catching lighting and what interscholastic coaches do on a daily basis. The coaches did not view their job as complex, often expressing the tenets, “coaching is just teaching” (FB-B, 8-28); “I develop athletes” (SM-B, 9-15); or “I am an organizer” (FB-A, 9-18). However, when pressed to dig deeper into the intricacies of their job, at first all of the coaches grew silent recognizing the paradoxical dilemmas at the heart of authentic coaching. “It is kind of funny, my first thought was I don’t know. After thinking about it I would say, coaching is my passion” (BW-A, 11-15). I agree, to catch lightning requires a personal passion.

### *The Power of Passion*

The current section has centered on describing coaching as a result-orientated endeavor. I said, authentic coaching is work with a purpose. As part of the selective coding stage of analysis, I recognized a second fundamental paradox to the authentic coaching process—the *paradox of purpose*. The paradox of purpose describes the inherent complexities of the athletic environment. In essence, the paradox explains the

difficulties coaches must face while acting as the bridge between the sporting context and athletes. A large part of Chapter 1 was devoted to explaining the paradoxical elements that make up athletics—sport, athletes, and the coach. The difficulty of coaching lies in the fact that each element of athletics holds a power unique in and of itself.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, a question kept creeping into my thoughts. What keeps these coaches going? The power of sport is just awesome. The ambition, drama, zeal, and complexity of athletes are equally amazing. As I explained in the coaching action section, a sport has needs and players have wants. Sport creates both confidence and fear for athletes. Athletes desire a sense of order and novelty while competing in sport. If all of that is true, and the actions of coaching attempt to balance those opposing forces, the question becomes, what fuels a coach to place him/herself between these two incredibly intricate and complicated forces day after day, season after season?

The genesis to my understanding of that question occurred while interviewing Coach FB-A. I asked him to tell me about his coaching philosophy. His response was, “My philosophy is, have passion. I think what drives me to walk on that field every year for the past 25 years is my passion. I have such a passion for football and athletics. It is my whole life; it is what I have always done” (FB-A, 8-2).

What I grew to understand while observing the coaches in this study was, it is passion that binds the opposing forces of authentic coaching together. Through their devotion toward the multitude of success outcomes of coaching, the coaches held the opposing poles of each coaching action in sync. Parker Palmer (2007) said, working with paradoxes is like “holding the opposing poles of a battery: bring the poles together and

they generate the energy of life; pull them apart and the current stops flowing” (p. 67). I would add, to bind the poles together and maintain the spark a person needs passion.

Passion is a much less tangible concept to describe. Passion is about excitement, desire, pride. With enough passion work becomes something to look forward to, not the dreaded swamp of complexity. The paradox of purpose explains how passion is the excitement a coach feels as a result of aligning action and purpose. The profound truth: purpose generates passion and passion generates purpose.

What Coach FB-A initially helped me to recognize, and what every other coach in the study showed me day after day, was a burning desire to fit all of the pieces of the coaching process together—the passion to actually catch lightning.

## The Pendulum Paradox

### The Swing

One of my fondest childhood memories is going to the park with my younger brother. We would always race to the swings, eager to resume our ritual of brotherly competition. Who can fly the highest?

I remember thinking, being two years older should give me an advantage, as I pushed myself backwards to begin the first and most crucial swing. Having pushed back to the point only my toes were touching the ground, bracing against invisible forces that tried to compel me forward, a familiar sensation of excitement and fear would set in. The mixed feeling of anticipation and concern was centered on the goal. Understand, our goal wasn’t just who could get the highest; our aspiration was a tree branch that hung just over the edge of the sandbox. That branch marked the pinnacle of height. Getting to that



branch required not just power, but also precision. Reaching the pinnacle meant bragging rights, at least until tomorrow.

If it were a good day, if luck was on my side, that first swing felt like butter. Releasing my weight, gliding forward, legs straight, head back, pull. One swing would lead to another, and another, and another. Working hard to keep my feet from hitting the ground, swing after swing gaining a little more speed and height every time. With each backward oscillation came comfort, going backwards provided a moment to rest as the forces returned me to where I had been, and a little beyond. That moment, at the highest point of the return arc also provided a moment to assess “am I ahead, can I win?” If all felt good, then I would unleash every bit of strength I had, surging to a new apex, and hoping my initial alignment would continue to propel me toward the objective.

If it was a bad day, and the gods were not smiling, the doubt set in on that first swing. As I mentioned, my brother and I chose a game of power and skill. Both height and trueness of flight was required to touch the branch. If my departure wobbled, allowing some invisible force to pull me off center, disaster was certain. If the wobble was ignored, each oscillation would draw me closer to my opponent. Eventually the crash would be unavoidable. Collision, even if by accident, was not only painful, but prohibited, and grounds for disqualification.

The only way to avoid the inevitable was to “hit the brakes”, which was our childhood lingo for dragging your feet at the bottom of the arc until you came to a stop. Painful in the moment, stopping was the only hope. The result of starting over was rarely victory. Disappointment, frustration, defeat was never fun. Yet, even as a boy I think I realized, winning wasn’t the only thing. Our game always brought an intensity that went beyond

the days result. Freedom, spirit, and flying those victories could not be lost. I think I understood, even then, having the chance to soar with your brother is special too. Plus, tomorrow meant re-match.

### The Pendulum Effect

The swing analogy above, captures the overall feel of how authentic coaches move through the coaching process. I came to call this notion the *pendulum paradox*. Different from most conceptions of process, which describe a plodding along step-by-step until the goal is reached. The pendulum effect utilizes the paradoxical energy of past vs. future, inner vs. outer, beliefs vs. action, to swing back and forth gaining speed and power with each oscillation.

### *Momentum*

I would venture to say, the sentiment most often expressed to any coach is a wish for good luck. Without downplaying the incredible power of providence, ask authentic coaches what they wish for and you will most likely hear them praise the power of momentum.

Returning to the swing analogy, each oscillation builds on itself. To achieve a higher state, you must first return to where you had been before going forward. The authentic coaches seemed to understand this type of momentum gained through repetition. The pendulum paradox captures the idea that no single action or event will propel a team to the ultimate goal. The goal is reached through a compounding process, swing by swing, decision by decision, action by action.

By observing the coaches over time, it became clear that as individual success outcomes were reached, not only did that provide a sense of growth but it also provided a

sense of speed. For example, Coach SM-A's (Architect) emphasized unique and innovative methods for corner-kicks (in-bounding the ball with an opportunity to score a goal). Through constant comparison with other soccer coaches in the study, it became clear that the organization of Coach SM-A practices provided a consistent revisiting of previously learned skills and concepts. Moreover, by the end of the season Coach SM-A's team had far outpaced opponents in the number of plays they could run on corner-kicks. While observing practices throughout the season it was apparent that the increased rate of incorporating new plays was directly related to the consistent review of previous plays. By re-teaching the previously learned plays, and adding a very small twist to the strategy, overall growth was achieved at an exponentially faster speed.

The methodological design of the study proved an advantage for recognizing the pendulum paradox. Because of the iterative nature of grounded theory, I was able to observe that the coaches did not simply engage in an action and then move on to another. Instead, the coaches worked to create a sense of wholeness over time, constantly re-setting the current situation with issues that had occurred previously. A noticeable example of the pendulum effect was observed when the coaches were teaching.

A common conception of the teaching process is related to the notion of sequencing. What I mean is, new concepts and skills are strung together, new following old, accumulating over time into higher and higher levels of understanding. Much like a marathon runner putting one foot in front of the other, step after step leading closer to the end goal. What I observed from the authentic coaches in the study was different.

For the coaches in the study, teaching was related more to a compounding effect than to an additive effect. With each swing of the pendulum, both fundamental needs and

players' current desires were considered together. The pendulum effect allowed for skills learned in the past to be related to new skills needed in the future.

The common conception of teaching often places emphasis on athletes acquiring more and newer concepts. Instead, the authentic coaches were consistently reviewing and returning to previously learned skills and knowledge. In the language of coaches, this notion of re-teaching was often called "repping". "I am a big believer in repetition; you can't re-invent the wheel every day that is why we are repping plays 70, 80, 90 times per practice" (FB-A, 9-23). "Fundamentals are vital. We are constantly going back and repping the basics. Sure, we try to add something new every year, but it is usually small, and more often than not we end up throwing it out and going back to what we do best" (BM-A, 12-17).

The pendulum effect was evident in each of the coaching actions, not just teaching. When it came to motivating, many of the coaches were consistently swinging between providing a secure and confident emotional state and the opposite, fear. That idea of swinging between emotional states is very different from the common conception of building confidence (or fear) to the point of complete saturation. A prime example of the pendulum effect was observed during the first official try-out practice of Coach VB-A's (Manager) season. After making a point to talk individually with each player before practice began, obviously welcoming them and attempting to make a personal connection with each girl, it was then time to start practice. She had decided to open the practice with a mile run. The last words she said before sending the girls off was, "You better keep your whining to yourself. I don't want to hear about how hard it is, just do it" (VB-A, 8-16).

### *The Energy of Tradition*

I argued in the previous section that the ultimate level of success for the authentic coaching process is tradition. One reason the term tradition seemed to fit the data was that it refers to a combining of past, present, and future into a single wholeness. Tradition means, consistently repeating the past. It is through the pendulum effect that the wholeness of tradition is achieved.

Momentum gained through the pendulum effect eventually allows for that blending of time—past and future merge into a wholeness of action. “We always get ready for games that way, it has always worked for us, so I don’t see us changing anytime soon” (SM-A, 11-20). Coach SM-A’s comments expressed a common tenet among the coaches regarding rituals, or ways they would perform particular activities. The common tenet being, “we do what we have done in the past, because it works” (SW-A, 12-9).

Another reason the term tradition seemed to fit the authentic coaching process is because the term winning did not. In the previous section, I also discussed how all of the coaches were hesitant to use the word winning as a measure of overall success. The coaches believed success involved other actions besides just the objective performance on game day. Winning was more often associated with the execution of skills taught. Although execution was cited as important by all of the coaches, so too was building a unique system that identified their program from other programs. Instilling a sense of discipline was also vital in the coaches’ eyes. As well as, having an ever-increasing presence of community and spirit.

All of the success outcomes were important to the coaches in the study. Yet, the coaches also agreed that the degree these outcomes were collectively present determined

an overall measure of success. Tradition came to mean, the increasing degree of all success outcomes measured together.

Tradition is both the blending of time *during* the coaching process, and the blending of success outcomes *across* the coaching actions—teaching, motivating, organizing, and politicking. The pendulum effect is what seemed to act as the energy source for both of these elements of tradition.

An example concerning the blending across success outcomes was seen by girls basketball coach BW-A (Conductor). After observing a number of early season practices in which I repeatedly noted a significant emphasis on Coach BW-A's part to create a common emotional bond among the players; which I also noted was very much in-line with her personal belief triad as a conductor. I was very surprised to walk in the gym and find Coach BW-A setting in a chair separated from the players as they stood underneath the basket. After several minutes watching the players arguing amongst themselves about what they should do next, Coach BW-A calmly said, "ladies, you need to figure this out, how are we going to organize ourselves during pre-game warm-ups".

Minutes passed with little getting accomplished, finally Coach BW-A stepped in and had the girls gather around her. She proceeded to instruct (teaching) the players about the importance of establish a sense of fear "in your opponent from the moment they walk into your gym" (BW-A, 11-29). I again noted the connection to her belief triad. Coach BW-A's intensity and enthusiasm while explaining what she expected from her players was palatable, and it was obvious each girl was emotionally charged by the coach's talk (motivating). She ended the situation by demonstrating how her teams of the past would

go through their pre-game warm-up, before returning to her chair at the far end of the court and allowing the players “to figure it out on your own” (organizing).

### Chapter Summary

For me, while in the moment, the example above clearly showed the synchronized blending of actions as well as the authentic connection of past and future—the achievement of Tradition. However, I recognize that from the perspective of someone reading the account it may not be as obvious. We are often trained to pull an event apart, searching for the most influential factor. The purpose of the current chapter has been just that, to dissect the authentic coaching process by separating its elements and describing them in detail.

Below is a listing of key aspects of the authentic coaching process that have been highlighted in this chapter:

- Experiences and events such as coaching apprenticeship, efficacy beliefs, athletic and educational experience make up a coach’s personal history and act as a foundation for the antecedent elements of the authentic coaching process
- Authentic coaches utilize the past as a kind of re-set button by pushing an event currently underway to the past tense, in essence, establishing a new beginning to the present tense
- Coaches beliefs are centered on achieving success
- Authentic coaches have a deep and personal understanding of three specific beliefs which together form a belief triad related to; individual-talent, team cohesion, and sport scheme

- Data from this study revealed three belief archetypes; Conductors, Managers, and Architects. Each archetype emphasizing a different path to success
- Focus refers to what a coach sees in the present tense, and acts as a bridge between the inner and outer aspects of the authentic coaching process
- Authentic coaches engage in four types of coaching action; teaching, motivating, organizing, and politicking
- Each coaching action can be defined by a fundamental paradox, which when balanced lead to a specific success outcome:
  - Teaching = Needs vs. Wants → Execution
  - Motivating = Confidence vs. Fear → Discipline
  - Organizing = Novelty vs. Routine → Unique System “Our Way”
  - Politicking = Internal vs. External → Spirit
- The compounding of the four success outcomes leads to an even higher level of success referred to as, Tradition

However, a danger exists in isolating the elements of a process. In the words of Palmer (2007), this amounts to “thinking the world apart” (p. 65). The danger is losing the whole, failing to appreciate how the opposing forces merge to create something even better. What I came to understand from examining the pendulum paradox is, in authentic coaching not one single event or element defines the coaching process. Authenticity involves the compounding of many elements, over time. Coaching is a paradox.

To close this chapter, and introduce the final chapter, I return to the research questions that have guided this investigation from the start:

How do different coaches maneuver through the coaching process in an authentic fashion?



- What influences a coach to recognize the boundaries of an incident?
- How do a coach's antecedent (inner) beliefs connect to his/her observable (outer) actions?
- What do coaches use to organize information leading to decision-making?

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### Overview of Authentic Coaching

The primary purpose of this project was to approach the complexity of coaching by embracing the tensions inherently found in the coaching process, as opposed to fighting the “hydra-headed monster” (LeUnes, 2007). To be more specific, the goal was to explore and describe the process interscholastic team coaches’ use in doing their job from a paradoxical perspective. While working to achieve that goal, I hoped to describe the coaching process using language that is meaningful for practicing coaches. In addition, I planned to probe the nature a coaching philosophy plays in the decision-making process for coaches.

The goals highlighted above, in addition to the research questions reviewed at the end of the previous chapter, were developed because of coaching science’s failure to adequately describe the link between the inner (antecedent) and outer (behavioral) aspects of the coaching self. Said simply, researchers have failed to effectively describe what it means to coach authentically—the notion of a thoughtful practitioner.

Numerous authors have described the countless number of decisions, and behaviors associated with those decisions, coaches must consider in the process of coaching (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Lyle, 2002; Nash & Collins, 2006). By employing a grounded theory methodology of iterative data collection and analysis, I too approached coaching as a decision-making process. Using the language and direct observations of eight interscholastic team sport coaches, I was

able to “ground” a framework that describes the authentic coaching process. I refer to this framework as the Authentic Coaching Model (see Figure 10).

Six elements characterize the authentic coaching process: (1) Personal History, (2) Belief Triad, (3) Focus, (4) Coaching Action, (5) Success Outcomes, and (6) Tradition. The data showed the coaches in this study did not operate in a vacuum; events and experiences from each coach’s personal history (1) played an important role in shaping their beliefs concerning how athletic success is achieved. The coaches organized three specific beliefs related to individual-talent, team cohesion, and scheme development into a belief triad (2), also referred to as a coaching philosophy. Utilizing their belief triad as a guide, the coaches would focus (3) on four distinctive coaching actions (4). The act of focusing also marked the moment when the inner (antecedent) and outer (observable) aspects of the process would merge. The observable coaching actions of teaching, motivating, organizing, and politicking are not new to coaching researchers, but were viewed through a paradoxical perspective in this study. Two opposing forces were identified as critical to each coaching action. It is important to note, politicking was shown to be an outlier on the action continuum, due to its reliance on other actions. A coach’s ability to balance the paradoxical forces involved with each coaching action determined specific success outcomes (5) including execution, discipline, a unique system, and spirit. The degree to which success outcomes are compounded over time determines the ultimate level of authentic coaching, termed tradition (6).

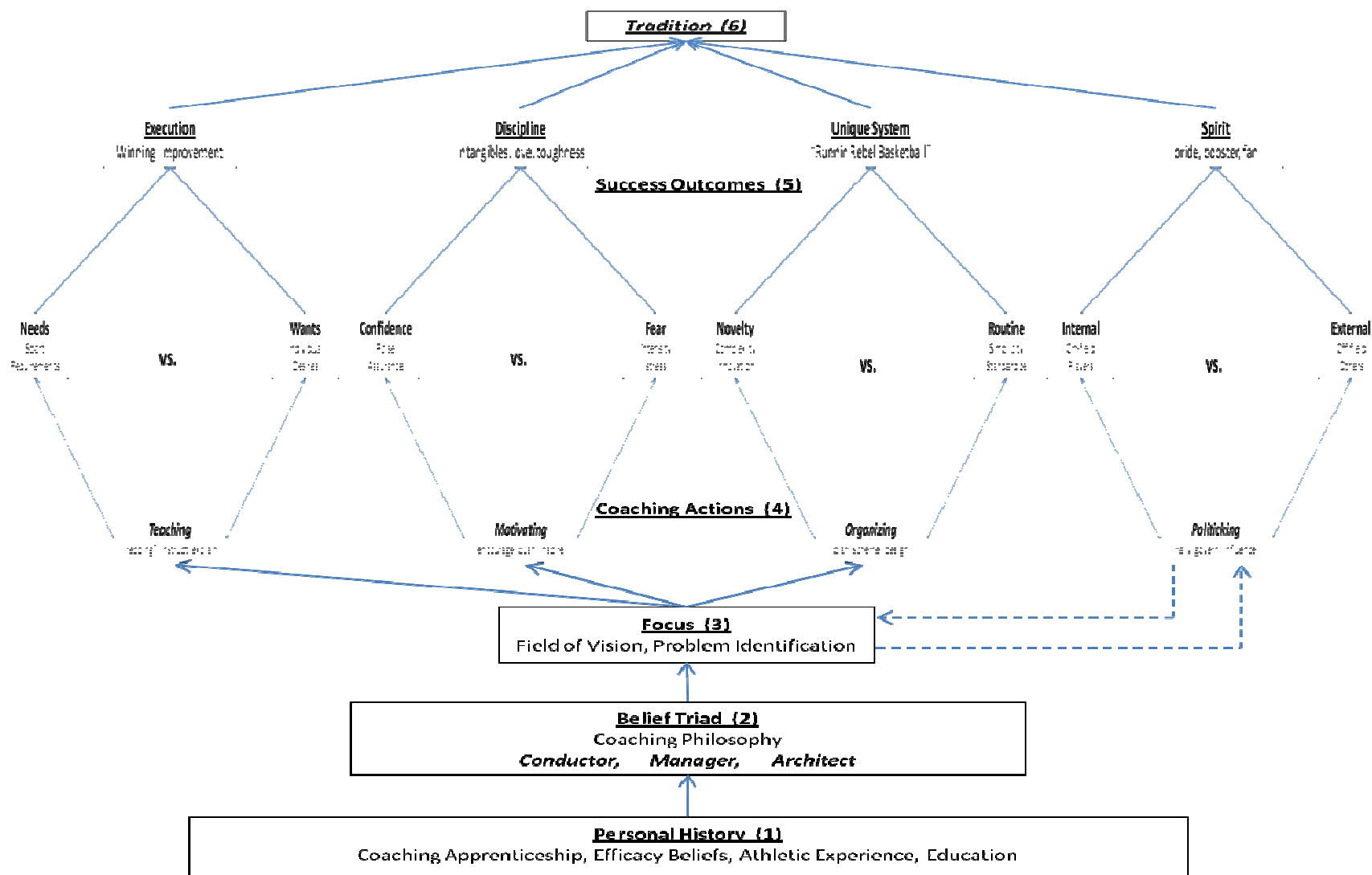


Figure 10. Authentic Coaching Model

### Three Foundational Paradoxes

The six elements described in the model are held together by three foundational paradoxes; the paradox of authenticity, paradox of purpose, and the pendulum paradox. These three invisible forces weave through, across, and around (respectively) the framework creating a sense of wholeness—authentic coaching. Following is a brief review of each paradox, for a more detailed discussion see Chapter 5—Concept Grounding.

First, *the paradox of authenticity* runs through the framework and explains how the coaches bind together the inner and outer coaching self. Most important to the notion of authenticity is the connection between beliefs and behavior (Rink, 1996). In essence, doing what one believes is right. Investigating the coaches beliefs related to athletic success revealed three belief archetypes; Conductors, Managers, and Architects. Through the iterative comparing of belief archetypes and the coaching actions seen in the field, the paradox of authenticity was exposed. When the coaches created a consistent alignment between their belief triad and the coaching behaviors they engaged in the most, a sense of authenticity was achieved. Said in simplest terms; Conductors—Motivate, Managers—Teach, and Architects—Organize.

While similar taxonomies of various aspects of coaching antecedent and observable behaviors are available (Chelladurai, 1990; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b; Feltz et al., 1999; Smoll & Smith, 1989), the Authentic Coaching Model, and specifically the notion of a coaching belief triad, specifies a relationship between individuals-talent, teams, and strategy, is a unique contribution to the present study. Investigating the similarities

between a coach's belief triad and coaching actions allows the coaching process to be viewed as an integrated whole functioning within a dynamic environment.

Second, *the paradox of purpose* describes the complexities coaches must traverse across the athletic environment to achieve success. In essence, the paradox explains why it is so difficult for coaches to get what they desire. The coaches in this study described success as a multiplicity of outcomes. From the iterative analysis of data four success outcomes were exposed; execution, discipline, a unique system, and spirit. Through a process of selective coding, which involves the linking of theoretical concepts, the four success outcomes were linked with the four coaching actions of teaching, motivating, organizing, and politicking respectively. What the coaches in this study confirmed is that authentic coaching is a series of purpose driven activities.

While investigating the relationship between actions and purpose it was important to acknowledge the complexities involved in the coaching process by viewing coaching action through a paradoxical lens. In doing so, two opposing forces were shown to be critical for each coaching action. These opposing forces also help explain the multiplicity of success outcomes. Following is a breakdown of the paradoxical complexities of coaching:

- Teaching = Needs vs. Wants → Execution
- Motivating = Confidence vs. Fear → Discipline
- Organizing = Novelty vs. Routine → Unique System "Our Way"
- Politicking = Internal vs. External → Spirit

The investigation into the paradox of purpose ultimately exposed the concept of passion. Passion is a much less tangible concept, and was defined as the desire for, or devotion to, a purpose. Said another way, passion is the quest for alignment between

actions and results—the paradox of purpose. If authentic coaching is the balancing of paradoxical forces, it is through passion that the coaches in this study accomplished authenticity.

Third, *the pendulum paradox* utilizes the metaphor of a swing to help explain how authentic coaches move around the coaching process. Different from common conceptions of process, which describe a plodding along step-by-step until a goal is reached. The pendulum effect utilizes the paradoxical energy of past vs. future, inner vs. outer, beliefs vs. action, to swing back and forth gaining speed and power with each oscillation.

Key to the pendulum paradox is the concept of momentum in that the coaches compounded success outcomes over time, constantly re-setting the current situation with issues that had previously occurred, ultimately creating a sense of wholeness. The idea that authentic coaches work to build multiple success outcomes over time, provided evidence that the ultimate level of coaching success should be conceptualized as tradition. Tradition involves a continued pattern of action established in the past and repeated into the future. The pendulum paradox helps to explain how authentic coaches create tradition by blending time through the process of swinging between past and future, and simultaneously blend success outcomes together across the coaching process.

### *Embracing Paradox*

Distinguishing a phenomenon by bracketing its elements, or by placing dichotomous boundaries around it, does aid in the understanding of complex social activities like coaching. That said, the bracketing of elements could leave both researchers and

practitioners with the impression that process distinctions are immutable entities (Lewis, 2000). Therefore, it is also important to retain the wholeness of a social phenomenon.

Although much of this paper has focused on ways researchers can identify and work with paradoxes, the goal of coaching science should never be to eliminate paradox. Nor should researchers attempt to avoid paradoxes. The many examples presented in this paper demonstrated, the coaching process for interscholastic coaches is inherently paradoxical—embroiled in tensions, complexity, and reinforcing cycles at its very core. Rather than using paradoxes to build theory, researchers can build theories about paradoxes (Poole & Van De Ven, 1989). That was the overarching purpose of this project, to describe the coaching process from a paradoxical perspective.

If we are to embrace the complexity of paradoxical tensions, a guiding framework is required—a tool to help researchers and practitioners explore the tensions, reinforcing cycles, and management of paradox. The Authentic Coaching Model is meant to serve that purpose.

### Future Research

Although I have confidence in the usefulness of the framework to increase the self-awareness of coaching students and practitioners, the model is not meant to be viewed as a complete and sufficient grasp of all that is known about the coaching process. Taking the lead from Cushion (2007), the Authentic Coaching Model and taxonomies presented in this paper may best be viewed as instruments of analysis, rather than the object of analysis. Meaning, the frameworks developed in this paper are most useful to researchers and practitioners in understanding the coaching process, as opposed to judging the quality of coaching.



While the concepts and framework I put forth in this paper were based on empirical research, much more work needs to be done. This paper is an initial step in bridging the space between theory and practice in our field. Multiple research opportunities were highlighted throughout this paper. Chief among those is the expansion of the theory beyond the substantive level of interscholastic team coaches. By utilizing the methodological techniques established throughout this study, it is possible to investigate other competitive contexts (such as; youth, club, college, and professional) as well as different sport contexts.

Although the framework presented in this paper provides a model of authentic coaching, that does not imply that all coaches coach authentically. During the course of the study, a decision was made to avoid describing inauthentic coaching. Obviously, it is vital for future research efforts to investigate the contrast to authenticity. The participants in the present study were identified as accomplished, reflective, and experienced coaches and thus not representative of all sport coaches. Perhaps authenticity is dependent on experience, or level of coaching education.

#### Implications for Athletic Coaching Education (ACE)

As the field of coaching science has grown, the awareness that coaching is a central element to athlete development and athletic program success has increased (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Horn, 2002, 2008; Jones & Turner, 2006). One need only take a cursory look at the field of coaching science to realize that athletic coach education (ACE) is also growing (Demers, Woodburn, & Savard, 2006; Gilbert, Cote, & Mallett, 2006; McCullick, Belcher, & Schempp, 2005; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). The purpose of ACE

has always been to help coaches translate the information, strategies, and insights gained through scientific inquiries into behaviors useful in their quest for success. I agree with Lyle (2002), if the growth in ACE is to continue attention must turn to providing tools in the form of frameworks that will help educators translate the vast amounts of knowledge coaching science has revealed.

The irony of the current situation is that although coaching practitioners/students are seeking opportunities to become more educated, ACE researchers are questioning if it is even possible to capture the complexities of the coaching process (Cushion, 2007).

However, it is only as a function of focusing on exploring the processes of coaching, e.g., antecedents elements, decision making, behavior, purpose, that coaching science and ACE will gain the insight into establishing useful models of effective coaching practices.

The critical implication for ACE, and the focus of this study, has been the creation of a framework that attempts to square the paradoxical dilemma concerning providing simple comprehensive knowledge about the process of coaching that also, incorporates and displays the complexity inherent to athletics.

This study demonstrated that although no two coaches are exactly alike, coaches do have commonly occurring attributes that allow researchers to classify and compare them. By continuing to investigate the commonalities among coaches, researchers can aid ACE by bringing a sense of clarity to the field as a whole.

### Concluding Thoughts

From the very first line of this dissertation, I have tried to paint interscholastic coaching as an extremely personal endeavor. I felt it was important to bring that personal

perspective to every aspect of this project. For that reason, I made a point of asking each coach in the study a simple but very personal question: What do you want other coaches to say about you? Coach FB-B's response to that question was equally as simple, "I want other coaches to say my teams are *well coached*" (8-28).

Those words, *well coached*, haunted me for weeks after that interview. Each time I would ask another coach the question of what they hoped others would say about them and their teams, I would hear the same basic tenet—*well coached*. Each time I heard those words a realization would wash over me.

Not only did I realize, *well coached*, is the ultimate compliment a coach can receive, especially from a peer. I also realized I never heard those words said about one of my teams. Sure, in my twenty plus years as an interscholastic coach I could recall times when my teams were described as talented, good, sound, smart, even disciplined. But never *well coached*.

That realization hurt at first. My first instinct was to justify, trying to reason with my ego I made a mental list of all the bad breaks, bad hops, and bad situations I had to endure during my career. After a while, after I got over myself, I came to understand it was actually that quest, my quest, for the compliment of *well coached* that had brought me to where I was in the present. My present included, twenty years of service as a high school teacher, countless seasons as an interscholastic coach, and most currently as a graduate student writing my doctoral dissertation. My search for the meaning of *well coached* is why I am here.

Now, as I step back and review the mountains of notes and interview transcripts sitting on my desk, a new realization has washed over me. My newfound awareness can be

separated into two thoughts; I understand a lot more about authentic coaching and what it means to have a *well coached* team than I did before, and I also understand my quest for *well coached* is not over. Coaching is a complex puzzle, and despite my confidence that this project has shed light on important aspects of the coaching process, the puzzle is not solved.

If I, and other coaching researchers, choose to concentrate on the overt behaviors of coaches without delving deeper into the internal mechanisms that drive the behaviors, the field reduces the practice of coaching to a trial and error endeavor. Some coaches, the lucky ones, will experience the successes and joys of authentic leadership, while many others will simply continue to feel the frustration of failure. Providing knowledge concerning the process of coaching in a simple and comprehensive manner that also fully displays the complexity inherent to athletics is a paradoxical dilemma, but should forever remain the goal of sport science research.

In closing, it was Parker (2007) who said, “In certain circumstances, truth is a paradoxical joining of apparent opposites, and if we want to know that truth, we must learn to embrace those opposites as one” (p. 65). The truths I have come to understand because of this study are:

Authentic coaching is personal. It connects the inner and outer coaching self as one.

Authentic coaching is a decision-making process in which coaches attempt to attain success through a congruent intentional philosophic approach; a trueness to ones beliefs.

Coaching is a paradox.

## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH NOTES AND MEMOS

12/2/09-----The first and best victory is to conquer self (Plato)

1/1/10 -----A model “for” (idealistic representation) coaching will come from a model “of” (empirical research) coaching practice.

-----Certain things coaches do aren’t part of the coaching process. Ex. Paperwork, yelling at referee, ordering equipment... Unless the coach specifically makes it part in his own mind.

-----Ask the question during coaches’ interview “was THAT coaching?” (7/29/10) incorporated into purposeful interview guide

1/2/10 -----Motivation and Teaching are labels from Feltz.

-----Possible title for dissertation.

Authentic Coaching: A Grounded Theory of the Coaching Process.

From Rink (1993) Teacher education: a focus on action

-----In almost every walk of life the price of success is discipline, the discipline that the work demands, and the discipline you demand of yourself. Writing book pg. 103 (W.Stanton – LB 2369 S73) UNLV Library book

1/5/10 -----What in the process does coaches have and have no control over?

Are role frames values?

Look at “Another bad day at the training ground”

Are coach’s goals most important, what about player or team or school etc.?

1/7/10 -----How many coaches continue to coach as losers? How much losing does it take to cause a coach to hang it up?



3-26-10 -----Pre-Prospectus

4-17-10 -----Presented Prospectus. Call me Doctoral Candidate!

5-2-10-----The source of attitude is your philosophy

5-13-10 -----Submitted To IRB

5-15-10 -----Positive thinking is the foundation of mental toughness, and your belief system is the structure, the load-bearing framework for mental toughness. If you are true to your belief system, believing your actions are necessary to accomplishing the overall goals and those goals are worthwhile, mental toughness will be heightened. Success magazine

6-8-10-----Received approved Informed Consent form.

6-14-10 -----Submitted application to CCSD IRB



7-26-10 -----Niels Bohr particle physicist, *“Thank god we have found a paradox, at last, now we may begin to make progress.”*

7-27-10 -----**Started Project**

7-28-10 -----\* **VB-A Entry Meeting (15 min.), signed consent.**

-----\* **VB-A Formal Interview (45 min.), See Transcript**

-----Transcribed Formal Interview for VB-A

-----Changed Formal Interview questions after interview with VB-A. Rationale was to make the questions tighter, more general to specific, and group them between three topics—general coaching, success, philosophy.

-----NOTE—Reread Coaching Philosophy chapter in Cassidy, Jones, Potrac book. Wanted to review what other authors have said about a coaching philosophy.

7-29-10 -----\* **VB-A General Observation #1(1 ½ hours) See Field Notes**

-----\* **VB-A Purposeful Interview #1(30 min.), Outside Coach, See PO#1**

-----I changed the purposeful interview format after interview with VB-A. Rationale was to facilitate a smoother dialog with the coach.

-----Reviewed RESEARCH MEMO'S

-----NOTE—Watched The Paradox of Time, by Zembardo, Stanford Psych. Dept.

7-30-10 -----Transcribed outtakes from VB-A purposeful interview #1

8-2-10 -----\***FB-A Entry Meeting (15 min) Signed informed consent**

-----\* **FB-A Formal Interview (30 min) See transcript and field notes**

-----\* **FB-A Philosophy Discussion (30min.) following formal interview. See discussion outtakes.**

-----NOTE—I need to guard against having these coaches be what I expect them to be. Go into it more blind and open.

-----NOTE—how are problems/predicaments dealt with or identified? Problem Creators, Problem Delegators, Problem Solvers.



9-23-10 -----\***FB-B Observation (1 hour). Pre-game walk through at home school and getting on bus. See field notes.**

-----\***FB-B Observation (3 hours). Game vs AV. See field notes.** Notes are a great example of how I want to start doing field notes. I really like the way I categorized the coaching actions.

-----NOTE—Can't forget to investigate the paradoxes of language that coaches use with players.

-----NOTE—Repping is a form of teaching to coaches

9-24-10 -----Created a Study Emphasis outline to guide the research for the short term.

-----Working on reviewing and revising Coaching Paradox Model.

-----NOTE—Another word coaches use to mean the creation of “fear” is “demanding”

9-28-10 -----\***SM-A Observation (3 ¼ hours). Pre-game and game vs. Palo. See field notes.** Great example of fear/confidence balance, he used a lecture strategy.

-----\***SM-A General Interview (15 min.).** After game on field, more casual conversation. Took notes during the talk. Great example of focus and how it led to problem identification.

-----\***FB-B General Interview (30 min.)**. Ran into FB-B as I was leaving the soccer game and talked casually about the previous week game vs. AV. He was very upset about the direction of his team. Mentioned numerous times the lack of discipline and intelligence of his players. I told him about the idea of adding the theme of loyalty to his program. Told him I was going to concentrate on soccer and volleyball for the next couple of weeks and then return to observe him toward the end of the season.

-----NOTE—I am really starting to connect with some of these coaches. I feel this is true because of how they are opening up to me.

9-29-10 -----Debriefing with Watson. See notes. Presented the coaching paradox model as is now, as well as, the Study Emphasis sheet.

-----NOTE—Watson made me think about the three basic questions of my study: What is coaching? Why is it so complex? How is it done well?



10-20-10-----\***FB-A Purposeful Interview #3 (30 min.)**. See transcript FB-A(PI#3).

-----\***FB-A Philosophy Discussion #2 (15 min.)**. See exerts

-----\***FB-A Model Discussion (1 hour)**. See exerts

-----\***SM-A Purposeful Interview #3 (30 min.)**. See transcript FB-A(PI#3).

-----\***SM-A Philosophy Discussion #2 (15 min.)**. See exerts

-----\***SM-A Model Discussion (30 min.)**. See exerts

-----\***FB-B Purposeful Interview #3 (15 min.)**. See transcript FB-A(PI#3).

-----\***FB-B Philosophy Discussion #2 (15 min.)**. See exerts

-----\***FB-B Model Discussion (45 min.)**. See exerts

-----I ended up taking a day off work to go and talk with these coaches. It was a great decision because we could relax and talk with less distractions. It really felt good to show these guys what I had done up to this point. They truly seemed to like it and most importantly understand it. I even got FB-A to agree and accept the model. I should try to schedule a time to go back after they have had a chance to digest the information and get their thoughts on the model again. It was a lot of work and transcribing the conversations is going to be a bear, but well worth it in the end.

10-25-10-----I need to get back into schedule and start seeing coaches again.

-----NOTE—I have been letting the model reviews with the coaches sink in. Slowly looking over the transcripts for the past week. I have so much running through my head right now it almost hurts.

10-26-10-----\***SM-B Observation (1 ½ hours)**. Practice preparing for end of season and push to the playoffs. See field notes.

-----\***SM-A Observation (2 hours)**. Game vs. SRHS. See field notes.



11-20-10-----\***BW-A Observation (2 hours)**. Saturday practice. See field notes. An amazing Conductor, she is all about setting the emotional tone. Her speech at the beginning of practice was classic conductor approach (see field notes).

-----NOTE— I was a little thrown off by Watson's email concerning the fear question. I understand what her worry is with the study getting out of control, and I appreciate her wisdom.

-----NOTE—I **am done!** After the BW-A observation, it convinced me that I am not seeing new things just better examples of what I have already seen. I really think I need to kick the writing process into high gear and get to the point where I start working on the results section. Now the thought of that is both exciting and scary. Maybe that is why I want to keep the data collection going, that way I don't have to start the results. I do want to maintain my connection to the field and coaches; I outlined rationale in email to Watson.

11-22-10-----\***SW-A Observation (1.5 hours). Regular practice. See field notes.**

11-24-10-----Sent all (but FB-A) coaches UNLV Study – Demographic Info (see attached). Was going to wait until season play-off season was over to send info sheet to FB-A.

-----Started a Demographic Information (working draft).

11-26-10-----Meet with Watson at restaurant for debriefing. Very productive meeting. Outlined results chapter and began review of chapter 5. Spent a lot of time discussing Coaching Paradox Model, and more specifically how “politics” might be better represented. I need to make adjustments to model to incorporate changes.

-----\***BW-A observation (1 hour). Typical practice. See field notes.**

11-27-10 ----\***FB-A Observation (3 hours). Region Championship game @ PV. See field notes.**

11-29-10-----\***BW-A Observation (2 hours). Pre-game practice before first game of season. See field notes.**





## APPENDIX B

### FORMAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Demographics

M / F      Age →

Coaching →

Head Coaching →

Head Coach of current school →

What is coaching?

What aspect of coaching do you feel you do well?

What aspect of coaching do you want to do better?

How do you define program success?

What is your role in helping your program achieve success?

What beliefs make up your coaching philosophy?

Has your philosophy changed during your coaching career?

Describe another coach (past or present) who did not seem to have the same philosophic beliefs as you.

## APPENDIX C

### PURPOSEFUL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Coach \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_

*Specific decision situation*

What did you hope would happen because of this decision?

Do you feel that decision was an aspect of “coaching”?

What lead up to you making this decision?

Why do you think you did not choose to (alternative)

Did the result meet your expectation?

## APPENDIX D

### FORMAL INTERVIEW

#### VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT (Sampling)

**FB-A 8/2/10**

**Formal Interview**

**4:30 What is coaching?**

Coaching is a chance to deal with young kids. To try to get them to be a better person, and a better athlete. Along with, keeping involved with sport. Because I think, a lot of coaches that coach is because they were athletes themselves. Not that you have to be an athlete to be a good coach, but like for myself, I knew I was not going to play in the NFL, but I still loved the game. I love any kind of sport. I have coached football, basketball, baseball, softball, track, all those different things. I think it gives you a chance to stay involved with athletics. That is another reason I why I became an athletic director (administration). I love being around all the different sports.

But the chance to be around young people, or even adults, depending on what kind of coaching you're talking about. Make them be a better person and also a better athlete. And that is why I coach.

**6:00 Can you look at someone and say "they are not coaching"? I mean, what is the difference between coaching and what someone does in the classroom?**

That is an easy one, well there isn't any difference. Coaching is really teaching. And, those who teach when they coach are good coaches. Those that coach when they coach, are not very good coaches.

**6:30 What is coaching when you coach?**

Coaching when you coach is just yelling at a kid. Yelling, screaming, you know, not having a game plan, not having a lesson plan. Teaching is actually teaching them the game and getting them better. Coming down to their level to where they are understanding what you are talking about. Sometimes I see all these guys who are great athletes themselves but can't get it across to someone what they are trying to teach them. That's because they are trying to coach them instead of trying to teach them. So you want to make sure you are using terminology that they are going to understand, and get it to where they are going to learn it, and not just scream it to them.

I have just got done coming through 8 years of my own kids coming through youth ball, and I see those coaches out there, and they are coaching not teaching. A lot of them just scream at the kids and think they are going to get better by just screaming at the kids. Don't get me wrong, especially a sport like football, you definitely have to be emotional, it is a very emotional contact type sport. You have to have that adrenaline. But you can also see a guy like Dundgy that coached in the NFL, and never raised his voice ever. There is all different types of style of coaches that teach. But I really believe that to be a good coach you have to be a good teacher.

---

**SM-A 8/13/10**

**Formal Interview**

**6:10 What aspect of coaching do you feel you do well?**

I think a strong point is definitely the information. As far as the technical part. Whether it is baseball, soccer, showing them how to properly do what is expected of them. For example, they have to learn how to pass first. How do you pass? What is your body supposed to be doing? Where are you supposed to be looking? I don't know everything that there is to know, but I do think as far as general knowledge needed to get these players to perform and execute the way we need them too.

**Trying to repeat back to you what I heard, is that teaching?**

Well, the first time I introduce anything that is teaching. Once you get beyond that, then you're coaching. So the first step is teaching, (for example) teach them how to hold the ball, teach them how to kick the ball, teach them how to do it. Now, you have already went over it, so they should already have some form of understand of what's expected. After that it is coaching.

**What is the difference between teaching and coaching?**

It is like saying, "I taught you how to do it, the next time it is a coaching aspect", because now as far as whatever I see that is wrong, it is a tweak. It is me coaching you to do whatever needs to be done. If it is passing or whatever it might be—that skill.

**8:10 What aspect of coaching do you want to do better?**

(pause) That is a good one. You do want to (as a coach) take care of your weaknesses. As far as my weaknesses, I know one of mine is keepers (goalkeepers). As a coach, if you see someone doing something wrong and you know they are doing something wrong, you want to be able to show them the right way. A lot of the times if I don't know how to help a kid that's on my team, and I don't have the ability to help that kids, that's frustrating at times. So, more experience with like keepers would be it.

**9:20 Did you have a thought at the end of last season, "this is what I need to do better"?**

There is a fine line when your coaching, there is more than just what's on the field. There is a lot of external as far as off the field things that would make a better environment. For example, their grades, contacting their teachers, which I try to do, but that can always be better. I think especially at the high school level kids can slip from eligible to ineligible rapidly. That's one thing.

---

**BW-A 11-15**

**Formal Interview**

**How do you define program success?**

Sacrifice, commit, dedicate those are just huge. The discipline like I told you. No grey area. You have to have consistency with kids. I think overall coaches have a hard time with that. Kids recognize no discipline right off the bat. Kids don't like inconsistencies. Kids notice favoritism right away. Why did she get to do this and I have to do that, you can't do that as a coach. It comes back to that grey area. That is really hard for some coaches because you do like some kids more than other kids, but you can't ever let that show. They will read into that and it puts holes in your program.

**You didn't mention winning as a way of defining success, why?**

I think that if you have all of the things I mentioned you will win. Sure, you have to have a little bit of talent, like the old expression you can't make chicken salad out of chicken shit, every team needs a little bit of talent. But, we all know there are coaches that have great players and they don't succeed. It has to be something from the underground, there is something going on underneath as to why your not succeeding if you have these talented kids. Granted, not all the best players make the best team. But coaches have to figure out how to do it.

**Your saying these intangible things come before or create winning.**

Absolutely, I go back to our first team, the 7, they were the core. We did go 30 and 1 that first year, but it was getting rid of the other 7 and finding that common goal that we were all going to have and then the program just built from there. It is funny how new kids will come into the program and I will be excited about their talent and their potential and I start to work them in, the other players will come up to me and say "she is not a C... kid", "she don't get it", it is like they know what type of person will make it and succeed.

---

**SW-A 11/15**

**Formal Interview**

**What beliefs make up your coaching philosophy?**

I believe in taking a more rounded approach, meaning everybody playing hard, having a good attitude. One of the things I think separated our team last year from other teams is competition. If you have competition, the kids are going to play better. You will practice better and do better in games. Competition in practice is what I am talking about. That is also something that is also out of your control too. Sometimes you have a group of players that are better than everybody else and they are going to be the ones playing. But when you can have day to day competition and create ways of doing that I think that helps your team.

**How do you decide who is going to start?**

It is solely my decision. I just watch.

**I know some coaches and some sports do a lot of charting of information to help them decide who is going to play. Do you do anything like that?**

I know what your talking about and the answer is no. I think that is kind of cowardly. If you want to be the head coach you should be the one making the decision.

**So when you said competition my vision of that was more of setting up a drill and then you keep score. Is that what you do?**

No not really. One thing the players are told is every day is a new day and nothing is guaranteed. We do a lot of games, but it is not necessarily keeping score. We are just watching them, and they know if they are having a bad day and someone else has a good day, then they are going to play.

## APPENDIX E

### FIELD NOTES AND MEMOS (Sampling)

Purposeful Obser. #1

Looking for Decision-making < calculated  
A-priori

8/12 6:30<sup>pm</sup> - 9:00<sup>pm</sup>

FB-A

- Practice Field (2<sup>nd</sup> practice of day 1)

- Greeted by "the Intimidator" at the gate, screaming "Where are you suppose to be" at each player as they entered.

cal \* ① makes grand entrance in supped-up ATV  
\* Why utilize the ATV's?

- ① yelled at Assistant coach about player logistics, still only early-outs.

- Field layed out with yardage markers (Unusual Detail)

② Think about the significance of who a coach mainly communicates with. Do S.O. usually talk to the "teachers"

cal \* Why 6 Assistant coaches?

- Team Time (Main Field) scrimmage - off emphasis

✓ → intense, machine-like, ① as a Director more than a teacher

\* ① encouraging words to #1, "Didn't catch the Ball, you will catch that in the game"

✓ → non-stop action, mix of pos. & neg. talk, almost all related to the scheme (it), "Read it!"

\* Told QB more than Explained to him how the scheme is designed to allow improv (use his talent), "you have a led blocker"

cal \* Why use Both fields?

② \* Why go off about the arm pad During first main field time?

① has taken something extremely complex (scheme) and made it simple, through routineness, Repetition, speed, & Directness.  
Machine-Like!!!



10-6 (2:00 - 3:30) 1 1/2 hours  
Practice (field) mid week 2 days before <sup>Cont.</sup> game

SM-B

\* **Politic** → joking  
- talking/joking with girls team.

- Captain?  
Decided on warm-up → leap frog.  
No Balls!

\* **Teaching** → physical contact, Lecturing  
- poking player to move over then patting on head.

- Duck-Duck game → **fun**  
- in circle middle of field → 1/2 serious, 1/2 joking

- Talking to injured player → very long time

- Sit-ups for team ~~with~~ because of poor play.

- Players hugging SM as a normal part of communication

\* **Manager** allow others to do the elements of coaching → teach, organize, motivate.

- their job is to build personal relationships

- every drill was set up offensive players vs defensive

\* No system no common theme!

\* 1/2 hour into practice before Ball was pulled out.!!

✓ No coaches to start practice → players stretch on own  
Asst. came out in middle of stretch. → SM shortly after.

→ Is authentic coaching, despite the fact it bothers me.

11-31 (2:00-4:00)

BW-A

Post game Practice

- \* Rebounding Drill → Teaching intensity!
  - gaining confidence through Banging
  - loud
  - Almost a street fight
- ✓ Family-like ribbing & encouragement
- \* It is obvious there are no favorites.
- \* Drills allow/encourage teams to work together.
  - ✓ competition helps to maintain intensity
  - "You guys don't want to..."
- + Very little positives, allows girls to do that to each other.
  - might be a Don't smile till X-mas thing
- Everyone plays every position.
- \* White or Blue play in game.
  - "they served their time"
- \* Casual conversation (Quick, during water break)
  - Centered to group
  - Green shoes (makes you the center of attention)  
(not about you.)



12-18 ( $2^{30} - 4^{00}$ )

BM-A

### General Observations (1st)

#### - Personal Talk

↳ subtle = put on back, whisper in ear

#### - Fun → player high-5 Asst. coach.

#### - Individual Instruction

- A lot of Humor

⊛ - Free throw Drill opportunity to personalize w/ players

\* How do you determine who's Red & white

- Alt. challenge

#### - Simplistic organization

- let the Dinomit nature of the game take  
core of <sup>adding</sup> complexity

\* Gadget → increase opportunity for repair.

↳ Allows for more individual instruction

#### - No standardness to technique or result.

#### - Very collegial atmosphere

- A number of coniving players

#### - Player loose focus when in group.

## APPENDIX F

### SYNTHESIS THOUGHTS (Sampling)

9/30/10 – FB-A (arm pad outburst)

A very good example of authentic coaching can be seen in FB-A's emotional outburst at practice over the arm pads being brought to the main field, as opposed to being left on the upper field. According to FB-A's success orientation, he believes success is achieved through the repetitive and consistent control of the environment or system of playing football. In his mind, not having the pads in the correct place on the practice field may lead to the breakdown of the system and subsequently the likelihood of success not being reached in the future. To him it would be the same as throwing a wrench into the machine of football. FB-A's reaction to this problem was to create a sense of fear among his players. He decided to motivate his players and created a sense of fear through his actions and language. The message sent was "you must do **it** the way we have planned" (FB-A), the Panther Way. Said another way, athletes must be conscience and diligent in following the plan, the system.

This emotional outburst was also done in full view of the entire team, that way all players participated in this sense of fear creation. This also was in line with FB-A's belief system and is another example of authentic coaching. Team unity and the notion of "we are in this together" was also clearly sent.

After reviewing what I wrote, I realize just how un-clear I am with the concept of "authenticness". I need to keep doing this type of writing. Above is not a very good example. Doesn't vividly display the concept.

10/1 – Coaching Action

One of the primary purposes of this study was to investigate the question, what is coaching? By approaching the topic of coaching from a paradoxical perspective, four elements became evident. At the most general level, coaching involves four distinctive activities: 1) teaching 2) motivating 3) organizing 4) politicking. Each of these actions consists of a fundamental paradox that helps to define the activity. These fundamental paradoxes also help to explain the complexity of the coaching process.

Really like this paragraph

Many coaching scholars (?) have described coaching as a decision-making process. This description also held true for the participants in this study. Coaches in the study often moved from one element of the process to the next or attempted to combine elements into a successfully smooth flow of action. For example, FB-A spent over an hour organizing one particular practice plan. Then using that plan, taught his athletes specific skills needed for the up-coming game. At one point during the practice FB-A unexpectedly turn his attention to creating a particular emotional state for the upcoming

game by motivating the players with a off the cuff speech. FB-A then turn his attention back to teaching by explaining why despite being easier to perform a skill in a certain fashion, a particular play calls for the skill to be complete differently. As (?) points out, the coaching process should not be viewed as following a recipe from a cookbook. The coaching process is a highly dynamic process set in an always-changing competitive environment.

I like this example of the process aspect of coaching. The cookbook analogy has always been a part of my personal explanation of what coaches don't do.

#### 10/6 – What is a Coaching Paradox

At the core of the Coaching Paradox Model is the notion of paradox—opposing forces that compound the complexity of the coaching process. In the previous section, I argued that four distinct elements of coaching action exist: 1) teaching 2) motivating 3) organizing 4) politicking. Each of these actions of these actions consists of a fundamental paradox that helps to define the activity. For example, when coaches organize what they are actually doing is attempting to balance the forces of complexity and simplicity. Things must be understandable by the athletes playing the sport, or the officials charged with monitoring the sport. At the same time, if what the coach is organizing is not complex enough the opponent will have an advantage.

I am not liking how this is coming together. I keep looking at the question. I think that is where the problem lies. I am not considering the right question. See the idea about Athletics = Sport—Athletes—The Coach.

#### 10/7 – Managers Orientation (updated)

##### Manager

Success comes from developing the fundamental talents/skills of individual athletes. By building/strengthening personal relationships with players and motivating them to reach their personal best, it is believed individual achievements will be compounded into overall program success. A coach must work to identify the current ability and overall potential of each athlete, and then determine the best role for each individual within the group. By utilizing the unique qualities of players, assistant coaches, and support personnel the (head) coach is freed to address the most pressing matters of the team. Talent development and performance, both physical and mental, is the primary aim.

My plan for today's writing was to review and update just the Manager's Orientation. I wanted to do this because of the differences I have noticed while being out in the field. I felt I could make the description more specific and descriptive. After reviewing the changes I made to the orientation and realizing just how much I altered the description, I feel it is necessary to do the same for the other two orientations.

11/18 – Fear question

It can be argued, fear is an essential element of all competitive sports, and helping athletes cope with fear is an important aspect of coaching. For example, facing a pitcher that throws exceptionally fast creates anxiety for baseball players, and despite knowing fear cannot be fully eliminated without fundamentally changing the game, coaches help athletes to deal with it. Fear is essential in the respect that if a fear is eliminated from a sport a new fear is created that is equally impeding. For instance, protective helmets were required in football to eliminate head and facial injuries, however, the speed and intensity of the game subsequently increased creating injuries equally as devastating. If you agree with that basic argument, that fear must be an element of all competitive sport, as a coach what do you want your athletes to fear.

I really like this approach. It feels like I can describe the coaching paradoxes in this manner. I think from this the descriptions for the actual dissertation will evolve. I sent a copy of this to Watson yesterday and she basically asked if the data was indicating a need to investigate this, and if coaches actively sought to create fear. I email her back my interview from SW-A and am waiting for her second response. It will be interesting to see what she has to say, but no matter what I think I like this a lot.

11/22 – Results Outline

See Working Outline Paper.

11/23 – Passion

Talk about my personal moments of passion and lightning !

Ideas to Explore

What is authentic coaching?

What is inauthentic coaching?

Explaining each paradox

What is a paradox?

## APPENDIX G

### HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL LETTER



#### Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review Approval Notice

**NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:**

*Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.*

**DATE:** June 8, 2010  
**TO:** Dr. Doris Watson, Sports Education Leadership  
**FROM:** Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects  
**RE:** Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Charles Rasmussen, Co-Chair  
Protocol Title: **The Coaching Process: An Investigation of Authenticity**  
Protocol #: 1005-3457M

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This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46. The protocol has been reviewed and approved.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of IRB approval. The expiration date of this protocol is June 6, 2011. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects (ORI Human Subjects).

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Attached to this approval notice is the official **Informed Consent/Assent (IC/A) Form** for this study. The IC/A contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/A form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

Should there be *any* change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a **Modification Form** through ORI Human Subjects. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond June 6, 2011, it would be necessary to submit a **Continuing Review Request Form** 60 days before the expiration date.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at [IRB@unlv.edu](mailto:IRB@unlv.edu) or call 895-2794.

Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects  
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451047 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047  
(702) 895-2794 • FAX: (702) 895-0805

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