



ANALYSIS OF SELECTED INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research paper was to analyze selected international and national coach education programs in order to summarize the key features of common coach education approaches around the world, sharing examples of international coach education system structures, to illustrate similarities and differences in global developments, in order to broaden understanding of global trends.

Methods: Examples of international coach education system structures have been shared to illustrate similarities and differences in global developments, and to broaden understanding of global trends. In addition, the case studies discussed here involved travelling to attend different international and national coach education courses, keeping field journal notes (FJN), and gathering documents to review systems. These systems were described and critiqued, comparing the following points: accreditation structure, modes of delivery, generic/specialization systems and management.

Results: The international and national cases provide further learning possibilities by identifying the strengths and challenges of other systems, critiquing them in relation to advantages and disadvantages of globalization and using outcomes to build foundation principles for the development proposal for coach education in other countries. This research also provides suggestions which help organizing international coach education programs better. Conclusion: It was concluded, that each sports organization should establish quality control of educational programmes for sport coaches according to their own financial, political and cultural situations, and they should seek to continually improve the quality of the coach education process and ensure that coaches have on-going pathways for further development.

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Introduction

With the global migration of coaches and athletes, coaching knowledge, skills and understanding also undergo constant exchange, development and refinement at international level. Increasing numbers of systematic coach education programmes are being developed around the world (Bale, 2007; ICCE, 2009). There is not yet a global coach education system that is accessible to interested people in all countries. Would it be desirable or useful if there were?

This research analyses and summarizes the key features of common coach education approaches around the world. Examples of international coach education system structures will be shared, to illustrate similarities and differences in global developments, in order to broaden understanding of global trends. There is a need to explain the gap between the current coach education situations in some countries, which includes a global review of coach education systems. Finally, it is important to reflect on how an understanding of sport globalization and aspects of current systems informs the research to develop recommendations in order to build a right coach education system. The case studies discussed here involved travelling to attend different international and national coach education courses, keeping field journal notes (FJN), and gathering documents to review systems. The international and national cases provide further learning possibilities by identifying the strengths and

challenges of other systems, critiquing them in relation to advantages and disadvantages of globalization and using outcomes to build foundation principles for the development proposal for coach education in other countries.

International Coach Education Programmes

There is an agreement that undertaking training as a coach is an important step in ensuring coaches are providing quality coaching to their participants (Debanne and Fontayne, 2009; Levy *et al.*, 2009). With increasing global expectations of standards and achievements in sport, the quality and credibility of coach education must be high, and responsibility lies with sport organizations. Despite global trends, many countries and sport organizations have developed their own coach education programmes and systems. For example, some coach education systems are provided by international sports federations to improve the knowledge of their coaches. In addition, coach education systems are provided for one continent, such as the coaching qualification system in Europe. The European Structure for the five levels of coach training was produced in 1999 as a common framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications as a requirement for the free movement of labour among European Union countries (Bale, 2007). A coach education framework has also been, and is still being, developed for the African continent (SCSA, 2010). Additionally, coach education systems are sometimes provided in a single country for its local coaches such as the Hungarian coach education programme. Some

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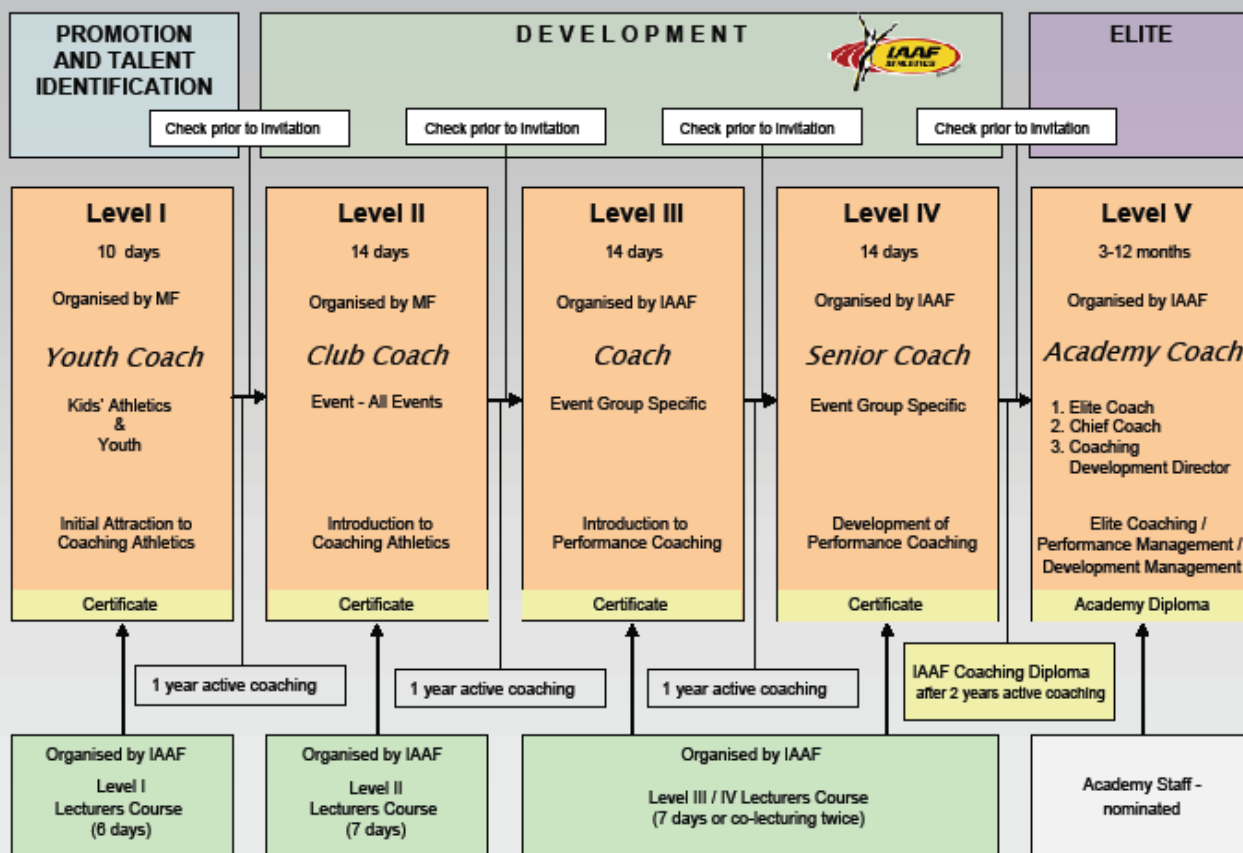


countries have no structured coach education programme, such as Oman, and a small number of these countries have recently adopted foreign coach education programmes in order to develop their national coaches, such as Qatar and Bahrain. However, the success of adopting such systems has not been evaluated to date. Some federal countries, (such as the USA) also have no united structured coach education programmes; instead individual States have adopted their own coach accreditation programmes. Such programmes have also been criticized. Gilbert *et al.* (2009) argue that, despite having nearly 60 million youth sport participants, the United States has no national coach education system. Individual States (and sports) are left to design and teach their own versions of coach education, resulting in a wide array of untested programmes. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a need for a framework for establishing a national learning community for youth sport coach education in the United States (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009), that should be in line with global trends.

Coach education programmes follow different accreditation level structures. The providers of these programmes (national or international) are also constantly updating the structures according to the new needs of their sport and coaches, as well as national

sporting frameworks. Some of the international sports federations were following a 3-level structure and have changed to a 5-level structure. The advantage of a 5-level structure is to maximize the opportunities for providing qualified coaches at all levels of sports programmes from 'sport for kids' to 'elite level'. To give a specific example, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) operates a Coaches Education and Certification System (CECS) (Figure 1). While it used to have a 3-level structure, from March 2007 the CECS has featured five levels of courses operating in seven languages. The first author of this research studied levels 1 and 2 of the IAAF coach education 3-level structure before 2007. Then, and because they have established the 5-level structure, I transferred to study level 5 in 2007 (FJN). For each course level, the IAAF provides a standard syllabus, qualified lecturers and the necessary learning support materials. Financial resources for the system come from the IAAF and its area associations, Olympic Solidarity and other partners at international and national levels, as well as self-funded options at the higher levels. The operation of CECS is co-ordinated by the IAAF Member Services Department (MSD) and the IAAF Regional Development Centres (RDCs) (IAAF, 2012; RDC Cairo, 2012).

Fig 1: Structure of the IAAF Coaches Educational & Certification System: 2007 -



Source: Adapted from IAAF (2012)

Figure 1: Structure of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) for Coaches Educational and Certification System

Such systems impact on sport development by giving coaches around the world, where they can gain access to a course, an opportunity for continuing education. For example, athletics coaches in Oman have opportunities to join the IAAF educational programme. However, only 39 athletics coaches have joined and only a few of them are working in the field. On the other hand, many Omani athletics coaches – as coaches in other sports - are working in the athletics field and have no coaching educational qualification (O.A.A, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, some international sports federations provide coach education programmes to qualify and accredit their coaches. However, there are other global international coaching programmes. Some of these programmes are offered to any coach around the world and others are offered only to coaches from developing countries. These programmes are designed to accept coaches from different sports, providing generic skills in different languages. For example, an international coaching course run by Leipzig University in Germany is offered to coaches from developing countries. Financial resources for the

programme come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. The participants come from different countries to spend five months together to gain knowledge in many areas of sports science (Leipzig University, 2012). In 2006, first author of this research attended this course and met coaches from many different countries. The course was an opportunity not only to gain coaching experiences, but also to identify different coach education systems through meeting other coaches (FJN). However, there are some weaknesses that should be taken into consideration during the conducting of such courses. Some developed countries also provide educational help by sending their coaching lecturers to developing countries to qualify sports coaches.

Another example is the International Coaching Course organized by the Institute of Coaching and Sport Education (ICSE) in Hungary and supported financially by Olympic Solidarity in International Olympic Committee (IOC). Since its establishment in 1971, 1084 coaches from more than 80 countries and from all continents have participated in this course (ICSE, 2012). This course is designed to train and



educate coaches worldwide. It provides coaches with a systematic way to improve their knowledge and skills in the theoretical, technical and practical aspects of coaching. The course is organized at half-yearly intervals starting every March and September, and usually 10-15 sports are offered. The course is given exclusively in the English language. As a result of its long term activity in international coaching education, this course has been recognized by the International Olympic Committee, which gives scholarships for coaches from developing countries to attend the course. While the first author of this research was attending this course in 2009, different sports subjects were conducted which I (and other coaches) had never studied before in our own countries, such as sports sociology. Accessing such subjects is considered one of the advantages of an international coach education system which supports the direction of global coaching curriculum (FJN).

Indeed, such international coaching programmes are examples of global attention to coach education. The greatest advantage of these international coaching courses is that they bring many coaches from different nations to one place to share coaching ideas. Therefore, they perpetuate the centralization and globalization of coaching theories and practices. As it is difficult for coaches from developing countries to update their coaching knowledge, these programmes are a good way to exchange new ideas. In addition, as English has become a global language (Hobson, 2009), such courses give a new opportunity for coaches to improve their English for sport, opening new knowledge transfer opportunities for them (FJN).

More critically, many considerations should be taken into account when organizing such international coach education programmes. For example, coaches should be prepared to face a new educational system that is most likely to be different from that in their own countries, and to meet and work with coaches from many different cultures and countries. In addition, as all coaches in the course study one curriculum level, there is a need to audit participants' education backgrounds and match needs and curricula. In reality language, cultural diversity and catering for differentiated needs are some of the challenges of such provision (FJN). Despite the time and money spent on such globally centralized coach education programmes, there is still no research to evaluate the impact they have when coaches return to their situations.

From the evidence available, it appears there are increasing efforts to move towards a global qualification framework or set of standards. As provision on the scale increases, and many international organizations are now providing coach education programs, there is also a need to increase cooperation and negotiation to reduce redundancy

between overlapping accreditation programmes. For example, there is a need to coordinate and recognize the qualification roles of the national and international sectors. Nationally, the coordination and recognition of the roles of non-university and university sectors are also to be encouraged. In addition, providing general guidance to countries, institutions and federations in order to develop their coach education programmes are needed (Bale, 2007). Finally, the information revolution – as a result of globalization – should be used to inform coaches around the world of all education opportunities and to communicate globally. For example, a global website will help to overcome the lack of communication between some countries - such as Oman - with international sports organizations in order to better benefit from the global opportunities (FJN).

National Coach Education Programmes

Coaching is a complex process (Galipeau and Trudel, 2006; Knowles *et al.*, 2006) and coaches need to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge to help prepare them for their important role. Therefore, to carry out their work effectively, coaches need proper education and training. The provision of national large-scale coach education programmes, as a result, is now available in many countries and national sports federations (Lyle, 2002; Wright *et al.*, 2007; Gilbert, 2009; Kidman *et al.*, 2009; Mallett *et al.*, 2009). The reason behind these unprecedented efforts around the world to develop and revise national coach education programmes is to contribute to the development of coaching as a profession and to certify and accredit sports coaches (Rynne *et al.*, 2006; Gilbert, 2009; Mallett *et al.*, 2009).

Examples of these large-scale programmes are the National Coaching Certification Programme (NCCP) in Canada, the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) in Australia, and the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate. These programmes share similar characteristics, including having different levels and having defined content for each level. Also, in order to apply the coaching ranking system, some countries require formal training, exams, certificates, licensing and amateur coaches. William (1995) notes that, in most nations, coaching education and certification programmes are centralized nationally, usually planned and operated under the auspices of the national government. He also notes that there are four approaches to sport coaching certification that are currently used in most nations:

- 1- National certification by the individual sport (for example, by the National Governing Body)
- 2- National certification by an all-sports coaching education group.
- 3- National licensing by a governmental agency (for example, in Japan).

4- Local licensing by a governmental agency (for example, in the United States).

delivery, generic/specialization systems and management.

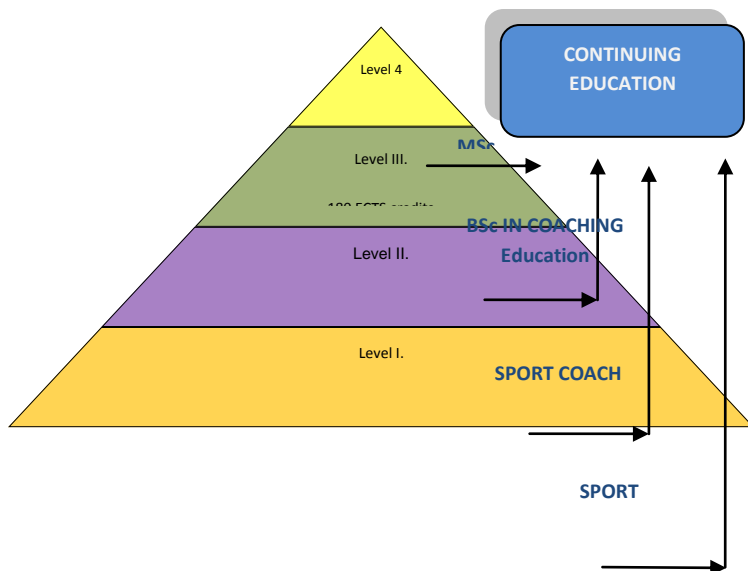
Accreditation Systems

Professional accreditation is the process of verifying that professional preparation is of sufficient quality to ensure that those completing such preparation will engage in safe and appropriate practice. Independent certification programmes may verify that participants have completed an identified unit of information or developed specific skills, but the certification does not address the quality or appropriateness of the specified curriculum or preparation (NCACE, 2012).

This section presents a comparison of national coach education systems from six different countries: Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Hungary. The main aim of presenting these systems is to identify any global trends of similarity, and difference, in order to provide a foundation of understanding to underpin the ensuing research investigation to develop the future coach education systems. All six countries have different coaching systems, modules, or programmes. They have been chosen in order to identify similarities, differences and trends in coach education systems and programmes, coaching strategies, courses, coach ranking and certification programmes. There are many reasons for choosing these particular systems. Firstly, in order to obtain different experiences, some of these systems are from western countries and the others are from developing countries. All of these systems have clear structures and are easy to follow. In addition, most of these systems have documents that are available on the internet and are therefore easy to access. To make this analysis relevant to the aims of this study, these systems will be described and critiqued, comparing the following points: accreditation structure, modes of

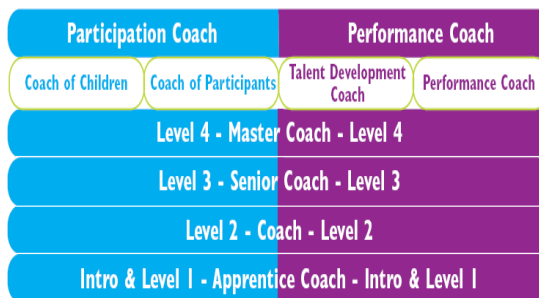
Generally, there are some differences regarding the accreditation structure in the six coach education programmes. In Australia, for example, the previous NCAS (the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme) framework required sports to conform to a three-tier structure (levels 1, 2 and 3). However, the NCAS now has a more flexible approach that allows each national sporting organization to determine the number and names of levels in their coach accreditation pathway (Australia Sports commission, 2008). Conversely, in Ireland and Hungary, there is a four level coaching ladder in place (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Hungarian Coaching Education Structure



Source: Adapted from Petrovic (2012)

Figure 3: Coach Development Model in Ireland

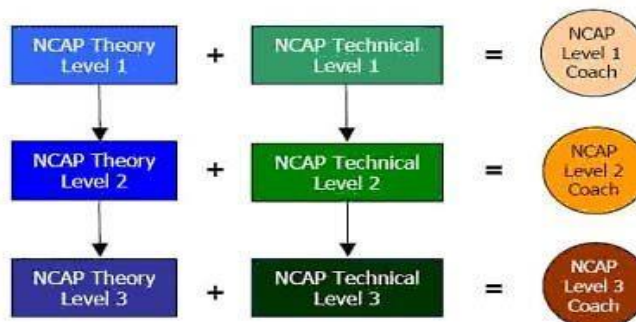


Source: Adapted from Coaching Ireland (2012)

On the other hand, in New Zealand and Singapore there are three-tier structures. In New Zealand for example, there is a coach accreditation programme for all levels of development from the beginner (Getting Started) through to coaching performance athletes (level 3) (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2008). Although Singapore also has a three-tier structure, it is different to that in New Zealand. Coaches in Singapore

can obtain certification at three levels, but to be a fully certified coach at any particular level, the coach needs to be certified in NCAP Theory (National Coaching Accreditation Programme) and in NCAP Technical at that level. For example, a coach is considered a Level 1 coach only when he or she has both NCAP Theory Level 1 and NCAP Technical Level 1 certifications (The Singapore Sports Council, 2010) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: National Coaching Accreditation Programme (NCAP) (Basic Coach Education Framework)



Source: Adapted from the Singapore Sports Council (2010)

Additionally, the CAP (The Foundation Coach Accreditation Programme) is concerned with the development and accreditation of coaches in Hong Kong and operates at three levels. Each level consists of four parts: A (Sports - General Theory), B (Sport-Specific Theory), C (Sport-Specific Practical) and D (Sport-Specific coaching experience) (The Hong Kong Coaching Committee, 2011). It is necessarily to recognize that some coaching systems in these six countries provide other coaching courses such as courses to coach athletes with a disability. These kinds of courses are designed to increase understanding and awareness of athletes with a disability and the special considerations associated with coaching disability athletes.

Finally, it is worth noting that the coaching world is debating not only how to educate sports coaches, but also how to accredit them. Part of the debate revolves around whether sports coaches should or can be given credit for the informal learning that they are engaged in while they practice. Indeed, the degree to which informal education should be included in coach education and accreditation is less clear (Reade, 2009). Therefore, further work and more widespread debate are needed to gather more information about including informal education in designing coach education frameworks. Generally, in addition to the previous accreditation experiences



mentioned in this section, and according to NCACE (2012), accreditation of coaching education should:

1. Identify levels of coaching education that are acceptable by both a systematic and scientific inquiry as well as identify a national consensus of what coaches should know, value, and be able to do.
2. Hold coaching educators accountable for the quality of professional education and ensure that the mechanisms involved in the accreditation process are of appropriate quality.
3. Promote coaching education programmes that are effective in serving the needs of a

Modes of Delivery and Content

There are also differences regarding the modes of delivery and the content in the six coach education programmes. There are a number of ways of undertaking training as a coach in NCAS in Australia, including face to face courses, online training and working with mentor coaches. Accredited coaches in Australia receive a range of benefits, including coaching courses, workshops and publications, and regular e-newsletters and information. NCAS training programmes in Australia include the following components:

- Coaching general principles, generic principles of coaching and athletic performance that apply to all sports.
- Sport specific skills, techniques, strategies and approaches to the particular sport (Australia Sports Commission, 2008).

In Ireland, education specific to each sport is provided for coaches. Course descriptions in this programme are crucial in laying down the skills and

dynamic social system and that are creative and responsive to the changing needs of prospective coaches.

4. Be precise in gathering key information about critical aspects of educational quality, both in scope of programmes and reliability of judgments and conclusions.
5. Create consistent, efficient, and cost-effective review procedures and processes by which decisions are made and maintain supportive relationships to allow for all levels of coaching education to seek accreditation.

knowledge required by coaches at each level (Rynne *et al.*, 2006; Coaching Ireland, 2012; National Coaching and Training Centre, 2011). In New Zealand, coaches are also involved in courses focusing on generic coaching principles which seek to complement sport-specific programmes (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2008). However, as there are two steps to becoming a fully certified coach at any particular level in Singapore, there are two different coaching courses (theoretical and technical courses) containing workshops and lectures on sports and coaching specific skills (The Singapore Sports Council, 2008). In Hong Kong, the coaching programme consists of coaching courses, seminars and workshops (Table 1) (The Hong Kong Coaching Committee, 2010). The longest period of delivery is in Hungary where the course duration is from one to three years depending on each level. The coaching programme also requires completion of both theory and practical/technical components

Table 1: Curriculum of the Hong Kong Foundation Coach Accreditation Programme

Module	Number of Lecturing Hours		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Sports Science	15	20	26
1. Concepts of Fitness			
2. Sports Physiology			
3. Sports Psychology			
4. Sports Biomechanics			
5. Sports Nutrition			
6. Motor Control and Learning			
7. Talent Identification			
Sports Coaching	6	7	7
8. Planning the Programme			
9. The Practice of Coaching			
10. Adapted Sports			
Coaches Management	2	2	4
11. Managing Skills for Coaches			

12. Legal Aspects in Sports Coaching			
Sports Medicine	4	4	8
13. Safety, Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation			
14. Doping and Sport			
Total	27	33	45

Source: Adapted from the Hong Kong Coaching Committee (2011)

Generic/Specialization systems

It is important that the information provided in the course is specific to one sport. Providing coaching courses for coaches from the same sport gives more opportunities to enrich the knowledge of that sport. Generally, all six coaching systems work the same with specialization. In Australia, the coach education programme offers courses at various levels with over 70 sports participating (Australia Sports Commission, 2008). The coach education programmes in Ireland, New Zealand, Hungary, Singapore and Hong Kong offer coaching courses for each level for each sport that is practised in the country (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2008; The Singapore Sports Council, 2008; The Hong Kong Coaching Committee, 2011; National Coaching and Training Centre, 2011; Coaching Ireland, 2012; ICSE, 2012; Petrovic, 2012).

Responsibility for the Management of Coach Education Programmes

Some coaching systems are politically driven while others are driven by academic organizations, with still others driven by sports organizations. In Australia, for example, coaches become accredited through the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS), which is an initiative of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) (Australia Sports Commission, 2008). In Ireland, coaches become accredited through The

National Coaching Development Programme (NCDP) (Coaching Ireland, 2012; National Coaching and Training Centre, 2011), and in New Zealand coaches become accredited through National Sport Organizations (NSO) but programmes must be endorsed by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2008; Misener and Danylchuk, 2009). In Singapore, coaches become accredited through the Singapore Sports Council Coaching and Technical Development Division via the National Coaching Accreditation Programme (NCAP) (The Singapore Sports Council, 2012; Koh, *et al.*, 2009). Finally, the Institute of Coaching and Sport Education manages the coach education system in Hungary (CEH, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations: Lessons from Global Review of selected Coach Education Programmes

It is clear that there are some differences between the six coaching systems described above. There are differences in coach accreditation and categories of accreditation, curriculum and management, as well as the modes of delivery, while there is similarity in applying specialization. These differences have occurred because each of these countries has structured a coach education programme that is suitable for its situation and financial, political, cultural context, as well as the geographical spread of the population (Table 2).

Table 2: The differences and similarities between some existing coaching systems in the world

	Australia	Ireland	New Zealand	Singapore	Hong Kong	Hungary
Accreditation Structure	Flexible approach that allows each national sporting organization to determine the number and names of levels in their coach accreditation pathway	Four levels	Three levels	Three levels	Three levels, each level consists of four parts (A, B, C & D)	Four levels: 2 vocational levels and 2 levels in higher education
Modes of delivery and contents	Face to face courses, online training and working with mentor coaches,	Course descriptions in this programme are crucial in	Courses with academic supports	Work-shops and lectures on sports specific skills	Coaching courses, seminar and workshops	Work-shops and lectures on sports specific



	publications, and access to regular e-newsletters and information, receive a coach identification card and sport specific benefits	laying down the skills and knowledge required by coaches at each level.		(theory and technical courses)		skills (theory and technical courses)
Generic/Specialization systems	Over 70 sports participating, Coaching general principles and sport specific skills	Provide a firm basis for the continuity and review of coach education programmes within each sport	Courses for each level for each sport	Courses for each level for each sport	Courses for each level for each sport	Courses for each level for each sport
Responsible of the coaching system	National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) which is an initiative of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)	The National Coaching Development Programme (NCDP)	National Sport Organizations	The Singapore Sports Council Coaching and Technical Development Division	The Hong Kong Coaching Committee	High education institutes

In conclusion, the review of selected coach education programmes around the world (nationally and internationally) provides some useful suggestions. The accreditation of coaching education programmes, for example, ought to be designed to provide consistent and scientifically-based guidelines by which to assess: (a) the content of programmes for the education of sports coaches; (b) the qualifications of instructors who provide coaching education; and (c) the process by which coaching education is provided. Coach education programmes should be focused on the development of appropriate skills, knowledge, and values needed to function as a coach (NCACE, 2012). In addition, each sports organization should establish quality control of educational programmes for sport coaches according to their own financial, political and cultural situations, and they should seek to continually improve the quality of the coach education process and ensure that coaches have ongoing pathways for further development. Also, they should increase the recognition and status of coaches to ensure they are valued and that coaching is seen as a rewarding experience. Additionally, any coach education system should be evaluated and revised from time to time to meet the new needs of coaches. Prospective expert reviewers include individuals from different organizational groups, such as multi-sport organizations, science/medical/educational organizations, single sport groups and distributors of coaching education.

Finally, prospective coaches must seek quality accredited coach education programmes that enable them to understand hiring practices and to meet appropriate certification requirements related to becoming a qualified coach. Accreditation of coach education encourages individuals, particularly at the volunteer level, to aspire to the qualifications that are appropriate for coaching athletes at all levels of development (NCACE, 2012). Therefore, any sports organizations should be committed to providing training and resources to help their sports coaches develop and share their knowledge.

One of the biggest issues recognized after reviewing the above systems is coach education assessment and effectiveness. In other words, is there any notable impact on sports coaches and coaching as a result of investment in coach education? Unfortunately, there is very little research on this issue. One of the only published studies in which a large-scale coach education program was evaluated is a pilot study published by Gilbert and Trudel (1999) entitled "An evaluation strategy for coach education programs". The evaluation used in this study focuses on three stages that relate to course delivery, knowledge gain and knowledge use. The study concluded that the evaluated course was not delivered as designed, no new knowledge was gained and both use and non-use of knowledge was evident in the field.

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