Exploring the types of questions coaches ask in practice

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Questioning has been suggested as an important pedagogical tool:

- Develop an understanding of **game play** (Wright & Forrest, 2007)

- ‘Empowers’ learners to take **ownership** of learning (Kidman, 2005)

- Develops **problem solving**, **decision making** and **creative thinking** skills (Chambers & Vickers, 2006)

- Develops **reflective thinking** and **communication** skills (Pearson & Webb, 2008)
What do we know about coach questioning

- **They don’t do a lot of it!** (e.g. Partington, Cushion & Harvey, 2013; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007; Segrave & Ciancio, 1990)

- **Even though most coaches think that they do** (Harvey, Cushion, Cope & Muir, 2013; Partington & Cushion, 2013)

- **Coaches need to increase** their level of questioning
However…

- However, simply educating coaches to ask more questions is **not** the answer.

- Research suggest that teachers are **not** very good at asking questions which promote learning (McNeill, Fry, Wright, Tan and Rossi, 2008; Wright & Forrest, 2007; Yang, 2006).

- The outcomes (i.e. understanding of game play, ownership of learning, problem solving, decision making and creative thinking, reflective thinking and communication) **are** merely potential, dependent on the types of questions asked and the needs of the learner.
Purpose of the study

Given the almost non-existent empirical research in this area, there is a clear need to qualitatively explore the types of questions coaches are asking in practice, and the responses given by learners.
Methodology

Participants and setting

- 5 youth football coaches (U10’s – U14’s) in an academy context

Data collection and procedure

- 15 practice sessions (3 per coach) were videoed to allow qualitative transcription of question and response

- Field notes provided information on timing and recipient of the questions (i.e. how much time had elapsed before coaches wanted a response, purpose of the sessions, planned nature of the questioning)
Data Analysis

- Questions and responses transcribed verbatim
- Data were **thematically** analysed, and are reported in the form of narratives

Themes:
- Coach requiring immediate response
- Recalling the focus of the session
- Monosyllabic responses
- Leading questions for desired response
Discussion points

- Questioning has been associated with the learning theory of constructivism.

- While coaches may have constructivist intentions, they actually display technocratic questions (McNeill et al., 2008).

- Implementation differs from aspiration.

- Needs to be a move away from:

  Positivist questioning (i.e. memorising information; recalling desired responses; coach displaying power)

  Constructivist questioning (i.e. challenging cognition; co-constructed learning process; developing new knowledge)
Recommendations for constructivist questioning

- Ask **divergent or value questions** that require learners to **critically** think about their answer (Daniel & Bergmann-Drewe, 1998; Wright & Forrest, 2007)

- However, thinking requires **time** so this needs providing (Blosser, 2000; Chambers & Vickers, 2006)

- Individualise learning by asking questions to **individuals or small groups**, rather than the whole group (McNeill et al., 2008)

- Let learners **discuss** amongst themselves. This creates dialogue, which is essential for learning (Wiersema & Licklider, 2009)

- Deliberately **plan** questions (Crowe & Stanford, 2010)
References


