

Regional Coaches' Community Development Project

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<p>The target of this thesis project was to implement a model of how to organize regional coaches' community action and investigate how it could be developed. The Finnish Olympic Committee has assigned regional sports academies to organize the action. The action is supposed to be regionally oriented; local circumstances, premises and objectives provide the basis for the action. The idea behind the coaches' community is to give coaches of various disciplines a chance to meet each other on a regular basis to share their knowledge and experiences. The ultimate objective is to help coaches to learn, increase their knowledge and improve the coaching practises in Päijät-Häme.</p> <p>This thesis was a development project of the coaches' community action in Päijät-Häme sports academy in 2016, in which action research related methods were used. The idea was to learn something from each step and to investigate how to improve the action in the future, as it will be one of the focal points of the organizing body also in the year 2017. The action included mainly meetings about changing themes. The members of the community had suggested the themes and a small steering group was formed out of the few most enthusiastic coaches to manage and direct the action. In addition to that, coaches were asked for feedback by using feedback forms and a separate survey. Some expert interviews and benchmarking were carried out as well.</p> <p>The project produced a model or an example of how to organize and develop coaches' community action. Coaches' community action is an important part of every sports academy's action, so other academies can make use of this study and its results in their action. The study results showed that coaches value the action and want to develop it, but they want to have more time for deeper conversation. To reach that goal people have to know each other better and the group should be divided into smaller groups or action should be organized on different levels.</p> <p>Formal coaching education is organized in Finland on many levels. However, it has been proved that also informal education is needed. Informal education does not lead to a degree, but is actually considered to be an even more efficient way to learn. Regional coaches' communities are one way to carry out informal coaching education, but the coaches have to feel that they belong to the group and a certain community spirit should be established. This project gave instructions on how to organize the action and what should be taken into account.</p>	
Keywords coaches' community, informal learning, coaching education, sports academy	

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1 Introduction

This thesis project aims to help coaches to learn and improve their coaching skills. Even though learning through practice is considered to be the most effective way to learn, coaches learn also via formal and informal education. Formal coaching education leads to a degree and it is organized on many levels. In Päijät-Häme region it is possible to have education all the way from an assistant coach to a master coach. However, it has been proved that also informal education is needed. Informal education does not lead to a degree, but is actually considered to be an even more efficient way to learn. Informal education means for example events, updating education, seminars, mentoring, blogs or magazines.

One way to implement informal coaching education is to arrange coaches' community action. It is said that it is important to be able to share knowledge and best practices in order to learn. The idea behind the coaches' community is to give the coaches from various disciplines a chance to meet each other on a regular basis, to share their knowledge and learn from each other. The need for this kind of action is actually noted on a national level. There are some key selections made in Finnish sport, one of which is high level competence. The Finnish Olympic Committee has divided the key selections into a few elements which help to achieve those big targets. One of the elements which lead to high level competence is building up regional coach- and expert communities. The execution of this action is the responsibility of local sports academies.

The author of this thesis works as an executive director in Päijät-Häme sports academy and one of the main objectives in the organization's action in the year 2016 was to build up a regional coaches' community. The action is supposed to be regionally oriented; local circumstances, premises and objectives provide the basis for the action. The idea of this thesis project was to do an action research of the coaches' community action in 2016; describe the action, learn something with each step and investigate how to improve it in the future, as it will be one of the focal points of the organizing body also in the year 2017.

The idea of the coaches' community is to give a chance to coaches from various disciplines to meet each other on a regular basis and share their knowledge. It is said that it is important to be able to share knowledge and to exchange the best practices in order to learn. The ultimate objective is to help coaches to develop themselves, increase their knowledge and improve the coaching in Päijät-Häme.

2 The Finnish model in elite sports

Finnish sport system is going through a period of transition. At the beginning of the year 2013 the High Performance Unit (HPU) was founded inside the Finnish Olympic Committee. The reform brought some radical changes with it; since then the HPU has had an independent and big role in leading and developing Finnish elite sports. The HPU directs and coordinates the activities of the national elite sport network. It also channels the resources. Resources are channeled through three programs; Sports Academy Program, Peak-Phase Program and Research and Development Program. The Sports Academy Program is responsible for managing the network of academies that covers the athlete's path from the start to the top. The Peak-Phase Program assembles, develops and distributes top-level know-how and financial resources in support of the coaching of elite athletes and teams. The Research and Development Program is responsible for developing and implementing research, development and coaching expertise within elite sport. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. a.)

The key selections or target states set for Finnish sports are: international success, valued sports and high level competence. Regardless of the goal the athlete is at the center and everything that is done aims to achieve those strategical goals. Every strategical choice is divided into a few key elements, which are justified and explained in the Finnish Sport Strategy. For example, building up coach- and expert communities, which strengthen the know-how and co-operation is one of the key elements of high level competence. The other four key elements of high level competence are continuing development, professionalism, networking and monitoring. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016a; Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016b.)

The HPU's Sports Academy Program has five main objectives for the year 2016 which, in turn, are divided into a few concrete operations. One of the main objectives is the intensification of everyday training processes in sport academies. The operations for this objective are: building up regional coach and expert communities and adding skills, participating expert work and developing training circumstances. Finland has 20 regional sport academies and the implementation of these main objectives is partly the responsibility of regional sport academies. Building up regional coach and expert communities means that every regional academy should build their own communities for coaches and experts. The operation mode should be permanent and regular and it should answer to coaches' needs as well as develop operational environments. The goal is to create a network where coaches from different disciplines share knowledge and best practices with each other.

(Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016a; Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016c; Suomen Olympiakomitea. b.)

2.1 The Finnish model in coaching

The Finnish Olympic Committee started the coach development coordination process in 2012. The development of coaching know-how consists of different kind of parts. Formal, informal and nonformal education is taken into account in the Finnish coaching development process. Coaching skills are seen as a wide entirety and educational occasions are one part of the development process. There are many ways to support the know-how, coaches usually use formal, informal and non-formal learning. Non-formal education can also be seen as a part of informal education. Education should be based on the individual's needs and a variety of learning styles should be taken into account. Finnish coaching development process is illustrated in the following figure 1. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014; Hämäläinen. 2015.)

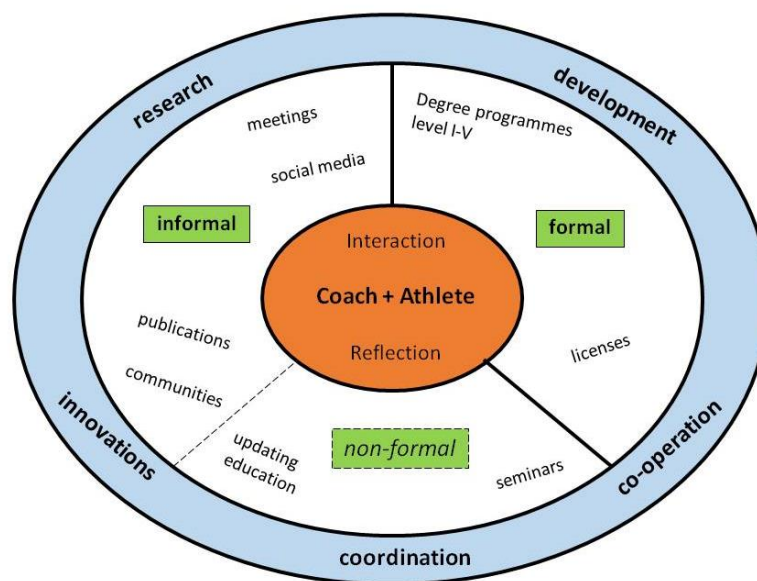


Figure 1. The Finnish coaching development process described in a figure and examples of what formal, non-formal and informal education could mean (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014. Modified)

It is recognized that education always reflects the time. The previous education system was based on the following assumptions: coaches want to proceed from an education level to the next one, the best coaches coach the most advanced athletes, classroom teaching is the most effective way to teach, theory moves in to practice on its own and learning happens only via education. These arguments have all been proved wrong. Only

10 % of coaches proceed from one education level to the next one, also kids and beginners should have professional coaches, excellence in coaching means different things in different stages of an athlete's path and nowadays learning through practice is considered the most important way to learn. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

The Finnish Olympic Committee has launched a coaching competence model, which is a tool for creating a common understanding about coaching, developing coaching education programs, the assessment of coaches' competence and providing self-reflection for coaches. The model has three parts: the operational environment of coaching, athletes' outcomes and coaches' competences. The coaching competence model is illustrated in figure 2. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

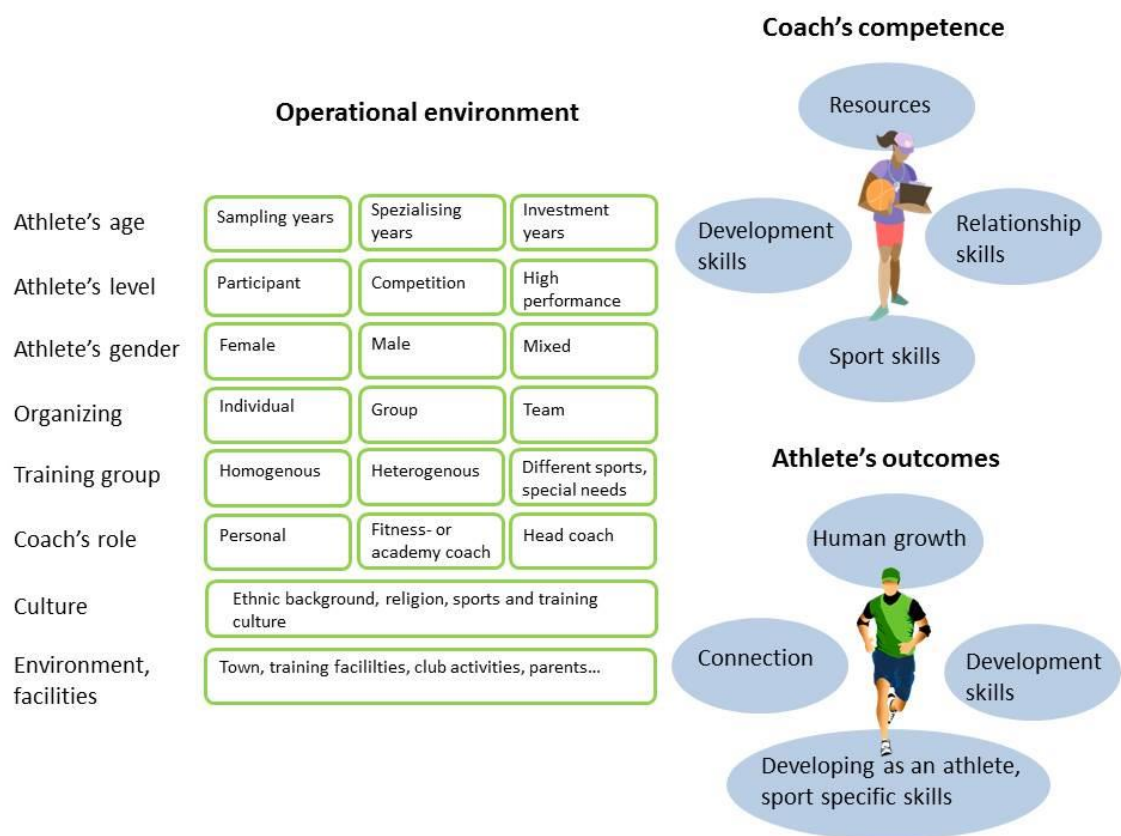


Figure 2. The coaching competence model (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

Defining the operational environment sets the skills needed for coaching. Things that define the operational environment are for example: athletes' age, level, gender, culture, environment, facilities, coach's role and training group. The things that a coach should master might be quite different in different operational environments. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

Athletes' outcomes refer to some things that a coach can have an effect on, such as their growth as a human, their development as an athlete (sport specific skills), their sense of belonging and development skills. The growth as a human being includes adopting values and attitudes, assuming responsibility, growing empathy, appreciating your self-worth, learning to respect others and developing relationship skills. The development as an athlete deals with athletic lifestyle, fitness, training, rest, recovery, nutrition, motivation, confidence, joy and sport specific skills like technical, tactical and equipment skills. An athlete's sense of belonging refers to his or her love for the sport, commitment and belonging. Finally, development skills include goal setting, self-assessment, learning skills, networking skills, knowledge seeking and evaluating and thinking. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

Coaches' competences points out the requirements for coaches' know-how. Physical, psychological and social resources are needed in order to have the required sports skills, relationship skills and developing skills. Sports skills involve the general knowledge of sports, sport specific skills and pedagogical skills. Relationship skills refer to management, organizational skills, conversational skills, problem solving and the knowledge of human nature. Developing skills deal with goal setting, self-assessment, learning skills, networking skills, thinking, knowledge seeking and evaluating. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

Competitive and elite sport research center has done a large coach research in 2009 and further research in 2013. Results show that even if learning through practice is considered to be the most effective way to learn, over 95 % of the coaches think that also formal education is still needed. Almost half of the coaches feel that coaching education has been useful in updating their knowledge. More than one third of the coaches felt that possibilities to network and share were useful and that they were more confident due to the education. 75 % of the coaches had participated in some kind of education in the past four years and two thirds are going to participate in the following year. But over half of the coaches didn't know how far they would like to educate themselves. One third of the respondents said that they have received some other kind of support in the past year such as mentoring or tutoring services, support from colleagues, supervision, coach meetings and societal support. Almost half of the respondents felt that they most likely need support in the following year, so developing these different kinds of informal support services is considered important. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

The same competitive and elite sport research center's research shows that 76 % of the most important learning experiences are achieved through own experiences as a coach.

24 % of the respondents felt that the most important learning situations happened in education. Approximately half of the most important learning experiences dealt with everyday coaching and 21 % dealt with interaction or communication. Learning experiences in education seemed to be quite evenly balanced out between formal education and different kinds of courses and seminars. 65 % of the most important learning experiences were related to sports skills and 29 % to communication skills. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014.)

According to the new understanding, learning is a process and it is about competence development, not just education. In the new Finnish coaching system also the athlete is included into the process and thus given more say in his or her training processes. Networking is a key element, so the coaches should be able to share their ideas and learning with colleagues. The Finnish school has had long traditions in discipline and control, which have been the cornerstones of quality. However, we have always learned by doing and especially vocational skills are gained by learning from others. The quicker the theory is put into practice, the more likely it will become a habit. (Hämäläinen. 2015.)

2.2 Formal and informal coaching education

Formal coaching education means education which leads to a degree. In Finland formal coaching education is organized by discipline associations, regional sport organizations, sports institutes, a few universities of applied sciences, the University of Jyväskylä and by some other organizations like The Coaches of Finland association. It is possible and actually recommended to combine different coaching education programs. A coach's path can be built in many ways. You can for example proceed to vocational examination by going through different levels of education offered by discipline associations. Other options are doing the basic vocational degree in a sports institute or an academic degree at the university of applied sciences or at the university. You can also combine those studies with the education provided for example by discipline federations. The educational path of coaches is illustrated in the figure 3. (Sport.fi.)

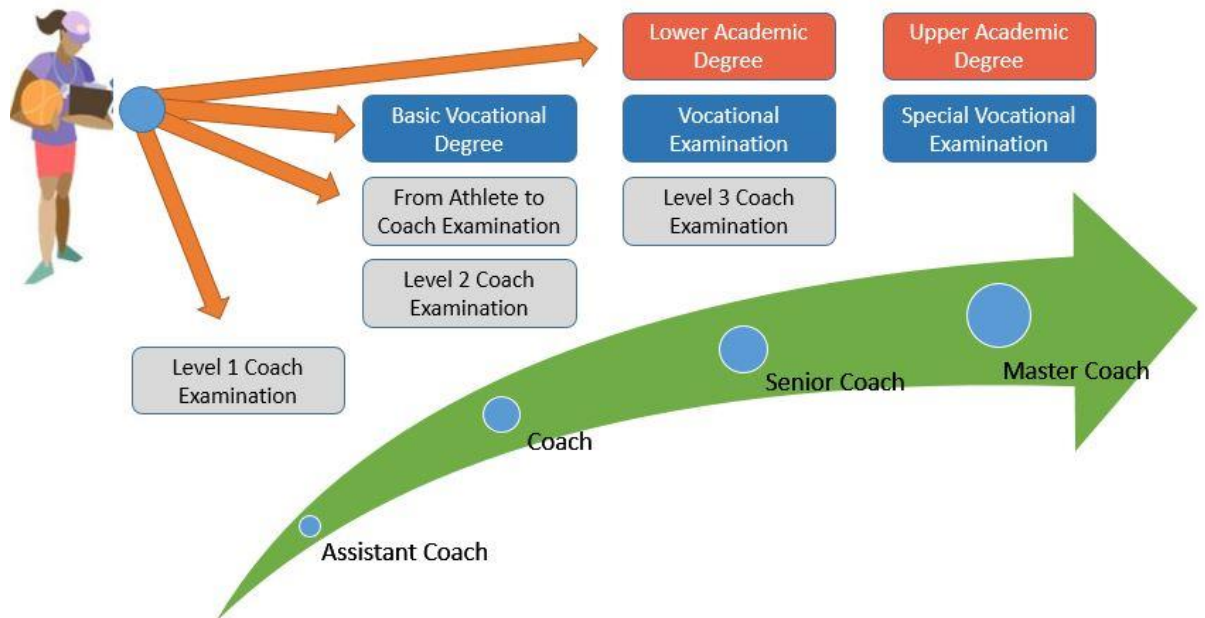


Figure 3. Educational paths of coaches (sport.fi. Modified)

In Päijät-Häme region it is possible to attend the formal coaching education widely. There is an active regional sport organization, which organizes level 1 coaching education. There are also two sports institutes, which organize basic vocational degree, vocational examination and special vocational examination education. Haaga-Helia University of applied sciences also operates in the region, organizing lower and upper academic degree education. Some of the education organized by discipline associations or other organizations can also take place in sports institutes. So it is possible to study coaching on every level from assistant coach to master coach in Päijät-Häme region.

Informal education includes education events which do not lead to a degree, for example updating education, seminars and congresses. The challenge is to recognize the knowledge which has accumulated as a result of different forms of learning. Informal coaching education can mean for example encounters outside of formal education, like mentoring and coach clubs or coach teams, where the parties learn from each other. Also magazines, databases, TV, books, internet, blogs and other media can support informal learning. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014, 5-6.)

Different kinds of societies are a good way to promote informal education. Many discipline associations have organized coach societies for the sports coaches. 26 of them have registered themselves as coach societies under the Coaches of Finland association. Additionally, some sports clubs have their own coach societies which usually are meant for coaches of a certain discipline. And then there are meetings organized for example by

sport academies, which usually are meant for coaches from several disciplines. These societies typically organize updating education, seminars and meetings. The executive director of the Coaches of Finland, Kristiina Danskanen, says that the feedback has been varied. The feedback has been negative if the society hasn't been active and the feedback has been positive if the meetings have been well organized and the topics have been well chosen. She continues that there are many opportunities to develop coaches' competence through these kinds of actions. She sees specially the societies which are under the discipline association very meaningful. Multidiscipline societies further cross talk, which promotes particularly the competence of the peak-phase coaches. (Danskanen. 8.12.2016.)

2.3 International studies and examples

The International Council for Coaching Excellence, ICCE, is an international organization with the mission of leading and developing sport coaching globally and enhancing the quality of coaching at every level of sport (International Council for Coaching Excellence). The organization made a guidebook on coaches' development. First of all, they wrote that various parties can act as coach developers; for example coach educators, learning facilitators, presenters and mentors are considered coach developers. ICCE guide that coach developers should first and foremost be experts in learning and also have expertise in coaching and in athlete development or some other important aspect, like for example medicine or technology or pedagogy. (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014.)

ICCE sees that learning shouldn't be viewed simply as accumulating knowledge, but as a process of changing conceptions. Learning happens when new pathways are built and neural connections increase in the brains. They claim that the learner should be active in the process and that a facilitative approach to learning is one of the most effective approaches for adult learners. Facilitative approach includes learner centered methods, problem-based strategies and experiential learning techniques. According to ICCE, adults learn best when their experiences and abilities are recognized and they get help to reflect and build on that. The feeling of needing to learn is vital and the learners should be encouraged to take responsibility of their learning. Adult learners should have opportunities to engage the practice and apply the new information in their own environment. The climate should be positive and supportive in education; adults need positive experiences and feedback that strengthens their self-confidence. The summary of points that produce the best learning outcome for adults according to ICCE are presented in the following figure 4. (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014.)

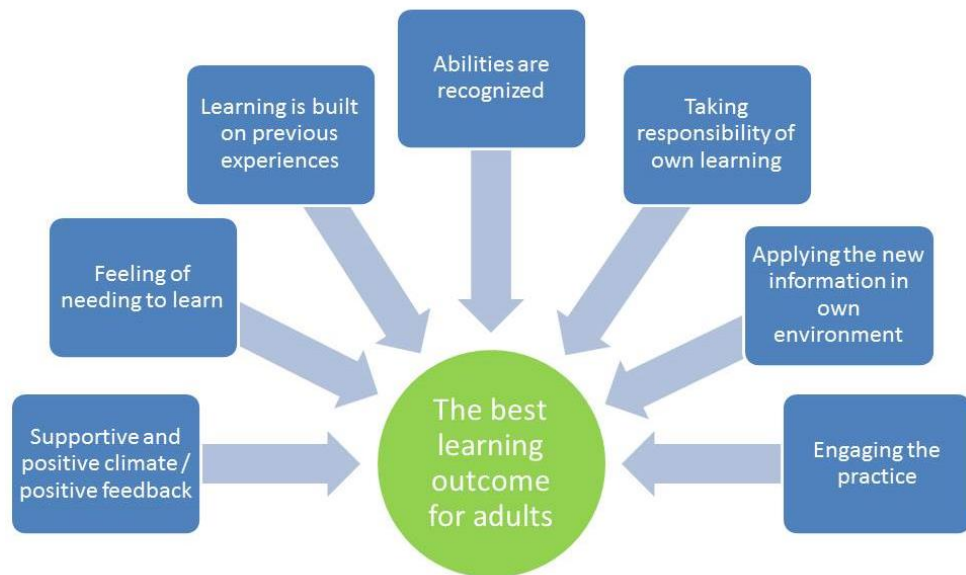


Figure 4. Points that produce the best learning outcomes in adults' education according to ICCE

According to ICCE, all types of learning, formal and informal, are important and needed in coaching education. Coaches operate in changing and complex environments, so the education should mirror that and be also versatile. ICCE refers to researches that claim that coaches learn best from practical experience and interaction with peers, so there is a need to take some of the formal education out of the classrooms onto the tracks and courts. The effectiveness of informal education may depend on coaches' ability to learn themselves, their eagerness to create new learning opportunities and their openness. The best type of learning may vary between different individuals and between the stages of coaches' expertise; less experienced ones may need more formal education and more experienced ones usually need more informal learning situations. (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014.)

The International Council for Coaching Excellence, ICCE, gives some guidelines to coach developers. Coach developers help coaches to work more effectively with athletes and develop athletes' capabilities. Coach developers need different kind of knowledge. Professional knowledge about sport is needed as well as performance related knowledge and knowledge about learning. Different kinds of skills are needed as well; ability to build reports, ability to create positive environment and observe and analyze coaches and facilitate learning. Coach developers should also be trustworthy, honest and emphatic, a proper mindset is very important as well. (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014.)

The Coaches of Finland association made a study in 2004 about the Finnish coaching education system. Also some international benchmarks were presented in the study, with examples from Ireland, Great Britain and the Netherlands. In Ireland the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC) is responsible for the national coaching development programme. They have a four-level education system; the fifth level is under planning. The education consists of universal coaching and discipline specific studies on every level. They have over 500 educated tutors or mentors to support the learning, the supervising body is the NCTC. The coaches can proceed from the level to the next one when they have completed the degree of the previous level and a certain amount of practical work has been done. There are some commonly chosen quality measurement indicators used in order to monitor the quality of education and coaching in Ireland's system. There is also some informal coaching education, like updating education and workshops, organized to support the coaches' learning in Ireland. (Suomen Valmentajat ry. 2004, 17-20.)

In Great Britain the Sport Coach UK is responsible for the national coaching development programme. The organization works in close co-operation with discipline associations and regional sports organizations. They organize workshops which are open for all coaches. There are 27 different workshops available and all of them have a different theme, learning in the workshops happens in small groups. To the expert coaches they organize special workshops together with the national Olympic Committee. Their education system is a five-level system; the level classification is made according to general competence requirements and discipline specific requirements. The idea in the British system is that the progress from one level to the next one is flexible and the coaches are encouraged to continuous self-development. There are also educated mentors and tutors to support the learning in the British system. There are approximately 50 fulltime coaching developers all over the country and also regional coaching communities to support the informal learning. (Suomen Valmentajat ry. 2004, 17-20.)

In the Netherlands the national Olympic Committee is responsible for the national coaching development programme. They have a few full time coaching developers in their payroll. Their statistics show that approximately 90% of the coaches are volunteers, the number of hired full-time coaches is about 16,000. The majority of all coaches are uneducated, which is a big concern for the Olympic Committee. They also have a five-level coaching education system and they have shifted from course based education to the job based learning. Every discipline association has an education manager who is responsible for mentors working in the clubs. The mentors are usually hired full-time. The education system works in the Netherlands so that there is a starting level test and according to that a

personal study plan is drawn. The level diplomas are completed by a practical skills test and every level includes also some formal education sessions. To support the learning, also some informal learning occasions, like forums and meetings are organized. In addition to this, certain expert coaches are entitled to use some support services provided by the national Olympic Committee. (Suomen Valmentajat ry. 2004, 17-20.)

Erickson, Burner, MacDonald and Cote made a study about the sources of coaching knowledge in Canada. In Canada the coaching education system is led by the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC). CAC runs a course based program called the National Coaching Certification Programme (NCCP) to train and certify coaches. Their recent evaluations and studies show that some changes have to be made in order to meet the coaches' needs better. They found out that no new knowledge was learned, nor did the coach apply much of the information from the class once he or she returned to the field. That is why they strongly recommend that a shift from the classroom based curriculum towards a competency based model should be done. Formal coaching education courses suffer from a lack of interaction between coaches. Erickson's study group underlines that formal coaching education programmes still play an important role in coaches' development. (Erickson et al. 2008.)

The same Canadian study suggests that learning through experience is often highlighted as a key element in coaches' development. Mentoring and observing other coaches is also seen very vital. The study group write in their report: "interacting with other coaches within communities of practice has been proposed as a particularly fruitful approach to fostering coach learning. Through this sustained interaction, coaches can collectively negotiate meaning in order to learn from another." Their study results show that coaches consider the most important sources of knowledge to be learning by doing, interacting with others, mentoring and coach certification programmes. (Erickson et al. 2008.)

Learning by doing as the most important source of coaching knowledge is consistent with the previous studies and literature. The frequent mention of interaction with others as a primary source of knowledge supports the notion of communities of practice as important contexts for learning and knowledge sharing. One might consider both learning by doing and interacting with coaching peers as variations of experiential learning; learning from one's own experiences and then sharing it with others. A large portion of knowledge can be gained through this kind of experiential learning. Erickson's group highlights the fact that different learning situations complement each other. Formal and informal coaching education is needed, coaches learn from a variety of sources. (Erickson et al. 2008.)

Canadian researchers, Doctor Culver and Professor Trudel, made a research on coaches' learning through interactions. They start their study report by underlining the fact that coaching is a complex concept and dependent on many factors. They continue that because of the nature of coaching, also the education should be very versatile, both formal and informal education are needed. According to Culver and Trudel coaches feel that learning from experience plays a very important role in their development. (Culver & Trudel. 2006.)

Culver and Trudel (2006) studied coaches' communities of practice and how they affected the coaches. They define coaches' communities of practice to be "a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis." It has been recognized that coaches inevitably interact with other in these kinds of communities. There is something that people want to accomplish or do together and they have a common understanding in these kinds of communities. They emphasize that there should be mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. They continue to claim that the coaches of the same club can form this kind of community, but only if they decide to communicate, share and learn from and with each other. (Culver & Trudel. 2006.)

Culver and Trudel (2006) argue that it is unlikely to find these kinds of communities outside of a team or a club. They justify their claim by listing out the features of high competitiveness, urge of winning and being better than others, which seem to be strong in sports. According to them coaches might see other coaches as enemies, not partners, and it might restrict coaches' desire to share their ideas or best practices. On the other hand, if the group is formed out of coaches from other leagues or different disciplines, the interaction can be better again. But the problem in that kind of communities is that they seem to be loose and informal. There is no joint enterprise or other strong glue that would stick the group together. Another problem might be that the people inside the group don't know each other well enough. The members meet face to face only rarely and reciprocity stays low.

Culver and Trudel (2006) say that having someone with whom the coach can let off steam and talk about their job is important and that help can be found from the communities of practice. That someone has to be someone who the coach respects and is approximately on the same level. An open-minded atmosphere that encourages participation is important. They suggest that the community should meet at regular intervals; the intervals might be different in different communities. The topics of the meetings should arise from

coaches' reflections about their day-to-day practice. At best the communities of practice can create work habits and procedures that improve coaches' skills.

Professor Trudel was involved in another study with Doctor Gilbert, which was about coaches' learning. Coaches' profession and also education is comprehensive. There even exists an International Council for Coach Education at the moment to further coaching education around the world. But actually coaches themselves don't value this kind of formal education as much as they value learning through work. (Gilbert & Trudel. 2006.)

Working as a coach and gaining work experience doesn't necessarily mean that expertise is growing automatically. Reflection is needed, it is considered to be the key to experiential learning. Gilbert and Trudel (2006) claim that without reflection ten years of coaching is just one year's practice repeated ten times. They point out that professionals' behaviour should be based on science and not intuition. When problematic situations occur, the problem solving shouldn't be limited to trial and error, but it should lead to a reflective process. According to Gilbert and Trudel, four prerequisites are affecting a reflective conversation: access to respected and trusted peers, coach's stage of learning, issue characteristics and environment. Coaches addressing common coaching dilemmas usually causes learning. Usually it takes a couple of attempts before coaches can go deep enough in their reflection and modify their coaching style, though. Gilbert and Trudel (2006) give a few tips how to facilitate access to peers and further reflective conversation. They suggest that the community of practice ideally would include other stakeholders in the sport context and not just coaches. That could mean for example other specialists like doctors or administrators.

Researchers Cushion, Armour and Jones from Great Britain studied how coaches learn to coach and especially what is experience's role in the process. They claim that "coaching is both an individual and a social process, which, because of its very nature, is inextricably linked to both the constraints and opportunities of human interaction. Indeed, at its heart lies the constructed connection between coach and athlete within the wider structure of sport that is itself vulnerable to differing social pressures and constraints." They argue that coaching education should be improved because it has an important role in coaches' development. They refer to previous studies which show that experience and observing other coaches are the most important sources of knowledge. Observing experienced coaches leaves a mark on novice coaches. Coaching education should aim to progressive integration of theory and practice, informal education is also important. (Cushion et al. 2003.)

According to Cushion, Armour and Jones (2003) experience should somehow be integrated into coaching education. One way could be mentoring. Mentoring possibilities already exist, but they are usually too informal and unstructured. Coach mentoring should be developed towards critical reflection and observation, the mentor should have a helping role. The aim should be to offer formalized and structured mentoring. This kind of mentoring process would help both the developing coach and the master coach, who works as a mentor.

Doctor Chris Cushion has studied mentoring. Mentoring partly relates to the communities of practice, but in mentoring the transfer of knowledge from more experienced ones to less experienced ones is highlighted. Cushion (2003) actually suggests that the mentoring process should be added to coaches' educational programmes. He says that the coaching environment influences not just the athletes' development, but the coaches' development as well. Coaches form their personal set of views of coaching through their social network that they have formed with other coaches. The views evolve through time and experience. Communication with other coaches contributes to the development.

Mentoring means sharing knowledge and experience. Coach's development is not coming from cloning or doing things exactly the same way as some more experienced coach does, but development comes through reflection and interaction and it should be based on research knowledge and practice. To become a competent coach a significant experience is usually needed. Coaches tend to learn by observing experienced coaches, but ongoing critical reflection is needed. Experience and other coaches have been seen as the most important aspects in coaches' development, and that's why the importance of mentoring has been emphasized. (Cushion. 2006.)

South African researchers Morris-Eyton and Coopoo from Johannesburg University made a study about coaches' own ideas and needs in coaching education. The study discussed in particular lifesaving coaches. The results of the study underlined the fact that coaches work in a complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional environment with specific social and cultural demands. The South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee has launched a long term coaching development plan to address the needs of coaches. Currently they don't have any standardized coaching education certification across all sports federations. Morris-Eyton and Coopoo said that the study showed the lack of a systematic coaching education and it also questioned the impact of coaching education. They pointed out, however, that basic theoretical knowledge is essential. In their opinion, prior learning and knowledge should be better recognized. (Morris & Coopoo. 2014.)

When the coaches were asked where they had learnt how to coach in the Morris-Eyton and Coopoo's research, the most common answer was that they have learned from their own sporting experiences, by watching other coaches or that they were self-taught. Just over half, 54%, of the answerers felt that a formal certification should be obligatory. According to the study, coaches are typically volunteers who may not have any formal coaching qualification. When the coaches were asked the most important contents in coaching education, the top three modules were technique correction, strength and condition training and technique analysis. The lowest ratings of importance were given to fundamental topics, such as psychology, communication, planning and time management, but according to Morris-Eyton and Coopoo (2014) also those are important and should be integrated into the knowledge base that coaches receive. Coaches prefer practical sessions, lectures and group work were the least preferred, when the preferred types of education were asked. (Morris & Coopoo. 2014.)

Nelson, Cushion and Potrac from the University of Hull and Loughborough University studied the effectiveness of coaching education and how the coaches themselves would like to develop the education supply. They interviewed 90 experienced coaches from various disciplines. They found out that coaches want to become better practitioners and they want to participate in the development work of coaching education. Coaches felt that the education should be delivered in a way that actively involves the learners, mentoring opportunities are needed as well. (Nelson et al. 2013.)

Coaching education is accused of limited impact. One reason for that could, according to Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013), be the fact that the education has traditionally used a top-down approach. They claim that for the education to work better the learners should be able to affect the education more. The findings of their study highlight coaches' desire for enhanced coaching ability. The content of the education should be interesting, up-to-date and relevant, quality education treats everyone as individuals and helps learners to improve their weaknesses. In other words, coaching education should be coach-centered. Ineffective learning situations were identified to be the ones which didn't challenge current thinking or where no new material was offered. Learning results in education are usually better when learners responsibly participate in the learning process, autonomy and choice are important aspects as well. Coaches seem to want the new information to be easily transferred into practice; education should link theory and practice.

Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) emphasize many times in their study report that coaching education should activate the learners. According to them, coaches need group learning, practical experiences, mentoring and multi-disciplined learning groups. Coaches

should be involved in the planning and implementation processes in order to make the courses interesting. Educational occasions should be interactive and practical. Coaches seem to want to have opportunities to share ideas and experiences with other coaches. They seem to want to develop themselves all the time and get new ideas. Revealing issues and approaches dealt in other sports could help learners to enhance their coaching skills.

Coaching educators should, according to Nelson's, Cushion's and Potrac's study, be well-prepared, effective presenters and communicators, they should have good demonstration skills, detailed knowledge, practical experience and status. It is also important that the coaching educators value the experience and knowledge that the coaches bring to educational occasions. Coach educators should share their understanding, but they should also understand that different kind of approaches can occur and that those can be good ones as well. The organizers or coaching educators should also provide high-quality and easily available supporting material for learners. (Nelson et al. 2013.)

Tiffanye Vargas-Tonsing from the University of Texas studied coaches' preferences in coaching education as well. She studied mainly volunteer coaches within youth sport. It has many times been proved to be important that the education meets the needs of learners. Vargas-Tonsing's (2007) study results showed that coaches want to learn more about communication. They want to learn how to communicate better with the athletes and with their parents as well. The second most desired educational topic was "advanced instruction drills". The least interesting topics were "gender differences" and "addictive behaviors". The study also pointed out the reasons why coaches want to further educate themselves. The most common reason for continuing education was a league requirement. On the other hand, coaches seem to be willing to continue further education, if the topic is relevant to them. All in all the study showed that the coaches think that coaching education is important. Online availability may increase willingness to pursue further education even more.

2.4 Definition of a good coach

Every kind of coaching education is aiming to produce better coaches. What is a good coach like then? Cote and Gilbert (2009) say in their study that the understanding of the coach's competence, and how it is evaluated, vary. Coaches' professional competence is traditionally defined by athletes' level and success or by athletes' satisfaction or by coach's years of experience. There is no clear and simple definition to coaches' know-

how, but it is an entirety which consists of knowledge and practical action. Good professional and pedagogical knowledge and good communication skills are needed, but it is not enough; self-knowledge and self-development skills are needed as well. Skills required from a good coach vary a bit depending on the operating environment and context. A good coach has a positive effect on an athlete's competence, confidence, connection and character. A good coach wants and knows how to learn and he or she wants to network, acquire knowledge in different ways, understand and apply it. The coach's ability to maximize an athlete's performance requires constant self-examination and renewal. The ability to establish and maintain networks is also essential. In order to be a successful coach, the coach should be in constant interaction with athletes and other coaches and professionals.

Also the Finnish Olympic Committee defines that a good coach constantly evaluates his or her own action and skills. A good coach understands the athlete and the generation that the athlete represents and includes the athlete in the training planning process. A good coach should also strengthen the athlete's sense of belonging. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014, 20-25.)

Schempp, McCullick and Sannen Mason (2006, 145-155) point out in their study that it takes time for a coach to achieve an expert level. In their study it is mentioned that it takes at least ten years of hard work. They claim that experience is a beginner's best coach. For novices practical work is often their most important source of information for increasing coaching competence. The slightly inexperienced coaches benefit from working with more advanced coaches. They also share knowledge with colleagues, copy each others' best practices and learn through trial and error. It is vital that the coach learns from his or her experiences and gains more knowledge. "Having learned the lessons of experience, proficient coaches look to sources outside their own coaching for fresh information. Other coaches and resources such as conferences, books, videotapes and the like are important sources of information", they find. Proficient coaches remain analytic and deliberative in their decision making.

According to Schempp, McCullick and Sannen Mason (2006, 156-161) for a proficient coach to become an expert he or she has to make a significant investment in learning. Experts absorb information from all over. They want to learn all they can about the subject and specially about their athletes. They continue to claim that to stop learning is to stop getting better and experts know that. An expert coach knows how to use a variety of different teaching methods and is able to use the training environment and tools for a wide

range of benefit. Experts usually have a good intuition, they spend a lot of time on planning and they want to be well prepared. Experts pay attention to the atypical and unusual and they invest in problem solving. The experts also monitor their action closely and extensively and evaluate their own skills.

3 Informal learning

Quite a few studies have shown that informal education and learning are very important aspects in coaches' development. So this chapter looks at informal learning a bit closer. Nowadays learning and work are very closely integrated, new ways of learning are emerging, some planned, some accidental or self-directed. It is important to understand how informal learning can be utilized and enhanced, because it is an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver organizational objectives and increase capability. According to current understanding, 70% of learning happens on the job, only 10% of learning process happens through formal education and the remaining 20% of learning happens through networking and sharing. This distribution is illustrated below in the figure 5. (Hoyle. 2015, 1-2.)

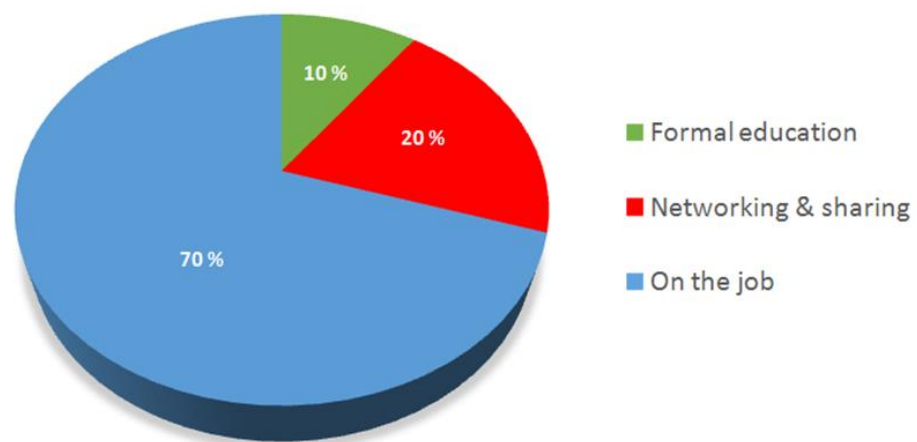


Figure 5. Distribution of learning

3.1 The definition of informal learning

Professors McNiff and Whitehead (2011) claim in their book that knowledge is uncertain and multiple answers can occur. According to them, knowledge is created, not only discovered and knowledge is a property of individuals. They continue that learning is usually

a process of trial and error. To improve some practice it is important to understand the influence, commit to own knowledge and to have an evidence base to the claim. Learning is a change that comes from within and in accordance with people's own wishes.

Robin Hoyle (2015, 10-12) agrees with McNiff's and Whitehead's claim as he says in his book that there are some universal elements in informal learning, which are illustrated in figure 6. It is important to understand the process in order to guide it and help people to learn. The learner is independent and he or she is in control of the process. The process goes on through trial and error and the learner sets objectives according to what is relevant to him or her. The learning process is, however, supported by others (resources and information) and the approach is modified according to what works and what doesn't work. Hoyle says that people need to find things out rather than be taught, and that is a typical feature in informal learning.

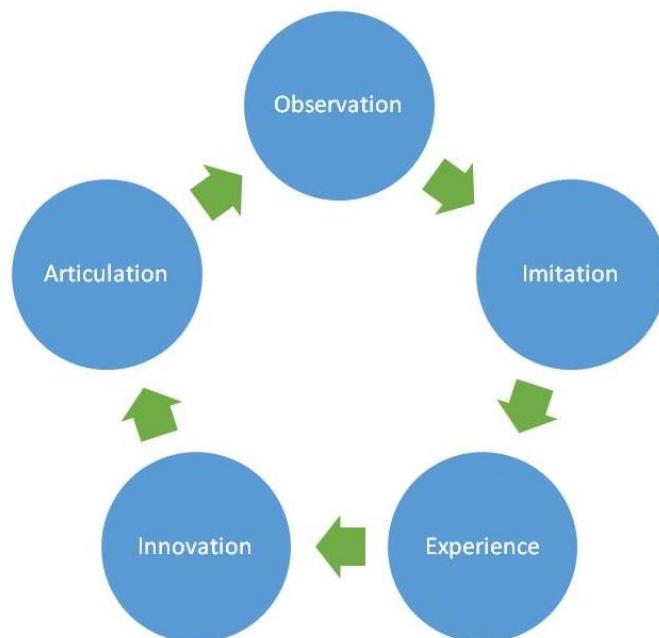


Figure 6. An informal learning model (Hoyle. 2015, 18.)

Hoyle (2015, 19-23) defines learning to be “acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values or preferences”. He underlines the word acquiring. Workers can no longer hold in their heads all the knowledge and information required to do their job, so being a skilled information seeker is a vital ability in the current century. When learning moves from formal to informal, the role of learning through work increases

and the role of courses and programs decreases, the process aims towards guided discovery. Hoyle says that guidance from wiser ones might be needed and the assistance to problem solving might be found from a person's network and connections.

A key element in learning experience is being made to think. In order to learn, a learner should challenge his or her beliefs. Relevant information may be ready to hand, but the danger is that it might prevent the learner from seeing alternative perspectives. It should be remembered that a learner's experiences, connections and views are not necessarily the only ones, and there might be other ones which are as correct or good. It might become a big obstacle to learning if learners don't challenge their preferences or are not willing to see different points of view. (Hoyle. 2015, 117.)

At the end of his book Hoyle (2015, 214) summarizes the informal learning process into a few questions and guidelines which help to see the important points of learning process. Those important questions and guidelines are written down in the following table.

Table 1. Informal learning process illustrated in questions and guidelines (Hoyle. 2015. 214.)

Constantly question. Why do we do things like this?
What would happen if we did things differently?
Reflect on your own performance. What worked and why? What didn't work and why?
Find role models and work out why what they do works for them.
Remain open-minded.
Don't believe everything you are told.
Build networks, not only a single network.
Write a blog or share your knowledge some other way.
Plan your learning, don't leave it to chance.
Give feedback to others and take feedback given to you into account.

3.2 Arrangements for learning

The organization has an obligation to create an environment where people can learn from and with others. People have to be able to take responsibility for updating their knowledge and skills. The learning might also be located in the wider professional community. Busy people need to be encouraged, instructed or enabled to learn and organizations need to give structure, resources and direction to it. The organization has to give time and mechanism to share information, but also encourage, monitor and reward those who do. (Hoyle. 2015, 38-49.)

Hoyle (2015, 50-52) claims in his book that the annual amount of money that organizations spent on training worldwide is 300-310 billion US dollars. Money is spent mostly (over 70%) on formal education which involves an instructor in the classroom. On the other hand, Hoyle refers to studies which show that only 64% of the participants consider classroom courses to be essential or very useful. Classroom education was ranked the fifth important way of education; the top four were collaboration with other team members, general conversations and meetings with others, google searches and support from line managers. Hoyle strongly suggests that the forms of education in organizations should be transferred from formal classroom type of education towards more informal education, like collaboration and sharing.

People seem to forget what they have heard in the courses if they do not have opportunities to put the skills and knowledge received in the classroom into practice. The learning should happen as close to work as possible. There has to be a dialogue between formal input and informal reinforcement. Hoyle summarizes the key points in organizing the education as follows: timing, managerial support and match between required skills and course objectives. These points seem easily loose in formal education arrangements, and should be paid extra attention to when education is organized. (Hoyle. 2015, 53.)

There are three kinds of informal learning. One is implicit learning where the learner links past episodes and events with current experiences. The second is reactive learning where the learner is reflecting on past experiences and events and checking out those reflections by asking questions and experimentation. The third is deliberative learning where the learner discusses and reviews events with others and then uses the information to make plans and decisions. This deliberative learning requires someone who arranges supportive environment and the opportunity for sharing. Managers in organizations should encourage employees to question, experiment and share knowledge with each other and provide opportunities to do so. (Hoyle. 2015, 56-58.)

Current beliefs and experiences should be challenged and a learner should be urged to think in order to learn something. The facilitator should organize meetings where people are expected to learn and share so that groupthink and narrow engagements with the subject are avoided. (Hoyle. 2015, 118.)

Hoyle (2015, 162) gives in his book a few practical tips for organizing workshop events. The organizer should somehow introduce the theme to participants beforehand. There should be some kind of pre-workshop, which could for example be a short task to be done online or something that makes participants think and orientate to the topic. With pre-

workshop tasks participants level up their knowledge and, according to Hoyle, workshop event in which the content is covered already in the pre-workshop task is more likely to be successful.

3.3 Integrating learning into work

Learners should be able to apply the learned knowledge into practice as soon as possible. Most of the learning happens when real people do real jobs, solve real problems and deal with real situations. The 70:20:10 model of learning (see figure 5 on page 18), underlines the importance of learning while working. Also knowledge sharing and conversations play a quite remarkable role. The 70:20:10 model cannot work if any of those three requisites is absent. So there has to be some formal education like courses and programmes, learners have to be able to discuss and share their knowledge and best practices and, above all, they have to be able to apply the knowledge into action and learn while they work. (Hoyle. 2015.)

According to Hoyle (2015, 171-180) the amount of learning is accelerated when the learner has important problems to resolve. Challenges should be scaled optimally: work shouldn't be too easy or too hard. Hoyle underlines that learning is a habit; there are always new experiences around the corner and skills used in one context may need adapting to be relevant in another.

4 The sense of community in coaches' community action

One of the most highlighted terms in working life nowadays is sharing. That is also the trend in sports and in coaches' profession. Sharing and networking form as much as 20 % of the learning process (Hoyle, 2015). So it can be said that sharing and a sense of community are important for individuals' development. It is good if people feel that they learn from each other in organizations. This is generally noticed, but it is often not so easy to bring it into practice. One way to enable sharing is to develop communities where people can meet and discuss.

Aini-Kristiina Jäppinen (2012, 15) says in her book that in a good community people are motivated and determined to acquire things that both the community and the group of individuals need in order to work better and to develop their activities. Often this kind of approach appears for example in educational institutions, but any community which wants to evolve and also develop individuals should act in that way.

This chapter studies the concept of community. In the regional coaches' community action the idea is that some kind of community is formed. That means a group of people who have something in common and who want to meet and share their ideas on a regular basis.

4.1 Forming and developing community

According to Hoyle (2015, 152-153), community has two dimensions; one is the community of practice and the other one is the enterprise community. The community of practice means that there is a group of individuals with a common interest and they are sharing ideas. According to Hoyle, there are a few important points in developing these kinds of communities which might sometimes be overlooked. Firstly, he argues that everyone should not be equal in the community. Some kind of hierarchy should exist, and it should be based on experience. All are created equals and all are learners but effective learning from each other requires someone to be more experienced than others. Novices are given opportunities to interact, but their role is more to be a listener and a questioner. Secondly, Hoyle reminds that "a good community of practice has the confidence to attract members who do not necessarily agree with each other and to encourage debates during which the areas of conflict and disagreement are given an airing."

Jäppinen (2012, 15-19) defines ten steps to form and develop community in organizations. Those steps are: 1) polyphony, 2) interaction, 3) expertise, 4) flexibility, 5) commitment, 6) taking responsibility, 7) decision-making, 8) negotiation, 9) control built on trust and 10) evaluation of own activity. The steps are illustrated in figure 7. After the figure comes a more detailed description of those steps according to Jäppinen.



Figure 7. Steps to form and develop community according to Jäppinen (2012)

Polyphony means that everyone who is affected by some action, practice or custom, should be able to have their say on the matter. Polyphony is crucial for a functioning community. It is the basis or the starting point of community. No community is silent and some are very loud. The volume or amount of sounds is not decisive, but the common understanding is. It is important to notice different kinds of voices. Contemporary society works in a hurry and under pressure. That being very usual, communities often give too little time for different kind of voices and opinions to be heard. Building up a well-organized community, speed and efficiency are not always appropriate, but there has to be enough time for comprehensive discussion. Unbiased hearing needs proper channels and a timetable. When proper channels are selected, it should be remembered that the usage of different kinds of channels should add value and not cause additional load for community's members. Hearing different kind of voices usually requires above all, a willingness to hear, an effort to arrange opportunities for members to be heard and the approval of different kinds of views. (Jäppinen. 2012, 25-56.)

Interaction inside the commune that is executed verbally, in writing or electronically and is somehow planned beforehand, supports community's action and develops it. Dialogue is a tool which helps members of the community to share their views and understand and

notice other. It is vital to understand that the matter is the target of discussion, not persons. Successful interaction focuses on issues that matter, not on the persons behind the dialogue. Disagreement should be approved and tolerated. Interaction is closely related to polyphony. Hearing is vital in interaction and active participation is needed. Participation should be correctly timed, so that no one is left out. (Jäppinen. 2012, 27-66.)

In order to function in the best possible way, the community needs all the mental, informational and skilled knowledge that individuals in the community have. Everybody has some kind of expertise, and it should be shared in the community. Jäppinen (2012, 29-73) defines expertise related to the community to be the knowledge or skill that the members of the group have or the group needs in order to implement the community's mission in the best possible way. The need for expertise can touch the whole community or just part of it. That is why expertise should be shared to those who need it or where it is needed.

The responsibility of sharing knowledge lies with everybody in the community, not only with the assumed experts. The questions about expertise that should be asked are for example: What kind of expertise do we need? What kind of expertise do we already have? Who has this kind of expertise? What kind of expertise is needed now and what in the future? Is the expertise that is needed now available? It is not enough that expertise is shared, it should also be understood. Yet again, enough time, proper space and workable tools and channels are needed. Knowledge should be passed on to others and the organizer should notice if expertise is not transmitted and if so, why, and if some expertise should be purchased outside, and if so, where. The organizer of the community should also think about new, innovative ways for sharing, or at least develop the existing ones. (Jäppinen. 2012, 29-73.)

By flexibility Jäppinen (2012, 29-77) means that the community should try to achieve open discussion, a common understanding and a simultaneous consideration of many different points of view. A satisfactory solution and a successful outcome can be achieved by taking those items into account. Flexibility doesn't mean that the community should move from one direction to another like a weathercock. Flexibility should neither mean any kind of pressure or forcing. The community should be based on voluntary participation. It should respect its members and individual needs or wishes.

Jäppinen (2012, 34-91, 138) says that individuals don't have to commit to everything that is developed or tried in the community. The community requires commitment to those matters that are meant to stay and grow inside the community. Sometimes that may mean commitment to matters which an individual would not have chosen himself but which are

essential in the big picture for common good and growth. The members of the community should commit to values, principles, beliefs, visions and the operation of structures or strategies that are chosen together. Commitment shouldn't be forced, it should be optional. Commitment is an individual and voluntary attachment to something that is considered valuable and important.

Jäppinen (2012, 34-91, 138) argues that all community activity should be based on common values. A common value is something that the whole community and its individual members are willing to make the effort for and sacrifice their time for. Common values, principles and beliefs provide power for the community's vision and common action. The core values of the community should be simple and easy to adopt. They should also be considered carefully and expressed clearly. A community itself is a very complex entirety, so its values should be very simple. Otherwise there is a risk of losing the substance and core of the whole action and the reason for the existence of the community. One of the most important values that a community can have is its members' sincere and authentic respect and support for each other.

Taking responsibility should sometimes reach further than one's own work task or the current object of interest. There are two kinds of responsibilities in communities: collective and individual responsibility. Collective responsibility means that many members are taking the responsibility at the same time as a group. The responsibility for some essential issues is collective in a way that all members are responsible. Collective responsibility is important, but in the end individuals show the way. If there is no individual responsibility, there is no collective either. People usually don't want to be obliged to do anything, they prefer freedom. A community should nevertheless impose obligations on its members in order to get things done. To fulfil one's obligations, one should take the responsibility. Obligations should be considered positive, not seen as an extra burden. This requires common understanding. (Jäppinen. 2012, 35-100.)

Negotiation means, according to Jäppinen (2012, 37-111), taking expertise into consideration in a natural and a concrete way in communities. Negotiation consists of sections that enable the use of the other important steps on the way to a functioning community. In order to succeed in negotiations, enough time and a proper space have to be arranged. It is worth remembering that the space can be either physical or virtual. Time- and space arrangements need to be well planned and structured. For the community to work and grow, the arrangements need to be done carefully. Negotiation also means making compromises. A mature person can also take others into consideration. They are also able to lis-

ten to others and hear them out. Jäppinen points out that every community has its own issues which need to be negotiated, but one thing is to be negotiated in each and every community: the common rules that determine how the community will work. Jäppinen also pinpoints the fact that a community should have an open, honest and supportive atmosphere. Every member of the community should be equally informed.

Thanks to common decisions, useful and, if necessary, creative or at least new solutions are reached. In order to make a good decision as a result of negotiations, sufficient options have to be introduced. That can mean showing the different perspectives on some matter or completely different solutions to some questions. The process starts with gathering some data and ends with formulating knowledge and understanding. The process also needs some kind of evaluation. (Jäppinen. 2012, 39-120.)

Everything doesn't have to be controlled in functioning communities. There has to be trust among people. The members of the community have to trust each other and that things are done the way they have been decided together. Jäppinen (2012, 40-125) argues that in functioning communities there has to be control, but the control has to be built on trust. Trust can be either a naive belief in false promises or certainty and clarity based on facts. People have to know that they are supported and they get help if they need it. Control can be either unnecessary stalking and a wrong use of power or taking care and responsibility and positive interference. Not everybody should do everything, roles and responsibilities should be divided according to expertise. The community needs good relationships inside the community in order to work, so social relations are very important. The organizer should invest effort in the development of social relations inside the community.

Evaluation means that individuals evaluate their own action as a member of the community or a group of individuals evaluate their action as a part of a bigger entirety. So nobody is evaluated on the individual level by others, but the evaluation is targeted at the action. Some indicators should be used in the evaluation process. The indicators can be verbal, visual or numerical. The usage of indicators shows the achievements of the action and makes the action understandable first of all to the community itself but also to outside. The evaluation of your activity includes participation and empowerment and, as a result, also ownership. Ownership in the community entails that all the steps introduced in the previous chapters are also respected; everybody is heard, people interact, the expertise of individuals is recognized and used, everybody is committed and takes responsibility and participates in decision-making and negotiations, control and trust are in balance. (Jäppinen. 2012, 129–135.)

4.2 Community in loose networks

The report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health says that when work is done in groups which cross administrative boundaries, like for example in projects, the work community and social aspects related to work are seen differently than in clear-cut work. The report studies work communities that destroy boundaries. Do the employees experience that they belong to the work community? Or is the community spirit crumbled when the boundaries are broken? That is a very fundamental question also in this thesis. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 35–38.)

Nowadays people belong to several communities at the same time rather than to one tight community. Many people feel that changing workgroups bring added value and prevent boredom. When collaborators change, people have to seek a common mode of operation, adjust their approach and create a common understanding. Most people like to belong to several communities at the same time, although, on the other hand, one's own clear-cut work community is needed. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 35–38.)

The binding force behind the community is a sense of togetherness, the emotional experience of belonging to the community. Forming a community requires at least common interests. When work is not done in one fixed group attached to a certain place, it might be more difficult to create a sense of community than in limited and permanent work groups. In work, where changing compositions are characteristic, a sense of community is built on rather traditional elements, like break spaces and open plan office. In addition to common meeting points, common action, common aims, goals and challenges are important. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 38–39.)

In general, people prefer to know the other members of the community. Familiarity and getting to know each other are considered important. A so called distant community works better if it is established face to face at first. If the size of the community is too big, it makes familiarisation difficult. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 41–42.)

At the same time when individuality and the responsibility of an individual have increased, communities have become more and more an individual's societies. The report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health speaks about an individual community. An individual belongs to several communities. Usually it is described as networking. When people network, they create new communities and join some others. So usually people have formed an individual, unique web of networks or communities for themselves. Some of the networks are formal, determined by others and others are more or less informal. Informal

networks are usually based on your own activity and more or less on randomness. In the report they are called loose links or loose communities, or they might be called as an individual's social capital. Contacts in those communities might be emotionally very important. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 42–45.)

A sense of togetherness in a community usually takes time. Employees can belong to several communities at the same time or the members of the community can interact using technology. Previously belonging to some community was determined by clear structures whereas nowadays it is rather a result of a common process or an individual's own activity. A shared, even a short face to face meeting can offer a good basis for collaboration even if the distance were longer in the future. Network-like communities can become very warm societies even though looser than traditional work communities. In the report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health they are called "mycelium-communities". Even though clear-cut work communities are somehow shattered, there still is a need for community. New, creative ways to build up the sense of community are needed. Active relationships in communities support employees' well-being, but they certainly have positive impacts on workplaces also more widely. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 42–45.)

In the report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health trust was brought up as one of the most important prerequisites in forming a community. The organizer's job is to create working conditions and organize the group to deal with the issues together. Their job is not to have complete answers to challenges or be the best specialist regarding the issue. In boundary breaking work a common process and active individuals rather than structures form a sense of community. (Janhonen & al. 2015. 79–81.)

4.3 Recommendations of the Finnish Olympic Committee considering coaches' communities

Coaching skills developer of the Finnish Olympic Committee, Pia Pekonen (2016, 1-2), writes in her master's thesis, that the understanding about coaching and learning has developed. Continuous learning and the pursuit of excellence are the core of coaching. It is vital that the coaches recognize their know-how, and that they understand the importance of sharing it. Coaches should try to develop themselves constantly in order to become good coaches. She continues that coaches' development is a process where tools and action models are created and the existing ones are shared. The process will probably never be complete, but it is essential that appropriate practices are found to every operating en-

vironment. Coaches should be involved in the planning process where modes of operations are brainstormed. It is easier for coaches to commit to the actions, when they are involved also in the planning.

One good tool for coaches' development could be the regional coaches' communities, which are coordinated by sports academies. Meetings require systematic coordination and facilitation. The meetings should be well planned in advance, facilitating means making good conversation between actors possible. Planning should happen before, during and after the meetings. Network-like co-operation follows up a cycle where action is planned, executed, evaluated and changed according to the evaluation. In order to function properly, the meetings require time management, but also a desire for collective reflection. Learning happens when people get together in order to share and create new knowledge. (Pekonen. 2016, 8-9, 19-20.)

Pekonen (2016) wrote her master's thesis about the coaches' community action process in Finland. She works as a coaching skills developer in the Finnish Olympic Committee and she discussed the coaches' community action in general, how it has started and why it has such an important role in the Finnish coaching model. She claims that the central factor in the coaches' development is that coaches recognize their knowledge and the needs for improvement. Every coach has a responsibility to try to become as good as they can be. Co-operation, participation and transparency are important aspects of self-development. Regional coaches' communities can offer the possibility to develop if the coach gives it a chance.

The Finnish Olympic Committee guides and directs the action and gives its support to the local organizers. It is important to find a solution and organize the action in a way where the actors are committed and through which knowledge and shared understanding will increase. It is also important that coaches can have influence on the content of the action and that they are involved in the planning process. (Pekonen. 2016, 45.)

There are lots of opportunities in the coaches' network, because there is a lot of knowledge. There are coaches from various disciplines involved in the network, which is very valuable because the points of views come from many different directions. Coaches can apply these different kinds of practices to their everyday life and, on the other hand, as professionals they can develop something completely new. Co-operation and sharing can be an important success factor in the Finnish sport. One way to add even more value to the network could be to include specialists from other fields, for example health care specialists could join and share their knowledge. (Pekonen. 2016, 46-47.)

5 Action research as a research method

The research method used in this thesis project is called action research method. In action research theory and practice go hand in hand. The researcher is an agent with methodological inventiveness. Action research is a form of professional learning and it generates theories about learning and practice and it gives new ideas to improve the researched issue (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011). Action research is a holistic approach to problem solving and it mixes methods for collecting and analyzing data. It allows several different research tools to be used in the process. Using various methods is generally common to the qualitative research concept. Research tools in action research can be for example: keeping a research journal, document collection and analysis, participant observation, questionnaire surveys, structured, semistructured or unstructured interviews and case studies. Data collection tools and data collection methods can be adjusted according to what is learned as the research progresses. (O'Brien. 1998.)

Action research is learning by doing. It aims at generating solutions to practical problems by empowering practitioners or group members. Action research seeks to improve workplace practices and learning and it usually has a common sense approach to development process. The process is open-ended and developmental and aims to improve learning with social intent. The process follows the following chain: identification of a problem or current situation, planning, action, evaluation and again problem identification, planning and so on. The action targets to improve practice and the researcher tries to answer the questions about how and why improvement has happened during the process. So it is a cycle of action and reflection. Participatory and democratic characters are typical in the process. The process is illustrated in figure 8. (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011; O'Brien. 1998.)



Figure 8. Action research is a deliberate, solution-oriented investigation, characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, data collection, analysis, reflection, action and redefinition (Valencia College).

O'Brien (1998) claims in his research paper regarding action research that "theory informs practice and practice refines theory in a continuous transformation. In any setting, people's actions are based on implicitly held assumptions, theories and hypotheses, and with every observed result, theoretical knowledge is enhanced. The two are intertwined aspects of a single change process." Also McNiff and Whitehead (2011) point out that an action researcher is seen as a competent practitioner and theorist, because she or he develops both. McNiff and Whitehead insist that it is up to the researcher to make clear theoretical justifications for the actions and also to question the bases of those justifications. The practical applications that follow are exposed to further analysis in a transformative cycle that continuously varies emphasis between theory and practice.

A researcher is typically an insider in action research, whereas in traditional science he or she is more or less an outsider. An action researcher is morally committed to the values and works in cooperation with others involved in the action. An action research report is usually written in we-form (not they). Typical for action research is that knowledge is uncertain and there can be multiple answers. Knowledge is created, not only discovered in action research, the process goes through trial and error. Action research is used in real situations, since its primary focus is on solving real problems and to develop current practices. It can also be used for preliminary or pilot research when something is wanted to try out. It is usually chosen when circumstances require flexibility, the involvement of the people in the research, or change must take place quickly or holistically. The researcher's role is to implement the action research method in a way that produces a mutually agreeable

result for all participants. It is also important that the process can be maintained afterwards. To accomplish that, it requires the researcher to adopt many different roles at various phases of the process. The roles vary from planner and leader to facilitator, observer, reporter, listener or even teacher. (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011; O'Brien. 1998.)

O'Brien (1998) emphasizes some central points of action research, which work as a guideline or checklist to the researcher. They are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. The central points of action research (O'Brien. 1998.)

Make sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work are accepted in advance by all.
All participants must be allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who do not wish to participate must be respected.
The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.
Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.
Descriptions of others' work and points of view must be negotiated with those concerned before being published.
The researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.
Decisions made about the direction of the research and the probable outcomes are collective.
Researchers are explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all personal biases and interests.
There is equal access to information generated by the process for all participants.
The outside researcher and the initial design team must create a process that maximizes the opportunities for involvement of all participants.

In his research paper at Toronto University, O'Brien (1998) distinguishes six principles that guide action research. They are: 1) reflective critique, 2) dialectal critique, 3) collaborative resource, 4) risk, 5) plural structure and 6) theory, practice and transformation.

According to O'Brien (1998), "reflective critique is needed because truth in a social setting is relative to the teller. In this way, practical accounts can give rise to theoretical considerations". Participants in an action research project are co-researchers. "The principle of collaborative resource presupposes that each person's ideas are equally significant. It especially makes possible to note the contradictions both between many viewpoints and within a single viewpoint", O'Brien outlines. O'Brien explains the risk-principle in the following way: "the change process potentially threatens fear, and one of the more prominent fears comes from the risk to ego stemming from open discussion of one's interpretations, ideas and judgments". The initiators of action research have to understand that and encourage people to participate. The nature of the research embodies a multiplicity of

views, commentaries and critiques, leading to multiple possible actions and interpretations. O'Brien reminds that this plural structure of inquiry requires a plural text for reporting. "A report acts as a support for ongoing discussion among collaborators, rather than a final conclusion of fact." Many sources underline that theory informs practice and practice refines theory in a continuous transformation in action research. O'Brien maintains that "the two are intertwined aspects of a single change process. The ensuing practical applications that follow are subjected to further analysis, in a transformative cycle that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice."

Professors McNiff and Whitehead (2011) guide that firstly it should be defined why the research question or topic is important. Plans for research process should be made, but it should be accepted that they will be modified as the process goes on. They instruct about different research phases in their book: "review current practice, identify what you want to investigate, imagine a way forward, try it out, take a stock of what happens, review and evaluate the modified action, evaluate the validity of claims to knowledge and develop new practices." So learning should be observed throughout the process. (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011.)

The research should engage somehow with the existing literature. Through literature the researcher can demonstrate critical engagement, show other researchers' ideas, develop conceptual framework and test findings. After the literature review the researcher should monitor practice and look for data. When gathering, sorting and storing data, different techniques can be used. Some are useful to record the action (for example field notes, record sheets and observation schedules) and some are useful to record the learning (for example written accounts, personal logs and diaries, social media, questionnaires and surveys/interviews). It is important to analyze the gathered data and generate evidence. When the data is turned into evidence, it is important to decide what is going to be claimed. The criteria and standards of judgement should be established. (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011.)

The legitimacy of the research should be accepted in the public domain. Not only claims, but also evidence should be validated. It is good to remember that possible critique is aimed at ideas, not at a person or the researcher. The researcher should remember to question their own ideas and so extend their thinking. Establishing the legitimacy and validity happens through getting recognized by the community of both practitioners and researchers. It is good to show what researchers and also others have learnt, and what the social formation is like. Also the evidence base has to be strengthened as well as the intellectual component. Critical friends or a validation group with constructive feedback can

help to notice if something is missed or if you need to find a new direction. The validation group should include 3-10 persons and it should meet at regular intervals. They scrutinize the data, give feedback, help to articulate the potential significance of the work and identify implications. The validation group's investment is very important in the whole process. (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011.)

In the end the researcher should be able to explain the significance of the work. The research should have significance for the researcher's own education and for workplace-based education for others. The research should also have significance for the education of social formations, which means social renewal. It is also important to be able to disseminate the results of the research as well as have the ear of policymakers. Sometimes you might face strong objection, negotiation skills might be needed. The issue should be presented comprehensibly, understandably, clearly and truthfully but passionately and in proper language (McNiff & Whitehead. 2011).

6 Target of the project

This thesis is a development project dealing with regional coaches' community action in Päijät-Häme area. The author works as an executive director in a local sports academy which is responsible for organizing the action. The target of this project is to build up and develop community action for coaches in Päijät-Häme area. The action is supposed to be regionally oriented; local circumstances, premises and objectives provide the basis for the action. The idea is to do an action research of the year's 2016 action; describe the action, learn something with each step and investigate how to improve it in the future, as it will be one of the focal points of the organizing body also in the year 2017. The idea of the coaches' community is to give a chance to coaches from various disciplines to meet each other on a regular basis and share their knowledge. It is said that it is important to be able to share knowledge and exchange the best practices in order to learn. The ultimate objective is to help coaches to learn, increase their knowledge and improve the coaching in Päijät-Häme. The target is described in figure 9.

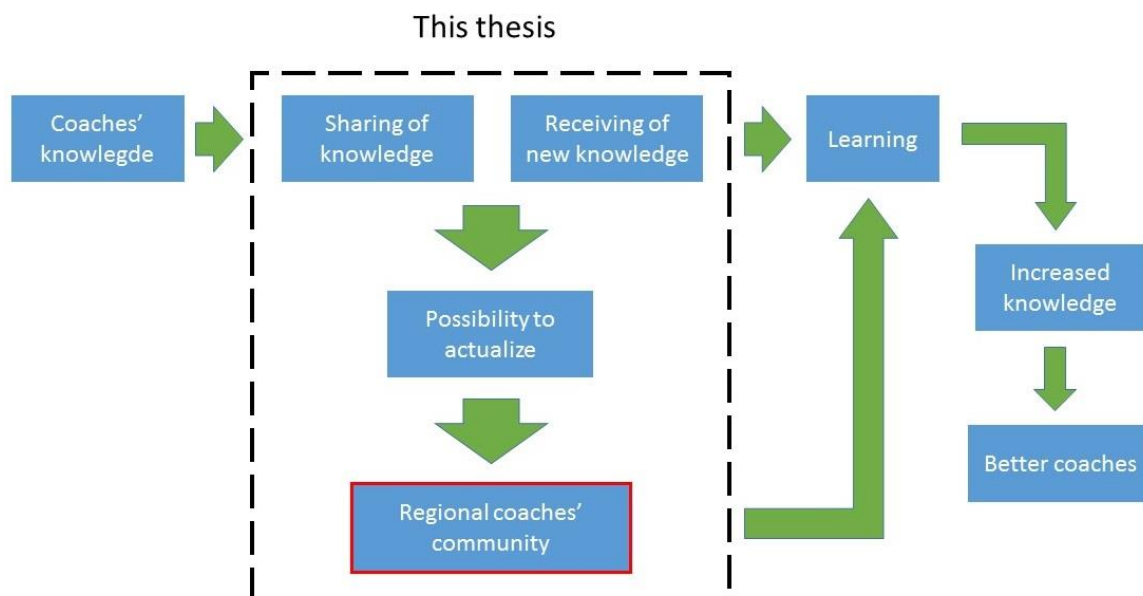


Figure 9. The objective of this project

The research questions for this project are: how to organize community action for coaches? Who should be invited? Does it add value or knowledge for coaches? How is the sense of community formed and developed? What should be taken into consideration in informal education? The literature review was exploited to answer the last two or three questions and the first two or three are dealt with in the following chapters.

Forming regional coaches' communities is seen important and the Finnish Olympic Committee has set it to be one of the main focal points in sports academies' action. As the author works as an executive director in Päijät-Häme sports academy, this has been an important part of her job, and one aim of this project is to give her tools and insight to do her job better. Other sports academies can benefit from the project's results as well.

The Finnish model in elite sports and especially in coaching is discussed in the theoretical part in order to give an overview of the coaching education and coaching development in Finland. It is important to understand the background of coaches' development in order to see that informal education is considered to be a vital part in the big picture. This coaches' community action is one way to implement informal education. That is the main reason why informal learning is also taken up in the theoretical part. If the coaches' community action succeeds well, people who take part in the action form a community where the people know each other and they want to share their opinions and learn from each other. That is the reason why the formation and the development of the community are described in the theoretical part.

7 Phases of the project

Organizing coaches' community action has been one of the primary focuses of Päijät-Häme sports academy and the national Olympic Committee. The whole 2016 action could be described to be one phase of the process, which gives experiences and development ideas for the next year. Or then the year's 2016 action could be divided into different phases and the phases of the year form a one-year project.

Päijät-Häme sports academy had organized some action for coaches also earlier. Some coaches' coffee meetings and lectures had been organized in the past, but for the year 2016 it became a clear focus. The organization wanted to develop and deepen the action and to seek a better sense of community. Due to the previous action, there was some kind of contact list already available. In the athlete application form to the golden level of Päijät-Häme sports academy, there is a coach section, where the coaches are asked if they want to be a part of the regional coaches' community action. At the beginning of the year 2016 the author of this thesis, who works as an executive director of the organization, asked the professional coaches of the region, who she knew to exist, if they wanted to join the group. After all this, there were a total of 154 coaches in the contact list.

The action in year 2016 mainly meant common meetings and some other measures in order to support the action. The phases of the project in a nutshell are illustrated in figure 10.



Figure 10. Phases of the project; the measures provided tips for the development of the action and supported and controlled it

7.1 Usage of action research method in this project

Action research process and informal learning process are pretty much alike (see figures 6 and 8 on pages 19 and 32). The informal learning of coaches is a focal point in this thesis and that justifies the method selection. Action research method fits well in this thesis project. As mentioned earlier, action research generates solutions to real practical problems and develops current practices. It can also be used for preliminary or pilot research when something is wanted to try out. It is also important that the process can be maintained afterwards. Action research means learning by doing, in this project at least the author, who has worked as the organizer, has learned a lot about informal coaching education. As a result, a new way to implement informal coaching education through community action has been discovered. It is characteristic of action research that there can be multiple answers, so too in this project. This project has produced one type or example how to organize the coaches' community action or informal coaching education, but some other kind of models can be as good. The aim is to make the formation and execution of the process work, so that other sport academies could also benefit from it.

In action research theory informs practice. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011) the research should engage somehow with the existing literature. Through the literature the

researcher can demonstrate critical engagement, show others' ideas, develop conceptual framework and test findings. In this thesis the literature part dealt with coaching education, informal learning and the sense of community. The literature review gave a theoretical perspective and the evidence base for practical ideas and achievements. The findings were taken into account when the action was developed. In the practical part different kind of methods were used to record the action and learning, for example field notes, participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and benchmarking. The data gathered from the literature review and the practical part were analysed and the instructions or the model of how to organize the coaches' community action developed as a result.

The action research follows the cycle of the identification of the current situation, planning, action and evaluation. In this project the action didn't start completely from scratch, but it clearly needed to be developed. The year started with planning the action together with the coaches and then the planned meetings took place. Something was learned in each meeting and the action developed along the way.

The researcher is typically an insider in the action research; here the researcher was the organizer of the coaches' community action. A participatory character is also typical and here for example coaches themselves were involved in the planning process and a steering group controlled and developed the action as well. The researcher has to be open to suggestions and possible critique. Here suggestions and new ideas have arisen along the way and for example from coaches' feedback or the steering group's meetings.

7.2 Meetings of the coaches' community

Coaches' community action mostly consist of meetings. The community met nine times during the year 2016. The topics for the meetings were chosen together in the first meeting of the year. Every meeting is described in more detail later in this chapter. The author of this thesis has organized the meetings and developed the action during the year 2016. The year's 2016 calendar is attached to this thesis as appendix 1.

The coaches were informed about the meetings via e-mail; the e-mail letters had approximately 150 recipients. Altogether 85 persons participated in some of the meetings during the year 2016. The majority of them participated only once or twice, the most active ones attended five or six meetings. Two of the most active participants were awarded in the first meeting of the year 2017 with coaching theme books. Besides the meetings, the coaches of the community were informed about other national or local seminars or activities addressed to coaches via e-mail.

The main idea in the meetings was that there was a different theme in every meeting and some expert spoke about the subject first and after that the participants discussed the topic and the best practices were exchanged. The meetings usually took two hours. The meetings were provided for the participants free of charge, except one, the Vammatt Veks –seminar, which involved more costs than the other ones, so a little entry fee was necessary. The meetings were directed to coaches from all disciplines or levels, except one, which was meant just for team ball sports’ professional coaches.

A research journal was kept and participant observation was made in every meeting, also feedback from participants was collected. The information was analyzed as one part of the project. The goal was to learn something from each meeting and organize the future ones even better and develop the action on the basis of the organizer's own observations and, on the other hand, on the basis of the participants’ feedback.

The idea of the meetings is illustrated in figure 11. The coaches’ community action in Päijät-Häme mostly consisted of meetings. Different kinds of themes were chosen to the meetings and something was learnt in every meeting. The coaches hopefully learnt something regarding coaching and the organizer learnt how to enhance the action. The phases that help to develop the action and support and control it are presented in figure 10 on page 38 and also later in this chapter.

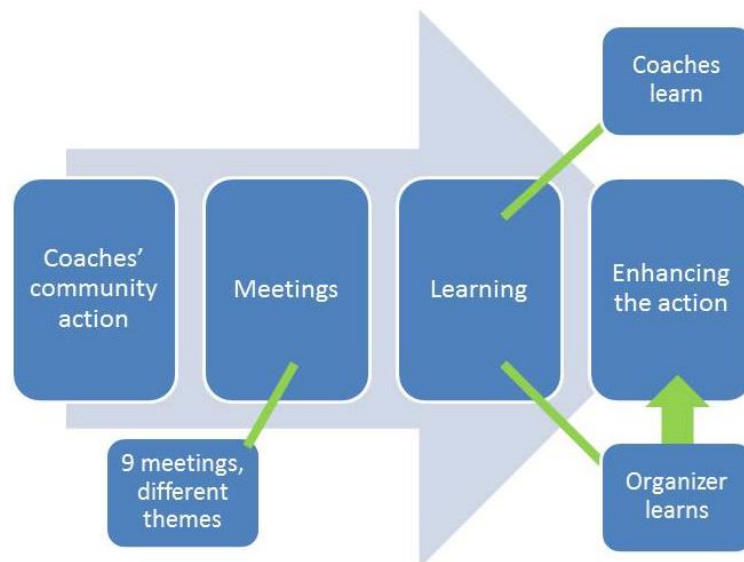


Figure 11. Coaches’ community action in Päijät-Häme in 2016. There were a total of nine meetings during the year 2016. Something was learned in every meeting, which helped to enhance the action.

The first meeting of the year was held at the beginning of February. The idea of the meeting was to discuss the strategic goals or choices of the Finnish elite sport system. Four employees from the Finnish Olympic Committee's High Performance Unit presented the objectives of the Finnish sport first in general and then in more detail considering the objectives of the sport academy programme and especially the coaches' communities and the Finnish coaching competence model. Also some practical examples from other regions or disciplines were heard.

In the February meeting the participants were able to propose topics for the year's meetings and discuss their learning needs. The ideas were brainstormed using a participatory method where everybody's voice was heard. There were a total of 69 ideas or proposals and a small group volunteered to compile them and form an action plan. The February meeting gathered 35 coaches plus the organizer and four guests and it took three hours.



Figures 12 and 13. The first meeting of the year

The second meeting of the year was held at the end of March. It dealt with the interaction skills of coaches. It was a theme education event bought from the Coaches of Finland association. The meeting gathered 21 participants plus organizer and the trainer and it took three hours. The instructor was Marianne Tarva-Parviainen from the Coaches of Finland association. The meeting included a theoretical presentation and practical exercises.



Figure 14. Participatory approaches were used in the interaction skills education

The third meeting discussed skills training and it was held at the beginning of May. The expert visitor was Sami Kalaja, who works as the director in the Research Institute for Olympic Sports and has done a doctoral dissertation on skills training. The meeting attracted 22 participants plus the organizer and the visitor and it took 2 hours. Kalaja talked about the topic about 45 minutes first and after that two local coaches gave examples of how skills' training is executed in practice. The presentations took about 15 minutes each and the rest 45 minutes was used for discussion.

The fourth meeting took place at the beginning of June and it was addressed to team ball sports coaches. There were expert visitors from the National Olympic Committee; Pia Pekonen works as a coaching skills developer and Jukka Rautakorpi is responsible for team ball sports' development in the Olympic Committee. Pekonen and Rautakorpi spoke about the Olympic Committee's High Performance Unit and how it is involved in the sports academy work, and especially about the team ball sports' national development plans in order to improve co-operation between disciplines. After that local aspects were discussed, like strengths and weaknesses in team sports and how the co-operation could be improved. There were 19 participants plus the visitors and the organizer and the meeting took three hours.

The fifth event was also held in June. The topic of the meeting was "the most important features and skills of a coach" and it was run as a panel discussion. There were six panelists; three of them were local experienced and successful coaches and three of them were local elite athletes. The meeting took 1 hour and gathered 15 coaches plus panelists and the moderator.

That was the first time for the organizer to arrange a panel discussion. To find out how to conduct a panel discussion various internet pages had to be consulted for instructions. The topic had already been selected. The first step was to recruit the panelists. Some sources say that three to five participants is ideal, some prefer three to six. Six participants were selected in this case in order to have a comprehensive enough bunch of panelists if someone cancels in the last minute. The author herself worked as a moderator. Various sources advise the length of a panel discussion to be one hour, so that is the reason why this meeting was slightly shorter than the other ones. The internet sources were also useful when advice for moderating the discussion were needed. (Arnold 2015; Iliff 2014; Kirsner 2013; Kirsner; WikiHow.)

The last meeting of the year was held in December. The special guest was the famous and successful endurance coach Ismo Hämäläinen. He told about his career, what he has learned and what are the most important aspects of coaching according to him. The meeting gathered 8 coaches plus the organizer and the guest. The meeting took two hours and it was a mix of specialist's presentation and audience's comments and questions.

7.3 Steering group

The operation was controlled by a steering group. In the first meeting of the year five persons volunteered to join the steering group with the organizing body representative. The group prepared an action plan for the year according to the wishes from the coaches, which were collected in the first meeting of the year. The executive director of the organizing body then set the exact dates, made facilities reservations, booked specialists, communicated with coaches and organized the action. The steering group met the second time in the summer in the middle of the year to discuss the past half year and to brainstorm the future ideas and operating models. The idea is that the members of the steering group would change yearly.

7.4 Exploiting social media

Facebook page for the regional coaches' community was created in summer. The idea was that it could add value to the community, it could deepen the sense of community and work as one platform to share knowledge or best practices. Social media is part of people's everyday life and it can benefit professional life or personal interests.

Hoyle (2015, 55, 100, 108) refers in his book to studies which show that only 14 % of organizations encourage learners to share experiences and solve problems using online social media tools, even if it could be a good way to do so. The usage of social media could, however, be a new way of learning. In his book, Hoyle (2015) refers to Gifford's study from year 2013 which shows that as many as 76 % of people use social media in their personal lives. Almost two thirds have a mobile digital device, which they use for work, so exploiting social media would be possible, if it were seen necessary. According to Gifford's study, only 26 % of employees use social media for work and only 18 % of them see it important for their work. Studies show, according to Hoyle, that between years 2009 and 2014 the top learning tool was twitter. However, 48 % of those who use social media for work, complain that it easily leads to information overload.

Hoyle (2015, 112) continues to refer in his book to Gifford's study which studied how people use social media at work. Somewhat half of the use seems to be about keeping up to date with news. Building a professional network and keeping in touch with people outside one's organization are both at almost 40%. Sharing knowledge with others is in place four with nearly 35%. Learning more about areas of interest, keeping in touch with people inside one's organization, building the profile of one's organization, building one's own reputation and job hunting were next. The least used way to employ social media was reported to be generating revenue for employers. According to that interpretation, using social media seems to be quite collaborative and useful, so it could be a good way to add value and communication between coaches as well.

Hoyle (2015, 104) talks in his book about seek-sense-share framework. Seeking in that framework means finding things out and keeping up to date. Sensing is how the information is personalized and used, often it requires experimentation. Sharing includes collaboration and exchanging resources, ideas and experiences with network and colleagues. The usage of social media could be a good tool to implement this.

Hoyle (2015, 133) believes that using social media could be a good tool for people to reflect on what they have learned. He says that the reflective role of social media is often overlooked. It is important for individuals to be able to tell what they have experienced and document what has worked and what hasn't. Social media could also provide a searchable database of lessons learned that individuals can interrogate and use as a starting point of looking for information and answers to questions.

In the intelligence strategy of the Ministry of Education and Culture it is defined that digital methods should be used in all education. If digital environments are used well with high quality, it could promote lifelong learning and provide personalized and flexible solutions. Social media is a significant part of our society, it provides an opportunity to act and participate. Mobile devices, like smartphones and tablets, bring further opportunities in social media use. Learning can be moved to different places and to different situations due to them. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014, 52-55.)

Social media could be used in coaching development as well. In coaches' development it is essential to get the latest information considering coaching from different sources. Social media could be a good tool to further learning, sharing of knowledge and communication. Social media could be used as a tool for personal learning environment. Suitable social media channels could be for example different kind of blogs, Twitter and Facebook. It

is important to remember that people learn in different ways. Different kind of learning methods can be taken into account in social media; text can include audio and video. Even though the usage of social media could be a good tool to promote learning, it cannot become an end in itself. Instruments should be used depending on how well they fit for each situation and it is good to remember that not everybody uses social media. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2014, 52-55.)

7.5 Interviews

Three expert interviews were made during the project in order to get ideas of or insights into how to develop the coaches' community action. The experts were selected on the basis of their specific competence. The interviews took 40-60 minutes, they took place at the interviewees' offices and they were recorded. The notes from the interviews are attached to this report as appendices 2-4 and the recordings are stored in the author's personal files. In this chapter the interviewees are introduced and the main results of the interviews are presented, more detailed information about the interviews can be found in the appendices. Some of the central findings of each interview are illustrated in figures 19-21 as well. The interview questions were shaped according to the interviewee's expertise and depending on what issues their knowledge would be useful for. The answers were based on interviewees' long experience and personal insights. The interviews were done using a semi structured method; some key questions were written out beforehand and asked, but the interview diverged during the course of conversation.

Päivi Frantsi works as a psychologist and she has done a lot of work in the field of sports and in coaches' education. She also gives professional guidance in different kinds of organizations and workplaces, so she has a wide theoretical knowledge and practical experience of community in organizations and she also has a general understanding of coaches' occupation. The interview was conducted in her home office in Vierumäki in mid-April 2016 and it took 45 minutes.

Herkko Koski is the head of coaching for the ice hockey club Kiekko Reipas. Other coaches and their development and well-being are his main focus as the head of coaching in the club. He is involved in the actual coaching as well. He also works as a mentor and gives professional guidance to coaches from various disciplines in Päijät-Häme region. The interview was conducted in the club's office in Lahti in May 2016 and it took 40 minutes.

Maiju Kokkonen works as a coach educator in Vierumäki Sports Training Centre. She is responsible for coaching education in Vierumäki; she educates coaches and develops the education programs. She has also been involved in the development process of the national coaching competence model. Before the current job she worked as a professional coach for several years and also as the head of education in a discipline association. At the moment she is doing coaching as a volunteer activity in her spare time. The interview was conducted in her office in Vierumäki in January 2017 and it took 60 minutes.

In her interview, psychologist Päivi Frantsi describes the community as building up a common or shared story for which common experiences and meetings are important. The identity of the group and common values are also very important. According to Frantsi, a community has a positive effect on a person, which again adds to its value. A community should be something that the participant wants to belong to. The members of a community want to share and learn from each other. A community is formed when people are open and they share also difficult problems. A community needs frames and a timetable, which should be planned well in advance.

Regional coaches' community is loose in nature. Päivi Frantsi sees that these loose, so-called "mycelium-communities" do not have tight limits or they are not like permanent work communities. Commitment to these loose communities is more challenging. If the community had a clearer identity, it would be easier for the participants to commit to. And Frantsi sees that a sense of community definitely requires commitment. The process follows up a circle: commitment → experiences → a sense of community. It is vital to understand that the circle works in both directions. The circle-process is illustrated in figure 19. According to Frantsi, more aware construction is needed in these "mycelium-communities", encounters have to be created. Participants have more expectations towards the content, so the meetings need to draw people's attention and have relevance. It is definitely vital, that participants have something to commit to. So the meetings have to be planned and well-organized beforehand.

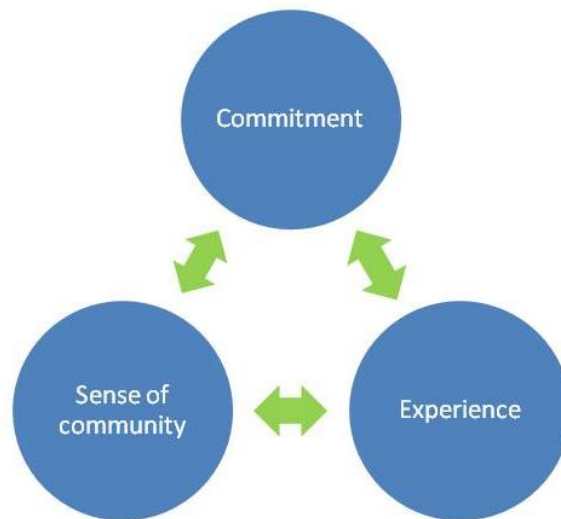


Figure 19. Frantsi's circle. The sense of community comes from common experiences, which require commitment. On the other hand, commitment increases the sense of community and vice versa.

If the group has quite high criterions, it is valued and people want to belong to it, so in Frantsi's opinion some criterions for participation should be set. She continues that a community calls for a common process which makes common growth possible. In order to get there, a certain starting level is needed. A common starting level helps in organizing the meetings and dealing with the issues so that everybody can profit from it. And as mentioned also previously, participants should get something from the community; it should add value for the members. Frantsi suggests that there could be different levels of meetings, some are open for everybody and others are open just for a certain group. But then she also points out that, on the other hand, a community should be quite open and not too tightly limited. The size of the community matters, it is important that the members somehow know each other, so too big a group might be challenging.

Psychologist Frantsi sees polyphony as an important part of community. Polyphony means that everybody's voice is accepted and heard. Frantsi emphasizes that versatile and different kind of methods should be used in the meetings, for example group work. Also spatial arrangements are very important in order to make communication easier. The space should be organized so that it furthers communication, for example chairs could be in a circle rather than in lines. In addition, the atmosphere in the community should be open, inspirational and supporting, so it encourages people to interact.

Frantsi points out a few tips how to create the right atmosphere in the community and meetings in order to encourage interaction. She argues that problem based learning might be a good way to create a good atmosphere. When the themes come from genuine everyday life, it usually creates enthusiasm. Also difficult issues should be put on the table, which might be challenging. Frantsi emphasizes that there has to be genuine conversation. The matter should open up to the participants and they should be able to form their opinion. Not everybody has to agree, but different opinions should be accepted. The organizer should encourage people to discuss and bring up different points of view. According to Frantsi, it is easier to create a pleasant atmosphere when people know each other. Organizing for example once a year a very informal occasion, for example pre-Christmas parties or sauna evening, might be one way to get there. Or the occasion could be a mixture of business and leisure, for example watching a match or ballgame where an expert enlightens the game and then a dinner afterwards. But these kinds of occasions should be carefully planned and they should be organized rarely enough.

Päivi Frantsi claims that sharing and taking responsibility is a vital aspect of community. Sharing responsibility is a good way to commit people. She points out that commitment and responsibility should be seen as a positive thing. Taking responsibility can mean for example that someone is responsible in their turn for telling their way to coach some theme. Usually people like to tell about themselves or their ways to do something.

According to Frantsi the members of a community should be able to evaluate and develop the action. As a practical piece of advice she recommends collecting feedback from the meetings. She accentuates that the feedback should be heard and taken into consideration.

Herkko Koski has himself participated in some of the meetings and is a member of the community. He sees that the community is not very tight or close, he feels only a loose connection to this community. He has some tighter communities in his network as well. Tighter communities are formed inside ice hockey circles or very informally between regions' experienced coaches from different disciplines. The road travelled together is what matters in those communities. Koski claims that the common meetings, common objectives, common direction and common understanding are required in order to strengthen the feeling of community and commitment in this regional coaches' community. Koski underlines that the most important thing is trust and respect inside the community, which usually takes shape informally. These important aspects of community are illustrated in figure 20.

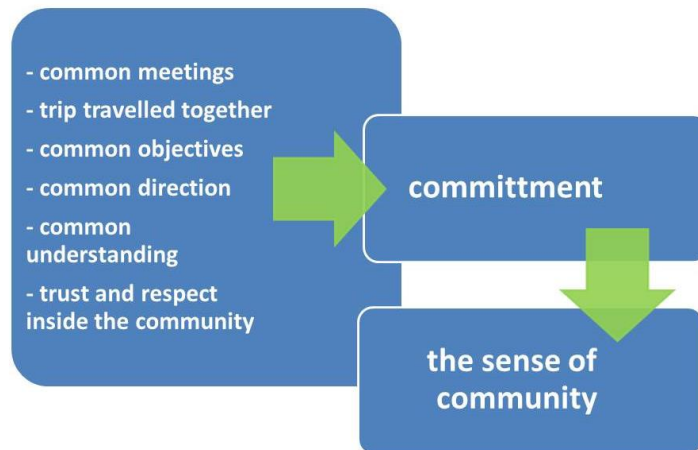


Figure 20. The most important aspects which affect commitment and the sense of community according to Koski

According to Koski, participants consider meetings important in communities which are built inside ice hockey. Peer support has been regarded as particularly important. In those communities the community has a common target, which is important according to Koski. The ice hockey federation has done a very good job in organization; they have managed to engage participants in common values and alignments. The national association organizes community action for the heads of coaching. The heads of coaching meet 4-6 times a year. The association is responsible for the agenda of the meetings and the meetings are popular. The agenda is usually related to ice hockey, but sometimes there are visitors from other disciplines to share their best practices. Koski sees ice hockey as a forerunner in this field.

Koski feels that also the regional coaches' community action is useful and worth sustaining. Learning happens in so many ways. Formal education is one way to learn, but maybe the most effective way is informal education. He points out that time management is nowadays very important, so when people are gathered together, it should have an added value for the participants. He sees that networking and building up contacts with different coaches is the most important value of the meetings, but also the content matters; meetings shouldn't be arranged only for the purpose of meeting each other. Participants have to be able to select which occasions they go to and which not.

Koski says that it is vital that the coaches can influence the content and topics of the meetings. Coaches want to be heard and their opinions and needs should be taken into

account. Knowledge from other disciplines is important. Coaches should take part in producing content. Sharing best practices is important but, he points out, the presentations should also be carefully prepared. There could also be some activities in the meetings where coaches move and are able to share and receive exercises, he suggests.

According to Koski, some criteria should be met to be accepted into a group. Some meetings could be open for every coach, others only for a limited group. At least the producers of content should be professional coaches, he demands.

Maiju Kokkonen has a professional insight into coaching education. She claims that the formal coaching education has changed; it's not like pouring knowledge into someone's head anymore. Also formal education tries to be reflective, personalized and inclusive nowadays. The relationship between formal and informal education depends on the level of the coach; in lower levels the focus is maybe more in the formal education. Informal education can give the coach a network, support and tools. It also provides the coach with prepared ideas or tools, as he or she might not have the time to look for all the data him- or herself. Resources might be an aspect in coaches' competence, where the focus is more in informal education. Formal education is usually more focused in sports skills and less weight is put on coaches' self-development skills. She underlines that all forms and levels of education are needed. She calls for personalized education paths. In addition, some kind of system is needed to coordinate the supply and to ensure the quality.

Kokkonen expects that in the future more focus is going to be put on coaches' self-development skills. She would like to see more tailor-made and personalized education paths in the Finnish coaching education system; the previously acquired skills should be recognized better in formal education, education plans should be made based on personal needs. She wishes that the people in discipline associations, who order education, had better knowledge and understanding of the contemporary view of learning. Education aims to improve coaches. Kokkonen claims that a good coach knows him- or herself and his or her strengths and development areas. A good coach has good communication skills and he or she gets along with different kind of people. The focus in coaching should be in the athlete and different individuals and their needs and goals are taken into account. A good coach is also encouraging and inspiring. A good coach remembers to be gracious; athletes are not machines, they are humans.

Kokkonen looks at regional coaches' community action positively. This kind of action gives a coach a network and peer support, which might often be very useful. A multi-disciplined

group is a good thing, it gives different kind of insights into coaching and furthers co-operation between disciplines. In Kokkonen's opinion the coaches should be able to influence the topics. But she emphasizes that also the organizer has a big responsibility to include topics which the coaches themselves might not understand to ask. She points out that there should be enough time for conversation and the conversation should be somehow guided. It should lead to some kind of action plan about how to put the day's topics into practice. She also suggests that the themes of the previous meeting should be briefly re-verted to at the beginning of the meeting in order to find out if the earlier suggestions had been put to practice, and if so, how they had succeeded in it.

According to Kokkonen, it is good to have a low threshold for participation. Some of the meetings should be open for everybody and others just for a certain group, depending on the topic. It is easier to deepen the conversation and target the topics even more if the group is a bit more limited. If some meetings are open for everybody, it might be a good idea to divide the group for group work and discussion, for example team ball sport coaches to one group and so on. But sometimes it might be a good idea to further the networking between coaches from different disciplines, so that discussion is not always conducted in the familiar group. The organizer should use participatory approaches and inspire participants to discuss and exchange best practices, Kokkonen points out.

Kokkonen thinks that it is very important that people inside the community know each other, so quite a lot of time should be spent on that. When they do know each other, it is easier to feel belongness and the sense of community. She suggests organizing "a starting camp" or a longer meeting at the beginning of a year, where people learn to know each other and plan the action. Writing the common rules together for the community might be a good idea as well. At the end of a year some more festive could also be organized for example in connection with Päijät-Häme Sports Gala, she suggests. She adds that there could be something more than just meetings, for example a group T-shirt or discounts for events etc, a Facebook group could work well. The material could be collected somewhere, for example on the sports academy's web pages.

The most important aspects of coaches' community action according to Kokkonen are squeezed up in figure 21. All of them were explained in the previous paragraphs dealing with her interview. .

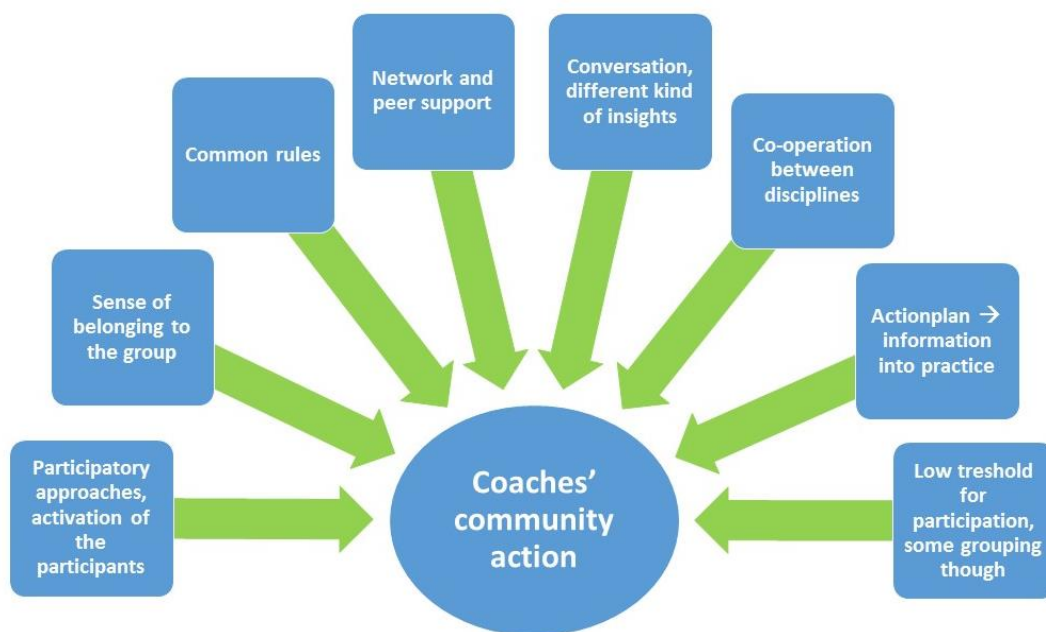


Figure 21. The most important points in coaches' community action according to Maiju Kokkonen

7.6 Benchmarking other regions

One part of the project was to benchmark other regions and to find out how they have implemented the national Olympic Committee's wishes considering regional coaches' community action. Three sports academies were contacted via telephone and e-mail in January and February 2017. The three selected sports academies were all different in principle; the Helsinki metropolitan area sports academy is considerably bigger than any other sports academy in Finland, the Turku region sports academy is a little bigger than the Päijät-Häme sports academy and after Helsinki one of the biggest. The Joensuu sports academy, on the other hand, is considered to be slightly smaller than Päijät-Häme. The main findings are presented in this chapter. The practical ideas of how to develop the regional coaches' community action in Päijät-Häme compared to other regions' examples are presented in the discussion chapter.

In the Joensuu sports academy the coaching coordinator Kimmo Hyppönen is responsible for the coaches' community action. In their case the coaches' community action is directed to sports academy's own coaches who coach morning trainings in their sport schools. For those coaches the community action time is, in principle, working time. The meetings are at times open for other coaches as well, for example for the coaches from their co-operation clubs. The invited group consists of 40 coaches. There are usually approximately 20

participants at the meetings. The community meets on a regular basis, they meet six times a year, every six weeks or so, when sports high school's students have their exam week.

In Joensuu the meetings include some administrative matters regarding school or morning trainings and but main part of the meeting is used for dealing with some theme related to coaching. The coaching coordinator has prepared the theme and the topics are selected according to coaches' wishes. The wishes have been very varied, but the coaches have mainly been satisfied with the meetings. Themes handled in 2016 were for example the meaning of proper warm-up, nutrition and skills training. The meetings might sometimes include some practical parts, where best practices could be changed or new ideas could be tested. In addition to these exam week meetings, they have had some very informal meetings as well, for example sauna evenings, which have been good in creating community spirit and helping people to get to know each other better. The coaching coordinator claims that the coaches don't know each other very well automatically, so time should be spent on that.

According to Hyppönen, one of their best acts regarding coaches' community action has been discipline visits. That means that every coach has an obligation to go to some other coach's trainings a few times a year. Coaches have found that useful and some further co-operation between disciplines has ensued. That is also a very good way to get the coaches know each other better.

For the year 2017 they have developed the action in Joensuu so that the sports academy has reserved some money in the budget for coaches' education. That means that coaches can attend some education occasions or seminars and then share the information with others. They are going to systematise the action more in the year 2017 and start to collect feedback and ideas of how to develop the action even more. Hyppönen feels that one way to forward the action could be by forming some kind of pools according to discipline groups, where the coaches could deepen the conversation and get peer support.

In the Helsinki metropolitan area sports academy coaches' community action is organized on different levels. They have once a month or once in two months meetings for sports academy coaches. Sports academy coaches means in their case discipline coaches, who coach sports schools' groups. Sometimes some personal coaches are invited as well. There are many sports schools in their network, so the invited group of the school coaches is already 183 persons. Usually around 30 coaches come to the meetings. Those

meetings have a certain theme, which is dealt with first by some specialist and then discussed with the group. The specialist is usually from within the group. The meetings usually take two hours and are organized in the middle of the day. They organized eight meetings for this group during the year 2016. The themes for the meetings followed the coaches' wishes and feedback. The dates for the meetings had been set at the beginning of the year, but usually some changes had had to be made.

Another level action is aimed at a wider range of coaches and it is open for every coach who wants to join. For that group they organize approximately two meetings a year together with the Coaches of Finland association. Those meetings usually have a little price tag and they are organized in the evenings in order to reach also those coaches who do coaching as volunteers and have some other day job.

For year 2017 the Helsinki metropolitan area sports academy wants to develop the action so that there will be one more level which consists of international level coaches and the coaches supported by the Olympic Committee. The group is smaller, but coaches who are in the group are working with the absolute elite sport and want to develop themselves even further. Their intention is to offer some more detailed support to that group, for example a professional guidance programme by a psychologist.

Mika Saari, who is responsible for the action in the Helsinki metropolitan area sports academy, considers the coaches' community action important, but mentions that there are some problems or issues which should be processed. The group is so big and versatile that the sense of community or belonging tend to miss. He thinks that dividing the group into smaller groups might help. He is not very convinced about the effectiveness or genuine sharing of best practices, or co-operation between different disciplines. Saari feels that the action is in some kind of pilot phase and the best way to organize the action has not been found yet. He also thinks that there are some cultural challenges in the Finnish coaching field; the coaches might not see that sometimes it could be more beneficial to skip one training and spend that time with other coaches changing best practices and sharing knowledge.

Mika Saari claims that it is also important to share ideas and best practices with other sport academies regarding the coaches' community action. He suggests that it could be a good idea to organize a joint meeting of all sport academy coaches in Finland once a year. It could be for example a 1-2-day cruise with a very good and comprehensive seminar programme.

The Turku region sports academy organizes coaches' community action in a few levels as well. One level is full time school coaches plus some discipline associations' coaches, who are attached to the commune. The group consists of 15 people, who actually share even the work space. Once a week the group has a meeting which the leader of the sports academy calls "a site meeting". The coaching coordinator has prepared some theme which is related to coaching. The school's study counsellors and the principal are invited to the meetings, so also school related issues are handled. The group is quite tight and glued together so co-operation is genuine and best practices are really changed.

The other level of coaches' community in Turku is network action. The network meets once a month. This group consists of for example club coaches who do co-operation with the sports academy, the invitation goes to 117 coaches. The group consists of full time and volunteer coaches. Usually around 35 coaches attend the meetings. The network meetings include some jointly chosen theme and conversation around the theme. The coaches who are involved in the action have had a chance to wish for certain themes.

The third level of coaches' community action is organized for sports academy coaches who are involved in the morning trainings in the sports academy's network. The group meets four times a year. Those meetings focus on increasing the community spirit and the meetings include something fun.

Coaches have given good feedback in Turku. The leader of the Turku region sports academy Mika Korpela feels that the coaches' community action has succeeded well. Especially the smaller group has succeeded particularly well, the coaches are well engaged in the action. Korpela considers the feeling of community as a very important part of the action, and it is way more difficult to achieve it in the bigger group. In the bigger group the conversation hasn't gone so deep than in the smaller group. Korpela deems common values in the group very important, and he feels that all three groups have been successful in creating them. In the future the Turku region sports academy wants to focus on the preventive health care in the coaches' meetings. The wishes from the coaches and from the disciplines are important and action is developed according to them.

7.7 Coaches' own views and development ideas

Coaches should be able to affect coaching education. This coaches' community action is informal education, so coaches involved in the action should have a chance to develop it. The 2016 action started with a meeting where coaches planned the themes for the year's

meetings. The year ended with a feedback survey whose aim was to collect also development ideas for the next year.

The inquiry was made with the Webropol survey tool in December. An internet link to the questionnaire was sent via e-mail to the members of the community. This way the recipients could answer it at whatever time was most convenient for them. The inquiry was open for three weeks, a reminder was sent twice to those who hadn't answered yet.

The first part of the inquiry consisted of background information on the answerer. After the background scan the coaches were asked which meetings they attended and what were the reasons if they didn't attend. Then they were asked how satisfied they were with certain aspects of the action and when the meetings should be held. The coaches were asked about the importance of the community, what they felt that are the most important aspects in a functioning community and at whom the action should be targeted. The effectiveness of the action had to be analyzed, too, so the coaches were asked if they felt that they had developed due to this action. For future reference the coaches were also asked if they had requests for topics and an opinion on more informal gatherings. Also open feedback or general comments were collected.

The link to the questionnaire was sent via e-mail to 154 recipients. The questionnaire was sent to everybody in the contact list, even though some of the recipients didn't attend any meetings. The idea was to gather opinions also from those who didn't participate in order to get ideas why they hadn't shown up at the meetings even though they were interested in the action. A total of 47 responses were received, so the response percent was 30,5%. Most of the answerers worked as full time professional coaches or coached regularly in addition to their normal duties. Eleven of the recipients hadn't participated in any meetings. The educational background of the answerers could be described mainly as senior coach.

The feedback was collected also from almost every meeting with a separate feedback form. The paper feedback form included numerical and open evaluation questions regarding the meeting and it was collected at the end of the meetings. The Webropol questionnaire form is attached to this thesis as appendix 5 and the feedback form concerning every meeting is enclosed as appendix 6.

The answers of the Likert scale questions were presented as means, and the results from nominal and ordinal scale questions as relative frequencies. The results show that coaches value the action and they want to develop it. The main findings were that

coaches want to have more time for deeper conversation and that some meetings should be open for everybody and some for certain groups. Some of the meetings should be organized also after 4pm in order to reach those who do coaching in their spare time.

Let's still look at the results a bit more closely. Almost half of the answerers have a level four education certification (a five-level system). Approximately the same amount of answerers do coaching as professionals and as volunteers. The reasons why the meetings were not attended were mainly due to scheduling challenges. The satisfaction with nine different aspects was measured with a 1-5 scale. The overall average was 3,82, so it can be said that the participants are quite satisfied. The answerers were most satisfied with the topics, the average in that was 4,37. The lowest average pertained to co-operation between the coaches from different disciplines, but it was quite high though; 3,33. Besides the topics, also the venues, lengths of the meetings and specialist guests got over 4,0 average score.

When asked about the best timing, two answers stood out; on weekdays 12-16 or after 16. Variation to timing was also hoped in order to reach different people. When the coaches were asked how important the community is to them on a 1-5 scale, the average was 3,46. The most important points in a functioning community according to these answers seem to be good content, conversation, regularity, communication, sharing of knowledge and genuine co-operation. Over half (55%) of the answerers felt that the action should be aimed at all coaches who want to join. On the other hand, 45% felt that some of the meetings should be targeted at a certain group. Proper grouping seems to depend on the topic. The main reason why some grouping should be done is that the conversation could go deeper.

Over half (57%) of the respondents felt that they have developed a bit as a coach because of the coaches' community action. 64% of the answerers said that they are interested also in more informal gatherings. The requests for the next year's themes were divided quite evenly between the four coach's competence sections of the Finnish coaching competence model (see figure 2 on page 4). Sports skills and development skills stand out a bit.

Paper feedback forms were handed out to participants at the end of the meeting on almost every occasion. In some meetings it was forgotten, but feedback nonetheless was collected from several meetings. Not all wanted to fill out the form, but feedback was received 54 times in total. The feedback was overall very positive. In the feedback form the

coaches were asked how they would evaluate the overall success of the event, specialist's part, the need for the topic, meeting's duration and timing, the emergence of new ideas and overall feelings of the coaches' community action with one to five scale. Then there was also an open space where the coaches could justify their grades or give some other feedback or development ideas. The means from every meeting and from all answers are presented in table 3. The open feedback was mainly related to timing, duration, practical examples, conversation and regularity. The coaches wanted to have more time for conversation, more practical examples or demonstrations and more regularity to the action.

Table 3. The means of the evaluation variables from the coaches' feedback collected from the meetings

proposition / question	mean (1-5 scale)
The timing and duration of the meeting was proper	3,9
I got new ideas to support my own coaching activities	4,24
The event was successful	4,27
The topic was necessary	4,58
The specialist's part was interesting	4,69
Coaches' community action is worth sustaining and developing	4,78

8 Discussion

As a main result this thesis project produced one kind of model on how to organize and develop coaches' community action. The subject was very necessary for Pääjät-Häme sports academy, because organizing the coaches' community action was one of the main focuses in the organization's action in year 2016. The project helped to develop the action and its results give a good basis and guidelines for the coming years.

The importance of the topic is quite easy to justify. Like it is said in the national sport strategy, there are some key selections made in Finnish sports. Every strategical choice is divided into a few key elements, which are justified and explained in the Finnish Sport Strategy. For example, building up coach- and expert communities, which strengthen the know-how and co-operation is one of the key elements of high level competence. So the coaches' community action is considered important on a national level as well. Informal education and sharing ideas with peers have been proved to be an important part of

coaches' development and coaches' community action is one way to implement it. For example the International Council for Coaching Excellence refers to researches that claim that coaches learn best from practical experience and interaction with peers, so there is a need to take some of the formal education out of the classrooms onto the tracks and courts. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016a; International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014.)

The National Olympic Committee's High Performance Unit's Sports Academy Program has five main objectives for the year 2016. One of them is the intensification of everyday training processes in sports academies. Building up regional coach and expert communities is one way to achieve this objective. Finland has 20 regional sports academies and implementation of these main goals is partly regional sports academies' responsibility. The goal is to create a network where coaches from different disciplines share knowledge and best practices with each other. Multidiscipline societies encourage cross talk which particularly promotes the competence of the peak-phase coaches. The topic of this thesis can be considered a real working life development project. The Finnish Olympic Committee guides and directs the action and gives its support to the local organizers, but the support hasn't been quite concrete yet. In some other areas of sports academies' action the National Olympic Committee gives quite strict precepts and it could be a good idea to have more concrete guidelines on how to organize this coaches' community action as well. On the other, hand it is good to have some leeway according to regional strengths and circumstances. (Suomen Olympiakomitea. 2016c.)

Several sources, for example Gilbert and Trudel (2006) and Pekonen (2016, 46-47), suggest, that the community of practice would ideally include other stakeholders from the sports context and not just coaches. It could add even more value to the community action if specialists from other fields could join the network, for example health care specialists could join and share their knowledge. One way to develop the action in Päijät-Häme region could be to involve different kinds of experts more closely in the action. For example doctors, physiotherapists or psychologists could definitely add value to the group. They have sometimes been used as guest speakers or experts in the meetings, but it could be better if they attended the meetings more regularly. That could mean that they would be an integral part of the network and coaches would get to know them and use their knowledge to enhance the training processes.

The National Olympic Committee (2016c) instructs that the operation model should be permanent, regular and it should answer the coaches' needs and develop operational en-

vironments. In Päijät-Häme the model is now permanent, but the meetings could be arranged at more regular intervals. During this project the time between the meetings was sometimes just a little over a week and sometimes nearly two months. If the meetings were always for example on the first Monday of the month, it could become a more accessible part of the monthly routines of the coaches. On the other hand, coaches have hoped variation to the dates, so that as many as possible could participate. If the meetings are always on Mondays and it is the worst day for someone, they can never attend it. Now the meetings were organized maybe at too irregular intervals. Some kind of compromise might be the best solution, for example organizing the meetings approximately every five or six weeks excluding the summer break. The benchmarking showed that the other benchmarked sports academies schedule the dates at regular intervals well in advance. However, at least in Helsinki metropolitan sports academy the dates had to be changed very often because of the challenging timetables of the visitors etc.

The organization has an obligation to create an environment where people can learn from and with others (Hoyle. 2015, 38-49). The majority of the learning happens when real people do real jobs, solve real problems and deal with real situations and share their knowledge with others (Hoyle. 2015). Many of the sports clubs in Finland are still quite unprofessionally organized and they don't necessarily fulfill the obligation of creating an environment where their coaches could share ideas with colleagues. So it is good that this kind of action is now possible in multi-disciplined groups in sports academies.

An organizer for the regional coaches' community action is required in certain areas of expertise. The International Council for Coaching Excellence (2014) guided that coach developers should first and foremost be experts in learning and also have expertise in coaching and in athlete development or some other important aspect, like for example medicine, technology or pedagogy. This project has taught the author more about coaches' learning and informal education, but in order to become an even more qualified organizer, the author should have some further education about learning and teaching.

Many sources, for example The Finnish Olympic Committee (2014) and Erickson et al (2008), emphasized that different types of learning, formal and informal, are important and needed in coaching education. Coaches themselves seem to value the informal education even more than formal programs, but also formal education is needed. Hoyle (2015) argued in his book that 20 % of learning happens via sharing and 70 % through work. Formal education is considered to be expensive and a lot of money is spent on it, while informal education could be more effective and cheaper. So it could be reasonable to direct a

bigger part of the money that is spent on education and its development from formal education to informal. Informal education has a big role in coaches' development and different kind of societies or communities are a good way to promote informal learning. Maybe it could be time to get more resources for their organization.

Several sources, for example the International Council for Coaching Excellence (2014) and Hoyle (2015) underlined that it is important that the coaches take responsibility for their learning and that coaching education activates the learners. So maybe they could be given an even bigger role in regional coaches' community action. Choosing the topics for the meetings is very important and coaches must have a say in that. It is good that coaches can choose which meetings they attend and which not depending on whether they find the topic interesting. Coaches seem to want to develop themselves continuously and also take part in the planning of community action. It could be a good idea to engage the coaches even more in the actual meetings and give more responsibility to them. The ultimate objective could be that the coaches themselves would organize the action and an outside organizer wouldn't be needed anymore. Of course the objective can be reached only step by step. If the first step was that the coaches suggested the topics and a small steering group was formed, the next one could be to give the steering group more power and responsibility. There is a lot of expertise inside the group, so expert lecturers could more often be found inside the group and only now and then there would be a need for external experts.

Coaches have to be able to apply the new information in their own environment. This fact was repeated many times in the literature review for example by Hoyle (2015) and Erickson's (2008) and Nelson's (2008) study groups. People seem to forget what they have heard in the courses if they do not have opportunities to put the skills and knowledge received in the classroom into practice. It might be a good idea to discuss the theme of the previous meeting and the application of the new information in practice. On the other hand, the group might be partly or totally different than the last time, so the discussion might feel inconvenient to at least part of the group. Maybe discussion in social media could be the best answer. It could become a good practice to start the conversation about the new information and its application in the Facebook group right after the meeting. One way to promote the transfer of knowledge into practice could be to add more practical training to the meetings, so far the majority of the information has been only theoretical.

Learners need positive feedback (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014). So the organizer has to make sure that the atmosphere in the group is supportive,

attention is drawn to positive things and good examples are praised. When the atmosphere is positive, it is easier for the coaches to engage to the group and its action. And when people are engaged to the action, they value it even more and it has more effectiveness. A positive climate doesn't mean that only good things or best practices are shared. Poor approaches or examples have to be shared as well, they can also be instructive. A coaching process goes through trial and error many times, so those errors and what has been learnt from them should be discussed together, not only the best practices. In order to get there a trusting and open atmosphere is required. This kind of approach could also further the problem solving culture. Some assistance to problem solving might be found in the person's network and connections, in other words inside the community. According to Hoyle (2015), the objective is to have real conversations in the meetings, where different kinds of approaches or opinions are shared. Group thinking and narrow engagements with the subject should be avoided. The action in this case has not completely reached this point yet.

Hoyle (2015) gives in his book a few practical tips for organizing workshop-events. The organizer should introduce the theme to participants beforehand with the help of a pre-workshop task such as some kind of short reflection task or it could be an article to read or something like that. On the other hand, the assignment shouldn't be too time consuming. To figure out the appropriate task the specialist visitor who is going to lecture on the topic in the meeting should be asked for help. This could definitely be a good idea in this case also and worth bringing into use. Also Maiju Kokkonen, who was interviewed, suggested the same.

Building up the sense of community was considered one of the biggest challenges. When work is not done in one fixed gang attached to a certain place, it might be more difficult to create a sense of community than in limited and permanent work groups (Janhonen & al. 2015. 38–39). A sense of togetherness or community usually takes time, so some patience is needed. In the theoretical part some of the literature showed that there are some universal steps to promote the formalization of the community and the right sense related to it. In the center of community is a sense of togetherness, an emotional experience of belonging to the community (Janhonen & al. 2015. 38–39). In the Webropol inquiry it was asked how important the coaches felt that the regional coaches' community is for them. The answer was 3,5 with 1-5 scale, which can be considered quite good regarding that the action is still in a stage of development. Another important phase is that coaches are able to have their say on the matter, they should be involved in the planning process, where modes of operations are brainstormed. It is easier for coaches to commit to the actions when they have been involved also in the planning process (Pekonen. 2016, 1-2). In

this case coaches have already been involved in the planning, which is good. Needless to say that their wishes have to be taken into account.

According to Jäppinen (2012), enough time has to be arranged for conversations in the meetings. The conversation should concentrate on the topics, not on persons behind the opinions. Different kinds of points of views should be allowed. Different kinds of opinions should be taken into account and valued, but everyone should make up their minds themselves, forcing oneself into the same mold with others has to be avoided. A good community of practice has the confidence to attract members who do not necessarily agree with each other and to encourage debates during which the different points of views are given an airing. It is good to remember also, that the responsibility of sharing knowledge applies to everybody in the community, not only to the assumed experts. So it is important as an organizer to remember to encourage people to tell their points of view and experiences. In this case the conversation has sometimes been quite active already, but there is always a possibility to improve.

Jäppinen (2012, 34-91) also says that the values and the vision of the community should be defined together, which has not yet been done in this case. The beginning of a year could be a good time to have a common planning evening, where the values and the vision would be processed and updated yearly. It is easier to commit to action which has a clear vision and values. When a person is committed, it is easier to take responsibility and also the sense of community strengthens. The responsibility in communities is collective and individual. So giving more responsibility to the coaches would enhance the sense of community.

Some other steps can strengthen the sense of community as well. Practical arrangements have to be done carefully. The members of the community have to be informed regularly and events must be informed about clearly and well in advance. Information has probably been done well enough in this case. The organizer has to be trustworthy. The members have to be able to trust the organizer, but each other as well. In the report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health trust was actually regarded as one of the most important prerequisites in forming a community (Janhonen et al. 2015, 79-81). Other sources highlighted the importance of trust as well. Social relations between the members are important, maybe not enough time has been spent on concentrating on that. In the future more weight should be put on that. The members of the community should also be able to evaluate their own action in the community (Jäppinen 2012, 129-135). That is not done very well yet. Maybe the coaches could be asked more regularly how they would like to be involved in the action or what they could do to promote the community and its action.

Culver and Trudel (2006) argue that it is unlikely to find functioning communities in sports outside of a team or club. They justify their claim by the features of high competitiveness, urge of winning and being better than others, which seem to be strong in sports. On the other hand, if the group is formed out of coaches from different disciplines, the interaction can be better again. But the problem in these kinds of communities is that they seem to be loose and informal. There is no joint enterprise or other strong glue that would stick the group together. Another problem might be that the people inside the group don't know each other well enough, which might be the case in this coaches' community as well. Familiarity and getting to know each other are considered important. The members meet face to face only rarely and reciprocity stays low. As mentioned also earlier, more weight should be put on coaches' knowing each other. Some more informal gatherings could be the best answer to that.

Hoyle (2015, 152-153) claimed that everyone should not be equal in the community. Some kind of hierarchy should exist, based on experience. All are created as equals and all are learners but effective learning from each other requires someone to be more experienced than others. So that means that the most qualified person of the group should be the expert who lectures. In addition, a proper expert should be found for each meeting, which sets requirements for the organizer of the action. There is a lot of different kind of knowledge and expertise already inside the group, but the organizer has to know the members quite well in order to find the right ones or to know when expertise should be bought outside. There is still certainly room for improvement in this case as well. The members of the group should know each other quite well for the community to function well, but on the other hand the organizer should know the members better also. The members and the organizer will surely get to know each other over time and through some more informal gatherings.

Three expert interviews were made during the project. Psychologist Päivi Frantsi, head of coaching Herkko Koski and coach educator Maiju Kokkonen were interviewed in order to get insights and development ideas for the project. The findings underlined pretty much the same things as the literature reviewed in the theoretical part. Some additional ideas arose though and on the other hand, the findings of the literature review were strengthened.

Kokkonen sees that coaching education and education generally has changed recently. Informal coaching education can provide support, network and tools and these regional

coaches' communities contribute to all that. The challenge is how to recognize the acquired knowledge and skills received through informal education. Kokkonen points out that all forms and levels of education are needed. She continues that the educational paths should, however, be more personalized. Kokkonen also underlines that some kind of system is needed to coordinate the coaching education supply and ensure the quality. A regional coaches' community can, if successful, be a good learning place and these regional coaches' communities have been noticed in the Finnish sports strategy. The National Olympic Committee considered them very important and assigned the local sports academies to organize them. Shouldn't the action then be more controlled or coordinated by the National Olympic Committee or the national coaching education programmes? Some kind of homogeneity and equal quality requirements could be set. There is a huge potential in the action but is it wasted if the action is not done enough systematically and if it is not well organized from the beginning?

Frantsi underlines that common experiences and meetings are important and the community should bring added value to participants. She remarks that also difficult issues should be brought up in the conversations. This coaches' community action is not there quite yet. One reason for that could be that the identity of the community is not clear enough. More work has to be done on it. People have to get to know each other better. It is easier for people to commit to a familiar group. Koski says that he belongs to communities inside ice hockey, which he considers more important and tighter than this regional multidiscipline coaches' community. He feels a stronger connection to those groups, because they have a clearer identity and their shared objectives are defined.

A community should bring added value to its members. Koski points out that time management is nowadays challenging and people are busy. For the community action to function properly and add value, the action has to be planned carefully. Remembering that makes demands on the organizer. Frantsi also says that some kind of criteria should be filled in order to get into the group. That would ensure that people are on about the same level and a common understanding could be easier to achieve. It is reasonable to ask if the community can add value to the members, if the topics are not discussed deep enough. Will the discussion remain too superficial if the group doesn't have a common starting point? On the other hand, Kokkonen says that it is good to have a low threshold for participation. Also coaches themselves pointed out in the survey that the group can be open for everybody. Depending on topics, some of the themes should be open for everybody and some just for a certain group. That could be the best alternative since all three interviewees along with coaches eventually proposed the same.

Frantsi underlines that in a good community everybody's voice is heard, accepted and valued. The same was emphasised in the literature review for example by Jäppinen (2012). The organizer has to always bear this in mind. An open, inspirational and supportive atmosphere which encourages people to interact is what helps to get there. According to Koski trust and respect among the participants is the most important thing. And yet again, when people know each other better, all this becomes easier. Frantsi suggests organizing more informal occasions sometimes, which could help to find the right atmosphere. That is definitely something to keep in mind, because she is not the only one who has suggested the same. Kokkonen suggests organizing some kind of a kickoff camp or kickoff evening at the beginning of each year, where common rules and the year's programme would be planned. They strongly advised to spend time on getting to know each other.

According to Frantsi, problem-based learning and case examples are a good way to process the themes. Both Koski and Frantsi strongly recommend that the coaches should choose the themes for the coaches' meetings and they should also be given more responsibility in planning the agenda for the meetings and in actual content producing as well. Frantsi notes that the responsibility should be seen as a positive thing. Kokkonen points out that the most important aspect in the practical implementation of community action is that there is enough conversation and that the conversation leads to some kind of action plan. The themes of the previous conversation should be discussed or handled afterwards in order to find out if the knowledge has been put into practice. As previously mentioned, that has not been done yet, but is a good idea.

Fransi and Kokkonen gave similar practical suggestions for the implementation of the meetings. Versatile and participatory approaches should be used as they should inspire people to interact. An appropriate method could be group work, which has not been used so much yet. Frantsi advised to pay attention to spatial arrangements and practice has shown the same. Spatial arrangements can further communication if the chairs are arranged for example in a circle and not in a line. Kokkonen suggested that the community action should also involve something more than just meetings; a group t-shirt, discounts to events or something like that could be included in the membership. She also suggested collecting the material from the meetings, like lecture slides for example on the sport academy's web pages.

Three other sports academies were benchmarked because the author wanted to know how they execute the mission of organizing regional coaches' community action. Some viable development ideas arose as a result, many of which could be applied in Päijät-Häme as well.

The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Sports Academy and the Turku Region Sports Academy organize the action in different levels, which could definitely be a good idea in Päijät-Häme as well. In Helsinki area the sport academy coaches who coach sport school groups plus some personal coaches meet once in two months. The group is quite big, even though it is somehow limited. The total number is 183 persons. Mika Saari, who is responsible for the action, says that the group is too big and varied, so the sense of community tends to be lacking. The problem is quite similar in Päijät-Häme. There are over 150 names on the contact list and people don't know each other well enough. Saari is going to divide the group into smaller groups. In fact, also the Joensuu Sport Academy is going to divide the group in smaller groups according to their discipline, even though they have only 40 coaches in the community.

The other group in Helsinki is open for everybody. That group meets twice a year and there is often a small fee to be paid. The meetings are usually seminars, which are organized with The Coaches of Finland Association. The meetings are arranged in the evening, so it is easier for the coaches who coach as volunteers and have a day job somewhere else to attend them.

Helsinki actually has also a third group, which consists of international level elite coaches. This group is only a small group whose purpose is to provide more individual support and professional guidance.

It is a good idea to make some divisions in Päijät-Häme as well. Some meetings should be addressed to certain groups depending on the topic for example according to the discipline like in Joensuu. Another level of action might also be a good idea. Sport school coaches' could be one separate group to whom special action could be arranged. Some ideas have already arisen regarding that, they will be discussed in more detail in chapter 10.

In Joensuu the community consists of 40 coaches, mainly school coaches. The group is small enough to create a sense of community. Maybe it is good after all that in Päijät-Häme the action is accessible to all coaches. At least if one specific level of action is addressed to sport school coaches. Now after this project the importance of team spirit and the sense of community are recognized and more effort can be put into that. It might be more difficult to achieve the feeling in a bigger group, but nobody has said that it would be impossible.

Turku organizes the action in a few levels as well. One level is for full time school coaches plus some discipline associations' coaches who are in close co-operation. The group consists of 15 coaches and they all share a common work space. They have a meeting once a week. The team spirit is very good in the group and the community feels tight and close. There is definitely genuine co-operation inside the group according to Mika Korpela, who is in charge. The other level of action is for network coaches. That means for example club coaches, who co-operate with the sports academy. The group meets once a month and it has a total of 117 members of whom approximately 35 attend the meetings.

In all three places coaches' wishes regarding the topics have been taken into account. Saari notes that the specialists can usually be found inside the group. In Päijät-Häme that could be remembered more often. In Joensuu they are going to develop the action so that they have a small budget for coaches' education. The sports academy can help with the payments if someone participates in external educational occasions or seminars and then the coach has an obligation to share the learnt knowledge to others.

Korpela feels that the team spirit or the feeling of community is the most important aspect in a well-functioning coaches' community. Too big a group is challenging, the conversation doesn't go deep enough. He continues that each community should set common values which must be approved by participants. In Joensuu the sports academy organizes also very informal meetings, such as sauna evenings, for the group. Kimmo Hyppönen, who organizes the action, feels that it is a good way to get to know each other and forge a community spirit. However, Hyppönen says that maybe the best way to further co-operation and to get to know each other is discipline visits. That means that coaches visit each other's trainings to get a slightly deeper understanding of each other's trainings. This might lead to new co-operation models. It could definitely be a good idea and worth trying in Päijät-Häme as well.

In all three places meetings are organized on a regular basis. In Päijät-Häme meeting intervals are not regular. That could be improved. Saari said that the dates have been set at the beginning of the year, but usually some changes come along the way. So is it good that some dates are announced beforehand if they change anyway?

Saari sees that the coaches' community action is in some kind of pilot phase and the best way to organize it hasn't been found yet. He continues that sports academies should share their ideas about how to organize the action.

At the end of year 2016 a Webropol survey was made in order to receive coaches' own development ideas. Participants gave feedback also after the meetings in separate questionnaires. Referring to my earlier argument, coaches should be able to affect the action. And if they give feedback and development ideas it is absolutely essential to take it into consideration. So the main findings should definitely shape the future action in Päijät-Häme.

Coaches want to have time for more and deeper conversation. Another clear-cut wish was variation to timing; the day of the week and the time of the day should vary. Coaches value especially good content, communication, conversation, regularity, sharing of knowledge and genuine co-operation. They wish that the action is open to everybody, but depending on the content some of the meetings should be addressed to a certain group. All this has to be kept in mind also in the future and all of these insights have to be taken into account when the action is developed.

The majority of the coaches seem to want to have some informal gatherings as well. Actually some informal gatherings were tried already during the year 2016. Lunch meetings were organized every first Monday of the month for a few months. The coaches hoped for some kind of informal meetings, but these lunch meetings didn't succeed. Only one or two coaches came despite sufficient advertising. So it was not appropriate to continue to organize these any longer. Even though the lunch meetings didn't succeed, the idea of more informal gatherings shouldn't be forgotten. Some other kind of approach has to be tried. Actually a sauna evening type of meeting with some actual informational content is already under planning.

Coaches value the action and are quite satisfied with it. It is nice to get praise, but on the other hand, feelings in the organizing body are a bit ambivalent. The feedback is positive and coaches seem to value it, but they don't show up at the meetings. When coaches were asked how important they think that the community is for them on a 1-5 scale, the mean was 3,5. That can be considered quite high, then why the meetings attract so small a number of participants?

8.1 Practical experiences

The steering group work succeeded well. The group was small enough and the participants of the steering group were active participants in the community action as well and they were genuinely interested in developing the action. A few meetings in a year were enough. The steering group work is worth keeping up.

Benchmarking other regions was a good idea. Discussions with colleagues from different sports academies gave the organizer new ideas. However, it might have been even more beneficial if it had been done already earlier. Now it was done quite late, at the end of the year, so the new ideas only benefit the year 2017.

Some of the specialist interviews were done already in the spring of 2016, so some information could be used already during the year 2016 project. But one of the interviews was done at the beginning of the year 2017 so the information from that one can't be used until in the year's 2017 action or later. So it might have been a better idea to do the third interview earlier too.

The questionnaire for the coaches gave very good information. The action can be developed according to it. Many sources, who were referred to in the literature review, for example Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) and Pekonen (2016, 1-2), highlighted how important it is that the coaches can themselves influence and develop the action. It is also very important that the feedback is heard and changes are done according to it. When their opinion matters, it might encourage them to participate in the action even more closely and to respond to inquiries in the future as well. A webropol questionnaire sent via e-mail is a good way to collect coaches' opinions for example yearly, because everybody can think about the questions and fill in the form when the time is suitable for them within a given time frame.

Social media could add value to the community and it could deepen the sense of community and work as one platform to share knowledge or best practices. The group's Facebook page was opened in the summer, but it didn't work as planned. In order to work, people should use it. It will not be used just because it is available, the moderator has to use time and effort to get people to join the group and encourage them to exploit it. The moderator should have time to respond to comments and also acknowledge and sustain meaningful discussion. It would be easier for people to write something and share their ideas if the sense of community was stronger and they felt a stronger connection to the group. Maybe the Facebook page should have been opened later when the sense of community grows. On the other hand, only about 13 % of the survey respondents at the end of the year said that a Facebook page or some other social media forum would further the coaches' community action just a little or not at all. So maybe the coaches don't know well enough about the existence of the site. Another idea of how to use social media could be to write a regional coach blog. It could work so that coaches would challenge each other in turns to write an article on a common blog site.

Practical arrangements concerning the meeting itself and what should be learnt from them or done differently are discussed further in the next chapters. In a nutshell, it could be said that it is good to favor the methods which make everybody's voice heard and promote a relaxed atmosphere. The organizer has to have good communication skills and knowledge about coaching in order to move the conversation forward and deepen it with necessary questions.

A lot was learned from practical arrangements. The atmosphere in the community should be open and supportive (International Council for Coaching Excellence et al. 2014). In this case the atmosphere was usually very good in the meetings. Sometimes funny, purposeless coincidences helped to lighten the mood. For example a phone ringing accidentally playing a funny and appropriate ring tone in the skills training meeting created a relaxed atmosphere and people started to make jokes. It had a positive effect on the meeting, because when the atmosphere became relaxed and open, it was easier for the participants to ask questions and interact. It is good if the organizer could lighten the atmosphere somehow, for example with a joke. Spatial arrangements can further the good atmosphere as well. For example when the space is open and the chairs are arranged to form a circle, it is easier for the participants to communicate and take part in the conversation.

It was learned the hard way that the technical issues have to be double checked every time. It was embarrassing when the organizer didn't know how the equipment works when it was time to change the speaker and project the other presentation on the big screen. As well as the equipment, also the premises should be checked beforehand. For example in the September's doctoral lecture the premises were poor. The building was the same than in the previous meetings, but the auditorium was different. The presupposition was that it would be similar to the other auditoriums, but it was smaller and poorer. For example it was not suitable for arranging the chairs in a circle and the participants barely fit in the room.

If the meetings include for example coffee service, it usually gives a positive start to the event. If the meeting takes more than two hours, it would be proper to have a short toilet break in between. In previous years when some coaches' coffee meetings were organized, coffee and pastry were always available. Now the service is poorer even though action otherwise has developed. On the other hand, the service is not the key point why people come to the meetings, the content is.

Schedules often fail, so the organizer has to have ability to adapt to changing situations. For example the original plans have to be edited, if some issue gathers extra attention and conversation goes deep in there. In advance the organizer had a little fear that the participants might not want to discuss in the meetings. But the fear was every time proved wrong. Usually there should have been more time for discussion. It was also noticed that people tend to speak too long, so the timetable shouldn't be too tight. However, the conversation usually stayed too superficial. The organizer should take a stronger role as the leader of the conversation. The conversation should progress and deepen during the meetings. The specialist who acts as a guest speaker should also move the discussion forward.

In 2016 the meetings were open for practically all coaches. If the size of the community is too big, it makes familiarization difficult (Janhonen & al. 2015. 41–42). Could the action be more effective if the invited group was more limited? The problem is to get the people to come to the meetings. The feedback is good, coaches seem to value the action but they don't show up. The invitations were sent to more than 100 recipients, but usually around 20 coaches showed up. The participant numbers are illustrated in figure 22. Of course the conversation could go deeper if the group was more limited. The coaches could be divided into smaller groups for example based on their discipline. Maybe this should be tried out and then go back to the old pattern if the meetings won't gather people. On the other hand, some kind of division could be done in the meetings even if they are open for everybody. For example, some part of the discussion could be done in small groups. When invitations go to 100+ people and only around 20 show up, what happens when the targeted group is even smaller? However, it might allure more people if they think that the topic is specially designed for their needs or to their discipline's special features. The answer will be found out only by trial and error.

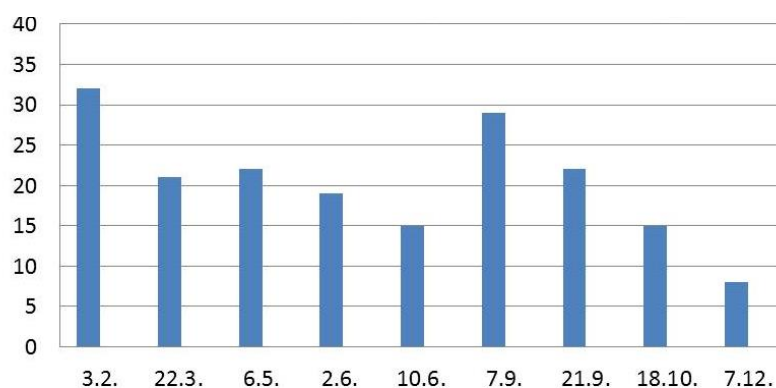


Figure 22. The number of participants in the meetings without the organizer or specialist guest(s)

8.2 Resources to organize the action

The organizing body, Päijät-Häme Sports Academy, has suffered from financial difficulties, so the coaches' community action has to be carried out with only small investments, even though it is one of the main objectives of the organization. Of course in order to get the action running, somebody needs to be in charge of the organization. Booking the premises for the meetings also incur costs. The idea is that the specialists who lecture and tell their points of view can be found inside the group. Usually the members of the group are committed to the action and they want to share their knowledge. But it is nice to give something as compensation for the preparations and the performance. Usually the compensation is a complimentary massage or other services, which are bought from Päijät-Häme sports academy's partners. Some of the meetings have included special training provided by the Coaches of Finland Association. The sports academy has also used its contacts and co-operation contract benefits in order to get some specialists to come and share their knowledge. For example the employees of the National Olympic Committee can be used as quest experts for free of charge and a free doctor's lecture is included in the co-operation contract with the medical center.

One of the development ideas of the author deals with the regional coaches' community action on a national level. This thesis project along with other studies has shown the importance of informal education in coaches' development. The Finnish coaching education system should be developed in a way that more resources would be moved from formal education arrangements to informal. Coaches' community action could be one good way to execute informal education and the sharing of best practices. So it might be worthwhile to give additional resources to sports academies designated for this action. Another alternative could be to remove the responsibility to organize this action from sports academies and assign it to the organs whose task is to organize coaching education. For example in Päijät-Häme it could be the regional sport organization PHLU or the training centres of Vierumäki or Pajulahti, who already organize coaching education. If sports academies don't get any resources to organize this important action, very significant results cannot be expected, even though there would be potential. In that case sports academies should target their resources to their original mission, that is, athletes' support. All in all, the national coaching competence development programmes should take a stand to this action; give some recommendations, help or resources to its organization.

9 Summary of the project

The results of the project are illustrated in the following figure 23. The project produced a model or an example of how to organize and develop coaches' community action. Coaches' community action is an important part of every sports academy's action, so other academies can make use of this study and its results in their action.

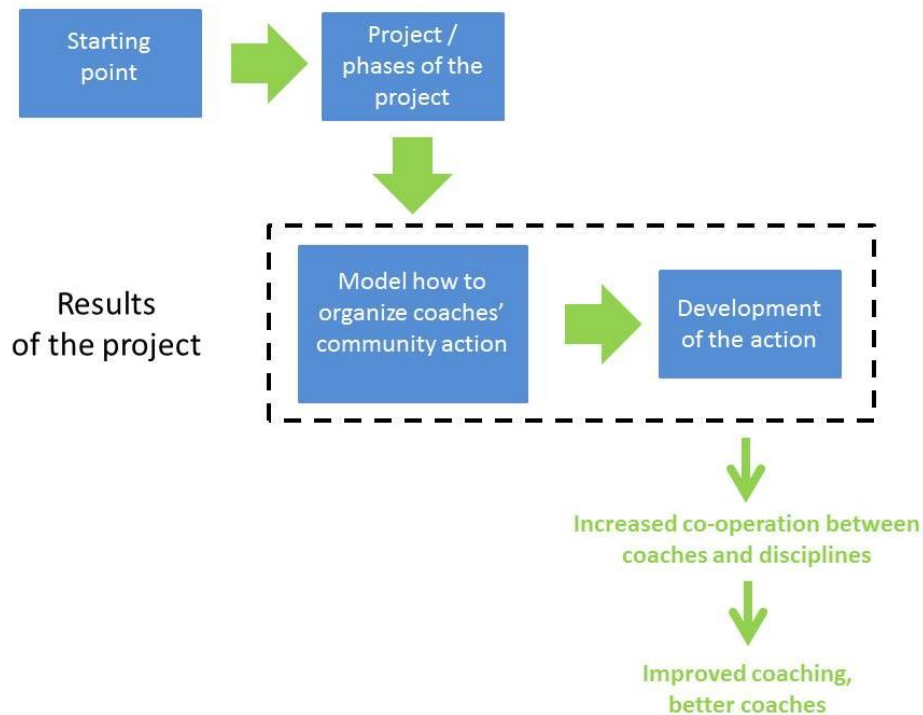


Figure 23. The project produced a model of how to organize and develop coaches' community action

Ultimately the final objective of the action is to develop the coaches and improve the level of coaching. The work is in progress, the action is still too young to fulfill the ultimate objectives. The work is part of a more important national objective to change the operating practices so that there would be more cooperation between different disciplines. This project helped to develop the regional coaches' community action in Päijät-Häme and can be used in other regions as well. When the coaches' communities develop, it has a positive impact on the main goal as well. So thanks to the project, a small step towards a new operating practice has been taken at least in Päijät-Häme.

The research questions defined earlier were: how to organize community action for coaches? Who should be invited? Does it add value or knowledge for coaches? How is the sense of community formed and developed? What should be taken into consideration

in informal education? The answers are not exact or unambiguous, but all of them are dealt with and answered earlier in this thesis.

10 Future

Below are three tables in which ideas and considerations for the future are capsulized. Table 4 is directed mainly to the organizing body of this project. It lists issues which partly already work, but can be improved or are otherwise very important to keep in mind. Table 5 presents the development ideas which have not yet been taken into account. The development ideas generally or nationally to coaches' community action are presented in table 6. Ideas in that table are not something that the author herself can change in her operating environment, but they are rather suggestions for national coaching education developers or other decision makers in sports.

Table 4. List of factors that have to be remembered to keep in mind or improve when coaches' community action is organized in Päijät-Häme sports academy in the future

Meetings should be arranged on more regular intervals (approximately every six weeks)
Remember to ask feedback regularly (after meetings and yearly) → remember to take the suggestion into account
Coaches should be able to choose the topics and content
Exploit and develop steering group
The meetings should include more practical training
Remember to have enough time for conversation
Atmosphere has to be positive, supportive, trusting, open, respective → organizer should try to lighten the atmosphere (joke at the beginning etc)
Remember to encourage people to tell their points of view → everybody's voice should be heard and valued
Practical arrangements have to be done carefully
Get people to know each other → familiarity is very important
Spatial arrangements should further communication → for example chairs in circle
Find specialists inside the group
Vary the date → day of the week and time of the day should vary

Table 5. List of development ideas which have not yet been tried in Päijät-Häme sports academy's action

Health care specialists should join the group
Further education about learning and teaching for the organizer
More responsibility to coaches
The themes should be introduced to the participants beforehand → assignment
The themes should be discussed afterwards → was the knowledge put into practice → social media
Values, vision, identity, rules and objectives should be defined together → planning evening
Organize also some informal gatherings
Organize action on different levels
Some meetings should be open for everybody, some just for a certain group
Conversation should go deeper, it should be better steered and it should lead to an action plan
Versatile and participatory approaches should be used in the meetings → group work
Technical issues and premises have to be (double)checked beforehand
Organize discipline visits
Something more than just meetings → group t-shirt, discounts etc
Lecture material to sports academy's web pages
Social media could add value → time and effort have to be used in order to make it work
Give time and resources to share information, but also encourage, monitor and reward those who do so

Table 6. National or general development ideas to coaches' community action

National guidelines how to organize regional coaches' community action are needed → to ensure quality
A larger part of the coaching education resources should be directed to informal coaching education (arranging regional coaches' community action is one method)
The acquired knowledge should be recognized at some level
Sports academies should share their ideas of how to organize the action
What is the proper body to organize the action in the first place?

Päijät-Häme sports academy is going to organize coaches' community action in the future as well. This thesis project gave good ideas and tools for it. Co-operation networks should be utilized though, so more co-operation is done with the regional sports organization PHLU in 2017 and in the future. In 2016 the seminar focusing on injury prevention in September was organized together with PHLU. In 2017 the co-operation will increase and that

is a good thing. The PHLU has a club developer whose tasks include also coaches' development. Collaboration between organizations is always reasonable because you can join forces and seek for better results.

The financial situation of Päijät-Häme sports academy is slowly getting better. A better financial situation mainly benefits athletes, but coaches can benefit from it a bit as well. More money can be used for the action in the future. One idea can be to support coaches financially when they attend some seminars or other educational occasions. The coaches can then disseminate information to others in the community. That kind of model is used in Joensuu. Increasing co-operation between different disciplines is one big goal in the Finnish sports. Something can be done with just small financial investments, if there is a will. Of course it is easier to develop the action if it is possible to target some financial resources to the action as well.

Before this thesis was published, some of the suggested new ideas had already been put into practice. It was suggested that those who attend and share their ideas with passion should be rewarded. At the beginning of the year the most active participants of the previous year were awarded with books. The action is organized on two levels in year 2017. A separate group is launched for sports schools' coaches. They are going to meet regularly every six weeks when the students have their exam week in school. Those meetings will be a bit more like group mentoring. In addition to another level, some grouping is implemented as well. Depending on the topic, some of the meetings are targeted to certain discipline groups. The groups are: endurance disciplines, team ball sports and speed & power disciplines. As for more informal gatherings, a coaches' well-being night will be organized in spring 2017. That is going to be a mix of business and leisure; guidance on work-related stress and followed by bowling and a sauna evening. Discipline visits are new experiments later in spring. A list of visits is already under preparation. In addition, lecture material from the meetings has been collected on the sports academy's web pages.

Surely some of the new operation practices will not succeed perfectly right from the start, but then further development is needed. The list of development ideas is quite long, but when they are tried out and further developed if need be, the action will surely gain ground. And step by step coaches' community action can do its bit to develop the coaching in Päijät-Häme region.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. 2016 calendar for coaches community action

Appendix 2. Notes from interview with Päivi Frantsi 13.4.2016

Appendix 3. Notes from interview with Herkko Koski 9.5.2016

Appendix 4. Notes from interview with Maiju Kokkonen 17.1.2017

Appendix 5. The Webropol questionnaire form

Appendix 6. The feedback form considering the meetings

Valmentajayhteisötoiminnan

vuosikello Lahden alueella



- 3.2.** **Valmentajayhteisötoiminnan esittely**, vieraina Suomen Olympiakomitean asiantuntijoita. Käydään läpi kansallisia ja paikallisia tavoitteita valmentajayhteisötoimintaan liittyen, kuullaan esimerkkejä muualta ja ideoidaan omaa toimintaa. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 10–13.
- 22.3.** **Valmentajan Vuorovaikutustaidot**, Suomen Valmentajat ry:n teemakoulutus, kouluttajana Marianne Tarva-Parviainen. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 10–13.
- 6.5.** **Taitoharjoittelu**, asiantuntijavieraana Sami Kalaja. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 12–14, teoretiedon lisäksi pureudutaan käytännön esimerkkeihin alueella toimivien mallien kautta.
- 2.6.** **Joukkuepalloilulajien tapaaminen**, vieraina Suomen Olympiakomitean asiantuntijat Pia Pekonen ja Jukka Rautakorpi. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 10–13,
- 10.6.** **Paneelikeskustelu aihepiirillä ”valmentajan tärkeimmät ominaisuudet ja taidot”**, panelisteina alueen huippu-urheilijoita ja -valmentajia. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 12–13.



kesälomatauko

- 7.9.** **Vammat Veks 2**, Suomen Valmentajat ry:n ja UKK-instituutin koulutus, joka pureutuu vammojen ennaltaehkäisyyn (erityishuomiolla nuoren urheilijan selkävaivat), Lahden lyseolla klo 17–20 (hintaa 20 €).
- 21.9.** **Luento / keskustelutilaisuus kuormituksen ja palautumisen suhteesta ja palautumisen seurannasta**, kirittäjänä lääkäri Mika Liukkonen. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 14–16.
- 18.10.** **Perehdytään toimintakulttuurin luomiseen seurassa tai joukkueessa**, vieraana jääkiekkovalmentaja Jukka Rautakorpi. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 13–15.
- 7.12.** **Menestynyt valmentaja tulee kertomaan omasta polustaan ja oppimisestaan**, ohjelmassa huippuvalmentajan oppimispäiväkirja, vieraana kestävyysguru Ismo Hämäläinen. Lahden Urheilukeskuksessa klo 12–14.



Ilmoittautuminen tapahtumiin Johannalle PHUra:n toimistoon: johanna.ylinen@phura.fi tai 0447638444

Notes from interview with Päivi Frantsi 13.4.2016

The interview was made as an open discussion where the author had some questions to guide the discussion. The interview was recorded and the recording is stored in the author's personal files. The interview took place in Vierumäki at interviewee's house and took 45 minutes (from 15:00 to 15:45 o'clock). Here are the notes from the discussion. Answers are based on interviewee's long experience and personal insight. Frantsi works as psychologist and has done a lot of work in sport field and in coaches' education. She is also giving professional guidance in different kind of organizations and workplaces, so she has a wide theoretical knowledge and practical experience on community in organizations and she also has a general understanding of coaches' occupation.

What does community mean?

- Sense of community could be described as a building up a common/shared story.
- Common experience and meetings are important bricks when community is build.
- Community has a positive vibe to a person.

Where is the community built from? What are the most important things in building up a community?

- Community adds value to the participant.
- Community should be something that the participants want to belong to, the member is motivated. Members of a community want to share and learn from each other.
- Identity of the group and common values and are very important.
- A sense of community is formed, when people are open and they share also difficult issues.
- Community needs frames and timetable, which should be planned well in advance.

How does the community in loose organizations differ compared to tighter networks or workplaces?

- These so-called "mycelium-communities" does not have tight limits or they are not like a permanent work communities.
- Commitment to these loose communities (what also regional coaches' community is) is more challenging.
- If the community had a clearer identity, it would be easier to commit. And a sense of community requires commitment.
- The process follows up a circle: commitment → experiences → a sense of community (and this works in both directions).
- More aware building and investing is needed, encounters have to be created.
- More expectations is directed to the content → needs a strong attraction and content.
- Beforehand planned and organized meetings are needed → something to commit to.

Who can be a member of a community? How the community should be limited?

- If the group has quite high criterions, it is valued and people want to belong to it → so some criterions should be set.
- Community requires a common process which causes common growth. And in order to get there a certain starting level is needed.

- A common starting level helps to organize meetings and issues dealt there so, that everybody can get something → maybe there should be different levels of meetings, some are open for everybody, some are open just for professionals.
- On the other hand community should be quite open and not too tightly limited.
- The size of the community matters, it is important, that the members somehow know each other, so too big group might be challenging.

How to get everybody's voice to be heard?

- Versatile and different kind of methods should be used in the meetings (for example group works).
- The space should be organized so, that it furthers communication (for example circle).
- The atmosphere in the community should be open, inspirational and supporting.

How to create a right atmosphere to the community and meetings?

- Problem based learning might be a good way to create good atmosphere. When the themes come from a genuine everyday life, it usually creates excitement.
- Also difficult issues should be lifted to the table (which might be challenging).
- There has to be genuine conversation. The matter should open up to the participants and they should be able to form their opinion. Everybody doesn't have to agree, but different opinions should be accepted. The moderator should encourage people to conversation and bring up different points of view.
- When people know each other it is easier to create a light atmosphere. Organizing for example once a year a very informal occasion might be one way to get there. For example pre-Christmas parties or sauna evening, or the occasion could be a mix of fact and leisure (for example watching a match/ballgame where an expert enlightens the game and a dinner afterwards). But these kinds of occasions should be considered and planned very carefully and they should be organized rarely enough.

How to share responsibility?

- Sharing responsibility is a good way to commit people.
- Commitment and responsibility should be seen as a positive thing.
- Taking responsibility can mean for example that someone is responsible in his or her return to tell his or her way to coach some theme. Usually people like to tell about themselves or their ways to do something.

Participation in the evaluation and development

- Members of community should be able to evaluate and develop the action.
- A feedback survey should be collected at the end of each meeting.
- Feedback should be heard and took into consideration.

Notes from interview with Herkko Koski 9.5.2016

The interview was made as an open discussion where the author had some questions to guide the discussion. The interview was recorded and the recording is stored in the author's personal files. The interview took place in Lahti at ice hockey club Kiekko Reipas's office and took 40 minutes (from 10:00 to 10:40 o'clock). Here are the notes from the discussion. Answers are based on interviewee's long experience and personal insight. Koski is a head of coaching in ice hockey club and also a coach. He also works as a mentor and gives professional guidance for coaches in Päijät-Häme region.

Do you think that you belong to regional coaches' community?

- Loosely. The community is not very tight or close.
- Tighter communities are formed inside ice hockey or very informally between regions' experienced coaches from different disciplines (for example school coaches or cooperation clubs). The trip travelled together is what matters in these.

How could the feeling be strengthened?

- Common meetings, common objectives and direction and common understanding are required.
- The most important thing is trust and respect inside the community. Those usually form informally.

What do you feel that you could get from this kind of community? Is the action useful?

- The action is useful and it is worth sustaining.
- Time management is nowadays very important, so when people are gathered, it should add value to participants.
- Networking and building up contacts to different coaches is the main thing, but also the content matters.
- Versatility and knowledge from other disciplines in content is important.
- Content should be inside the common goals. Coaches have had their influence to content, what is a very positive thing.
- Content matters, meetings shouldn't be arranged just in order to meet. Participants have to be able to select which occasions they go to and which not.

Are there coaches' communities inside ice-hockey?

- Yes, in many level. There is regional ice hockey coaches' community and also inside the club is a very tight community between coaches.
- National association organizes community action for the heads of coaching. The heads of coaching meet 4-6 times a year. Content in meetings is organized by association and meetings are popular. Content deals usually with matters related to ice hockey, but sometimes there are visitors from other disciplines to share their best practices.
- Ice hockey is a forerunner in this field.

How the ice hockey communities are born, what has been important in their growth?

- Participants see meetings important, peer support!
- Community has a common target. Ice hockey federation has done a very good job in organization; they have managed to engage participants to common values and alignments.

Where you are as a coach? Where you would like to develop more and how you could get there?

- Has worked 13 years as a head of coaching. In between some short periods also as team coach.
- Not in team coaching at the moment, so in order to develop as a coach, it would require jumping to the “real everyday coaching”.

How do you see the calendar for this year in regional coaches’ community action?

- Calendar is very comprehensive.
- It is important to be able to select in which to attend and which not. Some content interest more than others and sometimes timetable might be a problem.

What kind of responsibilities or roles you recommend to be given to coaches in these meetings?

- Coaches should take part to producing content. Sharing best practices is important, presentations should be carefully prepared.
- There should also be concrete action in meetings, where coaches move and are able to share and receive exercises. Sweat joins!

How the action should be limited? To whom it should be open for?

- It should be limited somehow, some criteria.
- At least producers of content should be professional coaches.
- Some meetings could be open for everybody, some only for limited group.

What is your dream situation regarding collaboration between coaches and different disciplines?

- Clubs could be general clubs at least for younger kids, where kids are able to try different kind of disciplines.
- Everyday life should be organized so, that expenses or timetables wouldn’t restrict too much. Kids would be able to do versatile sports.

What is the importance of mentoring process for coaches’ development?

- Learning happens in so many ways. Formal education is one way to learn, but maybe the most effective way is informal education. Mentoring is one way to get hands to individual’s needs and starting points.
- For a head of coaching other coaches are the main focus. Encountering the individual is important and it could happen via mentoring.
- Importance of mentoring is growing and for him it has been the most important way to develop.

What has emerged from mentoring processes, what do coaches need? Do they need this kind of community action?

- Coaches want to be heard and that their opinions and needs are taken into account.

Would you like to add something?

- A list of educated mentors could be collected from Suomen Valmentajat ry. The list could be shared to clubs and also to sport academies for regional coaches' communities' use.

Notes from interview with Maiju Kokkonen 17.1.2017

The interview was made as an open discussion where the author had some questions to guide the discussion. The interview was recorded and the recording is stored in the author's personal files. The interview took place at the interviewee's office in the Vierumäki Sports Training Centre and took 60 minutes (from 12:20 to 13:20 o'clock). Here are the notes from the discussion. Answers are based on interviewee's long experience and personal insight. Kokkonen works as a coach educator in the Vierumäki Sports Training Centre. She is responsible for coaches' education in Vierumäki; she educates coaches and develops the education programs. She has also been involved in the development process of the national coaching competence model. Before the current job she has worked as a professional coach for several years and also as a head of education in a discipline association. At the moment she is doing coaching as a volunteer activity on her spare time.

How do you see the relationship between formal and informal coaching education?

- The formal coaching education has changed; it's not like pouring knowledge into someone's head anymore. Also formal education tries nowadays to be reflective, personalized and inclusive.
- It's depending on the level of the coach; in lower levels the focus is maybe more in the formal education.
- All forms and levels of education are needed.
- Personalized education paths are needed.
- Also some kind of system is needed to coordinate the supply and to ensure the quality.
- Informal education can give the coach a network, support and tools. Informal education can give prepared ideas or tools to the coach, as he or she might not have the time to look for all the data him- or herself.

Are there some particular aspects in the Finnish coaching competence model, which suits best to just informal or formal coaching education?

- Both formal and informal education are needed in all aspects.
- Resources might be an aspect in coaches' competence, where the focus is more in informal education.
- Formal education is usually more focused in sport skills and less weight is put to coaches' own self-development skills.

Should the Finnish coaching education system be changed in some way?

- More focus is going to be put on self-development skills in the future.
- More tailor-made and personalized education paths are needed; the previously acquired skills should be recognized better in formal education, education plans should be made due to personal needs.
- The people in discipline associations (who might order educations) should have a better knowledge and understanding of a contemporary view of learning.
- The education should guide the coaches to own thinking and source criticism.

What is a good coach like?

- A good coach knows him- or herself, his/her strengths and development areas.
- He or she has good communication skills and he or she gets along with different kind of people.
- The focus in coaching is in the athlete and different individuals and their needs and goals are taken into account.
- A good coach is encouraging and inspiring.
- A good coach is also gracious; athletes are not machines, but they are humans.

What should be the most important points in the regional coaches' community action?

- The coaches' should be able to influence to the topics.
- Also the organizer has a big responsibility to include topics, which the coaches themselves might not understand to ask → requires expertise.
- There should be enough time on conversation and the conversation should be somehow guided.
 - For example small groups → thinking and discussing how to take the topic and tips in to practice in their coaching
 - The conversation should lead to some kind of action plan how to take the day's topics into practice → link to own everyday life
- The themes of previous meeting should somehow be shortly discussed in the beginning of the meeting → are the tips gone to practice and how others succeeded to do that.
- It is good to have a low threshold for participation.

What could the coaches at best get from this kind of action? Does it add value?

- This kind of action gives coach a network and peer support, which might often be very useful.
- Multi-disciplined group is a good thing, it gives different kind of insights to coaching and furthers co-operation between disciplines.

Who should be invited?

- Some of the meetings should be open for everybody and some just for certain group, depending on the topic. Then it is easier to deepen the conversation and target the topics even more.
- If some meetings are open for everybody, it might be a good idea to divide the group somehow when group works / discussion are done → for example team ball sport coaches to one group and so on.
- Sometimes it might be a good idea to further the networking between coaches from different disciplines, so that discussion is not always done in the familiar group.

What kind of roles should / could be given to the coaches who are involved in the community action?

- They should be taken along to the planning process.
- They could follow / observe each other when they coach → visits to trainings → get new ideas.
- Inside the meetings of course discussion is important and that people bring their views.

- Organizer should use participatory approaches and inspire participants to discuss and change best practices.

Have you been involved in similar kind of communities for coaches? What has been important in them?

- It is important that people inside the community know each other.
- Some communities inside clubs, where the more experienced coach has been a mentor to the younger ones.
 - planning the action and coaching in the club together, giving feedback, changing best practices

What kind of tips / advice you would give for the future?

- The people inside the group should know each other, so time should be spent on that.
 - maybe “starting camp” or longer meeting at the beginning of year, where people learn to know each other and plan the action
 - at the end of the year some more festive meeting might be a good idea also (maybe in connection with Päijät-Häme Sports Gala etc)
- There could be something more than just common meetings, for example common T-shirt or discounts to events etc.
- ideas to topics:
 - learning processes of coaches → different ways to learn and to become a better coach
 - how do I coach → how the process goes on, how do I instruct, asking skills (note this as organizer as well!)
- Common facebook group could work well.
- The materials could be collected to somewhere (for example to sport academy’s web pages) → open data
 - could some of the meetings be filmed / recorded as well?
- Own digital pad for the group → Vierumäki’s model (hockey centre)?

Do you want to add something?

- The challenge is to get the people know each other. When they do, it is easier to feel belonging and the sense of community
- It might be a good idea to form common rules for the group → maybe in the “starting camp” etc.

2016 valmentajayhteisötoiminnan palautekysely

Päijät-Hämeen Urheiluakatemia on järjestänyt vuoden 2016 aikana valmentajayhteisötoimintaa alueen valmentajille. Toimintaa halutaan jatkaa edelleen ja kehittää entisestään. Vastaamalla tähän kyselyyn autat kehittämään toimintaa, vastauksesi on erittäin tärkeä.

1. Mikä on ylin koulutusasteesi valmentajana?

Taso I (esim. VOK I)

Taso II (esim. liikuntaneuvoja, VOK II)

Taso III (esim. lajiliiton järjestämät III-tason koulutukset)

Taso IV (esim. AMK, VAT, VEAT)

Taso V (yliopistotason koulutus)

Joku muu, mikä?

Minulla ei ole muodollista koulutusta valmennustehtäviin

2. Mikä on asemasi valmentajana?

Teen valmennusta ammattilaisena kokopäiväisesti

Teen valmennusta ammattilaisena osa-aikaisesti

Teen valmennustyötä oman toimen ohella säännöllisesti

Teen valmennustyötä oman toimen ohella epäsäännöllisesti

Joku muu, mikä?

3. Mihin kaikkiin valmentajayhteisön tapaamisiin olet osallistunut vuoden 2016 aikana?

Olympiakomitean vierailu 3.2.

Valmentajan vuorovaikutustaidot 22.3.

Taitoharjoittelu 6.5.

Joukkuepalloilun tapaaminen 2.6.

Paneelikeskustelu valmentajan tärkeimmistä ominaisuuksista 10.6.

Vammat Veks II 7.9.

Kuormituksen ja palautumisen suhde ja seuranta 21.9.

Erilaiset toimintakulttuurit ja niiden luominen seurassa tai joukkueessa 18.10.

Valmentajan oppimispäiväkirja 7.12.

Jokin kuukausittaisista lounastapaamisista

4. Jos et ole osallistunut yhteenkään tapaamiseen, niin miksi? Miten sinut saisi mukaan toimintaan ensi vuonna?

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5. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet seuraaviin valmentajayhteisötoimintaa koskeviin asioihin?

	olen täysin tyytymätön	olen jokseenkin tyytymätön	neutraali	olen jokseenkin tyytyväinen	olen täysin tyytyväinen
Tapaamisten aiheet	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Tapaamisten ajankohdat	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Tapahtumapaikat	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Tapaamisten kesto	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Tapaamisten asiantuntijavieraat	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Teorian ja käytännön suhde tapaamisissa	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Keskustelulle varattu aika tapaamisissa	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Valmentajayhteisötoiminnan toimivuus	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n
Yhteistyö eri lajien valmentajien välillä	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n	j _n

6. Voit perustella edellisen kysymyksen vastauksiasi vielä sanallisesti, mikäli haluat.

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7. Mikä ajankohta olisi mielestäsi valmentajayhteisön tapaamisiin kaikkein sopivin?

Arkisin klo 8-12 välillä

Arkisin klo 12-16 välillä

Arkisin klo 16 jälkeen

Viikonloppuisin

Joku muu, mikä?

8. Kuinka tärkeä Päijät-Hämeen valmentajayhteisö on sinulle?

Ei lainkaan tärkeä

Jokseenkin tärkeä

Neutraali

Jokseenkin tärkeä

Erittäin tärkeä

9. Mitkä asiat ovat mielestäsi tärkeitä toimivassa valmentajayhteisössä?

10. Kenelle valmentajayhteisötoiminta pitäisi mielestäsi olla suunnattu?

Kaikille mukaan haluaville valmentajille

Joitain tapaamisia pitäisi olla suunnattu kaikille, joitain vain tietyille ryhmälle

Kaikki tapaamiset pitäisi olla suunnattu tietyille ryhmälle

11. Mikäli vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen, että kaikki tai joitain tapaamisia pitäisi olla suunnattu vain tietyille ryhmälle, niin mikä olisi mielestäsi sopiva ryhmäjako?

Lajiryhmittäin (esim. joukkuepalloilu, kestävyyslajit, kamppailulajit jne)

Valmennettavien ikäryhmän perusteella (lapset, nuoret, aikuiset)

Valmennettavien tason perusteella (harrasteurheilu, huippu-urheilu)

Valmentajan aseman mukaan (ammattivalmentajat, oman toimen ohella toimivat valmentajat)

Joku muu, mikä?

12. Voit perustella kahden edellisen kysymyksen vastauksiasi vielä sanallisesti, mikäli haluat.

13. Koetko, että olet kehittynyt valmentajana valmentajayhteisötoiminnan ansiosta?

- Kyllä, olen kehittynyt
- Ehkä hieman
- En usko
- En osaa sanoa

14. Voit perustella edellisen kysymyksen vastaustasi vielä sanallisesti, mikäli haluat.

15. Oletko kiinnostunut epämuodollisemmista valmentajatapaamisista, kuten esimerkiksi lounastapaamisista, saunailloista tms?

- Kyllä
- En

16. Koetko, että valmentajayhteisön yhteinen sähköinen foorumi (esim. facebook-ryhmä) edistäisi yhteisön toimintaa?

- Ei lainkaan
- Melko vähän
- En osaa sanoa
- Jonkin verran
- Erittäin paljon

17. Mihin valmentajan työn osa-alueisiin liittyviä tapaamisia toivoisit ensi vuodelle?

Voit valita yhden tai useamman vaihtoehdon.

- Urheiluosaaminen (esim. erilaisten ominaisuuksien harjoittaminen)
- Ihmissuhdetaidot (esim. tunne- ja vuorovaikutustaidot, ongelmanratkaisutaidot)

- € Itsensä kehittämisen taidot (esim. tiedon hankintataidot, oppimisen taidot)
- € Voimavarat (esim. valmentajan oma jaksaminen, ajanhallinta)

18. Voit perustella edellisen kysymyksen vastaustasi vielä sanallisesti tai antaa tarkempia aihe-ehdotuksia, mikäli haluat.

19. Voit lopuksi antaa yleisesti palautetta, kommentteja tai kehitysehdotuksia valmentajayhteisötoimintaan liittyen.

PALAUTEKYSELY PHURAN VALMENTAYHTEISÖN TAPAHTUMASTA

Tapahtuma: _____

Tapahtuman aika ja paikka: _____

Ympyröi mielestäsi sopivin vaihtoehto, 1 = täysin eri mieltä, 2 = osittain eri mieltä, 3 = eos, 4 = osittain samaa mieltä, 5 = täysin samaa mieltä

Tapahtuma oli onnistunut	1	2	3	4	5
Asiantuntijan osuus oli kiinnostava	1	2	3	4	5
Aihe oli tarpeellinen	1	2	3	4	5
Tapahtuman kesto ja ajankohta oli sopiva	1	2	3	4	5
Sain uusia ajatuksia oman valmennustoiminnan tueksi	1	2	3	4	5
Valmentajayhteisötoimintaa kannattaa jatkaa ja kehittää	1	2	3	4	5

Voit perustella vielä sanallisesti vastauksiasi, mikäli haluat:

Millä tavoilla olisit valmis olemaan valmentajayhteisötoiminnassa mukana:

Vapaa sana / ajatuksia valmentajayhteisötoiminnan kehittämiseen:

JATKA TARVITTAESSA KÄÄNTÖPUOLELLE

KIITOS VASTAUKSISTASI!