Development, Delivery, and Assessment of a Humanistic Coaching Workshop and its Impact on Youth Development

William R. Falcão

Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education

McGill University, Montreal

A thesis submitted to McGill University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

April 12, 2018

Abstract

Humanistic coaching is a philosophy that focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal relationships between coaches and athletes (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002**).** Despite the efforts to describe and define humanistic coaching, few studies have empirically investigated how coaches apply its principles in sport, how they impact youth athletes, and the perceptions of the individuals involved. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation was to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop while examining coaches' learning experiences, as well as investigating the impact of humanistic coaching on youth development through sport. This was accomplished through three original manuscripts, each addressing a different aspect of the larger purpose. The first study involved developing and delivering a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigating coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. Results revealed coaches perceived the workshop to be effective in teaching the humanistic principles and how to apply them in youth sport settings. In addition, the coaches reported positive outcomes in their athletes related to autonomy, communication, motivation, and willingness to help teammates. While their perceptions of athlete development provided valuable insight to how athletes responded to this coaching philosophy, it did not assess the athletes' outcomes. As such, the second study assessed the impact of a humanistic coaching workshop on the development of youth athletes of trained or untrained coaches. Results showed that athletes of trained coaches showed stronger connection to their coaches. The findings also suggested that participants increased their antisocial behaviours, yet this increase was lower for athletes of trained coaches. These findings suggest that teaching humanistic coaching principles may help foster developmental outcomes in youth sport participants. Building on these results, the next study qualitatively examined youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching and how it impacted their development. This is

particularly important considering humanistic coaching is a philosophy that advocates for the inclusion of athletes as active agents in the training process. Thus, the third study investigated the experiences of student-athletes of coaches who had been trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. Results showed athletes described their coaches as being engaged in their lives beyond sport, helping with personal issues and getting involved in their education. Athletes described having a trusting relationship with their coaches, and reported learning both sport and life skills from them. In sum, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of humanistic coaching, how it can be applied to sport, and its impact on youth development. Results indicated that teaching coaches the principles and strategies of humanistic coaching was an effective way of improving their ability to apply these principles, which in turn positively impacted youth athletes' development through sport. This dissertation provides recommendations for future research that can further improve best practices for youth sport coaches.

Résumé

Le coaching humaniste est une philosophie centrée sur le développement personnel de l'athlète en favorisant la faculté de prise de décision et les relations interpersonnelles entre l'entraîneur et l'athlète (Lombardo, 1987 ; Lyle, 2002). En dépit des efforts pour décrire et définir le coaching humaniste, peu d'études ont empiriquement examinées comment les entraîneurs appliquent ses principes dans le sport, comment ses principes impactent les jeunes athlètes, et les perceptions des individus concernés. Ainsi, le but de cette dissertation fut de développer et délivrer un atelier sur le coaching humaniste tout en examinant l'apprentissage des entraîneurs, et l'impact du coaching humaniste sur le développement des jeunes à travers le sport. Ceci a été accompli à travers trois manuscrits originaux, chacun adressant un aspect différent de l'objectif principal. La première étude impliqua le développement et la présentation d'un atelier sur le coaching humaniste, mais également l'étude des perceptions des entraîneurs au regard de cet atelier et leurs expériences lorsqu'ils utilisent le coaching humaniste. Les résultats ont révélés que les entraîneurs perçoivent l'atelier efficace dans l'enseignement des principes humanistes et sur la façon de les appliquer dans le cadre du sport pour jeunes. De plus, les entraîneurs ont rapportés des résultats positifs chez leurs athlètes liés à leur autonomie, communication, motivation et volonté d'aider leurs coéquipiers. Bien que leurs perceptions du développement de l'athlète a permis une précieuse compréhension sur la façon dont les athlètes réagissaient à cette philosophie d'entraînement, cela n'a pas permis d'évaluer les conséquences chez les athlètes. Dès lors, la deuxième étude a évalué l'impact de l'atelier de coaching humaniste sur le développement de jeunes athlètes entraînés par des coaches formés ou non formés à cette philosophie. Les résultats ont montrés que les athlètes d'entraîneurs formés aux principes de coaching humaniste démontrent une connexion plus forte avec leurs entraîneurs. Les résultats ont

également suggérés une augmentation des comportements antisociaux chez les participants, néanmoins cette augmentation fut moindre pour les athlètes d'entraîneurs formés. Ces résultats semblent indiquer que l'enseignement des principes de coaching humaniste pourrait favoriser le développement des jeunes pratiquants un sport. En partant de ses résultats, l'étude suivante examina qualitativement les perceptions de jeunes athlètes sur le coaching humaniste et comment cela a impacté leur développement. Cela est particulièrement important puisque le coaching humaniste est une philosophie qui préconise l'inclusion des athlètes en tant qu'acteurs du processus d'entraînement. Ainsi, la troisième étude examina l'expérience d'étudiants-athlètes entraînés par des entraîneurs formés à l'utilisation des principes humanistes afin de favoriser le développement personnel. Les résultats ont indiqués que les athlètes ont décrit leurs entraîneurs comme étant impliqués dans leurs vies au-delà du sport, les aidants avec des problèmes personnels tout en étant impliqués dans leur éducation. Les athlètes ont également décris avoir une relation de confiance avec leurs entraîneurs, et ont reportés apprendre à la fois des compétences sportives et de vie de la part de leurs entraîneurs. En résumé, cette dissertation contribue à notre compréhension du coaching humaniste, comment il peut être appliqué au sport et son impact sur le développement du jeune. Les résultats ont montrés qu'enseigner aux entraîneurs les principes et stratégies du coaching humaniste était une façon efficace d'améliorer leurs facultés d'appliquer ses principes, ce qui, en retour, influence positivement le développement des jeunes athlètes à travers le sport. Cette dissertation fournie des recommandations pour de futures recherches pouvant encore améliorer les meilleures pratiques pour les entraîneurs de jeunes.

Acknowledgements

- My supervisor, Dr. Gordon Bloom, for your guidance and feedback. Through your mentoring you have challenged and pushed me beyond what I thought were my limits. Thank you for believing in my potential and encouraging me to improve every day. You have impacted my life beyond academia, shaping me as a person and professional.
- My doctoral committee members: Dr. Wade Gilbert, Dr. Catherine Sabiston, and Dr. William Harvey. Thank you for your guidance and assistance in this project. It was been inspiring to work alongside such outstanding academic role models.
- Faculty members of the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education: Dr. Lindsay Duncan, Dr. Dennis Jensen, Dr. Shane Sweet, Dr. Lee Schaefer, Dr. David Pearsall, and Dr. Dilson Rassier. Thank you for your advice and support.
- Colleagues and collaborators: Dr. Todd Loughead, Dr. Jessica Fraser-Thomas, Dr. Jeff Caron, Dr. Andrew Bennie, Dr. Lea-Cathrin Dohme, Dr. Rui Resende, and Dr. Scott Douglas. It has been an honour working with you. I look forward to continued collaborations for years to come.
- The Bloomberg-Manulife doctoral fellowship, Wyng Trust fellowship, Walter A. and K. Mary Marsh fellowship, and Herschel and Christine Victor fellowship for funding my graduate work.
- Pour 3 Points, for welcoming me in the organization. A special thank you to Fabrice Vil for his vision to improve the life of underprivileged youth.
- Current and past members of the Sport Psychology Research Laboratory: Jordan Lefebvre, Jeemin Kim, Scott Rathwell, C-A Sinotte, Gill Ferrari, Charlie Labonté, Katherine Fairhurst, Daniela Donoso, Daphnée Andre-Morin, Julia Allain, Liam Heelis, Pierre Lepage, David Urquhart, Becca Steins, and Kathleen Belanger-Finn. You kept our lab a vibrant and

stimulating work environment. Thank you for your friendship.

- Research assistants: Marika Guérin, Evelyne Charbonneau, Siobhan Henderson, Kimberly Papp, Russell Wolfe, Joanna Singerman, and Keryn Chemtob. I hope you gained as much from this experience as you contributed to the project.
- The St-Pierre family for embracing my son, my wife, and me as one of your own. You have been essential in making Canada our home.
- Dad and Jesine, for the intellectual games and puzzles we've played as a family. This intellectual stimulation shaped my drive to challenge myself and pursue academic excellence. Big sis, looking up to you was a driving force pushing me forward. Thank you for setting the bar so high.
- Michelli and Matteo, you are my biggest motivators. Thank you for always being there for me and always providing strength and support. Son, I hope this work inspires you to pursue your goals.
- My mother for her unconditional support. Thank you for being my greatest role model. Your memory continues to inspire me to be a better parent and professional. My thoughts will always be with you. This thesis is dedicated to you.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Contribution of Authors

Chapter Three: Coaches' Experiences Learning and Applying the Content of a Humanistic Coaching Workshop in Youth Sport Settings

Co-author: William R. Falcão

- Contributions: As first author, William Falcão was involved in conceptualizing and designing the study, conducting literature searches, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as writing of the manuscript.

Co-author: Gordon A. Bloom

- Contributions: Dr. Bloom provided input regarding the conceptualization and design of the study, data analysis, interpretation of the data, and editing the manuscript.

Co-author: Andrew Bennie

- Contributions: Dr. Bennie assisted with interpreting the data and writing the manuscript.

Status of the manuscript: Published.

Chapter Four: The Impact of Humanistic Coach Training on Youth Athletes' Development through Sport

Co-author: William R. Falcão

- Contributions: As first author, William Falcão was involved in conceptualizing and designing the study, conducting literature searches, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as writing of the manuscript.

Co-author: Gordon A. Bloom

- Contributions: Dr. Bloom provided input regarding the conceptualization and design of the study, data analysis, interpretation of the data, and editing the manuscript.

Co-author: Catherine M. Sabiston

- Contributions: Dr. Sabiston assisted with the design, data analysis, and writing the manuscript.

Status of the manuscript: Submitted for review.

Chapter Five: Youth Athletes' Perceptions of Humanistic Coaching

Co-author: William R. Falcão

- Contributions: As first author, William Falcão was involved in conceptualizing and designing the study, conducting literature searches, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as writing of the manuscript.

Co-author: Gordon A. Bloom

- Contributions: Dr. Bloom provided input regarding the conceptualization and design of the study, data analysis, interpretation of the data, and editing the manuscript.

Co-author: Jeffrey G. Caron

- Contributions: Dr. Caron assisted with data analysis and editing the manuscript.

Co-author: Wade D. Gilbert

- Contributions: Dr. Gilbert assisted with study design and editing the manuscript.

Status of the manuscript: Submitted for review.

Preface

This dissertation is organized in manuscript format and includes six chapters: introduction, literature review, three manuscripts, and a summary. Chapter one is a general introduction of the current knowledge of humanistic coaching and youth development thought sport. It also includes the purpose and objectives of this dissertation. Chapter two is a literature review examining current theories and models that explain how sport can provide a context for youth development, the relevance of humanistic coaching philosophy to this process, and how coaches acquire knowledge that helps them promote personal development through sport. Chapter three contains an original manuscript that was published in the *International Sport Coaching Journal* (Falcão, Bloom, & Bennie, 2017) describing the development and delivery of a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigating coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. Chapter four is a manuscript that assesses the impact of a humanistic coaching workshop on the development of youth athletes using tools designed to measured youth developmental outcomes. In particular, this manuscript compares the outcomes of athletes whose coaches had been trained to use humanistic coaching strategies with athletes of untrained coaches. Chapter five is a manuscript that uses qualitative methods to investigate the perceptions of athletes of trained coaches. It was recently submitted to a peer reviewed journal. Finally, chapter six is a summary of the key findings of the dissertation, including the limitations and directions for future research.

Chapter One

General Introduction

Many people believe that youth sport is a good way of promoting positive developmental outcomes (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Multiple studies have reported that youth sport participation improved fundamental movement skills, motivation and self-perceptions, teamwork and communications skills, as well as leadership, autonomy, and respect for others (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Falcão, Bloom, & Gilbert, 2012; Holt et al., 2017; Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008; Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2016). However, sport participation alone does not ensure positive developmental outcomes. For example, studies have also shown that sport participation can potentially lead to increased risk-taking behaviours, such as substance abuse, aggression, and antisocial behaviours (Allan & Côté, 2016; Garry & Morrissey, 2000). One of the critical factors that determines if participants will experience positive or negative outcomes are the attitudes and behaviours of the coach (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

The impact of coaches' behaviours on their athletes' personal development has been widely reported in the sport coaching literature (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Koh, Camiré, Bloom, & Wang, 2017; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007, 2009; Weiss et al., 2016). For example, it has been shown that coaches can foster increased motivation, self-confidence, and lower anxiety by using positive reinforcement and encouragement, focusing on skill development over winning, and promoting social interactions and collaborations between participants (Smith et al., 2007, 2009). Furthermore, athletes of coaches who were caring, encouraging, and welcoming of athlete input experienced increased fun and enjoyment, autonomy, task-motivation, competence, confidence, character, and commitment (Allan & Côté, 2016; Camiré & Trudel, 2013). As such, an effective sport coach has been described as one who focuses on improving and developing

fundamental skills (as opposed to winning), creates opportunities for fun and play, and promotes social aspects and positive growth through sport (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Coaches adhere to coaching philosophies that guide their decisions in order to consistently engage in behaviours that foster development (Martens, 2012). An example of a coaching philosophy commonly used to guide positive developmental outcomes in sport is the humanistic coaching philosophy (Lyle, 2002).

Humanistic coaching is a philosophy that focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal relationships between coaches and athletes (Lombardo, 1987). It arose from the principles of humanistic psychology, an approach that views individuals as inherently motivated to grow and improve and focuses on promoting strengths as opposed to treating problems (Maslow, 1954). The application of humansitic principles in coaching highlights freedom and autonomy as fundamental to achieving personal growth and fulfillment (Rogers, 1969). As a result, the humanistic coaching philosophy describes six key behaviours for coaches: (a) responsive to change, (b) develop authentic freedom for athletes, (c) set clear goals, (d) gradually relinquish control, (e) provide problem-solving opportunities, and (f) individualize the coaching process (Lyle, 2002).

Research on humanistic coaching has investigated how coaches apply these key behaviours to their practices. For example, studies have depicted humanistic coaches as those who emphasized holistic development of athletes by fostering a balance between sport and other life domains (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010), and built positive collaborative relationships with players fostering autonomy and decision making (Solana-Sánchez, Lara-Bercial, & Solana-Sánchez, 2016). However, it has been suggested that individual coaches often only apply some of the humanistic principles (e.g., fostering confidence and independence, engaging in open

communication), but overlook others such as using a facilitative coaching style, sharing decision making, and promoting personal growth and development (Preston, Kerr, & Stirling, 2015). This lack of consistency regarding how humanistic coaching is applied to sports has contributed to the lack of research investigating the association between humanistic theory and coaching practices, which in turn has led to a wide range of interpretations of humanistic coaching and an unclear understanding of what it is and how it can be applied to sport (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014). Specific to these criticisms, Nelson et al. (2014) recommended humanistic coaching principles and its theoretical background be incorporated into coach training programs to improve its application as well as its impact on athletes.

Coach education literature describes three pathways through which coaches learn: formal training, informal training, and non-formal training (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). While formal training standardizes knowledge and informal training accounts for individual's personal experiences, coaches rely mostly on non-formal training to acquire knowledge on how to foster youth development through sport (Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, 2010). Non-formal training is defined as organized educational activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, or clinics that provide specific knowledge to a particular group (Nelson et al., 2006). Different training workshops have been created to teach coaches positive coaching behaviours (Smith et al., 2007), values and life skills development (Koh, Ong, & Camiré, 2014), team cohesion (Newin et al., 2008), and psychosocial development (Falcão et al., 2012). Despite studies using non-formal training, little is known about how knowledge is incorporated and transmitted in these protocols (Trudel et al., 2010). A framework called Knowledge Translation addresses this issue by providing an empirically based strategy to bridging the gap between knowledge and practice (Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2013). This framework includes practitioners in planning, producing,

applying, and disseminating knowledge and could be key to disseminating humanistic coaching knowledge to youth sport coaches (Caron, Bloom, Falcão, & Sweet, 2015).

Taken together, sport is a viable context to foster personal growth and development if coaches demonstrate appropriate behaviours. Humanistic coaching philosophy emphasizes personal growth and development and can help guide coaches to consistently demonstrate these behaviours. Yet, an unclear understanding of humanistic coaching and how it can be applied to sport has hindered its use in youth sport contexts. Consequently, researchers have suggested the application of humanistic coaching may become clearer if its principles and theoretical background are incorporated into coach training protocols (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014). Moreover, knowledge translation may be an effective way to teach youth sport coaches the humanistic principles, improve their ability to consistently apply it in the sport setting, and impact youth athletes' positive development through sport.

Purpose and Objectives of this Research

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop while examining coaches' learning experiences as well as investigating the impact of humanistic coaching on youth development through sport. To achieve this goal, three studies were conducted. The first study involved developing and delivering a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigating coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. The second study assessed the impact of a humanistic coaching workshop on the development of youth athletes of trained or untrained coaches. The third study investigated the experiences of student-athletes of coaches who had been trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. Taken together, the aim of this dissertation

was to expand our understanding of humanistic coaching, how it can be applied to sport, and how it can impact the personal growth and development of youth sport practitioners.

Context

Prior to presenting the studies that compose this dissertation, it is important to explain the uniqueness of the context in which this research took place, as well as provide a brief description of the primary investigator's background and relationship within this context. First, this research project was developed in partnership with a non-profit organization called Pour 3 Points (P3P: pour3points.ca). The goal of this organization is to use sport as a tool to improve the personal development of youth living in low-socioeconomic settings. This is accomplished by training beginner youth sport coaches to use effective strategies to promote development though sport. Following their training, P3P would assign each coach to a local high school team situated in a low-income part of the city. P3P contacted our research team with an invitation to collaborate in developing and delivering their coach training protocols. This partnership between the McGill Sport Psychology Research Laboratory and the P3P organization continued through all three studies of this dissertation. In particular, our research team helped train the P3P coaches by delivering a humanistic coaching workshop to the P3P coaches.

The Researcher

Given the intervention nature of this research project, it is important to provide background information on the primary researcher and his involvement with the P3P organization. The researcher grew up in the developing country of Brazil where he witnessed the value and importance of sport for people with limited financial means. These experiences undoubtedly made him a strong advocate for the use of sport to promote the psychosocial development of young athletes. The researcher also played competitive basketball in high school

and was head coach for a collegiate women's basketball team for five years. During his three years with P3P, the researcher spent hundreds of hours with the organization's board of directors as well as the coaches. First, during the conceptualization phase of this research project the researcher participated in weekly hour-long meetings with the organization directors discussing strategies that ensured the content and delivery of the training protocol was coherent with the vision of the organization. Later, during and after the coach training process, the researcher communicated frequently with participants on their experiences and issues with their teams. These experiences and interactions with individuals in the P3P organization allowed the researcher to build rapport and gain insight into some of the intricacies of the organization's functioning and the coaches' practices.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

Sport is an intrinsically motivating and engaging activity with the potential to foster development, especially among youth participants (Fraser-Thomas, Falcão, & Wolman, 2016). Although it is widely believed that positive outcomes are an implicit consequence of sport participation, research has shown they depend largely on coaches' attitudes and behaviours, which determine the sporting environment as well as impact participants' experiences and outcomes (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007; Stein, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2012). For example, Côté and Gilbert (2009) described effective youth sport coaches as those who strive to organize a mastery-oriented climate, create opportunities for fun and play, develop athletes' fundamental skills, and promote social aspects and positive growth through sport. As such, the role of the coach in youth sport setting goes beyond teaching sport and includes fostering life skills and positive developmental outcomes. The seminal work of Smith, Smoll, and their colleagues demonstrated that youth sport coaches can effectively foster psychosocial development by using positive reinforcement and encouragement, focusing on skill development over winning, and promoting social interactions and collaborations between participants (Smith & Smoll, 2002; Smith et al., 2007; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2009; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smoll & Smith, 2002; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). Finally, the work of Camiré and colleagues has emphasized the need for coaches to make a purposeful effort to transfer life skills such as respect for others, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership from sport to other settings (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012; Koh, Camiré, Bloom, & Wang, 2017).

There is an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence relating coaches' behaviours to athletes' experiences and outcomes (Falcão, Bloom, & Gilbert, 2012; LaForge, Sullivan, & Bloom, 2012; Weiss & Williams, 2004). Studies have found that coaches who are caring, encouraging, and welcoming of athlete input had athletes who experienced increased fun and enjoyment, autonomy, task-motivation, competence, confidence, and commitment to team and the coach (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010; Stein et al., 2012). For example, Camiré, Trudel, and Forneris (2009) interviewed 20 student-athletes to understand their perspectives on learning life skills in a high school program. According to their participants, when coaches were friendly and approachable they felt engaged in team decisions and comfortable expressing their needs and preferences, which in turn led to increased motivation and confidence. Also, Conroy and Coatsworth (2007) assessed 165 youth participants in a recreational sport league using questionnaires that measured perceived coaching behaviour and players' psychological needs. Results suggested that coaches' praised for autonomous behaviour and interest in athletes' input positively influenced perceived satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Coaches who encouraged autonomy, asked for feedback, and incorporated athletes' suggestions into practices fostered athletes' positive outcomes and reduced negative outcomes. Therefore, while sport has the potential to promote life skills and development because it is an intrinsically motivating activity, it will only build positive outcomes and teach transferable life skills if coaches demonstrate appropriate attitudes and behaviours.

To better understand how sport participation can foster development, how coaches can use their attitudes and behaviours to promote positive outcomes, and how coaches can learn these behaviours we must address (a) the models of youth development though sport that explain

how sport participation can lead to positive developmental outcomes, (b) the coaching philosophy that guides attitudes and behaviours fostering personal growth and development, as well as (c) how coaches acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge to apply these behaviours in their daily practices.

Models of Youth Development through Sport

The developmental outcomes of youth participants in sport have been defined and conceptualized using various theoretical frameworks derived from literature in human development (Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005), life skills promotion (Gould & Carson, 2008a, 2008b), leadership (Chelladurai, 1984), and coaching (Horn, 2008; Smith et al., 2007, 2009). Particularly related to the current research project are the theoretical models that address predictors and outcomes of youth development in sport, namely the Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Sport and the Life Skills Developmental Model.

Positive Youth Development in Sport

PYD is a theoretical framework that focuses on the development of youth's talents, strengths, interests, and potentials (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). It emerged as a preventive measure improving previously existing crisis intervention programs that used deficit-reduction approaches to reduce single problematic behaviours, such as substance abuse, antisocial behaviour, or academic failure (Catalano et al., 2004). Instead, PYD emerged as an innovative approach suggesting that offering positive experiences would both prevent general problematic behaviours while also teaching skills necessary to make long-term positive and healthy life choices. As such, PYD was originally defined as the "engagement in prosocial behaviours and avoidance of health-compromising and future-jeopardizing behaviours" (Roth,

Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998, p. 426). Developmental psychology research using PYD in community programs described five positive developmental outcomes that would accrue from a successful PYD approach: competence, confidence, connection, caring/compassion, and character (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000; Lerner et al., 2005). These outcomes are known as the "five C's" and have been used as indicators of youth developmental outcomes in various social environments, such as school, family, and sport. This PYD framework has promoted a shift in approach on how youth issues are addressed (Catalano et al., 2004). The shift from correcting children's problematic behaviours to emphasizing prevention through the promotion of social, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive development can be seen in various fields of study investigating youth development, for example, psychology (Varga & Zaff, 2017), health education (Rushing et al., 2017), social work (Chung & McBride, 2015), as well as sports coaching.

Inspired by the work of Lerner and his colleagues, Côté et al. (2010) applied the PYD framework to the sport domain. Instead of the five C's, Côté et al. (2010) proposed collapsing *caring/compassion* within *character* in response to the close relationship between these constructs in sport (cf. Hellison, 1995). As a result, the PYD in sport framework proposes four positive developmental outcomes: competence, confidence, connection, and character (Côté et al., 2010). In this theoretical framework competence is defined as individuals' abilities in a specific sport. Confidence is the degree of certainty an individual possesses about his/her ability to succeed in general. Connection is the positive interpersonal relationships originating from the need to belong and feel cared for. Finally, character refers to an individual's moral development and sportspersonship. These outcomes are known as the 4C's and have become widely accepted in the youth sport for development literature. For example, in a recent literature review of

qualitative studies using PYD in sport, Holt et al. (2017) found the most common outcomes of youth participation in sport included improved competence and fundamental movement skills, motivation and self-perceptions, teamwork and communications skills, as well as leadership, autonomy, and respect for others – all of which relate to the 4C's. This framework has not only provided clear constructs that allow sport researchers to define youth development through sport, but also offered ways of assessing it. In particular, Vierimaa, Erickson, Côté, and Gilbert (2012) reviewed more than 200 articles across sport participation, personal development, and coaching domains in order to develop an evaluation toolkit to assess the 4C's using previously validated questionnaires that assessed competence (Sport Competence Inventory: Dunn, Dunn, & Bayduza, 2007), confidence (Competitive State Anxiety Inventory - 2: Cox, Martens, & Russell, 2003), connection to peers (Peer Connection Inventory: Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982), connection to the coach (Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire: Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), and character (Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Sport Scale: Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009).

The work by Vierimaa et al. (2012) was the first step to quantitatively measure youth development in sport, and helped frame new studies that assessed athlete development, particularly as it related to coaches' behaviours. For example, Erickson and Côté (2016) used this toolkit to evaluate athletes' development according to their interaction with their coaches. They found that athletes showed higher scores on the 4C's when the coaches built collaborative relationships with their athlete (i.e. the coaches negotiate solutions with the athletes) and addressed matters outside of sport. Also, Allan and Côté (2016) used the toolkit to assess youth character according to coaches behaviours finding that athletes of coaches who were even-tempered and asked for athelte input showed higher character score than athletes of impatient coaches who pressured their athletes to win. Taken together, athlete development and the 4C's

have become central concepts in coaching research and practice, impacting even the International Olympic Committee consensus on promoting individual development through sport: “The 4C’s … should become the focal point of coaching practice. It is the coaches’ responsibility to establish positive training and competitive environments, and to create relationships that focus on individual athletes’ needs …” (Bergeron et al., 2015, p. 849).

Life Skills Developmental Model

The Life Skills Developmental Model is another theoretical framework used to describe life skills that can be taught through youth sport participation (Gould & Carson, 2008a, 2008b). Life skills are defined as “internal personal assets, characteristics, and skills … that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings” (Gould & Carson, 2008b, p. 287). For example, Gould, Carson, Fifer, Lauer, and Benham (2009) found that important life skills promoted in youth sport participation included goal setting, time and stress management, emotional regulation, moral development, teamwork, and confidence. The Life Skills Developmental Model describes five components in the process of teaching life skills through sport: (a) athletes’ make-up, (b) coaches’ strategies to teaching life skills, (c) how life skills development occurs and impacts behaviours, (d) possible outcomes of sport participation, and (e) the transferability of life skills to non-sport settings (Gould & Carson, 2008a).

The first component is the pre-existing make-up of youth participants, which highlights that young people enter sports with previous personalities, physical abilities, coaches, and peers. The second component, coaches’ strategies, suggests coaches can influence athletes’ experiences and outcomes through their attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, coaches use direct (e.g., clear and consistent rules and providing leadership opportunities) and indirect strategies (e.g., demands of the sport and positive team culture) to foster life skills. The third component explains

life skills are developed through social environmental influences (e.g., promoting positive identity, membership to a positive social group, attachment to positive adult role models), and impact behaviour by being applied to non-sport domains and increasing athletes' self-confidence (i.e., trust in one's skills and ability to succeed) and general self-worth. Fourth, the authors list possible outcomes of sport participation that address physical, intellectual, and psychosocial benefits including fitness and health, school engagement, and stress management. Finally, the last component lists factors that influence the transferability of life skills to non-sport setting, such as belief that the life skills are valued in other settings, comprehension to transfer them, confidence to apply them, and others' support and reinforcement (Gould & Carson, 2008a). In sum, this model describes the process of life skills promotion through sport and has guided multiple studies in the field.

Studies using Gould and Carson's (2008a) model have found that youth athletes learned and transferred life skills to non-sport settings when coaches explicitly made efforts to teach them following the components of the model (Bean, Kendellen, & Forneris, 2016; Camiré et al., 2012). More specifically, Bean et al. (2016) interviewed eight youth female participants of a physical activity based life skills promotion program to examine the effectiveness of the program for teaching transferable life skills. This program consisted of 57 weekly 75-90 minute sessions that ran for two years designed to develop and transfer life skills among youth participants. The program taught youth how and why life skills were important and encouraged them to put forth their best effort, take responsibility for their action, engage in leadership behaviours, and use opportunities to practice all these life skills. Results showed that youth participants reported learning emotional regulation, focus, goal setting, respect, responsibility, teamwork, and physical literacy, and also reported transferring these skills in non-sport settings such as family, social,

and academic (Bean et al., 2016). In addition, Camiré et al. (2012) interviewed nine coaches and 16 of their student-athletes' to examine the strategies used by high school coaches to teach and transfer life skills to non-sport settings. Findings suggested that coaches taught life skills following the five components of Gould and Carson's model. That is, coaches learned about their athletes' background, followed coaching philosophies that emphasized personal development, and used strategies that explicitly taught life skills. These strategies included teaching athletes to use keywords that prompted life skills inside and outside of sport, modelling and discussing core values of respect and fair play, taking advantage of teachable moments relating the lessons learned in sport to other domains, and organizing volunteer work to teach leadership and community involvement. In turn, athletes reported learning life skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork and transferring them to non-sport settings (Camiré et al., 2012). As such, the Life Skills Developmental Model provides examples of life skills that can be learned through sport participation and transferred to other life domains as well as a description of how coaches can foster these life skills through sport.

Taken together, the PYD in sport and Life Skills Developmental Models emphasize the positive outcomes that can accrue from sport participation. More specifically, PYD in sport entails the promotion of the 4Cs (competence, confidence, connection, and character) by promoting athletes' social, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive development and fostering positive coach-athlete interactions (Allan & Côté, 2016; Côté et al., 2010; Erickson & Côté, 2016). In turn, the Life Skills Developmental Model advocates the promotion of a wide range of skills (e.g., goal setting, time management, emotional regulation, and teamwork) that are transferable to other life domains (Bean et al., 2016; Camiré et al., 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008a). In order to consistently engage in behaviours that fosters these desirable outcomes

coaches adhere to philosophies that guide them in making more consistent objective decisions (Martens, 2012). One coaching philosophy that is in line with both the Positive Youth Development in Sport and Life Skills Developmental Model is called Humanistic Coaching.

From Humanistic Psychology to Humanistic Coaching

Humanistic coaching is a philosophy that focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal relationships between coaches and athletes (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). It focuses on providing athletes with positive experiences and problem-solving opportunities that encourage the achievement of personal, athletic, cognitive, and emotional competencies. Coaches individualize training and teach athletes to make positive decisions on and off the sport setting. These principles of humanistic coaching arise from the ideals of humanistic psychology that were adapted to the sport setting.

Humanistic Psychology

Humanistic psychology is a strength-based stance that proposes individuals are inherently motivated to grow and improve, while also taking control of their life (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969). It emanated in the mid-1950s in response to prevalent behaviourist and psychoanalytic theories that emphasized environmental and unconscious factors controlling human behaviour. Instead, humanistic psychology believed individuals had the potential to avoid external influences through their cognitive capacity and personal autonomy (Jourard, 1968). This perspective emphasized the importance of making choices and continually growing and developing through personal experiences. Humanistic psychology follows five core tenets (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969; Shaffer, 1978). First, it emphasizes the personal and subjective interpretation of one's experience that results from one's unique history. Second, it takes a

holistic stance to interpreting individuals advocating one is more than the sum of its parts and rejecting a dualist or reductionist view of humans. Third, it places freedom and autonomy as central concepts to human behaviour and denies the notion that people simply react to environmental or biological stimuli. More specifically, humanism views individuals as inherently motivated to achieve self-actualization (i.e., fulfillment, growth, and personal achievement), and to achieve this they must have freedom to experience and choose. Fourth, humanistic psychology is anti-reductionist, not attempting to analyze experience in components and viewing one's experience as a unique and personal phenomenon. Finally, it does not attempt to define human nature, instead it views it as a unique and dynamic process where individuals are continuously learning and developing. Taken together, humanistic psychology has an optimistic view of humanity that emphasizes individuality and holistic interpretation while also highlighting individuals' autonomy to make decisions and take control of their lives. These humanistic principles have been applied to other fields of science, such as education.

Humanistic education. Education prior to the 1960's can be described as teacher-centered, where instructors acted as the only source of information in the classroom and students the passive receivers of knowledge (Loyens & Rikers, 2011). Gradually teachers became aware of the importance of involving students as central agents in the learning process and implemented practices where students took an active role in building their own knowledge (Bransford, Franks, Vye, & Sherwood, 1989). Rogers (1969) had significant impact on the application of humanistic principles to educational practices. In particular, he encouraged educators to foster self-actualization by trusting students, providing them freedom to choose and discover, and making them active agents in the learning process – this became known as student-centered learning (Rogers, 1969). He also described important qualities to educators and their

roles, namely: honesty, acceptance, trust, and empathetic understanding. The most important was honesty to build a positive relationship with the learner by being open about thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Rogers, 1969). Facilitators must also show unconditional positive regard, fully accepting and trusting the learners. Finally, facilitators must be sensitive to individuals' concerns and anxieties experienced throughout the learning process. Since then, humanistic principles have been widely applied in education and became a well-developed field of study (Barrows, 1996; Savery, 2015). Research in student-centered approaches suggested it is an effective strategy to improve conceptual knowledge, understanding of models and paradigms, and critical thinking in high school (Wilson, Taylor, Kowalski, & Carlson, 2010), undergraduate physiology (Casotti, Rieser-Danner, & Knabb, 2008), and chemistry students (Lewis & Lewis, 2008). A review of student-centered studies from 2004 to 2010 showed increased domain-specific skills, social skills, critical thinking, and information retention among diverse populations (Loyens, Kirschner, & Paas, 2012). Research with young students suggested student-centered approaches were effective in fostering understanding and processing information in primary (Chu, 2009) and middle schools students (Geier et al., 2008). Finally, researchers identified improved factual knowledge and problem-solving skills in medical (Jamkar, Yemul, & Singh, 2006), education (Choi & Lee, 2009), and pharmacy students (Dupuis & Persky, 2008).

Taken together, these results provide strong evidence that student-centered strategies promote a deeper understating of information and facilitate the application of knowledge in practical settings. Given the positive impact of humanistic principles in education, several authors have discussed the application of humanistic principles in sports and coaching (Cassidy, 2010; Danziger, 1982; Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014).

Humanistic Coaching

In the same way humanistic education originated from teaching-centered methods, humanistic coaching also emerged in response to coach-centered methods characterized by lack of personal empathy and one-way coaching where knowledge and decisions were transmitted only from coach to athlete (Lombardo, 1987; Nelson et al., 2014). Lyle (2002) described this traditional coaching as autocratic, authoritative, and performance-oriented. Instead, humanistic coaching advocates for athlete autonomy and freedom, is athlete-centered, builds collaborative coach-athlete relationships, and is oriented towards growth and development (Lyle, 2002). In sum, humanistic coaching entails a change of attitude, from making decisions to sharing responsibility, from information-giver to a facilitator of a learning process, from setting rules and standards to agreeing on them (Lombardo, 1987).

Humanistic coaching philosophy describes six coaching behaviours (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002; Nelson et al., 2014). First, coaches must be responsive to change and secure of their self-concept to accept the continuous changes in sport coaching. The field is constantly changing and the reluctance of some coaches to adapt hinders the innovations in practice. Second, developing freedom and autonomy for athletes encourages them to pursue achievement, fulfilment, growth, and personal development (i.e., self-actualization). In that sense, the authenticity of freedom is more important than the amount of freedom itself. Third, coaches must set clear goals that focus on personal growth and development. Athletes need to understand what is expected of them and how they can progress in the sport setting. Fourth, coaches must gradually relinquish control until athletes attain the autonomy and freedom that will allow for self-actualization. This transition must be gradual so participants can adjust to new challenging circumstances that can enhance athlete's potential to problem-solve. Fifth, provide problem-

solving opportunities and challenge athletes to learn by being self-directed and independent. In humanistic coaching, athletes must learn by doing and trying, and it is the coaches' responsibility to provide athletes with optimal level challenges that foster opportunities to improve performance and self-awareness. Finally, individualize the coaching process by adjusting and adapting their behaviour and leadership to the needs, characteristics, and abilities of the athlete.

These key behaviours share similarities with behaviours described in other coaching approaches, such as mastery approach to coaching (Smith, et al., 2009), transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), autonomy-supportive coaching (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and athlete-centered coaching (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010), however, few studies have empirically investigated coaches' perceptions and application of humansitic coaching principles in order to empirically understand the relationship between humanistic coaching and these aforementioned approaches. The few studies that have investigated humanistic coaches' practices did it in elite sport contexts and found that humanistic coaches fostered holistic development, built positive collaborative relationships with their athletes, and provided problem-solving opportunities for atletes (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003; Lara-Bercial & Mallett, 2016; Solana-Sánchez, Lara-Bercial, & Solana-Sánchez, 2016). For example, Bennie and O'Connor (2010) interviewed professional Australian coaches and their athletes finding that humanistic coaches associated athletic success with personal development and a healthy sport-life balance. Lara-Bercial and Mallett (2016) studied the personalities, practices, and developmental pathways of successful professional and Olympic coaches finding that successful humanistic coaches adopted an explicitly athlete-centered stance, showed high moral values, and emphasized positive balance between sport and other life domains. Jones et al. (2003) investigated a professional soccer coach and found that humanistic coaches built positive

relationships with players and sought to gain cooperation and collaboration from them. Finally, Solana-Sánchez et al. (2016) investigated a youth soccer academy to find they had multiple humanistic characteristics, such as emphasizing life skill development and providing problem-solving opportunities to promote decision making and in-depth understanding of the sport. Taken together, these research findings suggest that coaches apply the humanistic coaching philosophy into their practices by setting clear and transparent forms of coach-athlete communication, welcoming athletes' input about team functions, adapting practices to meet athletes' needs, and sharing responsibility for team decisions.

While most studies in humanistic coaching have focused on describing its behaviours and the positive outcomes that accrued from them, one study in particular investigated how coaches applied these behaviours to their practices. Preston, Kerr, and Stirling (2015) assessed elite-level athletes' perceptions of their coaches' humanistic behaviours. Their findings indicated that while coaches followed some humanistic principles (i.e., fostering confidence and independence, engaging in open communication), they overlooked others such as using a democratic or facilitative coaching style, sharing decision making, and promoting personal growth and development. This inconsistent application of humanistic coaching had negative consequences for athletes, who perceived they were over-coached or that coaches showed favouritism to other athletes (Preston et al., 2015). These findings are not unique. According to Cassidy (2010) and Nelson et al. (2014), the lack of research investigating the association between humanistic theory and coaching practices has led to a wide range of interpretations of humanistic coaching, inconsistent practices, and an unclear understanding of what it is and how it can be applied to sport. Furthermore, Nelson et al. (2014) called for the inclusion of humanistic coaching principles and its theoretical backgrounds into coach training protocols as a way to improve the

application of humanistic coaching to sports as well as its impact on athletes. In order to understand how to appropriately include humanistic theory into coach training we my first address how coaches acquire knowledge.

Coach Learning

According to Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006), coaches acquire knowledge through three types of learning: formal, informal, and non-formal. First, formal learning entails nationwide certifications developed and implemented by sport associations or governing bodies. For example, the Coaching Association of Canada (www.coach.ca) created a National Coach Certification Program (NCCP) to equip coaches with tools to become competent and successful leaders. It is made up of three streams: community sport, instruction, and competition. The community sport stream is designed for individuals interested in coaching at the community level. There are two contexts to this stream: initiation and ongoing participation. The workshop in the initiation context is designed for coaches who are introducing sports to young children or adolescents that are participating in sports for the first time. The emphasis of the coach is to ensure the participants are having fun in a safe environment while teaching basic skills. The workshop in the ongoing participation context teaches coaches to instruct participants in a recreational environment and encourage lifelong participation in physical activity. The other two stream in the NCCP are the instruction stream that aims to develop coaches' skill proficiency in non-competitive settings by focusing on teaching sport-specific skills and training, and the competition stream that is designed for individuals who have previous coaching or athletic experience in a sport and teaches coaches to instruct athletes in physical, technical, tactical, and mental aspects of training. Taken together, the NCCP is a competence-based program that

focuses on coaches' abilities to meet the needs of sport participants and places emphasis on the environment or context in which the coach is coaching.

Second, informal learning involves personal experiences and social interactions that take place in situations where learning is not the main purpose (Cushion et al., 2010; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009). For example, research has shown that many elite coaches learned through their own experiences as athletes (Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004; Schinke, Bloom, & Salmela, 1995), while youth sport coaches learned from their personal experiences becoming parents (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2014). Moreover, Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald, and Côté (2008) noted that almost half of coaches in Canada identified mentors as an ideal source of knowledge. Mentoring involves a non-familial and non-romantic relationship in which an experienced individual has a direct and personal impact on the development of a less experienced individual (Bloom, 2013). Mentors help coaches shape one's personal coaching style and philosophy through positive role modeling and communication (Bloom, 2013). While the importance of mentors has been widely discussed in multiple studies with coaches at the elite level (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Saury & Durand, 1998), few have investigated mentoring in youth sport coaching. For example, Lemyre, Trudel, and Durand-Bush (2007) interviewed 36 youth sport ice hockey, soccer, and baseball coaches to understand the learning experiences of coaches in multiple youth sports. Their findings suggested that participants had access to some kind of mentoring, which generally involved their league supervisors (Lemyre et al., 2007).

Third, non-formal learning refers to organized educational activities outside of the formal setting that provide specific knowledge to a particular group (Nelson et al., 2006). These types of learning have been described as workshops, seminars, conferences, and clinics developed and

delivered by coaches or researchers, that are brief in duration (i.e., 60-120 min), and take place in controlled environments offering learning experiences in contextualized situations (Mallett et al., 2009; Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, 2010). A literature review on the effectiveness of coach education showed coaches relied mostly on these non-formal programs to learn strategies that allowed them to foster youth developmental outcomes (Trudel et al., 2010). Empirical studies support the effectiveness of non-formal coach learning showing that trained coaches were better able to improve team environment, build positive coach-athlete relationships, and foster positive outcomes in their athletes (Koh, Ong, & Camiré, 2014; Smith et al., 2007, 2009; Strachan, MacDonald, & Côté, 2016). For example, in their seminal work on youth sport coaching, Smith et al. (1979) designed and implemented an intervention program called Coach Effectiveness Training (CET). Lasting three hours, this training program followed five coaching principles: focus on mastering skills other than beating the opponent, utilize a positive approach to coaching using reinforcement and encouragement, establish norms that promote help and support among players, involve athletes in the decision making process regarding the team, use self-monitoring to increase awareness of one's behaviours (Smith & Smoll, 2002; Smith et al., 1979; Smoll & Smith, 2002). Smith et al. (2007) modified the CET program and created the mastery approach to coaching (MAC). This program emphasised the promotion of team cohesion and positive coach-athlete interaction that created an atmosphere that allowed for skill development while also increasing athletes' intrinsic motivation. The MAC simplified the five principles of CET into two themes: emphasizing positive reinforcement and measuring success based on maximum effort. They also reduced the length of the training to 75min. Research examining the effectiveness of Smith, Smoll, and colleagues' training programs found that athletes of trained coaches showed

higher promoted enjoyment, self-esteem, social interaction, and lowered anxiety than athletes of untrained coaches (Smith et al., 2007, 2009; Smith et al., 1979).

Another example of non-formal coach learning was the work of Koh et al. (2014), who created a four-phase training program designed to identify and transfer positive values to youth sport participants. First, the introductory phase consisted of a two-hour workshop where participants identified values they believed positively impacted youth athletes development and created activities to address them in practice. Second, the planning phase taught participants to create additional activities that promoted other values (e.g., integrity, respect, commitment, and resilience) and incorporated them in a coaching plan. Third, the practical phase consisted of participants running practice, receiving feedback from an expert, and reflecting on their own behaviours by watching video recordings of their practices. Finally, the review phase consisted of a group meeting where participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the education program. Examination of the effectiveness of this workshop found trained coaches successfully transmitted important values such as integrity, respect, commitment, and resilience to their athletes (Koh et al., 2014), and continued doing so two years later after the program was completed (Koh, Camiré, Regina, & Soon, 2016).

Finally, other non-formal training programs have adapted workshop protocols from prior literature to fit the purpose of their studies. For example, intervention studies teaching youth sport coaches to build team cohesion in youth ice hockey (Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008) or to foster developmental outcomes in youth basketball (Falcão et al., 2012) used a four-stage protocol developed by Carron and Spink (1993) that included an introductory stage, a conceptual stage, a practical stage, and an intervention stage. In the introductory stage the researcher explained the rationale of the program and its benefits in order to increase participants'

motivation and adherence to the intervention program. At the conceptual stage, the researcher presented evidence-based guidelines to simplify complex constructs, clarify how individual components relate to each other, and make it easier for participants to identify the focus of the interventions. The practical stage consisted of working with participants to create strategies that addressed the purpose of the workshop. Finally, in the intervention stage the activities presented in the practical stage are carried out.

In conclusion, while coaches can learn from multiple sources, such as certified training programs, peer interactions, and mentoring, the main source of knowledge regarding fostering development through sport has been via non-formal workshops (Trudel et al., 2010). These workshops have been traditionally developed and delivered as part of research projects and using different protocols to transfer knowledge to the coaches. Yet, despite research on the effectiveness of non-formal coach training programs, little is known about how knowledge is incorporated to these programs and translated to end users (Trudel et al., 2010).

Knowledge Translation

Knowledge translation (KT) is a process that aims at bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and practitioners (Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2013), and could be key in promoting evidence-based practices in youth sport coaching (Caron, Bloom, Falcão, & Sweet, 2015; Provvidenza et al., 2013). Some conceptual frameworks for implementing KT have been proposed describing similar procedures (Craig et al., 2008; Graham et al., 2006). For example, the Knowledge-to-Action cycle described how KT strategies could be incorporated to intervention programs (Graham et al., 2006). This framework was divided into two phases: knowledge creation and the action cycle. Knowledge creation consisted of inquiry, synthesis, and creation of knowledge and tools that are useful to end-users (Graham et al., 2006). The action

cycle represented the application and evaluation of these knowledge and tools. It included adapting, assessing barriers, and tailoring knowledge to the local context, monitoring the use of knowledge, and evaluating its outcomes (Graham et al., 2006).

KT has been used in sport sciences to develop and disseminate knowledge about sport-safety to elite coaches (Caron et al., 2015; Provvidenza et al., 2013; Richmond, McKay, & Emery, 2014). For example, the Sport Injury Prevention Research Center used the KT process to engage individuals who would be impacted by their research (e.g., parents, coaches, referees, youth participants) in planning, producing, applying, and disseminating research (Richmond et al., 2014). A research proposal was prepared in collaboration with these individuals for two studies that investigated the impact of body checking on concussion rates in elite level youth ice hockey (Emery, Hagel, Decloe, & Carly, 2010; Emery, Kang, Schneider, & Meeuwisse, 2011). Once results were found, barriers to applying the findings were collaboratively identified and the community members guided the dissemination of findings through medical organizations, hockey associations, and the media (Richmond et al., 2014). The KT process and collaboration among researchers and their partners allowed researchers to maximize the impact of their findings on youth sports in their community (Richmond et al., 2014).

KT has also been used to understand how elite coaches developed knowledge and learned about sport-safety (Caron et al., 2015; Provvidenza et al., 2013; Reade, Rodgers, & Hall, 2008; Reade, Rodgers, & Spriggs, 2008). For example, Reade, Rodgers, and Spriggs (2008) interviewed 20 Canadian University coaches to understand how they learned and how coaching research could transfer knowledge more efficiently. They found coaches learned from clinics and by actively seeking information other than scientific publications. Scientific papers were perceived as having technical language that did not appeal to the coaching population (Reade,

Rodgers, & Spriggs, 2008). Coaches suggested research could better fit the needs of practitioners by being more problem-driven, sport-specific, and focus on applicable strategies and tools (Reade, Rodgers, & Spriggs, 2008). These findings support that KT strategies are an effective way of disseminating knowledge to coaches, including teaching youth sport coaches humanistic principles and behaviours that can foster development through sport.

Conclusions

Theoretical models have been created to help demonstrate that sport is a viable context for fostering personal development through sport. Frameworks such as PYD in sport and Life Skills Developmental Models describe the positive outcomes of youth sport participation, while humanistic coaching provides general guidelines for effective coach behaviours (Côté et al., 2010; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Humanistic coaching is a philosophy that can guide coaches' in consistently engaging in the positive attitudes and behaviours that will foster athletes' personal growth. However, the lack of training on humanistic principles has led to inconsistent coaching practices and a lack of clear understanding about humanistic coaching and how it can be applied to sport (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014; Preston et al., 2015). The most effective way coaches have learned to foster developmental outcomes through sport has been non-formal training, however workshops have not taught humanistic principles to youth sport coaches (Nelson et al., 2014) and have used a wide array of protocols that don't clearly describe how knowledge is translated to end users (Trudel et al., 2010). As such, the purpose of the proposed program of research is to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop while examining coaches' learning experiences as well as investigating the impact of humanistic coaching on youth development through sport. To this end, three studies were conducted, each addressing a different aspect of the larger purpose. The first study involved developing and

delivering a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigating coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. The second study assessed the impact of a humanistic coaching workshop on the development of youth athletes of trained coaches. Finally, the third study investigated the experiences of student-athletes of coaches who had been trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. Overall, the aim of this dissertation was to expand our understanding of humanistic coaching, how it can be applied to sport, and the impact it can have on youth development.

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Bridging Text

Chapter two provided a review of the literature on youth development through sport, humanistic coaching, and coach learning. Among the conclusions, incorporating humanistic coaching principles to coach training protocols would improve both the application of humanistic coaching in sport, as well as its impact on athletes. Chapter three presents the development and delivery of a coach training program designed to teach the background principles, and importance of humanistic coaching. Additionally, it investigates coaches' experiences applying humanistic coaching in youth sport settings.

Chapter Three

Coaches' Experiences Learning and Applying the Content of a Humanistic Coaching Workshop in Youth Sport Settings

William R. Falcão[1], Gordon A. Bloom[1], & Andrew Bennie[2]

[1] McGill University

[2] Western Sydney University

(Published)

Falcão, W. R., Bloom, G. A., & Bennie, A. (2017). Coaches' experiences learning and applying the content of a humanistic coaching workshop in youth sport settings. *International Sport Coaching Journal, 4*, 279-290. doi: 10.1123/iscj.2017-0027

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigate coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. Participants were 12 coaches of grade 7-11 basketball teams from schools in low socio-economic communities in a major Canadian city. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and personal journals. An inductive thematic analysis revealed coaches perceived the workshop to be effective in teaching the humanistic principles and how to apply them in youth sport settings. The perceived strengths of the workshop included the group discussions, use of videos, practical coaching examples, and learning about the findings from empirical studies. The participants applied the humanistic principles with their teams by asking questions that guided athlete learning and by requesting feedback about various personal and team matters. Despite facing challenges such as increased time and effort to implement humanistic coaching principles, the participants reported positive outcomes in their athletes related to autonomy, communication, motivation, and willingness to help teammates. These results are discussed using literature on youth sport coaching, knowledge translation, and youth development through sport. Findings from this study can be used to enhance youth sport coach training protocols.

Keywords: coach education, knowledge translation, youth development through sport, coach learning

Coaches' Experiences Learning and Applying the Content of a Humanistic Coaching Workshop in Youth Sport Settings

Effective youth sport coaches promote a mastery-orientated climate, foster fun and play, encourage social interactions, and promote positive growth opportunities (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Moreover, youth sport coaches also act as mentors, role models, friends, and community leaders who promote the personal development of their participants (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Falcão, Bloom, & Gilbert, 2012; Schwebel, Smith, & Smoll, 2016; Stein, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2012). Studies investigating youth development through sport found coaches' behaviours positively influenced participants' outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2008; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2009). More specifically, Camiré and Trudel (2013) interviewed 18 high school football players and nine of their coaches, and found those coaches' efforts to teach life-skills through sport fostered leadership and engagement inside and outside of the sport setting. Similarly, White and Bennie (2015) interviewed 22 youth gymnasts and seven of their coaches, and found positive interpersonal relationships and effective coach behaviours helped athletes cope with the challenges and stress of sport, developed athletes' resilience, life skills, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. These coaching behaviours have been associated with humanistic coaching, which is proposed to promote development of young participants (Lyle, 2002).

Humanistic Coaching

Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal coach-athlete relationships (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). The principles of humanistic coaching can be traced to humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychology adopts a strength-based stance, proposing individuals are inherently motivated to grow and improve, while also having the potential to

avoid external influences through their cognitive capacity and personal autonomy (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969; Shaffer, 1978). This theory emphasizes the personal and subjective interpretation of human experience, and takes an anti-reductionist holistic view of individuals. It places human freedom and autonomy as central concepts, and can be used to highlight the importance of decision making and reject the notion that people react passively to stimuli (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969; Shaffer, 1978). In sum, humanistic psychology has an optimistic view of humanity that emphasizes individuality and holistic interpretation while also highlighting one's autonomy to make decisions and take control of their lives.

Similar to humanistic psychology, humanistic coaching also emerged in response to coaching methods characterized by lack of personal empathy, coach-centred decision making, and one-way teaching behaviours where knowledge was transmitted only from coach to athlete (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). Instead, early views on humanistic coaching advocated for an athlete-centred approach that promoted autonomy, were oriented towards athletes' growth and development, and created positive interpersonal relationships (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). Thus, humanistic coaching entailed a change of attitude by coaches from making decisions to sharing responsibility, from information-giver to a facilitator of a learning process, from setting rules and standards to agreeing on them (Lombardo, 1987). More specifically, Lyle (2002) described humanistic coaching as: (a) responsive to change, (b) providing opportunities to foster autonomy, (c) setting clear goals, (d) gradually relinquishing control, (e) providing problem-solving opportunities, and (f) individualizing the coaching process.

Despite efforts to describe and define humanistic coaching (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014), very few studies have investigated coaches' perceptions and application of humansitic coaching principles. Even less evident are empirical research of

humansitic coaching within youth sport settings. One study by Preston, Kerr, and Stirling (2015) was conducted to assess Olympic athletes' perceptions of their coaches' humanistic behaviours. They found that while coaches followed some humanistic principles (i.e., fostering confidence and independence, engaging in open communication), they overlooked others such as using a democratic or facilitative coaching style, sharing decision making, and promoting personal growth and development. Furthermore, this inconsistent application of humanistic coaching may have led to negative athlete experiences, such as the perception of being over-coached or that coaches showed favouritism to some athletes (Preston et al., 2015).

This absence of research investigating the links between humanistic theory and coaching practices has led to a wide range of interpretations of humanistic coaching, inconsistent practices, and an unclear understanding of what it is and how it can be applied to sport (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014). In order to address this gap, Nelson et al. (2014) suggested that humanistic coaching principles and its theoretical backgrounds should be included in coach training protocols. This is important for the present research because a clearly articulated relationship between humanistic theory and coaching practices can avoid "cherry picking convenient … concepts and ideas from humanistic psychology" (Nelson et al., 2014, p. 3). In addition, research evidence can be used to evaluate humanistic coach training programs and better inform future practice.

Coach Training

According to Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006), coaches acquire knowledge through three types of learning: formal, informal, and non-formal. Formal learning entails courses and certifications developed and implemented by sport associations or national governing bodies. Informal learning involves personal experiences and social interactions that take place in

situations where learning is not the main purpose. Lastly, non-formal learning refers to organized educational activities outside of the formal setting that provide specific knowledge to a particular group (Nelson et al., 2006). Most relevant to the present study, non-formal learning opportunities have been described as workshops, seminars, conferences, and clinics developed and delivered by coaches or researchers, that are brief in duration (i.e., 60-120 min), and take place in controlled environments offering learning experiences in contextualized situations (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, 2010). A review on the effectiveness of coach education indicated that while formal coach education programs contributed to standardizing knowledge, they had limited impact on coaches' abilities to foster life skills in their athletes (Trudel et al., 2010). On the other hand, non-formal learning methods such as workshops and seminars addressed specific topics that are more authentic, meaningful, and contextualized to a coach (Mallett et al., 2009). This statement is supported by empirical studies that found youth sport coaches who participated in non-formal coach training programs enhanced their ability to improve their team's environment, build positive coach-athlete relationships, and foster positive outcomes in their athletes (Koh, Ong, & Camiré, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). For example, Koh et al. (2014) developed and delivered a coach training program designed to teach strategies that promoted values related to personal growth and development. They found that primary school coaches acquired knowledge and athletes learned values such as integrity, respect, commitment, and resilience that impacted them both inside and outside of sport. Further, Koh, Camiré, Regina, and Soon (2016) conducted a follow-up investigation and found those same coaches continued to apply the strategies two years after the training program. These findings suggest that non-formal coach learning programs can have a long-term impact on coaches' behaviours that foster youth development through sport.

Despite research on the effectiveness of non-formal coach training programs, little is known about how knowledge is incorporated and transmitted in these programs (Trudel et al., 2010). Knowledge translation (KT) is a process that aims at bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and practice (Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2013), and could be helpful in developing evidence-based workshops in sport coaching (Caron, Bloom, Falcão, & Sweet, 2015). Graham et al. (2006) developed a two-phase framework called Knowledge-to-Action cycle to describe how KT could be used in non-formal training programs for health professionals. First, knowledge creation consisted of inquiry, synthesis, and creation of knowledge and tools that were useful for practitioners (Graham et al., 2006). Next, the action cycle was used to apply and evaluate the knowledge and tools by (a) adapting and tailoring knowledge to the context, and assessing its barriers, (b) monitoring the use of knowledge, and (c) evaluating outcomes (Graham et al., 2006). While knowledge translation has been widely used in health science settings, few studies have applied its structure in sport research (and those that have generally used it to develop and disseminate knowledge about sport-safety – see Caron et al., 2015; Richmond, McKay, & Emery, 2014.

In sum, literature has shown that KT is useful to bridge the gap between theory and practice. More specifically, coach education literature has suggested non-formal coach training programs are effective for teaching coaches to foster development through sport. Despite this, youth sport coach training programs have yet to specifically address humanistic principles using KT strategies. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as investigate coaches' perceptions of this workshop and their experiences using humanistic coaching. The present study was guided by two research questions: How can humanistic principles be incorporated into a coach training workshop to translate

knowledge on youth development through sport? And what are youth sport coaches' experiences using humanistic coaching?

Methods

The present study used transcendental phenomenology (cf. Husserl, 1931), a research methodology that describes the common meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals. This methodology is inspired by existential philosophy, which views humans as engaged beings capable of building personal meaning for their own experiences (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological studies have seven features: (a) present the philosophical background of phenomenology, (b) explore the lived experiences of a group of individuals, (c) emphasize the phenomenon, (d) collect data using interviews, (e) analyse data with an inductive systematic procedure, (f) use bracketing, and (g) describe the essence of participants' experiences. This study addressed all features of this methodology by exploring the lived experiences of a group of youth sport coaches with emphasis on their perceptions of a workshop as well as their use of humanistic coaching. The features of this methodology are addressed throughout the paper.

Participants

The participants of the present study were 12 youth sport basketball head coaches (10 male and 2 female) with an average age of 25.16 years (*SD* = 3.18, R = 21-30) and 3.92 years of coaching experience (*SD* = 3.30, R = 1-11). Six participants had certification in the Canadian national coaching certification program, while two had sport-specific provincial accreditation. Eight participants had a university degree (five in physical education), and four had a high school degree. Participants coached grade 7-11 basketball teams from schools in low socio-economic communities in a major Canadian city. All coaches played multiple sports as youth athletes, and

most specialized in basketball. Three participants played at the university level, while the others stopped playing earlier on due to injury or deselection. The participants started coaching after they stopped playing organized sports, motivated by the desire to give back to their community and positively impact the lives of children.

All the coaches in this study were part of a local non-profit organization called Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca), who uses sport as a tool to improve the personal development of youth living in low-socioeconomic settings. The coaches understood that the mission of the organization was to train beginner youth sport coaches on effective strategies designed to promote development though sport. After being selected and trained by the organization, they were assigned a high school team to coach for a whole season as part of the partnership between Pour 3 Points and local schools. The organization contacted our research team with a request to collaborate in developing and delivering the training protocol for their newly selected youth sport coaches. The primary investigator delivered a humanistic coaching workshop to the Pour 3 Points coaches and also led the examination of their experiences learning from the workshop and applying humanistic coaching in their practices. All of the coaches who were recruited agreed to participate in the study.

Procedures

After institutional ethics approval was obtained, one 2-hour humanistic coaching workshop was delivered prior to the start of the basketball season at a location chosen by the non-profit organization (see Appendix A for the informed consent form). The lead author delivered the workshop, which followed the two phases of the Knowledge-to-Action cycle: knowledge creation and action (Graham et al., 2006). Knowledge creation consisted of inquiry, synthesis, and creation of relevant knowledge and tools (Graham et al., 2006). The inquiry

started when the organization invited our research team to collaborate in training coaches on strategies to foster youth development through sport. As a result, our research team examined the theoretical and philosophical background of humanistic coaching to identify knowledge and tools that met the needs of the organization. This information was synthesized in a PowerPoint presentation that included psychological and educational theory related to humanism (cf. Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969) as well as humanistic coaching principles (cf. Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). This theoretical content was augmented with empirical research findings supporting the use of humanistic theories in education as well as the impact of positive coaching behaviours on youth development through sport. Finally, videos of high profile coaches' behaviours were used to illustrate humanistic behaviours and the lead author provided additional anecdotal practical coaching examples during the presentation. A summary of the content and activities from the workshop are presented in Table 1.

The action cycle consisted of applying and evaluating the knowledge of humanistic principles by adapting it to the context, assessing the barriers to applying it, and evaluating its outcomes (Graham et al., 2006). First, the lead author presented the information and facilitated discussions between the coaches on how to adapt humanistic coaching practices to the youth sport context during the workshop. Discussions during the workshop also covered some of the possible barriers coaches may encounter using humanistic coaching and how to overcome them. After the workshop, the use of humanistic coaching was monitored through journaling, and the outcomes of their practices were evaluated using qualitative interviews.

Instruments

Coaches participated in individual semi-structured interviews and completed bi-weekly journals throughout the season. The semi-structured interviews took place at a time and location

of coaches' convenience between four and six weeks after the workshop. This time allowed them to gain experience and form impressions of humanistic coaching. Coaches were asked to start their bi-weekly journal entries two weeks after the workshop.

Individual semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2013), data collection in phenomenological studies usually involves interviewing individuals. As such, an 11-question individual semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant (Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews have been described as a guided conversation where the researcher introduces a discussion topic using open-ended questions, thereby allowing the participants to answer freely (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Semi-structured interviews also allow for interpretations of participants' discourse, and aim at understanding the meaning of respondents' experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In line with another feature of phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013), the interview questions examined the lived experiences of coaches regarding the phenomenon being studied, that is their participation in the workshop and use of humanistic coaching principles in youth sport settings. The interviews averaged approximately 90 minutes (R = 50–134 min) and the data collected during the interviews were the primary source of information for most of the results section.

Bi-weekly journals. The coaches also completed a personal journal every two weeks, which allowed them to reflect and communicate their thoughts and experiences throughout the research process (Janesick, 1999). Journal entries were filled-out and submitted online using a survey website that was only accessible to the lead author. The journal was composed of three open-ended questions: What happened to your team since the last journal entry? Provide examples of how you used humanistic coaching in the past two weeks. Share any relevant coaching experience you had in the past two weeks and your overall impressions (Appendix C).

A total of 165 journal entries were submitted, with each coach submitting between 13 and 15 journals throughout the season. These data were used as a secondary source of information to contextualize the responses gathered in the interviews.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using an inductive systematic procedure, described as one of the features of transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). More specifically, an inductive thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse, and report thematic meanings in our qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013) described seven stages to performing thematic analysis: (a) transcription, (b) familiarization with the data, (c) coding, (d) searching for themes, (e) reviewing themes, (f) defining and naming themes, and (g) writing.

First, the 1085 minutes of audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim with minor changes to ensure clarity and anonymity of the content. This resulted in 240 pages of single-spaced interview transcription. The lead author became familiar with the data by listening to the audio recordings and reviewing the transcripts and journals before starting the analysis. The third stage entailed inductively coding the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2013), which resulted in 871 data features that were labelled using 34 codes. For example, the transcript extract “The kids don’t learn the lessons when we go through the steps too quickly. Humanistic coaching is about trying to get as much feedback as we can from them so you know how fast you can go” was coded as *listening to athlete input*. In the fourth stage, the authors combined codes to identify themes. For example, the aforementioned code was combined with other similar codes, such as *guiding athletes* and *athlete decision making*. In total, the authors identified six themes, which were then combined into three overarching themes. Next, the first two authors reviewed the themes and overarching themes by going over the transcriptions and ensuring they

represented the information portrayed by the participants. The sixth stage entailed defining themes and overarching themes by identifying their nature, writing a detailed description that summarized its essence, and constructing a concise name for each one. The three overarching themes are listed next, with the themes that comprised each one in parenthesis: (a) *humanistic coaching workshop* (themes: *perceptions of the workshop* and *lessons learned in the workshop*), (b) *experiences using humanistic coaching* (themes: *description of humanistic coaching* and *examples of humanistic coaching*) and (c) *outcomes of humanistic coaching* (themes: *perceptions of humanistic coaching* and *impact of humanistic coaching*). See appendix D for a complete list of the themes and codes. Finally, the writing involved combining the participants' accounts to tell a story about their experiences, which is presented in the results section.

Quality Standards

Qualitative sport coaching researchers have proposed criteria to ensure research quality (Smith, Sparkes, & Caddick, 2014). Based on Smith et al. (2014), the following strategies were used: (a) width, (b) aesthetic merit, (c) worthy topic, (d) rich rigor, and (e) transparency. To achieve width (i.e., comprehensiveness and quality of evidence), the lead author delivered the workshop and collected data from all coaches of the non-profit organization, provided a detailed description of the data analysis, and reported direct quotes of the participants to allow the reader to judge the quality of the data. Aesthetic merit (i.e., creative analytical practices) was addressed by using an inductive thematic analytical process, which opened up the text for explanatory interpretation of information. The study itself is deemed a worthy topic given it originated from a request of the community and was relevant, timely, and significant to their needs. The study showed rich rigor (i.e., use of theoretical constructs, abundant data, and time in the field) by using humanistic coaching as a central theoretical framework, collecting 1085 minutes of

interviews, and having the lead author spend time with the P3P board members and coaches before and after the workshop. Finally, transparency was attained through regular discussions between the lead author and the second author, where the latter scrutinized the process of data collection and analysis in a way that encouraged reflection and exploration of alternative interpretations of the data.

Finally, bracketing was also used as a quality standard criterion. This is a feature in transcendental phenomenology that allows the investigator to focus on the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013). Bracketing promotes self-reflection and raises awareness to how one's personal experiences may impact the collection and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2013). To meet this quality standard, the lead author – who was responsible for all of the data collection and the initial phases of data analysis – kept a reflective journal throughout the entire study. In this journal he reflected on his interactions with the various stakeholders in the project, on the process of the interviews, and on the various stages of analysis.

Results

This section presents participants' perceptions of the humanistic coaching workshop, their experiences using humanistic coaching in youth sport, and their observations of its impact on their athletes. This section is framed using the overarching themes identified in the analysis of the data: *humanistic coaching workshop*, *experiences using humanistic coaching*, and *outcomes of humanistic coaching*. The definition of each theme is presented along with quotes are used to illustrate coaches' experiences. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity.

Humanistic Coaching Workshop

This overarching theme included what and how coaches learned, as well as suggestions to improve the workshop. Coaches' reported the workshop taught them to allow athletes to make

decisions about the team, how to build positive relationships with athletes, and how to focus on athletes' needs. Participants said the workshop highlighted the importance of including athletes in team related decisions as a way to promote independence, autonomy, critical thinking, and problem solving. For example, Kyle said: 'The workshop taught me we must involve athletes in decisions about the team. They like to feel involved and it enables them to assimilate things more easily. They love to help when we don't give them orders.' In turn, Adam stated:

> I learned the goal is for athletes to become independent, make their own decisions, and be responsible. Humanistic coaching focuses on them learning how to behave towards each other and in society. We are not forming professional players; we are forming future men.

Participants also reported learning to establish open communications with the players instead of giving orders. More specifically, Chris mentioned: 'The workshop taught me how to improve communication by asking questions that make them think and allowing them to find the answer themselves. You have to know why you do something otherwise what is the point of doing it?' Other coaches said:

> I love the way that the workshop puts the horizontal relationship between the players and the coaches. … The workshop taught me that it is important to open-up to the players and consider their feedback. Having a discussion, asking them questions, and guiding them through answers is a lot more powerful than preaching to them. (Ben)
>
> The workshop taught me to communicate with the players. Before I spoke as a dictator because that's what I knew. Now, I ask questions that make them think and help them find solutions. (Evan)

Coaches also used language that raised awareness to teamwork and collaborating with others as a way to foster an engaging and supportive environment. For example:

> The workshop taught me to think of *us* instead of *me*. When someone makes a mistake I don't tell them 'you made a mistake' or else my players will also blame each other during games. Instead I tell them this is *our* mistake. If someone is not able to do something, we work together to encourage them. (Ian)

Finally, one coach addressed the importance of focusing on athletes' needs by building their practices considering players' athletic and emotional characteristics.

> I learned that as coaches we must focus on the players and see how they feel instead of just taking things where we want it to go. We must start from what is happening to them, from where they are emotionally, and bring them where we want. (Lindsay)

Coaches also discussed how the workshop helped them learn about humanistic coaching. More specifically, coaches said videos, empirical studies, group discussions, and practical coaching examples were the elements of the workshop that helped them stay engaged and learn:

> I am big on everything that is visual. The videos of the coaches' speeches were great. Both the good and bad examples were great. … Everything in the workshop was research based and there were reasons to believe humanistic coaching can be good. … You gave us actual examples and we discussed how we would react in certain situations. (Adam)

> The story about how the coach dealt with the player who shot a buzzer beater during a blowout. The coach knew he shouldn't walk on the court and yell at the player. Instead he had a conversation with her to explain why she shouldn't have done it. The girl understood and apologized. Other coaches would make the girl do push-ups on the court. … Just hearing those examples made me think. (Dylan)

Finally, suggestions to improve the workshop included making the workshop more interactive, asking more questions and applying activities where coaches would watch or run practices. For

example, Fred said: ‘The workshop could have been better if it had been more interactive. Instead of focusing so much on theory, show more practices.’ Another coach added:

> The workshop started by showing many studies. Instead, my suggestion would be to first explain and discuss the approach to later show the research. Start with: Why are we doing this? What can it bring? Then you tell us about the research. You must have the theory, I agree. Just reverse it. (George)

Experiences Using Humanistic Coaching

During the interviews and journal entries, coaches provided examples of how they applied humanistic coaching. Coaches described humanistic coaching behaviours as guiding athletes through problem solving, building collaborative coach-athlete relationships, seeking athletes’ input and allowing them to make decision about the team, and fostering development through sport. First, coaches guided athletes by asking thought-provoking questions instead of telling them what to do. The coach acted as a facilitator that enabled athletes to come up with their own solutions when creating team rules, in practice, and choosing team strategy:

> The coach is a guide in the humanistic coaching. I don’t talk that much…. I try teaching through games where players have fun while learning. I propose a problem and they work on finding a solution. If their solution does not solve the problem, that’s OK, they'll keep trying until they get it. I keep asking questions until they find an answer. (George)
>
> It is important for coaches to understand the person is not *your* player, they are kids who will soon be adults and will have to make their own choices. We are here to guide them and at the end of the day it’s their life. Asking questions is good because they have to think and they have to find the solution. By knowing your mistakes, you are able to fix them yourself. (John)

Data from the journal entries describe how coaches encouraged athletes to identify problems and find solutions by themselves. For example, Heather mentioned:

> We were doing a drill and the girls were very unfocused. Instead of screaming and getting mad, I called for a water break. When they got back I addressed the situation and they understood there was a problem. I went to the other side of the court and let them talk among themselves to identify the cause of the problem and propose solutions. After that, the environment changed completely and they practiced with much more intensity. (October 11-24)

> A player's parents took her out of the team because she lied to them. To avoid that from happening again I spoke to the girls. I asked them to come up with a way to avoid losing other girls. They debated the issue together, calmly, and respectfully. Most importantly, they ALL contributed to creating new team rules so it wouldn't happen again. (November 22-December 5)

Participants also described the coach-athlete relationship in humanistic coaching as one where coaches collaborated with athletes in building the team environment, trust, and friendships. Coaches developed the coach-athlete relationship by having frequent discussions with their athletes about subjects outside of sports while maintaining a positive and understanding approach to coaching:

> I always start practice with a little discussion. I ask them about their week, about school. At the end of the practice I stay longer and the girls come chat with me. I am a friend at the beginning and at end of practices, but when the practice starts they know I am the coach. That shows two sides of coaching. (Heather)

Third, participants highlighted that humanistic coaching entailed including athletes in decisions about the team and welcomed athletes' input. More specifically, coaches allowed athletes to create the team rules and implemented sport-specific strategies that encouraged decision making on the playing field:

> At the beginning of the year there was a lot of dribbling and shooting while I was talking. I brought up that issue and asked: 'How can we fix this?' They decided the player who disturbed practice should run, but I told them everyone had to run – they are a team. So they proposed if that player didn't finish first he would run another lap. It was something I would have never thought, and I accepted their suggestion. Now the running is more competitive and fun. (Ben)

> I teach my players to run 5-out because this is an offensive system where players need to make decisions and react to what the defence is doing. I can teach them all motions and skills, but they must decide what to do. I don't want my players to think like robots where I say: 'Here's a play. Run it.' I want them to think and understand basketball. (Evan)

Coaches also asked for athletes' feedback about practices and adjusted drills to meet their preference and needs. This allowed coaches to gain insight on athletes' perceptions about the team. For example, Lindsay said: 'In practice, we often gather before and after each drill. We ask for their feedback on what worked, and what they saw. By doing that we know what they understand from the drill.' In turn, Ian suggested:

> I started to listen to my players. That's something I didn't do before. For example, I won't say no if they want to change a drill. I must agree because that's what they want, and if they like the drill they will do it better.

Lastly, participants mentioned humanistic coaches promoted development outcomes through sport by connecting the lessons learned in sport to other life situations. Coaches mentioned they taught their players to work hard and stay positive in sport, and spent time with them outside of sport holding team study hours:

> The purpose of the humanistic coaching is not to win games, championships, or trophies. The goal is the long-term development of the player and the person in the academic, professional, and in everyday life. The player and the person are both important. (Kyle)

Participants reported facing a number of challenges when implementing humanistic coaching. Most challenges related to the time and effort it took to continuously challenge athletes, ask thought provoking questions, and wait for athletes to find solutions. Also, even though no coaches experienced this, a couple were concerned with athletes possibly abusing the autonomy granted in humanistic coaching:

> When coaching, you need to think a lot. When I do my drills, I really have to think about what I'm doing and what I'm asking. …. The practices take more time when you are constantly asking athletes to think and discuss. It would go faster if the coach simply tells players what to do. (Dylan)

> I think humanistic coaching works depending on what type of players you have. It may be difficult to use with players with big egos. They may abuse the freedom you give them and they won't really respect you. (Chris)

Outcomes of Humanistic Coaching

This overarching theme addressed coaches' perceptions regarding the impact of humanistic coaching on youth sport athletes. The coaches noticed increased autonomy,

communication skills, and motivation amongst their athletes. First, coaches stated that youth athletes showed more autonomy by starting practice and drills without coaches' instruction:

> I notice my players are more independent. One day I was late for practice and they didn't wait for me to get started. When I arrived they had already done the warm-up, layups, and were practicing, whereas in the first practice of the year they did nothing, and just sat there until I arrived. (Kyle)

> I find my athletes gained more autonomy. For example, although I am present, they immediately begin doing the drills they have to do. They don't ask, 'Coach what do we do next?' like they used to. It would have taken two months before they stop asking me, with humanistic coaching in two weeks it was settled. (Fred)

Second, coaches noticed their athletes showed improved communication skills. In particular, their athletes became more comfortable expressing their opinions and respecting others', and more proactive in helping their teammates. As a result, coaches noticed improved trust between teammates as well as between athletes and coaches:

> Last year the communication was not open and they were afraid of me. Now they are increasingly opening up. I'm building trust. They tell me about their problems. One player told me and the team his cousin had passed away. The whole team supported him. Youth players won't talk to you about personal issues if they don't trust you. (Evan)

> Humanistic coaching helped change my best player. I always ask my players their thoughts on drills and skills they are executing. In the beginning he was very shy and unable to share his opinion. Still, I continue to ask him for his thoughts. Now he answers questions and communicates with his teammates. (George)

Finally, coaches noticed increased athlete motivation to improve their sport knowledge and skills. Coaches attributed this high motivation to the fun and interactive nature of their practices. For example, Chris said: 'I realized that one of the outcomes of humanistic coaching was the players working harder. They wanted to learn. They were excited.' In turn, Dylan said:

> I think my players feel very comfortable at practice. They enjoy it because we have good harmony, as opposed to feeling forced to be there. They want to come because they know they will have a good time. Practices are meant to be as interactive as possible.

The personal journals also supported the coaches' perceptions of their athletes' improved engagement, effort, and motivation. For example, Ian described how his athletes stayed positive and continued working hard despite losing games in the beginning of the season.

> It impresses me how my girls criticize each other in an encouraging and positive way. One of them called the others for a practice between them because they needed to improve. They all came even if I wasn't there. (November 8-21)
>
> We lost our 4th game, but girls are more motivated and want to learn more in practice. I did a practice on a holiday and they were happy. It was great. The girls are not making the same mistakes as they used to, and are more serious about practice. (November 22-December 5)

All participants reported their intention to continue using humanistic coaching because it allowed them to have a greater impact on the lives of youth athletes, inside and outside of sport:

> Humanistic coaching leads to more engaged players that can give their opinions instead of just following the path of others. This approach creates individuals that are more conscious about the world around them. It will bring great changes into society. (Ben)

> Through humanistic coaching the kids will be able to make choices when they are older and when we are not there. You will mean something to them. Some parents are not really there and in sport they have an adult taking care of them and helping them be successful. That's one of the things I think is most beautiful. (John)

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to develop and deliver a humanistic coaching workshop, to investigate coaches' perceptions of this workshop, and to explore their experiences using humanistic coaching. The results indicated this workshop successfully taught coaches about humanistic coaching and provided them with tools to apply their knowledge in youth sport settings. Overall, coaches had positive experiences and observed developmental outcomes in their athletes despite facing challenges such as increased time and effort required to use humanistic coaching.

Researchers have acknowledged that while the combination of humanism and sport is not new, the knowledge and application of these principles remains limited and superficial in the sport context (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson, Potrac, & Marshall, 2010). Indeed, the interpretations and practice of humanistic coaching have been inconsistent (Cassidy, 2010; Lyle, 2002; Nelson et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2010; Preston et al., 2015). Our study attempted to address this gap by implementing a coach education program underpinned by the Knowledge-to-Action cycle (cf. Graham et al., 2006). Non-formal sport coach training programs have not typically used KT, instead using frameworks based on previous experience (Koh et al., 2014) or protocols from other research (Falcão et al., 2012; Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008). By using the Knowledge-to-Action cycle, we were able to plan training based on theoretically derived humanistic principles, as well as use qualitative methods to investigate the participants'

experiences learning and applying knowledge. Our findings demonstrate that the Knowledge-to-Action cycle (Graham et al., 2006) was valuable for building collaborations between researchers and community partners, assessing participant's needs, collaboratively creating knowledge, evaluating participant's learning, and examining the applicability of the knowledge and tools developed. Thus, this can be an effective mechanism to incorporate humanistic coaching in non-formal coach training.

Coaches in the current study described humanistic coaching in a similar manner as previous literature (cf. Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002), suggesting the workshop effectively taught them the key principles of humanistic coaching. Another unique aspect of our study is that it demonstrated how coaches applied humanistic coaching principles in their practices. For example, the coaches asked questions to their athletes as opposed to giving them answers, frequently talked to their athletes about matters related and unrelated to sport to improve the coach-athlete relationship, and requested athletes' feedback about various team matters. These coaching behaviours share similarities with other coaching approaches (cf. Vella & Perlman, 2014). For example, the mastery approach fosters positive experiences by setting clear goals and using positive reinforcements (Smith et al., 2009), transformational leadership promotes development by intellectually stimulating athletes and individualizing the coaching process (Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, & Hardy, 2009; Turnnidge & Côté, 2016; Vallée & Bloom, 2005), while autonomy-supportive coaching gives athletes choices and a sense of control (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The resemblance between humanistic coaching and the aforementioned coaching approaches suggests humanistic coaching may be the common philosophy underlying the guiding principles of these coaching approaches. This understanding

can shed light into the similarities between the approaches and help coaches implement them together in a complementary way.

Our findings also revealed a number of athlete developmental outcomes (autonomy, communication, motivation, and willingness to help teammates) that the coaches felt occurred because of the training they received in our workshop. This highlights the potential of humanistic coaching to foster personal development, which has been conceptualized using the life skills model (Gould & Carson, 2008) or the positive youth development in sport framework (Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010). The life skills model suggested youth athletes can learn and transfer skills such as respect for others, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership from sport to non-sport contexts (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Gould & Carson, 2008). Relatedly, the positive youth development in sport framework identified four desirable athlete outcomes: competence, confidence, connection, and character (4C's: Côté et al., 2010). Findings from our study demonstrated that coaches observed outcomes associated to both of these conceptual frameworks. First, coaches connected lessons learned in sport to other life domains, such as communication skills and respect for others. Second, coaches observed athlete outcomes that mirrored the 4C's by deepening athlete learning in their sport (competence), improving autonomy and motivation (confidence), building positive relationships and communication skills (connection), and fostering respect for others (character). Hence, humanistic coaching may be another beneficial way to foster positive athlete outcomes through sport participation.

According to the coaches in the present study, the application of humanistic coaching principles was not without challenges. Their main concern was the increased time and effort required to apply humanistic coaching to their practice compared to other coaching approaches. More specifically, the coaches felt they spent more time planning their training sessions to

include games and problem-solving activities, and they also felt they invested more time with their athletes outside of sport (e.g., study hours and community work). This is an important lesson for future implementation of humanistic coaching, as these strategies went beyond the expected norms of many youth sport coaching practices (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014). Because of these challenges, it may be beneficial to present coaches with research findings and an evidence-based rationale that underpins the value of building relationships with athletes off the training field and how using questions can stimulate learning during practice. For instance, researchers have shown that collaborative interactions with athletes and using questions fostered decision making, improved pro-social behaviours, and developed life skills (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; White & Bennie, 2015). Additionally, Kidman and Lombardo (2010) suggested that questioning could foster autonomy, critical thinking, and decision making, while simply telling athletes what to do provided lower rates of learning and retention. Our evaluation of the coaches' perceptions suggested this evidence-based rationale led them to become strong advocates of using humanistic coaching. Ultimately, this encouraged them to continue using humanistic principles because the perceived benefits outweighed the challenges.

The current study was used to examine the experiences of youth sport coaches using humanistic coaching. It would be equally beneficial to assess the athlete's perspective using psychometric instruments and qualitative methodologies. Psychometric evaluations of youth sport participants' personal development can provide tangible assessments of whether humanistic coaching is an effective way for promoting developmental outcomes. Moreover, qualitative methodologies can examine athletes' individual experiences and perceptions of humanistic coaching, which is particularly relevant given its principles advocate the inclusion of athlete

input in all team matters. In addition, an experimental design could be incorporated to enhance the rigour and fidelity of the experiment by including control and comparison groups and measuring coaches' understanding of the humanistic principles and behaviours. Furthermore, the strategies described in the current study could be combined with behaviour observation instruments to further investigate why, how, and when coaches implement these behaviours, without strictly relying on participants' self-reported behaviours. For example, researchers can videotape practice or competition analyzing the videos for humanistic coaching behaviours and discussing them with the coach. Alternatively, observers can attend practices to independently rate a coach on their engagement in humanistic coaching behaviours. Finally, coaches were part of an organization that aimed to promote youth development though sport, which meant their values and beliefs were likely aligned with the content discussed in the workshop. It would be valuable for future research to investigate the coaches' perceptions from those who are not affiliated with this type of organization and may not be as receptive, as well as coaches from different sports, cultures, and levels of competition. This would build the knowledge base about the applicability of humanistic coaching to other settings.

Conclusions

According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological studies must describe the what and how of participants' experiences – this is called the *essence* and is the last feature of phenomenology. In the present study, the coaches' experiences can be summarized as learning to guide athletes and foster positive experiences through youth sport (what). Importantly, coaches asked questions and sought athlete input (how) to develop autonomy, critical thinking skills, as well as respect for others. Participants faced challenges throughout the application strategies, but maintained positive attitudes towards humanistic coaching principles and intended to continue using them in

the future. In sum, our findings suggest that incorporating humanistic theory in non-formal coach training protocols may increase youth sport coaches' understanding and ability to apply the key principles of humanistic coaching, as well as help them foster sport environments that promote positive youth psychosocial outcomes.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to acknowledge the Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca) organization for their collaboration. We would like to thank both the program executives and the coaches for their dedication and commitment to the application of humanistic coaching.

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Table 1

The Phases and Content of the Humanistic Coaching Workshop

Phase	Content
Introduction	• Defined and explained Humanistic Coaching using two videos of well-known basketball coaches. One clip was sourced from a post-game interview with an NBA coach that emphasized an athlete-centred coaching style. The other clip contained a halftime speech given by a University basketball coach that demonstrated a coach-centred approach. • Provided rationale for the workshop
Humanistic Theories	• Connected coaching and humanistic theories from psychology and education. • Humanistic Psychology: briefly described as a strength-based approach that emphasizes decision making, freedom, and autonomy. • Humanistic Education: briefly described the application of humanistic theory in education and the role of the teacher. Exemplified humanistic education practices with a video of 3rd grade educators teaching math using student-centered and problem-solving strategies. Presented empirical research findings supporting positive learning outcomes. • Discussed the relationship between teaching and coaching, as well as the use of humanistic strategies in coaching.
Humanistic Coaching	• Expanded on the description and use of humanistic coaching. • Small group activity whereby the coaches co-created, presented, and discussed humanistic coaching strategies to teach drills, set team goals, or determine team values. • Presented empirical research findings describing the connection between humanistic coaches' behaviours and positive youth athlete outcomes.
Conclusions	• Discussed the potential challenges implementing humanistic coaching and identified strategies to overcome the addressed barriers. • Described the requirements and highlighted the importance of completing the reflective journals and participating in the interviews to evaluate the program.

Bridging Text

Chapter three was an original manuscript that described the creation of a humanistic coaching workshop, the strategies coaches used to apply this philosophy in their practices, and the reported outcomes they observed in their athletes. Results revealed how coaches applied humanistic coaching to youth sport settings and the positive outcomes they felt resulted from it. While the coaches' perceptions of athlete development provided valuable insight to how athletes responded to this coaching philosophy, it did not assess the athletes' outcomes. Chapter four assesses the impact of humanistic coach training on athlete development comparing the differences between athletes of trained and untrained coaches using quantitative instruments measuring four developmental outcomes: competence, confidence, connection, and character.

Chapter Four

The Impact of Humanistic Coach Training on Youth Athletes' Development through Sport

William R. Falcão[1], Gordon A. Bloom[1], & Catherine M. Sabiston[2]

[1] McGill University, Montreal, Canada

[2] University of Toronto, Canada

(Submitted for review)

Falcão, W. R., Bloom, G. A., & Sabiston, C. M. (submitted for review). The impact of humanistic coach training on youth athletes' development through sport.

Abstract

Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering participants and fostering positive coach-athlete relationships. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of humanistic coach training on athlete development. A sample of 148 student-athletes of both trained and untrained coaches completed questionnaires twice during their season. The effects of the humanistic coach training were assessed using repeated measures multiple analysis of variance. Based on the results, athletes of trained coaches showed stronger connection to their coaches. While the findings also suggest that participants increased their antisocial behaviours, this increase was lower for athletes of trained coaches. These findings suggest that teaching humanistic coaching principles may help foster developmental outcomes in youth sport participants. Humanistic coach training must be continually developed and tested to further improve its ability to foster youth development.

Keywords: Youth Sport; Coaching; Positive Youth Development

The Impact of Humanistic Coach Training on Youth Athletes' Development through Sport

Sport is a highly desirable context with potential to foster youth personal development (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Youth sport participation has helped facilitate many positive athlete outcomes such as increased enjoyment, self-esteem, emotional regulation, and ability to work with others (Koh, Camiré, Bloom, & Wang, 2017; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007; Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2016). Additionally, sport can help youth athletes acquire life skills that are transferable to other settings, such as respect for others, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership (Camiré & Trudel, 2013). All of these developmental outcomes have been defined and conceptualized using various theoretical frameworks with underpinnings in leadership, life skills promotion, and coaching effectiveness (e.g., Chelladurai, 1984; Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010; Gould & Carson, 2008; Horn, 2008). An overarching framework integrating many theoretical tenets is Côté et al.'s (2010) Positive Youth Development (PYD) in sport framework.

PYD in Sport

Originating from Lerner et al. (2005) seminal work in developmental psychology, PYD describes desirable outcomes ensuing from youths' social environments including their school, family, and community. Côté et al. (2010) adapted this work to the sport domain and described four outcomes from youth sport participation that became known as the 4C's: competence, confidence, connection, and character. Competence is defined as individuals' abilities in a specific sport. Confidence is the degree of certainty an individual possesses about his/her ability to succeed in general. Connection is the positive interpersonal relationships originating from the need to belong and feel cared for. Finally, character refers to an individual's moral development and sportspersonship. In a literature review of qualitative studies published on PYD in sport,

researchers analyzed 63 articles and found the most common outcomes of youth participation in sport included improved competence and fundamental movement skills, motivation and self-perceptions, teamwork and communications skills, as well as leadership, autonomy, and respect for others – all of which relate to the 4C's (Holt et al., 2017). These findings support the widespread acceptance of the PYD in sport framework and the 4C's as a way of describing and measuring youth development through sport.

Vierimaa, Erickson, Côté, and Gilbert (2012) performed an extensive literature review of more than 200 articles across sport participation, personal development, and coaching domains that led to the creation of a toolkit for measuring PYD in sport. Their toolkit was composed of previously validated questionnaires that separately measured each of the 4C's. Since this toolkit was created, some studies have used it to measure youth development in sport (Allan & Côté, 2016; Erickson & Côté, 2016). For example, Erickson and Côté (2016) found that athletes demonstrated increased 4C scores when coaches interacted collaboratively with them by addressing matters outside of sport, and decreased 4C scores when coaches imposed solutions and addressed only sport-related matters. In a related manner, Allan and Côté (2016) found that athletes of even-tempered coaches who routinely asked for athlete input showed higher scores in character than athletes of impatient coaches who pressured their athletes to perform. In sum, these findings support that coaches' behaviours can impact the development of young participants, and thus training coaches to build sport environments that foster the 4C's is important for athlete development.

Coach Training

The impact of coaches' behaviours on youth development is well documented in the sport coaching literature, especially among trained coaches (LaForge, Sullivan, & Bloom, 2012; Smith

et al., 2007; Weiss & Williams, 2004). More specifically, coaches have learned to foster youth development through sport mainly from non-formal training programs, such as workshops developed and delivered by other coaches or researchers (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, 2010). Researchers that developed and delivered coach training evaluated the quality of their workshop by assessing coaches' knowledge, behaviours, and the impact on youth athletes (Koh, Ong, & Camiré, 2014; Smith et al., 2007; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). For example, Smith, Smoll, and colleagues designed a training protocol to teach youth sport coaches to use positive feedback, engage athletes in decisions about the team, and focus on skill development (Smith et al., 2007; Smith et al., 1979). Using quasi-experimental methods, these researchers found trained coaches' promoted enjoyment, improved self-esteem, lowered the anxiety level of their athletes, and encouraged positive social interactions (Smith et al., 2007; Smith et al., 1979). In addition, Koh et al. (2014) created a program designed to teach coaches how to identify and transfer values to youth sport participants. Examination of this workshop found trained coaches successfully transmitted important values such as integrity, respect, commitment, and resilience to their athletes (Koh et al., 2014), and continued doing so two years later after the program was completed (Koh, Camiré, Regina, & Soon, 2016). Finally, other non-formal training programs also taught youth sport coaches how to build team cohesion (Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008) or address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals through sport (Falcão, Bloom, & Gilbert, 2012). These studies found trained coaches felt better prepared to deal with athletes' needs and noticed improved leadership, cohesion, and communication skills among their athletes, as well as other outcomes related to the 4C's. Coaching behaviours that aim at fostering personal development, such as giving positive feedback, allowing athletes to make decision about the team, and building positive coach-athlete

relationships, are associated with a coaching philosophy called humanistic coaching (Lombardo, 1987).

Humanistic Coaching

Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering participants and fostering positive coach-athletes relationships (Lyle, 2002). It was inspired by humanistic psychology and education (cf. Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969) and emerged in response to traditional coach-centered approaches that focused solely on winning. As a result, humanistic coaching behaviours were described as: (a) encouraging autonomy and gradually relinquishing control by using a facilitative coaching style; (b) providing problem-solving opportunities; (c) individualizing the coaching process by setting clear personal goals that address individual needs; and (d) building positive collaborative coach-athlete relationships by being understanding and supportive, as well as being open about thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Lyle, 2002; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014).

Researchers studying effective coaching behaviours further noted that coaching using this philosophy fostered development inside and outside of sport, used clear and transparent forms of coach-athlete communication, welcomed athlete input about team functions, adapted practices to meet athlete needs, and shared responsibility for team decisions (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003; Lara-Bercial & Mallett, 2016). More precisely, Bennie and O'Connor (2010) interviewed six coaches and 25 of their athletes from Australian professional sport leagues to learn about coaches' philosophies and attitudes towards fostering athlete's personal growth and development. Findings suggested professional coaches who followed humanistic principles believed success on the field was a consequence of developing the individual as an athlete and a person by allowing their players to achieve a balance between sport

and life. In addition, Lara-Bercial and Mallett (2016) studied the personalities, practices, and developmental pathways of professional and Olympic coaches who had repeatedly achieved success. The authors described a humanistic coach as someone who took an explicitly athlete-centered stance, showed high moral values, and emphasized positive balance between sport and other life domains. Finally, Jones et al.'s (2003) case study investigation of a professional soccer coach found the coach used humanistic strategies to build positive relationships with players and to gain cooperation and collaboration from them.

Taken together, PYD in sport describes the desirable outcomes of youth sport participation (Côté et al., 2010), non-formal coach training programs teach behaviours that foster these outcomes (Smith et al., 2007), and humanistic coaching provides the guiding principles of these coaching behaviours (Lyle, 2002). Despite the close relationship between these elements, Nelson et al. (2014) noted that coach training programs designed to teach development through sport did not typically address humanistic coaching principles. Furthermore, they suggested that teaching humanistic principles in youth sport coach training programs could increase coaches' knowledge, lead to more consistent practices, and foster development through sport. However, despite recommendations and suggestion from humanistic coaching proponents, there is limited empirical support that teaching the principles of humanistic coaching can impact youth development through sport, in particular the 4C's. Thus, the purpose of this study was to assess the impact of a humanistic coaching workshop on the development of youth athletes of trained coaches. Specifically, differences in athletes' reporting of competence, confidence, connection, and character (4C's) was tested between athletes of coaches trained or not trained in humanistic principles. It was hypothesized that athletes of trained coaches would demonstrate higher increases on their 4C's scores than athlete of untrained coaches.

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were 148 student-athletes between 12 and 17 years old (M_{age}=13.63, SD=1.09, 64.2% male) from 19 varsity teams from four schools in low socio-economic communities in a major Canadian city. The student-athletes were divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=98) composed of student-athletes of 11 head coaches who participated in a humanistic coaching training session; and a comparison group (n=50) composed of student-athletes of 8 untrained coaches. The comparison group members were purposefully recruited to match the school, age, and gender of the members in the experimental group. The experimental group was composed exclusively of basketball players, while the comparison group included athletes from soccer, volleyball, and ice hockey teams.

Context

Coaches of athletes in the experimental group were affiliated with a local non-profit organization called Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca) that used sport as a tool to improve the personal development of youth living in low-socioeconomic settings. Our research team collaborated with this organization by training their youth sport coaches on humanistic coaching strategies. The humanistic coach training session entailed a 2-hour workshop delivered prior to the start of the school year (cf. Falcão, Bloom, & Bennie, 2017). The training session addressed the principles of humanistic coaching and taught coaches to build collaborative coach-athlete relationships, seek athletes' input about practices and games, provide athletes with problem solving opportunities, and include athletes in decisions about the team. After being selected and trained by the organization, the coaches were assigned a high school team to coach for a whole season as part of partnerships between Pour 3 Points and local schools.

Procedures

Ethical approval was obtained from the primary investigators' home University and the school boards that participated in the study. The primary investigator contacted the school principals for permission to recruit their student-athletes. Following this initial approval, the primary investigator contacted the head coaches of the school teams asking for permission to attend a practice and invite their student-athletes to participate. The primary investigator explained the purpose and procedures of the study to potential participants. Those interested were required to sign an assent form and submit a consent form signed by their legal tutors that contained additional details about the study (Appendices E and F). Participants completed the toolkit of questionnaires measuring the 4C's in sport (Vierimaa et al., 2012). The questionnaires were administered twice during the season and following the testing order suggested by Vierimaa et al. (2012). The average time between the administration of the first and second questionnaires was 85.8 days (R = 76-103 days). The questionnaires were completed before or after practice, in a classroom or in the school gymnasium. The primary investigator and research assistants supervised the data collection process while coaches left the premises to avoid influencing participants' responses.

Measures

Four questionnaires from Vierimaa et al.'s (2012) toolkit were used to assess each of the 4C's: competence, confidence, connection to the coach, and character (Appendix G). See Vierimaa et al. for information on the reliability and validity of the questionnaires.

Competence. In the Athlete Sport Competence Inventory the youth athletes rated their peers' athletic competence on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *'not at all competent'* to *'extremely competent'* in three different sport-related skills: technical, tactical, and physical

(Vierimaa et al., 2012). The inventory included the names of all members of the team so that student-athletes could rate each teammate. This was adapted from the work by Dunn, Dunn, and Bayduza (2007), who used a similar method to measure classmates' athletic competence, but with a single-item indicator. Other studies using this inventory have also used third party evaluation of participant competence as oppose to self-assessment (e.g., Erickson & Côté, 2016). For the present study, the final competence score was calculated averaging the ratings given by all teammates to the three skills. Cronbach's alphas were 0.913 and .932 for time 1 and 2 respectively.

Confidence. The self-confidence subscale of the Revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory – 2 (Cox, Martens, & Russell, 2003) was composed of five-items scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *'not at all'* to *'very much so'*. The items referred to individuals' general feelings of confidence that targeted respondents' trait sport confidence (e.g., I'm confident I can meet the challenge). The average of all items was used as the index for athlete's confidence. For the current sample, Cronbach's alphas were 0.828 and 0.844 for data collection 1 and 2 respectively.

Connection to the coach. The Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q: Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) is an 11-item questionnaire scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *'not at all'* to *'extremely'*. The items addressed three subscales of the CART-Q: closeness (N_{items} = 4; e.g., "I like my coach"), commitment (N_{items} = 3; e.g., "I feel committed to my coach"), and complementarily (N_{items} = 4; e.g., "When I am coached by my coach, I feel at ease"). Based on the findings from previous studies (Adie & Jowett, 2010) and the high correlations between the three subscales in the current study, they were combined into a single

dimension of connection to the coach. For the current sample, Cronbach's alphas were 0.915 and 0.907 in times 1 and 2 respectively.

Character. The Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Sport Scale (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009) is a 20-item questionnaire scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *'never'* to 'v*ery often'*. The items address prosocial behaviours (N_{items} = 7; e.g., "Encouraged a teammate" or "Helped an opponent off the floor") and antisocial behaviours (N_{items} = 13; e.g., "Criticized a teammate " or "Tried to injure an opponent"). Participants were scored in prosocial and antisocial constructs by averaging their responses to each item. For the current sample, Cronbach's alphas were 0.733 and 0.777 for the prosocial subscale and 0.823 and 0.900 for the antisocial subscale in times 1 and 2 respectively.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations) and Pearson correlation coefficients between the study variables at Time 1 and Time 2 were computed. Data were screened for missing data, outliers, and assumptions of multivariate analyses. Missing data from participants who did not complete the toolkit in both Time 1 and Time 2 or who did not answer more than 5% of the items in the tool kit were excluded from the analysis. The outlying scores ($z>3.29$) were transformed following guidelines proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) such that these raw scores were assigned values one unit larger (or smaller) than the next more extreme score in the distribution. This transformation procedure is regularly used in empirical studies in sport and exercise psychology (e.g., Caron et al., 2018; Rocchi, Routhier, Latimer-Cheung, Ginis, Noreau, & Sweet, 2017). Given the significant correlation between some of the dependent variables, a Repeated Measures Multiple Analysis of Variance (RM-MANOVA) was conducted to explore the differences between the experimental and comparison groups over time.

The present study followed a group by time mixed statistical design with two levels for each independent variable (i.e., experimental and comparison groups; time 1 and 2), where group was the fixed factor and time the within-subject factor. Five dependent variables were measured namely, competence, confidence, connection to the coach, and character. The last dependent measure was further divided into prosocial behaviours and antisocial behaviours. Finally, post hoc power analysis were conducted using the G*Power software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) with alpha set at .05 and sample size at n = 111 (see participant exclusion criteria below). This analysis revealed adequate power for time (d = .99) and group (d = .99) effects. However, the interaction effect revealed near adequate power for the interaction effect (d = .789). An n of approximately 114 would be needed to obtain statistical power at the recommended .80 level (Cohen, 1988). The limited values found in the present study may be due to the small sample size, which may have played a role in limiting the significance of some of the findings. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 24.0.

Results

Sample Size

Of the 148 participants recruited to participate in the study, n = 111 completed questionnaires at Time 1 and Time 2, and answered more than 5% of the items in the questionnaires. A total of 36 participants were excluded for completing only one questionnaire time point, while one additional participant was excluded for answering less than 5% of the items in the questionnaires). After the exclusion of ineligible participants, the age range and the number of teams in the study remained the same, there was a minor change to the average age (M_{age} = 13.60, SD = 1.10), the rate of male participants dropped to 60%, and the number of participants dropped in both the experimental (n = 74) and comparison groups (n = 37). The Sum

of Squares III was used in the present analysis to account for the unequal group sizes and decrease the likelihood of alpha inflation (Field, Miles, & Field, 2012).

Preliminary Analyses

Table 2 shows the descriptive data of the measures of 4C's at both time points. Table 3 shows the correlations between the 4C's also at both time points. Of interest, the connection to the coach was significantly positively correlated to confidence (r = .28 and .31) at Time 1 and Time 2, and competence was significantly positively correlated to antisocial behaviours (r = .22) at Time 1. At Time 2, connection to the coach was also significant positively correlated with prosocial and antisocial behaviours (r = .22 in both cases).

RM-MANOVA

Time effects. There was a significant multivariate time effect [$F(4,106) = 3.038$, $p = .020$, $hp^2 = .10$] (Table 4). The univariate effects demonstrated antisocial behaviour [$F(1, 109) = 8.29$, $p = .005$, $hp^2 = .07$] significantly increased across the time points (Table 5).

Group effects. There was a significant multivariate group effect [$F(4,106) = 3.11$, $p = .018$, $hp^2 = .11$] (Table 4). Specifically, univariate effects demonstrated that the comparison group reported significantly higher confidence scores [$F(1, 109) = 12.65$, $p = .001$, $hp^2 = .10$] compared to the experimental group (Table 6).

Interaction effects. There was a significant multivariate time x group interaction effect [$F(4,106) = 2.90$, $p = .025$, $hp^2 = .099$] (Table 4). Significant time x group interactions were found for connection to the coach [$F(1, 109) = 6.27$, $p = .014$, $hp^2 = .054$] and for antisocial behaviour [$F(1, 109) = 9.42$, $p = .003$, $hp^2 = .080$] (Table 7 and Figure 1).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of humanistic coach training on athlete development by using questionnaires that measured the competence, confidence, connection to the coach, and character (4C's) of athletes in the experimental and comparison conditions. The results showed that athletes of coaches trained to use humanistic principles showed higher connection to their coaches. Also, participants from both groups showed more antisocial behaviours at the end of the season, but the athletes of trained coaches were less antisocial compared to athletes of untrained coaches. These findings provide evidence suggesting humanistic coaching can help foster developmental outcomes in youth sport settings.

Connection to coaches improved for athletes of trained coaches. Connection to coaches also positively correlated to other developmental outcomes, namely confidence and prosocial behaviours. Studies have found similar results showing that trained coaches built better coach-athlete relationships (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Weiss et al., 2016), which in turn impacted youth development (Allan & Côté, 2016; Erickson & Côté, 2016; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013). The present study differed from the previous ones by giving examples of how to foster connection between the coaches and athletes. More specifically, the humanistic coach training session included information and discussions about being understanding and supportive, including athletes in team decisions, and working collaboratively with athletes (Falcão et al., 2017). Prior to the present study, Falcão et al. (2017) interviewed the trained coaches of the athletes in the experimental group and found they built the coach-athlete relationship by frequently talking to athletes about matters outside of sport (e.g., school and family), and encouraged autonomy and collaboration within the sport domain by using thought-provoking questions, welcoming athletes' input, and allowing athletes to make decision about the

team. Taken together, findings from Falcão et al. combined with the results of the present study support that humanistic behaviours improved coaches' ability to build positive collaborative coach-athlete relationship, which is important because this is key to fostering other positive outcomes. Finally, these findings can inform youth sport coaches' practices by demonstrating that supporting athletes through challenges and empowering them by giving opportunities to contribute with team decisions can improve the sporting environment, athletes' experiences, as well as the outcomes of sport participation.

Second, athletes in both groups showed increased antisocial behaviours at the end of the season, yet the athletes of trained coaches showed a smaller increase on this undesirable outcome than athletes of untrained coaches. In addition, antisocial behaviours positively correlated with athletes' competence in their sport. The frequency of antisocial behaviours in a youth sport setting is not unique (Kavussanu, Seal, & Phillips, 2006; Martin, Gould, & Ewing, 2017). For example, Kavussanu et al. (2006) found that youth players engaged in antisocial behaviours more frequently than prosocial behaviours, and Martin et al. (2017) showed trying to win was the main reason youth athletes broke the rules. As such, the prevalence of antisocial behaviours can be attributed to the competitive nature of sport leading individuals to feeling pressured to win and trying to gain an advantage over the opponent. Although previous studies reported the frequency and reasons for antisocial behaviours, they did not assess its change during the season or the impact of coaches' behaviours on this undesirable outcome (Kavussanu et al., 2006; Martin et al., 2017). The present study adds to the literature by showing antisocial behaviours increased at the end of the season yet humanistic coaching lowered this increase. The overall increase in antisocial behaviour could be attributed to the fact that games become more competitive towards the end of the season. In fact, the current data were gathered right after

playoffs finished. Future studies may investigate the relationship between antisocial behaviours and competition by observing athletes' prosocial and antisocial behaviours at specific times during the season and accounting for the importance of games (e.g., playing against a rival team, playing a playoff elimination game). In turn, the smaller increase observed in athletes of trained coaches highlight the importance humanistic coaching places on mastery over winning, which reduces the emphasis and pressure to win. Taken together, youth sport coaches can benefit from these findings by implementing humanistic principles as a way of preventing overemphasis on winning and its negative consequences, as well as adjusting their feedback and coaching strategies according to the time of the season and importance of a game.

The present study used a third party evaluation to measure participants' competence. This strategy was preferred over self-assessment in order to prevent it from being highly correlated to participants' confidence. In particular, we used teammates' evaluation (as opposed to the coach) in order to obtain a greater sample of scores; the use of peer evaluation was consistent with the original work by Dunn et al. (2007) that inspired this questionnaire. Interestingly, results showed this measurement was significantly related to antisocial behaviour in a positive direction indicating that participants who were perceived by their teammates as being more competent also reported higher levels of antisocial behaviours. This supports the notion that the competitive nature of sports can increase the athletes' pressure to win, leading them to show lack of sportspersonship (Kavussanu et al., 2006; Martin et al., 2017). Of interest, teammates' perceptions of participants' competence and perceptions of prosocial behaviour did not change over time and there were no group differences. Various factors, such as team and sport culture, level of competition, and ceiling effects, could have led to these non-significant findings. However, the lack of significant differences in the comparison group suggests methodological

issues may have played a role. For example, the time between data collection may have not been enough to produce significant changes to one's skill and prosocial behaviours. Also, collecting data at only two time points (as oppose to three or more) makes the data more susceptible to issues of regression to the mean (cf. Ettekal, Lerner, Agans, Ferris, & Burkhard, 2016).

Finally, confidence was the only measure of development in which the comparison group did better than athletes of trained coaches. Research on instructional feedback may help explain this unexpected finding (Carpentier & Mageau, 2016; Mouratidis, Lens, & Vansteenkiste, 2010). In particular, Carpentier and Mageau (2016) showed youth athletes improved self-confidence when coaches reinforced or instructed skill execution, but not when they used general autonomy-supportive coaching style. Their description of autonomy-supportive coaching style shares similarities with humanistic coaching, namely giving choices to athletes, allowing opportunities to take initiatives, as well as inquiring and acknowledging athletes' opinions. The current finding highlights a potential limitation in the humanistic coach training. Although the coaches learned general humanistic principles that led to the aforementioned positive developmental outcomes, the training did not address how to provide sport-specific feedback. In particular, the training session had four phases that focused on humanistic theory in psychology, education, and coaching with emphasis on how this coaching philosophy impacted interpersonal relationship and athlete autonomy (Falcão et al., 2017). Taken together, these findings highlight that the coach training sessions must not only teach humanistic principles, but also include information on how to give instructional feedback in order to improve athlete confidence.

Limitations

These findings should be considered in light of the limitations inherent to the study. First, the values, attitudes, experiences, and behaviours of untrained coaches were not observed. This

is an important factor because the comparison group coaches, despite not being trained, may have used strategies to foster personal development of their athletes. Second, this was not a random sample as participants were selected from the schools partnered with a local non-for-profit organization. The schools' interest in associating with a non-for-profit organization may reflect an openness to using sport as a tool to develop student-athletes, which may not be representative of other school settings both in our city and elsewhere. Still related to sampling issues, although our sample included six girls' teams, only four coaches were women. The coach-athlete gender match-up influences their relationships (Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006), which in turn may influence developmental outcomes. The quasi-experimental nature of this study also led to a limitation regarding the sample size. Power seemed adequate, however, we recommend future studies perform an a priori power analysis in order to determine the appropriate number of participants necessary. Although the sum of squares III was used to control for alpha inflation, future studies may also benefit from equal group sizes. Next, order and learning effects may have impacted the data given that questionnaires were presented in the same sequence to all participants and the same toolkit was used in both time points. Finally, this study used quantitative tools to assess development, yet it did not attempt to examine the experiences of youth athletes. A qualitative investigation of youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching can provide insight into how and why this philosophy fosters positive developmental outcomes.

Conclusions

The present study extends the literature on humanistic coaching and youth development through sport by showing that training coaches on humanistic principles can effectively improve athletes' connection to their coaches and lower engagement in antisocial behaviours. This adds to

the current literature by suggesting athletes' whose coaches are trained in humanistic principles build positive coach-athlete relationship and experience both personal and athletic outcomes. Findings from the present study can be used to inform coach training curriculum, especially those designed to foster youth development through sport. Training coaches on humanistic principles can disseminate the coaching behaviours that empower athletes and build positive coach-athlete relationships while also raising awareness to the use of sport as a tool to promote personal growth and development.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to acknowledge the Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca) organization for their collaboration. We would like to thank both the program executives and the coaches for their dedication and commitment to the application of humanistic coaching.

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Table 2

Means and Standard Deviation of PYD measures

Group	4C's of PYD		Means T1 (SD)	Means T2 (SD)
Comparison	Competence		3.42 (0.81)	3.39 (0.96)
	Confidence		3.59 (0.46)	3.61 (0.41)
	Connection to the coach		6.05 (0.68)	5.70 (1.15)
	Character	Prosocial	3.41 (0.82)	3.45 (0.89)
		Antisocial	1.78 (0.58)	2.04 (0.93)
Experimental	Competence		3.38 (0.62)	3.47 (0.59)
	Confidence		3.17 (0.59)	3.24 (0.60)
	Connection to the coach		5.85 (0.82)	5.88 (0.84)
	Character	Prosocial	3.51 (0.68)	3.40 (0.70)
		Antisocial	1.70 (0.44)	1.76 (0.58)
Overall	Competence		3.39 (0.68)	3.45 (0.73)
	Confidence		3.31 (0.59)	3.36 (0.57)
	Connection to the coach		5.92 (0.78)	5.82 (0.95)
	Character	Prosocial	3.48 (0.73)	3.42 (0.76)
		Antisocial	1.73 (0.49)	1.85 (0.72)

Table 3

Pearson Correlations between Overall Measures of PYD at Time 1

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.069	.114	-.054	.221*
Confidence		-	.288**	.019	-.117
Connection			-	.135	-.168
ProSocial				-	-.127
AntiSocial					-

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations between Overall Measures of PYD at Time 2

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.055	.110	-.070	.002
Confidence		-	.309**	.172	-.080
Connection			-	.216*	-.220*
ProSocial				-	-.101
AntiSocial					-

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations between Comparison Group Measures of PYD at Time 1

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.119	.318	-.203	.138
Confidence		-	.362*	-.067	-.103
Connection			-	.114	-.151
ProSocial				-	-.293
AntiSocial					-

Note: * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations between Comparison Group Measures of PYD at Time 2

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.182	.156	-.226	-.060
Confidence		-	.265	.346*	-.325
Connection			-	.055	-.263
ProSocial				-	-.153
AntiSocial					-

Note: * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations between Experimental Group Measures of PYD at Time 1

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.040	.008	.062	.288*
Confidence		-	.238*	.095	-.180
Connection			-	.161	-.198
ProSocial				-	.008
AntiSocial					-

Note: * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations between Experimental Group Measures of PYD at Time 2

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	ProSocial	AntiSocial
Competence	-	.029	.053	.086	.094
Confidence		-	.426**	.107	-.072
Connection			-	.358**	-.150
ProSocial				-	-.068
AntiSocial					-

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4

Repeated Measures Multiple Analysis of Variance

Effects	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
PYD	.065	383.131[b]	4.000	106.000	.000	.935
Time	.997	.289[b]	1.000	109.000	.592	.003
Group	.999	.141[b]	1.000	109.000	.708	.001
Time * Group	.999	.141[b]	1.000	109.000	.708	.001
PYD * Time	.897	3.038[b]	4.000	106.000	.020	.103
PYD * Group	.895	3.112[b]	4.000	106.000	.018	.105
PYD * Time * Group	.901	2.902[b]	4.000	106.000	.025	.099

a. Design: Intercept + Group
Within Subjects Design: PYD + Time + PYD * Time
b. Exact statistic
c. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 5

Analysis of the time effects for each PYD measure

PYD	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Competence	.994	.690[a]	1.000	109.000	.408	.006
Confidence	.988	1.334[a]	1.000	109.000	.251	.012
Connection to the Coach	.972	3.108[a]	1.000	109.000	.081	.028
ProSocial	.998	.259[a]	1.000	109.000	.612	.002
AntiSocial	.929	8.294[a]	1.000	109.000	.005	.071

Each F tests the multivariate simple effects of Time within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Exact statistic

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 6

Analysis of the group effects for each PYD measure

PYD		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Competence	Contrast	.008	1	.008	.017	.897	.000
	Error	48.945	109	.449			
Confidence	Contrast	3.513	1	3.513	12.646	.001	.104
	Error	30.276	109	.278			
Connection to the Coach	Contrast	.103	1	.103	.132	.717	.001
	Error	84.968	109	.780			
ProSocial	Contrast	.001	1	.001	.003	.957	.000
	Error	49.619	109	.455			
AntiSocial	Contrast	1.161	1	1.161	3.322	.071	.030
	Error	38.078	109	.349			

Each F tests the simple effects of Group within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.
a. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 7

Analysis of the interaction effects for each PYD measure

Group	PYD	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Comparison	Competence	.999	.067[a]	1.000	109.000	.797	.001
	Confidence	.998	.255[a]	1.000	109.000	.615	.002
	Connection to the Coach	.946	6.274[a]	1.000	109.000	.014	.054
	ProSocial	.998	.193[a]	1.000	109.000	.661	.002
	AntiSocial	.920	9.424[a]	1.000	109.000	.003	.080
Experimental	Competence	.971	3.255[a]	1.000	109.000	.074	.029
	Confidence	.985	1.656[a]	1.000	109.000	.201	.015
	Connection to the Coach	.998	.239[a]	1.000	109.000	.626	.002
	ProSocial	.980	2.259[a]	1.000	109.000	.136	.020
	AntiSocial	.996	.418[a]	1.000	109.000	.519	.004

Each F tests the multivariate simple effects of Time within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Exact statistic

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Figure 1

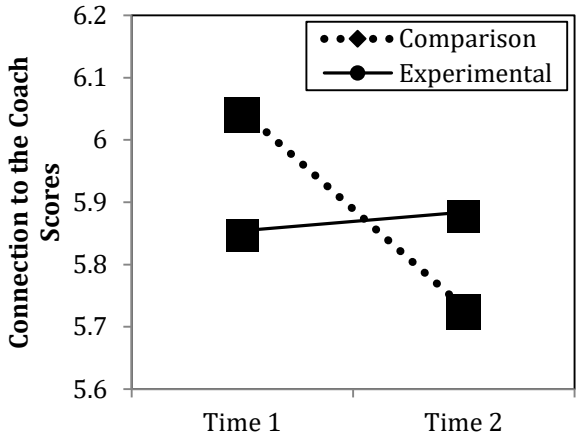

Figure 1a. Interactions between comparison and experimental groups on connection to the coach scores at Time 1 and Time 2.

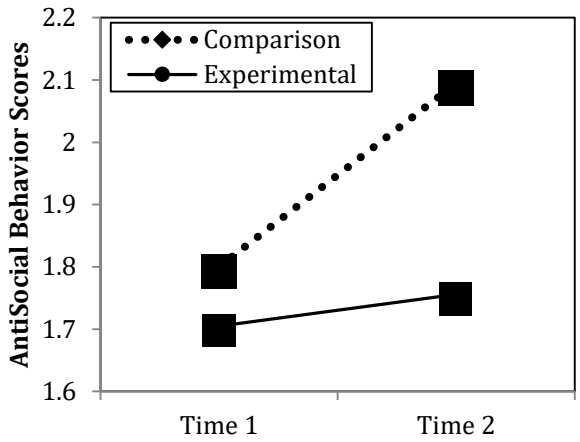

Figure 1b. Interactions between comparison and experimental groups on antisocial behaviour scores at Time 1 and Time 2.

Bridging Text

Chapter four presented an original manuscript assessing the impact of humanistic coaching on youth athletes' development of competence, confidence, connection, and character. Results indicated that athletes of trained coaches showed better coach-athlete relationships (connection) than athletes of untrained coaches, and that humanistic coaching had a positive association with athletes' engagement in antisocial behaviours (character). Building on these results, the next study qualitatively examined youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching and how it impacted their development. This is particularly important considering humanistic coaching is a philosophy that advocates for the inclusion of athletes as active agents in the training process. As such, chapter five uses focus groups interviewing to examine youth athletes' experiences of humanistic coaching practices.

Chapter Five

Youth Athletes' Perceptions of Humanistic Coaching

William R. Falcão[1], Gordon A. Bloom[1], Jeffrey G. Caron[2], & Wade D. Gilbert[3]

[1]McGill University

[2]Yale University

[3]California State University, Fresno

(Submitted for review)

Falcão, W. R., Bloom, G. A., Caron, J. G., & Gilbert, W. D. (submitted for review). Youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching.

Abstract

Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal coach-athlete relationships. Humanistic coaching entails a higher involvement of athletes in their learning process, sharing responsibilities, and making decisions about the team. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the experiences of student-athletes of coaches who had been trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. A collective case study design with focus group interviews was employed to investigate the experiences of 23 student-athletes between the ages of 13 and 18 (M_{age} = 14.5 years) from three different schools (a sport-intensive school, a school with limited resources, and an individualized support school). A cross-case inductive thematic analysis was performed to identify common themes across cases. Athlete descriptions of their coaches demonstrated they were aware of the humanistic behaviours of their coaches, which they felt positively impacted their sporting experiences. Athletes reported improved confidence, motivation, autonomy, and decision making, both in sport and school. These findings extend the current humanistic coaching literature by providing athlete accounts of humanistic coaching in a developmental youth sport setting, and by supporting the notion that effective coaching requires a balance between multiple approaches to coaching (e.g., facilitative and authoritative). Additionally, it illustrates the value and importance of training youth sport coaches to adopt humanistic coaching principles as way to foster youth development through sport.

Key words: youth sport, coaching, athlete development, life skills, focus groups

Youth Athletes' Perceptions of Humanistic Coaching

Youth sport participation is considered an effective way to foster life skills and personal development because it is an intrinsically motivating and popular activity (Fraser-Thomas, Falcão, & Wolman, 2016; Gould & Carson, 2008). Studies have shown youth sport can foster positive developmental outcomes such as improved confidence, self-esteem, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and respect for others (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012; Koh, Camiré, Bloom, & Wang, 2017; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013). Although some believe these positive outcomes are an implicit consequence of sport participation, research has indicated they depend to a large extent on coaches, parents, and sport programmers (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). In particular, coaches' attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with a humanistic coaching philosophy have played an essential role in building a positive sport climate that facilitated youth personal development (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002; Smith et al., 2007).

Humanistic Coaching

Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal coach-athlete relationships (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). This philosophy was inspired by humanistic psychology, in particular the work of Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1969). Maslow contributed to understanding human behaviour by proposing people were motivated to achieve a sense of fulfillment, growth, and personal achievement, referred to as *self-actualization* (Coulter, Megan, Mallett, & Carey, 2016; Maslow, 1954). In order to achieve self-actualization, Rogers suggested individuals needed *freedom* to experience and choose (Rogers, 1969; Rowley & Lester, 2016). This ideology

contrasted with other contemporary perspectives that focused on individuals' deficits and problematic behaviours. Based on humanistic psychology, Rogers encouraged educators to foster self-actualization by trusting students, providing them freedom to choose and discover, and making them active agents in the learning process (Rowley & Lester, 2016). As such, humanistic psychology can be described as a strength-based approach that assumes individuals are inherently motivated to grow and improve, and places individual freedom and autonomy as central concepts to achieve personal growth and fulfillment (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969).

Several authors have discussed the application of humanistic principles to sports (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014). Lombardo (1987) used the term humanistic coaching to refer to the application of humanistic principles in sport coaching. Humanistic coaching entailed a change in attitude from coaches being the decision makers to sharing responsibility with their athletes, from providing knowledge to facilitating the learning process, and from setting rules and standards to agreeing on them. This is a coaching philosophy that empowers athletes to achieve their personal goals and self-fulfillment where the coach guides activities that correspond with individual athletes' developmental needs (Lyle, 2002; Nelson et al., 2014). Humanistic coaching can be described as a philosophy where coaches: (a) use a facilitative coaching style to encourage autonomy and gradually relinquish control; (b) provide problem-solving opportunities; (c) set clear goals that address individual needs to individualize the coaching process; and (d) show acceptance, understanding, and support to build a positive collaborative coach-athlete relationship (Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002).

Studies investigating the use of humanistic coaching in sport have described strategies used by coaches and organizations as well as their impact on athletes' development (e.g., Bennie

& O'Connor, 2010; Falcão, Bloom, & Bennie, 2017; Preston, Kerr, & Stirling, 2015; Solana-Sánchez, Lara-Bercial, & Solana-Sánchez, 2016). For example, Falcão et al. (2017) trained 12 beginner coaches on the principles of a humanistic coaching philosophy and investigated how they applied these principles to coaching youth athletes. They found trained coaches applied humanistic principles with their teams through problem solving initiatives, building collaborative coach-athlete relationships, as well as seeking athletes' input and allowing them to make decisions about the team. As a result, coaches observed a number of developmental improvements in their athletes, such as increased autonomy, communication skills, motivation, and willingness to help teammates (Falcão et al., 2017). In a related manner, Solana-Sánchez et al. (2016) investigated the guiding principles of a youth soccer academy that was affiliated with a European professional club. Their findings revealed the academy had multiple humanistic characteristics, emphasizing life skills such as leadership, communication, and ethical values through sport. Coaches in the academy also provided problem-solving opportunities by teaching games for understanding (cf. Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) to promote decision making skills and in-depth knowledge of the sport (Solana-Sánchez et al., 2016). In order to fully understand how humanistic coaching behaviours impact youths' experiences and outcomes, it is important to investigate athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours.

Athletes' Perceptions of Coaches' Behaviours

Athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours have been investigated in a variety of sport contexts and using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Findings from qualitative studies demonstrated that positive coach-athlete relationships are essential to promoting fun, motivation, and confidence (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Jowett & Carpenter, 2015). For example, Camiré et al. (2009) interviewed 20 student-

athletes to understand their perspectives on learning life skills in a high school program. When coaches were friendly and approachable, athletes felt engaged in team decisions and comfortable expressing their needs and preferences, which in turn led to increased motivation and confidence (Camiré et al., 2009). In turn, poor coach-athlete communication negatively impacted participants' sport experiences by not providing opportunities to voice opinions or participate in decision making (Camiré et al., 2009). Other studies investigating the effects of poor coaching behaviours also showed that poor instructional feedback and lack of technical, mental, and life skill development lowered self-efficacy, motivation, and team cohesion (Gearity, 2012; Gearity & Murray, 2011).

Findings from quantitative studies demonstrated that youth athletes experienced positive outcomes such as increased enjoyment, autonomy, task-motivation, competence, and commitment to the team and the coach when athletes viewed coaches as caring, encouraging, and welcoming of their input (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010; Stein, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2012). For example, Conroy and Coatsworth (2007) assessed 165 youth participants in a recreational sport league using questionnaires that measured perceived coaching behaviour and players' psychological needs. Coaches' praise for autonomous behaviour and interest in athletes' input positively influenced perceived satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Coaches who encouraged autonomy, asked for feedback, and incorporated athletes' suggestions into practices fostered athletes' positive outcomes and reduced negative outcomes. Furthermore, Stein et al. (2012) assessed 70 youth athletes' preferred and perceived coach feedback patterns and its impact on their perceptions of team motivational climate. The type of feedback and the agreement between perceived and preferred feedback influenced athletes' task and ego

motivational climate. While positive informative feedback led to task motivation, non-reinforcement of good performance diminished task motivation, and punishment led to increase ego motivation (Stein et al., 2012). Also, the discrepancy between perceived and preferred feedback led to decreased task motivation. These findings highlight the importance of understanding athletes' perceptions and preferences when investigating coaches' behaviours and their impact on athlete development.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the experiences of student-athletes of coaches trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. The research questions were: Did the athletes notice humanistic characteristics in their coaches' behaviours and if so, how did it impact their experiences? And what were the most important life skills athletes learned?

Methods

Guided by a constructionist approach, the present study was underpinned by ontological relativism (i.e., realities are multiple and subjective constructions, which are socially and experientially based) and epistemological transactional/subjectivism (i.e., the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked) (Daly, 2007; Smith & Sparkes, 2017). The present study used a collective case study design where we focused on one issue and selected multiple cases to illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2013). The present study involved three cases: a sport-intensive school, a school with limited resources, and an individualized support school.

The sport-intensive school (Case 1) included student-athletes from three basketball teams in a school with approximately 2600 students known for its elite sport programs. Student-athletes attended classes for approximately 15h per week, had 5h per week of study hall, and trained in

their sport for approximately 10h per week. The school required student-athletes to maintain a 75% average in each class to participate in sports.

The school with limited resources (Case 2) included student-athletes from three basketball teams in a school with limited athletic resources. Notably, in the beginning of the year the teams did not have basketballs for practice and coaches had to raise funds to purchase equipment, such as balls and jerseys. The school had approximately 1000 students and many of the sport teams had been created the same year of our study. Some of the student-athletes had never played basketball before.

The individualized support school (Case 3) comprised student-athletes from two basketball teams in a school that was designed to serve students with learning disabilities and behaviour problems. This school had approximately 1500 students and offered individualized pedagogical support and supervision to stimulate students' learning. They offered multiple afterschool programs, such as a student-run school radio station and more than 20 sports teams. The sports teams were used as a tool to help students' learning by providing supervised study hours for each team, a safe after school environment, and by requiring them to have good grades and good classroom behaviours as conditions to play.

Participants

The participants were selected from a pool of 92 student-athletes coached by eight trained coaches who were trained in humanistic coaching principles and who went to schools in low socio-economic settings in an urban Canadian city. We recruited seven to eight athletes for each focus group to elicit more diverse views and discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2014). A heterogeneous purposive sampling technique was used to recruit eight participants for cases 1 and 2, and seven for case 3. A total of 23 student-athletes (16 girls and 7

boys) with average age of 14.5 years (SD = 1.71, R = 13-18) were selected for this study. All the students were currently attending one of the three schools, played an entire season for a trained coach, and were available to participate in a focus group interview at the pre-determined time.

Coach Training

Participants were coached by individuals affiliated with a local non-profit organization called Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca). This organization provides training for youth sport coaches to promote personal development of youth living in low-socioeconomic settings. Our research team collaborated with this organization by training their youth sport coaches on humanistic coaching strategies. The first author delivered a two-hour humanistic coaching workshop to the Pour 3 Points coaches prior to the start of the school year. The workshop addressed the principles of humanistic coaching and taught coaches to build collaborative coach-athlete relationships, seek athletes' input about practices and games, provide athletes with problem solving opportunities, and include athletes in decisions about the team. Following the workshop, coaches were assigned a school team to coach for a full season and received continuous support and guidance throughout the seasons.

Data Collection

Ethical approval from the first authors' home University and approval from school directors were granted before participants were recruited. The first author contacted the trained coaches at the end of the basketball season asking them to distribute assent and consent forms to student-athletes (Appendices H and I). The forms contained an invitation to participate in a focus group interview. Forms were returned to the coaches in sealed envelopes and only students-athletes who agreed to participate and had legal tutor consent were considered for the study. A focus group interview was arranged with student-athletes at a mutually convenient time after

school in a classroom at their school. The first author moderated all three focus group interviews, which were audio recorded. The coaches were not present at the time of data collection.

Focus group interviews were chosen as the method of data collection because of their effectiveness in gaining insight on behaviours and experiences shared by a group of individuals (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2014). In addition, the social interaction and meaning-making nature of this method align with the constructionist paradigm of the present study rooted in the belief that all reality is subjectively constructed (Daly, 2007). The authors of the current study created an interview guide to direct the conversations in the focus group (Appendix J). However, the moderator allowed participants to elaborate on aspects of their experiences they felt were most relevant to their experiences.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed across cases following Braun and Clarke's (2013) seven-stage process for thematic analysis: (a) transcription, (b) familiarization with the data, (c) coding, (d) searching for themes, (e) reviewing themes, (f) defining and naming themes, and (g) writing. The first author led all stages of data analysis, while a research assistant and the other authors collaborated in different stages of the analysis.

The first stage of the thematic analysis consisted of transcribing verbatim the focus group interviews, each lasting between 80-90 minutes (M_{length} = 87 min) and yielded 70 pages of single-spaced transcription. Second, the lead author became familiar with the data by moderating the focus group interviews, listening to the audio recordings, and reviewing the transcripts prior to beginning the analysis. The third stage involved the first author and the research assistant inductively coding the transcripts, in which 241 features of data were labeled using 24 codes. In this level of analysis the first author and a research assistant focused on the semantic meaning of

the data, which emphasized the literal meaning of the textual excerpts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The fourth stage involved searching for latent meanings within the codes. This stage emphasized the first authors' interpretations of data combining the codes into four themes. In the fifth stage, the first and third authors then reviewed the themes by reviewing the transcriptions to ensure the themes represented the information portrayed by the participants. In the sixth stage the first and third authors defined and identified the nature of the themes, writing a detailed description, and constructing a concise name for each one. See appendix K for a complete list of themes and codes. The seventh and final stage involved combining participants' accounts to tell a story about their experiences.

Quality Standards

The criteria for judging quality was drawn from a list of contextually situated and flexible traits (Burke, 2017; Smith & McGannon, 2017). The criteria included width, coherence, credibility, worthy topic, rich rigor, and transparency (Burke, 2017; Smith, Sparkes, & Caddick, 2014). We provided evidence of *width* (i.e., comprehensiveness of the evidence) through a detailed description of the data analysis, raw data in the form of quotations, as well as explanations for our interpretation. We sought *coherence* by interpreting the data across cases to create a complete and meaningful picture of our findings. We believe the present study is a *worthy topic* (i.e., relevant, timely, significant, and interesting) given it originated from a collaboration with a non-profit organization interested in impacting student-athletes' development through coach training. *Rich rigor* was evident throughout all phases of the study. That is, humanistic coaching was the theoretical framework that formed the basis of the coach training, data were collected from three different groups of youth athletes, and the first author worked alongside the agents involved in the project, namely the organization and coaches.

Finally, *transparency* was achieved by using two critical friends, a research assistant and the third author. The research assistant assisted in the semantic level of analysis by challenging the sorting and organization of the data. The third author scrutinized the latent meaning of the codes by challenging assumptions, encouraging reflexivity, and facilitating exploration of alternative interpretations of the data.

Results

This section presents the findings across cases using the four themes identified in the thematic analysis: (a) *coaches' philosophy and behaviours*, (b) *relationship with the coach*, (c) *learning sport and life skills*, and (d) *advice to coaches*. Participants' quotes are included to illustrate personal experiences and discussion between participants and the social construction of the knowledge generated in the focus groups. Pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity, and participants' cases are included in parenthesis (i.e., Case 1, Case 2, or Case 3).

Coaches' Philosophy and Behaviours

This theme encompassed codes that addressed the participants' perceptions of their coaches' values, beliefs, and behaviours. Overall, participants described their coaches as someone engaged in their personal lives, who taught life lessons, and supported them through personal challenges. For example, Sarah (Case 1) said: "[Our coach] helped us develop in sport, but also in our personal life. For example, there are people in our team who did not know how to take the bus. She taught them how that worked and other things like that." In addition, participants in the other cases explained they felt good and enjoyed having coaches who cared and were interested in other domains of their lives:

> *Jason (Case 2)*: My mom had a surgery this year and [my coach] would always ask me "Is she ok?" Always telling me that family is first. If I needed to miss practice or

anything it was fine. He was supportive. It made me feel good because it showed me that he cared.

Brian (Case 3): [Our coach] is different from other coaches because he talks to us more. He's more concerned about us, even in our personal lives. It's not like other coaches do not care, but [our coach] is concerned about school, how we are doing, what grades we have at school…. I like having a coach who is not just a basketball coach and is also involved in other aspects of my life. I feel proud to have a coach like that.

Participants in all cases also discussed how the coaches were involved in their education, helped them study, do homework, and some even communicated with teachers and parents about school-related issues:

Sharon (Case 2): [The coach] helps us in school. He doesn't just care about basketball, for example we had team study sessions. He cared about our success and us getting better. Our coach helping us with school is important because not a lot of people care if you are passing your classes, and most coaches don't care about your grades.

Following this comment Sonia (Case 2) added: "The coach is a good teacher, he helped us a lot. For example, after exams he would ask our teachers what he could do to help us get better." Another exchange between participants from the individualized support school reiterated coaches' influence in athletes' education:

Allan (Case 3): My coach is not just a coach on the court, he is also a life coach. More than once he helped us push our limit on the court, but he would also talk to us if we had bad grades. He will take his time and help us find solutions to improve our grades. Sometimes when we have problems he will talk to our teacher. He will even talk to our

parents to explain any problems we are having in school. He helps us a lot, not just on the court, but also in school and in our personal life.

Michael (Case 3): What I liked about [our coach] is that he is always there to help us. When we have problems with our homework, he helps us. He helps us with everything. He really encourages us in practice and it really helps us to improve. When there is a homework that I do not understand, he is there to help me.

Finally, participants said their coaches encouraged athletes using positive feedback. For example, participants from the sport-intensive school said their coaches encouraged them to work hard and improve:

Victoria (Case 1): What I like about my coach is that she always pushes us to the maximum, she knows how far we can go. When one of us wants to give up, she tells us 'You are too close to give up now, it's in your head, keep pushing, tell yourself to push further.'

Andrew (Case 1): My coach never got mad when we lost. We were upset and we wanted to quit, but [he] would say: 'Losing is part of the game, we just need to work harder'. That's what I liked about [him] he encouraged us to accept defeat and work hard to get the wins.

Participants in the individualized support school also talked about feeling encouraged, and said this motivated them:

Linda (Case 3): The way [our coach] encourages us doesn't show much, because what she does is not yell at us. For example, when we are playing bad in games she sits down and doesn't say anything. She knows that when we see her like that we will concentrate on the game and take the game more seriously.

Diana (Case 3): The fact that [our coach] is involved with us personally motivates me to push myself more because she puts so much effort for us to succeed. I want to succeed to show her that when she encourages me I can achieve what I want, to show her that I succeeded thanks to her encouragement.

Aside from the shared descriptions of coaches across cases, participants in individual cases emphasized specific characteristics of their coaches. For example, participants in the sport-intensive school emphasized how their coaches carefully explained the execution of the sport skills, especially after they made mistakes. Victoria (Case 1) said: "When we are not able to do what [our coach] asks us to do, she will take time to explain how to do it in more details." Another player added:

Bianca (Case 1): [She] will show us what we are doing wrong, what we should do, and how to do it instead of making us run every time. She makes us understand our mistakes so we won't repeat them. With my old coach, for example, every time you didn't do something the way he wanted, we would run.

In addition, participants in the school with limited resources emphasized how their coaches were not strict and how that increased athletes' enjoyment and helped performance:

Wilson (Case 2): Having a relaxed coach helped me more rather than a strict coach. I'm not too good under pressure. Having a coach behind me all the time, who I know will get me out of a game if I make a mistake, doesn't give me confidence. I am a serious player and I know I give 100% if a relaxed coach tells me to do something.

Mary (Case 2): Now I'm trying out for the [community team] and the coach is very different from [our coach at school]. The coach there is really strict. Everything we do is

> really serious. With [our coach here] we would joke and also have the moments when we would really have to concentrate in basketball.

Relationship with the Coach

Overall, the participants described having a trusting relationship with their coach that allowed them to talk about personal issues. For example, Bianca (Case 1) said: "Our coach wants us to consider her more than just a coach. She wants us to be able to trust her. You can talk to her." Participants said their relationship with their coaches went beyond sports, some even comparing them to family members:

> *Jessica (Case 3)*: Our relationship is a little like she is our mother. We built this relationship spending time together outside of sport, like during study periods when we talked about anything. … We like having this relationship with our coach. It makes our day a little happier. For example, if we have a problem or a bad day we would go to basketball and we could change how our day was going.

Later, another participant from the same school added:

> *Diana (Case 3)*: I learned [my coach] is someone you can trust. Last year she was my teacher, I called her 'Mrs'. This year, I started calling her by her first name. That gave me confidence in general and motivated me to work harder.

Aside from these shared topics, participants in individual cases also emphasized specific aspects of their relationship with the coaches. First, participants in the sport-intensive school described feeling confident to discuss personal problems with their coaches:

> *Sarah (Case 1)*: [The coach] has a relationship with us where we could talk to her about our problems, if we felt bad or something was wrong with the team chemistry. We could

trust her because she would welcome us with open arms and console our feelings regarding anything we wanted to talk about. She understood what we felt.

Second, participants in the individualized support school described the coach-athlete relationship as friendly, where coaches showed care and a sense of humour:

Jason (Case 2): I agree with my teammate that [our coach] is a caring guy. What I like about [him] is that he is like a friend. My first coach wasn't like that. I prefer having fun and playing basketball at the same time. It is easier to get better. Messing around a little bit and get to work at the same time. I was motivated to work hard and get better.

Danielle (Case 2): Sometimes, our coach will play basketball with us. It's nice, he's like a friend. Sometimes, outside of basketball, he will take us all out for a meal. It's not always basketball. He's also a friend.

Learning Sport and Life Skills

This theme addressed the student-athletes' description of what they learned both inside and outside of sport. Overall, participants described learning sport skills that ranged from technical skills to mental preparation. For example, Edward (Case 1) said: "Often before games we were talking, joking around, and singing. [Our coach] would tell us to listen to our music quietly, prepare yourself mentally and physically, and stay relaxed before games." Players from multiple schools described how their coaches helped them improve their technical sport skills:

Deborah (Case 2): [My coach] helped me improved many skills I already had. My shooting got better, my passing, and teamwork. He worked with players individually. He gave me workouts when I had no class or even when school was off. We could do something on our own, or we could work with our teammates.

Michael (Case 3): [My coach], with regards to basketball, helped me with my shot. He helped me spin the ball with one hand, instead of two, and use one hand to hold the ball so it does not go to the side. I like the way he worked with me, I reached my goal with basketball this year. My goal was to improve my offence, to make myself more confident. [He] really helped me with that.

Participants from all schools also described learning life skills, particularly becoming more confident. In an exchange during the interview, two students from the school with limited resources described how a friendly and caring coach made them feel better about themselves:

Jenna (Case 2): Basketball gives me more confidence to deal with my life in general, with things outside of sport. [The coach] helped me with that…. It is important that [the coach] is like a friend and that the most important thing is to have fun, not win. This makes me believe that even if we lose games, it's not that we aren't good. We just need to keep working. That helped me feel better about myself.

Mary (Case 2): Basketball showed me [the coach] is not just a coach, he's also someone we can confide and share things with. We don't have to keep things that we don't like to ourselves. That gave me confidence to speak up. He also has a big heart. One day I was upset and had a bad practice because it was the 5th anniversary of my mother's death. The next practice he consoled me and said it was ok, that he understood, that he had also lost his mother. That helped me feel more confident.

A participant from the individualized support school felt that her coach's encouragement and her improvement in sport helped her believe in herself and impacted her academic performance:

Tania (Case 3): Basketball built my confidence. Especially this year the coach pushed us more. For example, I was really stressed in the beginning and she told me: 'It's you who

> are on the court, not them. It's you in this moment so go out there and show me what you got.' Also, I got better in school. I wasn't doing well and had bad grades. When [the coach] forced us to go to study hall I passed my classes. Even now that the season is over, she still pushes me to continue doing well in school. Now I feel more capable of achieving my goals and getting better grades in school. I think basketball pushed me to do better because if I want to play at the collegiate level I need to have good grades. That makes me want it more.

Participants in the sport-intensive school emphasized enhancing their autonomy and decision making skills:

> *Yvonne (Case 1)*: [The coach] allowed us to be more independent and improve our organization skills outside of basketball.
>
> *Michelle (Case 1)*: [My coach] taught me to slow down, in basketball and in life. To take my time because sometime things go too fast and if I continue to go fast it can get worse. I just have to calm down, take the time to make a good decision, the best decision for me.

The athletes also commented on learning to become more responsible, particularly in balancing school and sports. For example, Edward (Case 1) said: "[The coach] taught us to go straight home after practice, do our homework, don't sleep late, and not be late to class. …Those things will impact my life in the future when he's not around."

In turn, participants in the individualized support school reported learning character and perseverance. They explained their coaches took time to talk about the importance of respecting opponents and teammates. Players felt these conversations impacted their values and beliefs with regards to dealing with challenges, particularly when losing games:

> *Jessica (Case 3)*: During the year [our coach] spoke to us about sportsmanship and how to respect the opponent, teammates, and coaches. I find that it helped us because she showed how to respect others and why it is important. This helps make sure that even if we lose, we will not be bad losers.

Participants in this case made a connection between overcoming challenges on the court and in school. They discussed how they dedicated themselves more to getting good grades once they learned to persevere in sport:

> *Allan (Case 3)*: What I learned most from [my coach] was perseverance. More than once we did not do a good job on the court and he taught us to be persistent, work together to succeed, and win. It's not just perseverance on the court that I've improved. For example, I had problems in one of my classes because I was not doing the work. [My coach] told me to not give up and go to tutoring with the teacher. I managed to pass the class.

Advice to Coaches

The codes in this theme related to recommendations made by athletes to their coaches as a way to enhance team functioning. Participants in two focus groups said they would have preferred if coaches were stricter. For participants in the sport-intensive school this was important to maintain discipline and enforce team rules:

> *Noemi (Case 1)*: My advice for [the coach] is to become stricter. Sometimes girls miss practice for no good reason. She should teach them to be more dedicated because in the next level they won’t be allowed to do the same thing.
>
> *Michelle (Case 1)*: My advice to [the coach] would be to become a lot stricter and severe. Not being strict and not giving consequences allows the girls to do things they shouldn't

do. I think becoming more severe will also make the team a lot more determined. I prefer a more severe coaching style, it makes me push harder and it makes me want it more.

In turn, participants in the school with limited resources believed having stricter coaches could motivate them to work harder:

> *Danielle (Case 2)*: Maybe if [my coach] was stricter it would have helped me more. I would have been better because I really need someone to push me.… [She was] too loose and too nice. But having a stricter coach would not allow me to be as friendly, talk about my life problems, and build my confidence. I would prefer to have a coach who can have a good balance, but I would choose [our coach] over a stricter one.
>
> *Jenna (Case 2)*: [My coach] could also improve by being a little stricter because he is always relaxed. It is not a bad thing, but sometimes the coach needs to be stricter if you want to improve your basketball skills. Becoming better in basketball is not really important for me so I don't really like coaches who are really strict. I wouldn't be playing basketball if the coach wasn't friendly. I like a coach who is a little bit strict but also friendly.

A unique finding from the participants in the individualized support school was that their coaches should provide more encouragement during the season and continue practices and study sessions after the season was over. First, Linda (Case 3) thought her coach could encourage the athletes by trusting them more: "I don't think [my coach] should change, I think that she would be able to encourage us more if she trusted us more." Another player clarified:

> *Jessica (Case 3)*: She already trusts us, but she could encourage us more openly. For example, make encouraging team cheers, or telling us "you can do it". I confess she already does that, but it would be even better if she did it more.

Finally, Diana (Case 3) suggested that having more practices could help keep the athletes fit: “I would suggest [my coach] to have more practices because since we won the championship we’ve been having less practise and we’re losing our cardio.” In another example, Tania (Case 3) suggested the coach should continue with the study sessions: “I would suggest my coach to continue the study sessions, I’m not sure why we stopped, but they are important.”

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the experiences of student-athletes of coaches who had been trained to use humanistic principles to foster personal development. The findings revealed student-athletes were aware of their coaches’ values, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as how they impacted their sporting experiences. In particular, the focus group method gave athletes opportunities to interact and build upon each other’s insights, including how coaches impacted their personal development.

Athletes’ descriptions of coaches’ attitudes and behaviours, as well as how coaches interacted with them, were in line with the humanistic coaching principles (cf. Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002). To date, empirical studies on humanistic coaching have primarily focused on elite level competitors (e.g., Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Solana-Sánchez et al., 2016). The present study extends the literature by examining the efficacy of a humanistic coaching philosophy in developmental youth sport settings. For example, Bennie and O'Connor (2010) showed humanistic coaches of professional athletes fostered development by promoting balance between sport, work, and family. Along the same line, the present study found that humanistic coaches of student-athletes promoted a balance between sport, school, and family by supporting athletes through academic and personal challenges. It is interesting that participants noticed the occurrence of these coaching behaviours without being aware of the principles of humanistic

coaching. This has important implications regarding the use of humanistic coaching in non-elite youth sport settings. In particular, the awareness of their coaches' attitudes and behaviours demonstrates that youth sport athletes are active agents who are capable of critically interpreting how their own experiences impact personal developmental outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of youth sport coaches building collaborative relationships with their athletes and including them in both personal and team-related decisions.

The focus group interviews used in the present study allowed participants to address how the coaches' behaviours impacted their experiences and outcomes in sport. Athletes reported their coaches' use of positive reinforcement, being less strict, and building trustful relationships led them to achieve higher levels of success in basketball, as well as feeling more motivated and experiencing greater enjoyment both inside and outside of basketball. They also reported feeling good, cared for, and proud to have coaches' who supported them through personal and academic challenges. While the potential developmental benefits of sport participation have been widely reported in the youth sport literature (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Koh et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2013), only a small number of studies have investigated the athletes' perceptions of these outcomes (Camiré & Trudel, 2010; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Stein et al., 2012). Besides gathering data from the athletes, a unique aspect of the present study was the use of focus groups, which allowed participants to openly discuss *what* they learned, as well as *how* their coaches' behaviours influenced their sport experiences and developmental outcomes. The findings confirm previous literature showing that humanistic coaching behaviours can lead to increased competence, confidence, commitment, and autonomy of youth sport athletes, yet it also extends our understanding of the coaching behaviours that directly impacted these outcomes. This information can be useful for coach developers when designing education programs to teach

sport coaches how to promote youth development through sport, as well as to researchers and youth sport practitioners aiming to positively impact youth development through sport.

In line with humanistic principles, the present study sought athlete's input regarding how coaches could improve their attitudes and behaviours. Despite describing positive experiences and outcomes as a result of their coaches' behaviours, participants also mentioned that they would like their coaches to be stricter with regards to discipline. These findings may seem to contradict athletes' perceptions mentioned above, however it is important to note that athletes still valued understanding and supportive coaching when learning skills and building relationships. More specifically, athletes wanted their coaches to be stricter when enforcing team rules and dealing with negative athlete behaviours. Moreover, athletes wanted their coaches to punish their teammates who were late or missed practices. Studies in humanistic coaching have addressed the need to balance facilitative or authoritative coaching styles (Preston & Fraser-Thomas, 2014; Rowley & Lester, 2016). The present results demonstrate that youth sport athletes welcomed and understood the need for coach disciplinary actions. These findings support the notion that there is not a one-size-fits-all coaching approach, and confirm global and national sport coaching frameworks highlighting that effective coaching requires the ability to adapt the coaching approach to athlete needs and the coaching context (Gilbert, 2017; International Council of Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, & Leeds Beckett University, 2013; United States Olympic Committee, 2017).

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Although the present study offered insights into athletes' perceptions of their coaches' humanistic behaviours, some limitations need to be addressed. First, data were collected from a sample of student-athletes who voluntarily participated in a group discussion about their

coaches' behaviours. This willingness and openness may have reflected a positive view of their experiences, which may not be representative of all student-athletes on these teams. Second, most participants were female, which can influence coach-athlete relationships (Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006) and may have impacted their perceptions and outcomes. Third, while focus groups have many benefits, this method may also discourage participants from sharing sensitive or negative information (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Fourth, all participants had coaches who had been trained to use humanistic coaching. Interviewing athletes of untrained coaches could help inform better coaching practices by investigating the positive and negative experiences of athletes of trained and untrained coaches. Finally, interviews were performed at the end of the season, thus relying on participants' recollections of coaches' behaviours and coach-athlete interactions. Stimulated recall interviewing during the season using verbal cues, pictures, or video segments may be used in future research to validate responses or prompt memory of coaches' behaviours (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004).

Conclusions

The present study demonstrated that youth sport athletes were aware of the humanistic behaviours of their coaches, which they felt positively impacted their sporting experiences. Athletes reported improved confidence, motivation, autonomy, and decision making, both in sport and school. These findings extend the current humanistic coaching literature by providing athlete accounts of humanistic coaching in a developmental youth sport setting, and by supporting the notion that effective coaching requires a balance between multiple approaches to coaching (e.g., facilitative and authoritative). In sum, the findings support the value and use of humanistic coaching as a way to foster positive developmental outcomes in youth sport. It also

illustrates the value and importance of training youth sport coaches to adopt humanistic coaching principles as way to foster youth development through sport.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to acknowledge the Pour 3 Points (pour3points.ca) organization for their collaboration. We would like to thank both the program executives and the coaches for their dedication and commitment to the application of humanistic coaching.

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Chapter Six

Summary

This doctoral dissertation consisted of six chapters. Chapters one and two provided a review of current literature on humanistic coaching, youth development through sport, and coach training. In particular, several theoretical models were presented that helped demonstrate the ways sport participation, and in particular coaches, fostered athlete personal development (Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Perhaps this is not surprising given that coaches' attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with a humanistic coaching approach have played an essential role in facilitating youth personal development (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Lombardo, 1987; Lyle, 2002; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). However, research in this domain has typically reported a lack of understanding and consistency about humanistic coaching and how it can be applied to sport (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014; Preston, Kerr, & Stirling, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to address this gap in the literature by developing, delivering, and assessing a humanistic coaching workshop taking into account the coaches' learning experiences and the impact of humanistic coaching on youth development through sport. This objective was accomplished through a series of three manuscripts that were presented in chapters three through five. The present chapter will begin by reviewing the different studies comprising this dissertation, followed by a critical overview of humanistic coaching including its relationship to comparable coaching approaches, followed by the strengths and limitations of this dissertation, as well as future recommendations for researchers and practitioners.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter three presented the development and delivery of a humanistic coaching workshop, which also included the coaches' perceptions of this workshop. Coaches identified many strengths of the workshop including group discussions, videos, practical coaching examples, and evidence from empirical studies. The coaches also learned to apply humanistic principles in youth sport settings and did so by asking questions that guided athlete learning and included athletes in decisions about the team. Finally, coaches noticed positive developmental outcomes in their athletes including increased autonomy, communication skills, motivation, and willingness to help teammates. In sum, chapter three suggested that teaching humanistic principles to youth sport coaches increased their understanding and ability to apply this coaching approach, as well as improved their ability to foster positive developmental outcomes.

To confirm the impact of humanistic coach training on youth development it was necessary to go beyond investigating coaches' perceptions and assess the athletes themselves. Chapter four was a quantitative study that assessed the effects of humanistic coach training on athlete development. Youth athletes of both trained and untrained coaches completed questionnaires measuring developmental outcomes (cf. Vierimaa, Erickson, Côté, & Gilbert, 2012) twice during their season. The results revealed athletes of trained coaches reported stronger connection to their coaches than athletes of untrained coaches. The findings also indicated that youth athletes reported increased antisocial behaviours, yet this increase was lower for athletes of trained coaches. Taken together, these findings suggested that teaching humanistic principles to youth sport coaches impacted the developmental outcomes of their athletes. While these findings described *what* developmental outcomes humanistic coaching could impact, a qualitative investigation of youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching was necessary to

provide insight into *how* and *why* humanistic coaching fostered positive developmental outcomes.

Chapter five qualitatively investigated the experiences of youth sport athletes of coaches who had participated in the humanistic coaching workshop. The athletes' description of their coaches' values and behaviours was congruent with the description of humanistic coaching. The athletes spoke about coaches' support and encouragement, as well as learning life skills such as confidence, perseverance, motivation, and responsibility. The findings from chapter five indicated that athletes were aware of their coaches' attitudes and behaviours, and believed these behaviours positively impacted their personal development.

Humanistic Coaching

Although this work examined and highlighted the benefits of humanistic coaching by promoting development in youth sport contexts, certain challenges must be acknowledged regarding its application and impact on participants. In particular, coaches in the program alluded to the additional time and effort required to constantly challenge athletes, create problem-solving opportunities, and wait for athletes to find a solution instead of giving them the answers. This is an important concern given the already demanding tasks of youth sport coaches who are typically responsible for providing managerial, technical, and emotional support for athletes, while often times working as volunteers balancing personal, professional, and team responsibilities (Harwood & Knight, 2015; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Also, coaches raised concern with athletes potentially abusing the autonomy granted in humanistic coaching by saying some athletes would not be ready to accept the responsibilities of making decisions for their teams. It is worth noting that athletes corroborated this concern by stating they preferred if coaches were stricter, particularly regarding their teammates' misbehaviours (e.g., tardiness,

missing practices, being disruptive in practice). These findings suggest that some athletes may not be ready to accept the shared responsibility advocated by humanistic coaching, which indicates this philosophy may not address the needs of athletes who require a more authoritative coaching figure to impose rules, discipline, and motivate them in the sport context.

Furthermore, the findings raised concerns regarding the impact of humanistic coaching on athlete confidence, competence, and prosocial behaviours. First, the lack of significant improvement in confidence might be attributed to the high emphasis placed on facilitating problem-solving strategies by giving athletes choice and encouraging independent work. The emphasis in autonomy and independence may come at the expense of instructional feedback, which in turn can negatively impact athlete confidence (cf. Carpentier & Mageau, 2016; Preston et al., 2015). Second, mixed results were found regarding competence and prosocial behaviours. Although coaches and athletes perceived improvement in athletes' sport skills, team work, and respect for others, quantitative measures did not indicate significant effects. As such, additional empirical research is needed to further investigate *if* and *how* humanistic coaching can impact youth athletes' competence and prosocial behaviours.

These shortcomings highlight the importance of coaches tailoring their strategies to the needs of athletes. Global and national sport coaching frameworks have advocated for a unified approach highlighting that effective coaching requires the ability to balance and adjust the coaching style to the demands of the individual and the context, rejecting the idea of a one-size-fits-all coaching approach (Gilbert, 2017; International Council of Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, & Leeds Beckett University, 2013; United States Olympic Committee, 2017). In order to understand the role of humanistic coaching

in promoting a unifying framework it is important to understand the relationship between humanistic coaching philosophy and other comparable coaching approaches.

Humanistic Coaching Philosophy and Comparable Coaching Approaches

The humanistic coaching behaviours identified by the coaches and athletes in this research project shared similarities with the mastery approach to coaching (Smith et al., 2007), transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), autonomy-supportive coaching (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and an athlete-centered approach (Kidman 2001, 2005). With that in mind, it is fitting to discuss their relationship to humanistic coaching.

The mastery approach to coaching (MAC) originated from the extensive research by Smith, Smoll and colleagues (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smith & Smoll, 2002; Smith et al., 2007). Originally, this approach advocated five coaching principles that were reduced to two (Smoll & Smith, 2002). First, coaches must promote positive athlete behaviour by using reinforcement and encouragement through instructive and technical feedback. Second, coaches must promote a mastery climate by reinforcing maximum effort, individualizing the coaching process, emphasizing learning and development, and promoting fun while de-emphasizing winning. The principles and behaviours promoted in the MAC approach align with some of the key behaviours of humanistic coaching, specifically individualizing the coaching process and emphasizing personal growth and development over winning.

Transformational leadership (TFL) is a follower-centered approach in which leaders engage with their followers to fulfill long-term intrinsic needs, such as self-efficacy and satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). TFL comprises four characteristics. First, *intellectual stimulation* is the degree to which leaders stimulate independent thinking and creativity by challenging assumptions, taking risks, and rethinking old ideas. Second, *individual*

consideration entails leaders fostering self-development and intrinsic motivation by attending to follower's needs individually and communicating with them openly. Third, *inspirational motivation* occurs when leaders articulate a desirable vision to followers, communicate optimism about the vision, and provide meaning for the task. Finally, *idealized influence* is generated when leaders develop trust, respect, and admiration by acting as a role model for high ethical behaviour and values they wish to convey to accomplish their vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Consequently, the characteristics of TFL share similarities with humanistic coaching. For example, the TFL descriptions for intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence are similar to the humanistic coaching tenets of providing problem-solving opportunities, setting clear goals, and developing freedom and autonomy for athletes. Regarding the application of TFL in sports, studies with athlete-leaders and coaches suggested that TFL leaders in sport respected individual differences, motivated athletes to buy into their vision and goals, showed strong morals, and built positive relationships with their athletes (Hoption, Phelan, & Barling, 2007; Vallée & Bloom, 2005). In a similar manner, humanistic coaches in the present research program asked questions to their athletes, welcomed their feedback, showed concern beyond the sport context, and built trusting coach-athlete relationships.

Autonomy-supportive coaching highlights how interpersonal behaviours of coaches shape the quality of athlete motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). It emphasizes self-initiation and encourages choice, independent problem solving, and participation in team decision making. This approach proposes that coaches who use autonomy-supportive behaviours positively influence the satisfaction of athletes' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (cf. Deci & Ryan, 1985). There are seven autonomy-supportive coaching behaviours: provide choice

within limits, provide a rationale for tasks, acknowledge athletes' feelings, provide athletes with opportunities for independent work, provide non-controlling competence feedback, avoid controlling behaviours, and prevent ego-involvement in athletes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). These behaviours share multiple similarities with humanistic coaching behaviours, such as developing freedom and autonomy, setting clear goals, providing problem-solving opportunities, and individualizing the coaching process.

Finally, athlete-centered approach (ACA) is an approach that empowers athletes to make decisions within and outside the sport setting by giving them choice and control (Kidman, 2001, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). ACA entails three key components: using games for athletes to learn skill, technique, and gain tactical understanding; developing critical thinking and decision making skills; and establishing a team culture to bring individuals together for the pursuit of a common goal (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2004). According to Kidman (2001), the role of the coach is to guide athletes through the process of solving problems and establishing an environment in which players share responsibility for performance. Similarly, De Souza and Oslin (2008) suggested ACA coaches supported athletes' autonomy by implementing strategies that empowered them to take ownership of performance and enhanced decision making ability. ACA is another coaching approach that shares similarities with the principles of humanistic coaching. It focuses on each individual athlete and embraces the complexity and diversity of the coaching context, it fosters freedom and autonomy by providing athletes problem-solving opportunities that empower them with control over the learning process, and it focuses on growth and development inside and outside the sport environment.

Humanistic coaching draws on the strength of these aforementioned approaches providing an overarching philosophy that underlies their main guiding principles. Similar to TFL

and MAC, humanistic coaching originated between the 1970's and 1980's and is strongly influenced by positive psychology highlighting principles of strength-promotion and emphasizing individual satisfaction. Autonomy-supportive coaching and ACA are more recent approaches that explicitly built on these preceding ideologies. Autonomy-supportive coaching is built on motivational theories and parenting behaviours (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989), and ACA explicitly uses the principles of humanistic coaching philosophy to propose practical coaching methods, such as questioning and using games for understanding (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). The unique aspect of humanistic coaching is its close relationship to humanistic philosophy as well as psychological and educational theories (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969). As noted throughout the dissertation, the application of humanistic coaching principles in the sport context parallels the use of student-centered teaching in education.

This unique characteristic combined with its similarities to the main approaches used in youth sport coaching suggests humanistic coaching may be the overarching philosophy guiding multiple approaches in youth sport coaching. This is also supported by prior claims stating humanistic coaching is the prevailing ideology in youth sport (Donnelly, 2000; Lyle, 2002). Taken together humanistic coaching can be an important philosophy for helping practitioners balance multiple coaching approaches in a complementary way that meets the needs of individual athletes and the coaching context. This notion can help coaches utilize multiple coaching approaches as suggested by the global and national sport coaching frameworks that advocate for a unified framework focusing on meeting the needs of individual athletes and the coaching context (Gilbert, 2017; International Council of Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, & Leeds Beckett University, 2013; United States Olympic Committee, 2017).

Strengths and Limitations

The current research program was enhanced by the use of humanistic and youth sport theories, as well as the knowledge translation (KT) framework and a variety of methodological approaches. First, the pioneering work of Maslow (1954) in psychology, Rogers (1969) in education, and Lombardo (1987) in sport coaching were combined with youth sport coaching theories (e.g., Côté et al., 2010; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008), which collectively provided a sound theoretical basis for the research in this dissertation. Second, the use of KT provided a valuable framework for translating scientific knowledge to practical interventions. The KT framework provided an intervention model that allowed researchers to engage participants in collaboratively identifying practical humanistic coaching strategies as well as making improvements to the humanistic coaching workshop. Third, this dissertation used a wide range of methodological approaches. In particular, study one used transcendental phenomenology and semi-structured interviews that allowed for an in-depth investigation of individuals' experiences. Study two used quantitative methods to assess youth development, which permitted an objective evaluation of developmental changes during the season and a comparison between athletes of trained and untrained coaches. Finally, study three used a constructionist approach and focus group interviews to gain insight to the experiences shared by the athletes of trained coaches. This variety of research methodologies provided a comprehensive view into the application and impact of humanistic coaching.

While there are several strengths to this dissertation, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the studies were conducted with coaches and athletes from the same non-profit organization that aimed at using sport as a tool to promote development among youth from low socio-economic communities. As such, participants' values and beliefs may have already been

aligned with the goals of promoting personal growth and development through sport, making them more accepting to the humanistic principles, which may not be representative of the general population. Second, the study used purposeful sampling to gather information from trained coaches and their athletes. Non-random samples and unequal group sizes may impact data analyses, especially those using quantitative data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Third, this dissertation appraised coaches' humanistic behaviours strictly relying on participants' self-reported behaviours or their athletes' perceptions. While individuals' perceptions are a valuable strategy to investigate one's experience or interpretation of a phenomenon, the dissertation could have benefitted from an observation tool. An observation tool could have provided additional details regarding humanistic coaches' practices and more clear examples of strategies and practices they used. However, there does not appear to be any observation tools to measure engagement in humanistic coaching behaviours. This is not surprising given that experts have previously alluded to the lack of clarity regarding the use and understanding of humanistic coaching (Cassidy, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014).

Future Recommendations

The results and limitations of this dissertation help inform future research in humanistic coaching and coach education. Results from this dissertation indicate the KT framework was effective in developing a non-formal coach training protocol and could be used to guide other coach training workshops, as well as humanistic coach education programs. In particular, the positive findings regarding coaches understanding and application of the workshop content advocates for the use of KT in other non-formal coach training protocols. KT was described as a cyclical process of knowledge creation, application, and evaluation that has been advocated as a way to improve coaches' education (Caron, Bloom, Falcão, & Sweet, 2015; Graham et al.,

2006). Findings from this dissertation provide evaluation measures that can be used to improve future iterations of a humanistic coaching workshop, as well as existing coach education protocols. First, they highlight the potential benefits of including humanistic coaching content into youth sport coach training programs. Second, they support the inclusion of empirical research in the coach training program as a way to support and increase coaches' compliance to the content. Third, the results indicate that coach training programs should strive to foster interactive learning environments with discussions between the participants. This recommendation is particularly interesting because it is in line with the humanistic principles of engaging learners as active agents in their learning experiences. This is also important given the current trend of coach training programs using online modules (Glang, Koester, Beaver, Clay, & McLaughlin, 2010; Strachan, MacDonald, & Côté, 2016). Although the online content provides flexibility and accessibility to coaches, developers must allow opportunities for participants to interact, ask questions, and exchange information with their peers. Finally, coach training programs should provide coaches with practical coaching examples, during the training itself or as videos.

Also, results from this dissertation indicated that athletes were aware of their coaches' behaviours and critically interpreted how their athletic experiences impacted their personal development. This highlights the importance of including athletes as active agents of the coaching process by fostering autonomy and collaborative coach-athlete relationships. Still, while athletes of trained coaches improved in some measures of development, they were unable to improve confidence scores. Moreover, Carpentier and Mageau (2016) previously discussed the relationship between coaches' behaviours and athlete confidence when they found that reinforcing skill execution and providing instructional feedback could help build athlete

confidence. Future studies incorporating the humanistic principles along with highlighting the importance of providing positive reinforcement and instructional feedback in non-formal coach training appears timely.

The limitations of this dissertation also provide insight into future recommendations. For example, observational tools could be used as a way to watch coaches during games or practices to see if, and how, they are using humanistic coaching practices. Behavioural observational studies have provided a more nuanced picture of coaches' behaviours by focusing on the content of the behaviour, as well as their quality (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999; Cushion, Harvey, Muir, & Nelson, 2012; Erickson, Côté, Hollenstein, & Deakin, 2011). The findings from this research project can contribute to defining, operationalizing, and developing observational tools that assess coaches' use of humanistic coaching behaviours. Longitudinal studies can be used to investigate coach learning experiences and practical strategies used to apply humanistic principles to youth sport settings. Mixed method research designs would be an effective way of investigating coaches' knowledge and experiences learning about humanistic principles.

Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation was to expand our understanding of the humanistic coaching philosophy, how it can be applied to sport, and its impact on youth development. This was accomplished by developing and delivering a humanistic coaching workshop and examining coaches' learning experiences, as well as investigating the impact of humanistic coaching on the development of youth athletes. This dissertation provides quantitative and qualitative evidence of the impact humanistic coaching behaviours can have on youth development, while also revealing some of the challenges that are apart of empowering athletes to make decisions about their team. These findings have important implications for coach education, as well as in developing an

overarching coaching framework that integrates various approaches emphasizing an athlete-needs style of coaching. In sum, this dissertation provides theoretical and practical contributions to our understanding of humanistic coaching that can be used to improve how researchers and practitioners use sport as a tool to foster youth development.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Coach Consent Form

This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for William Falcão, a Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology, in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at McGill University. You are invited to participate in our research on youth sport coaching strategies. If you choose to participate in this study you will be requested, without payment, to partake in a 60 to 75 minute audiotaped interview where you will be asked to discuss your perceptions on the coach training protocol you participated and the ways it influenced your coaching practices. In addition, you will be asked to complete a bi-weekly online journal describing your coaching experiences throughout this season. If more information is necessary, then a follow-up telephone interview may occur.

Once the interview is complete, you will have to opportunity to edit any comments you made during the interview at your discretion. You will also receive a typed transcription of the interview, which may be edited at your discretion. Prior to publication, you will receive copies of the results and conclusions of the study. The information you provide will **remain confidential**. The main investigator (William Falcão) and the faculty supervisor (Dr. Gordon Bloom) will be the only individuals to have access to identifiable data. All data, including audio files of the recorded interview(s) and digital copies of the demographic questionnaire and consent form, will be securely stored in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer for a period of seven years. Any paper copies will be converted to digital files and promptly destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used to label all digital files. All data will be destroyed seven years after the study ends. The information disclosed during the interview(s) will remain confidential and will be used for publication in scholarly journals or presentations at conferences. The researchers will not disclose names or identify the study participants at any time. The McGill Research Ethics Board has reviewed this study for compliance with its ethical standards.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and not mandatory. You are free to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from participation in this study at any time, for any reason, without penalty or prejudice. You are also free to withdraw your data at any time without penalty or prejudice.

After reading the above statement and having had the directions verbally explained, it is now possible for you to provide consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project based on the terms outlined in this consent form. You will be provided with a signed copy of this consent form for your records. You may refuse to continue participation at any time, without penalty, and all information gathered will remain confidential. Please contact the Research Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831, or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca if you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights and welfare as a participant in this research study. Please sign below if you agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Participants' Signature Date

_____ _____
Primary Investigator's Signature Date

I agree to the audiotaping of the interviews with the understanding that these recordings will be used solely for the purpose of transcribing these sessions. Yes□ No□ _____ Initials

William Falcão, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology
Dept. of Kinesiology & PE
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
william.falcao@mail.mcgill.ca

Gordon Bloom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Dept. of Kinesiology & PE
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Guide

Opening Questions:

1. Briefly describe your athletic history.
    a) What did you learn from these experiences?
    b) How did it impact your coaching style?
2. Briefly describe your coaching experiences.
    a) When, how, and why did you get involved in coaching?
    b) Levels of sport coached and position in the teams (head or assistant coach)
3. How did you learn about the Pour 3 Points organization?

Key Questions:

4. What did you learn from the humanistic workshop?
    a) Athlete decision making
    b) Athlete communication
    c) Coach-athlete relationships
    d) Athlete outcomes
5. What do you understand humanistic coaching to be?
6. What do you think of using humanistic coaching in youth sport?
    a) Benefits of this approach?
    b) Barriers of this approach?
    c) Did parent or kids give you any feedback?
    d) Would you continue using it?
7. In your opinion, what did your athletes think of the humanistic coaching?
    a) Did it influence them in a positive/negative way?
    b) Describe an interaction with an athlete in which you used the ACA guidelines.
8. Which topics discussed in the workshop did you find most and least useful in your practices, and why?
    a) How can the workshop be improved?

Summary Questions:

9. What were the most important things you learned from the workshop and why?

Concluding Questions:

10. Is there anything you would like to add?
11. Do you have any final questions or concerns?

Appendix C

Bi-weekly Journal Template

Q1. Identification

Name:
Email Address
Phone Number:

Q2. This journal entry concerns the period between

□ First practice	□ November 22 - December 5	□ February 22 - March 5
□ September 2 -12	□ December 6 -19	□ March 14 - 27
□ September 13 - 26	□ December 20 - January 2	□ March 28 - April 10
□ September 27 - October 10	□ January 3 - 16	□ April 11 - 24
□ October 11 - 24	□ January 17 - 30	□ Last practice
□ October 26 - November 7	□ January 31 - February 13	
□ November 8 - 21	□ February 14 - 27	

Q3. What has happened with your team since the last journal entry (example: wins or loses, injuries, feuds, etc.)? Please avoid using athlete names.

Q4: Please provide an example of how and when you used humanistic coaching in your practices in the last two weeks.

Q5: Share any relevant coaching experience you had in the past two weeks. Feel free to share any type of information such as your overall impressions using humanistic coaching, your impressions of your team or athletes, or specific interactions you had with them. Please avoid using athlete names.

Appendix D

List of Themes and Codes

Overarching themes	Themes	Codes
Humanistic coaching workshop	Perceptions of the workshop	Workshop - strengths
		Workshop - improvements
		Workshop - previous humanistic knowledge
	Lessons learned in the workshop	Workshop - athlete decision making
		Workshop - coach-athlete relationship
		Workshop - focusing on athlete
Experiences using humanistic coaching	Descriptions of humanistic coaching	HC - adapting to players' needs
		HC - athlete decision making
		HC - coach-athlete relationship
	Examples of humanistic coaching	HC - athlete input
		HC - guiding athletes
		HC - skill development
		HC - teaching life skills
Outcome of humanistic coaching	Perceptions of humanistic coaching	HC - benefits
		HC - challenges
		HC - continue to use
		HC - feedback from others
	Impact of humanistic coaching	Impact - athlete autonomy
		Impact - communication
		Impact - confidence
		Impact - improved behaviour
		Impact - leadership
		Impact - motivation

Appendix E

Athlete Assent Form

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled: The influence of an athlete-centered approach on the development of youth sport athletes. The purpose of this research study is to help us understand how sport participation can influence student-athletes' personal development. This document explains our research so you can choose to participate. Participation in this study involves filling out questionnaires about yourself, your teammates, and your coach. You will fill out the questionnaires individually to maximize confidentiality. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and you will be asked to do it two times during the season. The McGill Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved this study (reference number: 130-1014).

What do you get if you participate in the study?
You will not receive any rewards for participating in this study.

What if you don't want to participate?
You may choose not to participate in this study at any time and for any reason.

Are there any dangers if you participate in the study?
This study is not dangerous. Participation in this research study will not influence your grades or position on your team.

Who will know what you said?
A fake name will be attached to your comments so no one at the school will ever know what you answered in your questionnaires, including your coach. Only my supervisor (Dr. Gordon Bloom) and I (William Falcão) will know what you answered. Digital copies of your answers will be stored in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer for seven years. All files will be destroyed seven years after the study ends.

What if you have questions?
If you want to speak with someone about any concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or email: lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca. If you have any questions about this study you can contact:

William Falcão	OR	Dr. Gordon Bloom
Email: william.falcao@mail.mcgill.ca		Email: gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca

I, (please print your name)_____, understand that my Mom, Dad, or Legal Tutor have/has given me permission to participate in a research study titled: **The impact of humanistic coach training on youth athletes' development through sport**.

My participation in this project is voluntary and I have been told that I may stop participating in this study at any time and for any reason. You will be provided a copy of this form for your records.

Participant: _____
Name Signature Date

William Falcão: _____
Signature Date

Appendix F

Parent Consent Form

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study entitled: **The impact of humanistic coach training on youth athletes' development through sport.** The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the purpose, procedures, and conditions of the research we are conducting at your child's school, as well as to invite your child to participate in our study. The McGill Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved this study for ethical acceptability. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for William Falcão, a Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology, in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at McGill University.

The purpose of our research is to assess the impact of youth sport coaching strategies on the personal development of student-athletes. Should you consent and allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be requested – without payment or reward – to answer questionnaires with a combined total of 40-50 multiple-choice questions. Participants will fill-out the questionnaires individually to maximize confidentiality and prior to the beginning of practice. It should take approximately 15 minutes of their time. Questionnaires will not be filled-out during class time. The same questionnaires will be given at two times during the season. Your child does not have to prepare or study to answer the questionnaires.

All information provided by the participants will **remain confidential**. Coaches are helping us recruit the student-athletes. Thus, they will know who is participating in the research but they will not have access to the questionnaires and your child's answers. The principle investigator (William Falcão) and the faculty supervisor (Dr. Gordon Bloom) will be the only individuals to have access to identifiable data. All data, including questionnaire responses and digital copies of this consent and assent forms given to your child, will be securely stored in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer for a period of seven years. Any paper copies will be converted to digital files and destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used to name the files. All data will be destroyed seven years after the study ends. The information disclosed will remain confidential and will be used for publication purposes and scholarly journals or for presentations at conferences. The researchers will not disclose names or identify the study participants at any time.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and not mandatory. They are free to withdraw from participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty or prejudice.

I (print name) _____ consent and voluntarily allow to my child to participate in this research project based on the terms outlined in this consent form.

Child's Name (print): _____

_____ _____
(Parent's or Legal Tutor's signature) (Date)

_____ _____
William Falcão (Date)

You may keep a signed copy of this consent form for your records. Please contact my supervisor or myself using the information provided at the bottom of the page if you have any questions or concerns

regarding your child's rights and welfare as a research participant in this study. In addition, you can contact the Research Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831, or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

The McGill Sport Psychology Research Laboratory has a history of producing influential research on youth sport coaching and youth sport participation. Please visit our website if you would like to learn more about our research: http://sportpsych.mcgill.ca.

Thank you for considering participating in this research project.

Sincerely,

William Falcão

William Falcão, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
william.falcao@mail.mcgill.ca
+1 (514) 655-4824

Gordon Bloom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca
+1 (514) 398-4184, ext. 0516

Appendix G

Questionnaires

Athlete Sport Competence Inventory

Sport competence refers to one's **ability to successfully perform a certain task** in sport. In this form you will be rating the sport competence of both yourself and your teammates in your sport.

Please answer each question based on how skilled or competent you perceive yourself or your teammates in each of the areas listed compared to all of the athletes that you know. Please answer truthfully, basing your rating solely on **the specific area described** in each question.

Circle the number that best corresponds to your perceptions. A 5 represents the most competent athlete you know at your age/skill level, while a 1 represents the least competent athlete you know at your age/skill level. **Please check the appropriate box when you reach the section where you are rating yourself. Please rate yourself.**

Your answers will be kept completely confidential.

In this section you will be evaluating **Athlete's Name** ☐ *Check box if this is you*

Please rate this person's sport competence in the following areas:

Technical skills (e.g., shooting, passing, blocking, etc.)	Not at all competent 1	Somewhat competent 2	Moderately competent 3	Very competent 4	Extremely competent 5
Tactical skills (e.g., decision making, reading the play, strategy, etc.)	Not at all competent 1	Somewhat competent 2	Moderately competent 3	Very competent 4	Extremely competent 5
Physical Skills (e.g., strength, speed, agility, endurance, etc.)	Not at all competent 1	Somewhat competent 2	Moderately competent 3	Very competent 4	Extremely competent 5

Note. Additional copies of the three items above are repeated for each athlete on the team.

Sport Confidence Inventory

A number of statements that athletes have used to describe their feelings in sport are given below. Read each statement and then **circle the appropriate number** to indicate how you **generally** feel while participating in your sport.

I feel self-confident.	Not at all 1	2	3	Very much so 4
I'm confident I can meet the challenge.	Not at all 1	2	3	Very much so 4
I'm confident about performing well.	Not at all 1	2	3	Very much so 4
I'm confident because I mentally picture myself reaching my goal	Not at all 1	2	3	Very much so 4
I'm confident of coming through under pressure	Not at all 1	2	3	Very much so 4

Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to assess your relationship with your coach. Please answer truthfully. All answers will be kept completely confidential.

1. I feel close to my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I feel committed to my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I feel that my sport career is promising with my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I like my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I trust my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I respect my coach	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I feel appreciation for the sacrifices my coach has experienced in order to improve his/her performance	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. When I am coached by my coach, I feel at ease	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. When I am coached by my coach, I feel responsive to his/her efforts	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. When I am coached by my coach, I am ready to do my best	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. When I am coached by my coach, I adopt a friendly stance	Not at all						Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Athlete Behaviour Scale

Below is a list of behaviours likely to occur during matches/games. Please think about your experiences while playing your sport and indicate how often you engaged in these behaviours this season by circling the relevant number. Please respond honestly.

While playing for my team **this season, I…**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some times**	**Often**	**Very Often**
1. Gave positive feedback to a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
2. Criticized an opponent	1	2	3	4	5
3. Argued with a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
4. Helped an opponent off the floor	1	2	3	4	5
5. Deliberately fouled an opponent	1	2	3	4	5
6. Asked to stop play when an opponent was injured	1	2	3	4	5
7. Verbally abused a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
8. Encouraged a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
9. Retaliated after a bad foul	1	2	3	4	5
10. Helped an injured opponent	1	2	3	4	5
11. Criticized a team-mate	1	2	3	4	5
12. Gave constructive feedback to a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
13. Tried to wind up[1] an opponent	1	2	3	4	5
14. Swore at a teammate	1	2	3	4	5
15. Congratulated a teammate for good play	1	2	3	4	5
16. Tried to injure an opponent	1	2	3	4	5
17. Intentionally distracted an opponent	1	2	3	4	5
18. Showed frustration at a team-mate's poor play	1	2	3	4	5
19. Intentionally broke the rules of the game	1	2	3	4	5
20. Physically intimidated an opponent	1	2	3	4	5

[1] Winding up an opponent means physical or verbally taunting him/her to cause distraction or provoke a punishable reaction.

Appendix H

Athlete Assent Form

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled: **Youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching.** The purpose of this research study is to help us understand how sport participation can influence student-athletes' personal development. This document explains our research so you can choose to participate. Participation in this study involves filling out a questionnaire about yourself, your teammates, and your coach. You will fill out the questionnaires individually to maximize confidentiality. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and you will be asked to do it two times during the season. In addition, you may be invited to participate in a 30 to 45 minute audio taped group interview with other student-athletes from your school. Participation is voluntary. You do not have to study or prepare for the questionnaires or interviews. The McGill Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved this study (reference number: 130-1014).

What do you get if you participate in the study?
You will not receive any rewards for participating in this study.

What if you don't want to participate?
You may choose not to participate in this study at any time and for any reason.

Are there any dangers if you participate in the study?
This study is not dangerous. Participation in this research study will not influence your grades or position on your team.

Who will know what you said?
A fake name will be attached to your comments so no one at the school will ever know what you answered in your questionnaires including your coach. Only my supervisor (Dr. Gordon Bloom) and I (William Falcão) will know what you said. Digital copies of your answers will be stored in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer for seven years. All files will be destroyed seven years after the study ends.

What if you have questions?
If you want to speak with someone about any concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or email: lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca. If you have any questions about this study you can contact:

William Falcão Email: william.falcao@mail.mcgill.ca	OR	Dr. Gordon Bloom Email: gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca

I, (please print your name)_____, understand that my Mom, Dad, or Legal Tutor have/has given me permission to participate in a research study titled: **Youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching**.

Please sign if you want to participate in both or just one part of this study:

1	I want to participate in the first part of the study where I will be asked to fill out **questionnaires**.	☐ Yes	☐ No
2	I want to participate in the second part of the study where I may be asked to be part of a **focus group interview**.	☐ Yes	☐ No

Participant: _____
Signature Date

Your participation in this project is voluntary and you may stop participating at any time and for any reason. You will be provided a copy of this form for your records.

William Falcão: _____
Signature Date

Appendix I

Parent Consent Form

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study entitled: **Youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching.** The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the purpose, procedures, and conditions of the research we are conducting at your child's school, as well as to invite your child to participate in our study. The McGill Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved this study for ethical acceptability. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for William Falcão, a Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology, in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at McGill University.

The purpose of our research is to assess the impact of youth sport coaching strategies on the personal development of student-athletes. Should you consent and allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be requested – without payment or reward – to answer questionnaires with a combined total of 40-50 multiple-choice questions, as well as a personal information form (see attachment). Participants will fill-out the questionnaires individually to maximize confidentiality and prior to the beginning of practice. It should take approximately 15 minutes of their time. The same questionnaires will be given at two times during the season. Additionally, your child may be invited to partake in a 30 to 45 minute audiotaped focus group interview, which would also occur before or after a regularly scheduled practice. The questionnaires and the focus group will take place outside of class time. Your child does not have to prepare or study to answer the questionnaires or participate in the focus group interview.

All information provided by the participants will **remain confidential**. Coaches are helping us recruit the student-athletes. Thus, they will know who is participating in the research but they will not have access to the questionnaires and your child's answers. The principle investigator (William Falcão) and the faculty supervisor (Dr. Gordon Bloom) will be the only individuals to have access to identifiable data. All data, including questionnaire responses and digital copies of this consent and assent forms given to your child, will be securely stored in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer for a period of seven years. Any paper copies will be converted to digital files and destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used to name the files. All data will be destroyed seven years after the study ends. The information disclosed will remain confidential and will be used for publication purposes and scholarly journals or for presentations at conferences. The researchers will not disclose names or identify the study participants at any time.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and not mandatory. They are free to withdraw from participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty or prejudice.

After reading the above statement, I (print name) _____, parent or legal tutor of
(print child's name) _____ consent and voluntarily allow my child to participate in:

1	The first part of the study where he/she will be asked to fill out **questionnaires**.	☐ Yes	☐ No
2	The second part of the study where he/she may be asked to be part of a **focus group interview**.	☐ Yes	☐ No

_____ _____
(Parent's or Legal Tutor's signature) Date

_____ _____
William Falcão Date

You may keep a signed copy of this consent form for your records. Please contact my supervisor or myself using the information provided at the bottom of the page if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's rights and welfare as a research participant in this study. In addition, you can contact the Research Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831, or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

The McGill Sport Psychology Research Laboratory has a history of producing influential research on youth sport coaching and youth sport participation. Please visit our website if you would like to learn more about our research: http://sportpsych.mcgill.ca.

Thank you for considering participating in this research project.

Sincerely,

William Falcão

William Falcão, Ph.D. (C)
Ph.D. Candidate in Sport Psychology
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
william.falcao@mail.mcgill.ca
+1 (514) 655-4824

Gordon Bloom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca
+1 (514) 398-4184, ext. 0516

Appendix J

Focus Group Interview Guide

Opening Questions

1. Let's go around the table so each one of you can say your:
    - Name, age, team/age category, coach.
    - How long have you been playing your sport?
2. What did you like the most about playing sports this season?

Key Questions

3. Tell me about your coach.
    - What do you like about him/her?
    - What would you like him/her to do differently?
4. **Competence:** How well do you feel you can do the skills needed to play your sport?
    - How much did your learn from your coach and did you like his/her coaching style?
5. **Confidence**: How sure are you of your ability to achieve your goals in sport and in life?
    - How did your coach influence your thoughts and feelings?
6. **Connection with the coach:** How was your relationship with your coach?
    - Give me an example of how you and your coach typically interact or speak to each other.
7. **Connection with teammates:** How was your relationship with your teammates?
    - How did your coach influence this relationship?
8. **Character:** How much did you follow the rules, and showed good sportsmanship this season?
    - How much did your teammates show good sportsmanship? Give examples.
    - How did your coach encourage this type of behaviour?
9. What did you learn most from your coach this season?

Concluding Questions

10. What advice would you give your coach?
11. Would you like to add any other information related to your coach or your experiences playing sport this year?
12. Do you have any other comments or questions?

Appendix K

List of Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes
Coaches' philosophy and behaviours	Coaches' strategies to build cohesion
	Coach encourages athletes
	Coach communicates in practice
	Coach is easy going
	Coach engaged in education
	Coach engaged in personal life
	Coach uses repetition
	Coaching in game-like situation
	Coach punishing athletes
Relationship with the coach	Relationship to teammates
	Personal communication with the coach
	Trusting relationship with the coach
	Coach is a friend
Learning sport and life skills	Learning autonomy
	Learning responsibility
	Learning sport skills
	Learning other life skills
	Learning confidence
	Learning character
	Learning resiliency
	Learning communication
Advice to coaches	Coach should be more strict
	No suggestions to the coach
	Other suggestions to the coach