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The purpose of this paper was to gain insight into how coaches problematized their coaching practices and the process in which they engaged to become what they perceived to be better coaches using a course based on critical reflective practice. We assumed that constant critical self-reflection would enable coaches to move closer to their individual idea of a 'good coach.' Scholars and coaches collaborated to develop course content. The course was built on principles of rational-emotive education. We drew on Foucault's conceptualization of self-constitution or modes of subjectivation and confessional practice and Knaus' approach to teaching for our analytical framework. Thirty-five coaches participated in this study. The data consisted of semistructured interviews, field notes, open-ended questionnaires and focus group. The results are presented per mode of change or transformation. We explored how coaches wanted to transform their coaching practice (ethical substance), how they defined a good coach (mode of subjection), how they worked on change (ethical work) and how they transformed themselves (telos). To gain further insight into this process, we also examined narratives of three coaches as they described why and how they changed. The practice of critical reflection seemed to meet the needs of the coaches involved in the study. They used it to continually examine their behavior and their normalized taken-for-granted beliefs and to transform themselves in the direction of their idea of a 'good coach.' Ontological reflection was seen as a tool and a process that requires continual practice.

Keywords: *Coach education; Reflection; Transformation; Good coach; Evaluation*

Introduction

Scholars, who have explored the experiences of children in youth sport, have emphasized the crucial role coaches play in these experiences. They see the coach as a catalyst for promoting the positive effects of sport participation such as learning social and moral skills including respect and fair play, how to cope with social differences and with winning and losing and how to develop healthy habits (see, for example, Bailey, 2006; Bailey et al., 2009; Janssens 2004).

Coaches often assume that they develop what they understand to be good coaching skills through experience. They tend to rely more on their own experiences and those of other coaches than on formal coaching education (CE) courses and programs to develop their coaching skills (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). In contrast, scholars have contended that CE can improve coaching practices and possibly strengthen the desired social outcomes of youth sport participation (see, for example, Cushion et al., 2003; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005; Jones,

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Armour, & Potrac, 2003; Piggott, 2012; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Scholars disagree, however, about what coaches need to learn and do to be able to accomplish this. Cushion et al. (2006) have summarized these different approaches and their incorporation into coach education programs. They found that the priority in CE has been to help coaches to improve their communication skills, to enhance the quality of their feedback and didactics, to increase their understanding of the motor learning process and to develop various decision-making styles. Scholars differ in their prioritizing of coaching skills in such courses and in their operationalization of definitions of a good coach. This variation in approaches to CE suggests that the notion of a good coach and what she or he needs to learn is a fluid and ambiguous concept. Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, and Groom (2014) urged those developing CE courses to situate the knowledges and practices within a theoretical frame that enables the coaches to apply the content in a variety of situations and encounters. Little attention has been paid, however, to how coaches try to apply what they learn and how they try to achieve their notion of being a good coach. Such scholarly attention is, however, necessary. Denison (2007) has argued that coaches continually need to evaluate the assumptions underlying their practices and approaches to coaching. They can do so by expanding their tools to include more/expanded theoretical frameworks and ideas. Most CE courses seem to be built on the assumption that coaches will apply what they learn, that is, when necessary, they will change their practices to enhance the possibility that athletes will experience the positive effects of sport participation. Insight is, therefore, needed into how coaches incorporate what they learn in CE in their coaching practice. The focus of this paper is on how coaches attempt to change or transform themselves into their perceptions of a good coach during and after a coaching course that was based on their feedback. Such insight can be invaluable for coaches who wish to be a good coach as well as those who develop CE and scholars who study coaching.

This notion that a good coach is developed through CE is disputed. The criticism of CE is not only just confined to specific content but also to its purpose. Taylor and Garratt (2010) argue that many CE programs tend to assume there is a commonly shared notion of what constitutes a good coach and that notion is rarely problematized in CE. They contend this assumption means that the purpose of CE is often to normalize and homogenize coaching behaviors. According to Taylor and Garratt, CE courses may attempt to produce coaches who behave in ways that conform to popular understandings of a good coach and to good coaching practices as summarized in coaching literature. Similarly, Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006, 2013) have argued that different forms of normative power are enacted on coaches and their practices through the content of CE since its content suggests there is a norm to which coaches must adhere to be labeled good and effective (see also Piggott, 2012). Those who produce CE may, therefore, not always question what are seen as acceptable or best coaching practices but instead teach coaches how to use them (Denison, 2007; see also Markula & Pringle, 2006). Taylor and Garratt (2010) have questioned the desirability of this normalization and homogenization of a good coach. Denison (2007) drew from Foucauldian perspectives to point out, 'when a

practice achieves this level of unquestioned superiority, we are unlikely to change it and instead try to change the individual who seems to be having difficulty abiding by it' (p. 380). This norm seems to ignore contextuality and to reduce coaching to a uniform process.

The assumption that coaches can be normalized through the learning of the various skills described earlier suggests that coaches are autonomous individuals who are almost solely responsible for the behavior and development of their athletes. Yet coaches are not only part of a specific team but are also part of a network of power relations that includes sport clubs, communities of parents, athletes and coaches, national and international sport associations and Olympic committees, etc. (see also Cushion et al. 2003 on this). These networks and the individual coaching contexts act upon coaches so that they are not the autonomous agents that coaching courses may suggest.

This normative power means others decide what coaches need to learn and how to assess to what extent that behavior is learned. Yet coaches prefer knowledge development and practical strategies that can be used in their specific context (see Cassidy, Potrac, & McKenzie, 2006; Cushion et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2013; Piggott, 2012). Chesterfield, Potrac, and Jones (2010) reported that the coaches involved in their study believed that the practice methods taught by coach educators were generally inappropriate for use in their own club contexts and concluded that there is no 'one size fits all' course. Similarly, Denison (2007) argued that it is erroneous to assume that what a coach learns from solving a specific situation can be used in similar situations. Coaches seem to value courses in which they have room to explore ideas, to disagree with each other and the instructors and to share their practices and problems with others (Nelson et al., 2013; Piggott, 2012). They often prefer informal and self-directed learning; they want to learn in a classroom as well as in the context of their coaching practice including problems with which they have to cope (Cassidy et al., 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Leduc, Culver, & Werthner, 2012; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). This suggests that those planning CE courses should integrate feedback from coaches and use a bottom-up approach, that is, base the content of a course on the identified needs of the participating coaches. Yet what coaches need is not always clear.

Various scholars have suggested that coach education courses should not prioritize specific coaching knowledges but instead focus on teaching coaches to reflect on their own coaching practices (Cushion et al., 2006; Denison, 2007; Jones et al., 2003; Leduc et al., 2012; Peel, Cropley, Hanton, & Fleming, 2013). Denison and Avner (2011) argue that coaches have to learn to construct their own (individual) solutions for a problem by exploring how problems have been defined, why and by whom, and, therefore, coaching should never become a taken-for-granted practice. Analyzing and constructing solutions can be developed through constant critical reflection. Reflection can be seen as a form of 'meta thinking' (thinking about thinking) in which individuals constantly consider the relationship between thoughts and actions/behaviors in their coaching practice (Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Nevill, 2001). Coaches who engage in reflective practice would continually question

how and why they coach as they do (Denison, 2007). Denison (2007) has proposed that CE should help coaches 'cultivate a new sense of themselves that would effectively challenge them to problematize how they develop and apply their knowledge' (p. 378). Reflection is a process, however, that requires practice in learning to ask the right questions.

This need for reflection in coach education has received attention from several scholars. Some (Hughes, Lee, & Chesterfield, 2009; Winfield, Williams, & Dixon, 2013) have developed methods such as reflection cards containing questions about goals, behaviors and practices that coaches can use before and after their practices and matches and discuss during dialogical mentoring. Critical reflection, however, requires coaches to have conceptual tools that give direction to their reflection, to practice using those tools and to engage in continual learning or transformation of behavior to reach their aim (Leduc et al., 2012).

Theoretical frameworks

Development of reflexivity.   We drew on Foucauldian perspectives to frame our approach to CE and to the analysis. Foucault (1998) has argued that change or transformation (what he calls ethical work) consists of self-reflection on and self-awareness about how one is positioned with respect to the moral code within a specific context and how she or he can respond. This suggests that coaches who wish to change or transform themselves into individuals who create a positive pedagogical setting must continually reflect on their knowledge and their underlying assumptions and problematize their beliefs and practices (see also Denison & Avner, 2011; Infinito, 2003). Reflection is not a linear practice, however, that can be learned by following a series of steps (Denison, 2010), but requires engaging in processes of transformation. This process of learning about and engaging in transformation through critical reflection has received relatively little attention in the coaching literature. Insights from research that examines these processes should, therefore, not only benefit coaches and ultimately the athletes but also those who develop CE.

Foucault (2000) has also argued that in order to govern others one must be able to govern one's self. To do so, a person (coaches) needs tools or techniques that one has at one's disposal to practice and engage in transformation (see also Markula & Pringle, 2006). Foucault (1983) stated that transformation or ethical work requires specific forms of practice, since 'no technique, no professional skill can be acquired without exercise' (p. 246). In other words, one cannot change oneself without deliberate strategies and implementation of actual technologies of the self. Foucault (1983) contended that an individual needs to deliberately choose and use strategies to change oneself. An often-used strategy is confessional practice. According to Foucault, confessional practice is a technology of the self that enables individuals to discover the 'truth' about themselves. They scrutinize their work or way of doing and 'confess' or verbalize their shortcomings to others (Fejes, 2008, 2011).

Processes of change. We drew on Foucault's conceptualization of self-constitution or modes of subjectivation (Foucault, 1998; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Niesche & Haase, 2012) to explore how coaches negotiate and actualize their desire to be a good coach while following a coaching course. Specifically, we used Foucault's modes of subjectivation to describe processes of transformations of coaches as they followed and completed a course designed according to their needs/wishes.

Foucault divided the process of how individuals, in this case coaches, constitute and transform themselves into four aspects: the ethical substance, mode of subjection, ethical work and telos (Foucault, 1998; Markula & Pringle, 2006). The ethical substance refers to the actual part of one's self that an individual chooses as material for transformation. This can consist of dissatisfaction with personal coaching behaviors or practices. The mode of subjection refers to an individual's relation to specific rules and the moral obligation she or he feels to put these into practice. This may refer, for example, to formal codes about fair play and respect in a sport club, policy documents, a coaching course or a dominant, often contextual, discourse about a good coach. The ethical work refers to the deliberate strategies coaches use in their attempts to transform themselves to realize the desired behavior or practice. By critically reflecting on her or his relation to specific rules (mode of subjection), a coach can determine strategies for transforming the self. These strategies or practices of the self are related to the telos. The telos is what a coach wants to accomplish, that is, how a coach wants to behave. The use of this Foucauldian lens provides insight into the process of perceived change and the use of critical reflection.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, was to gain insight into how coaches, who wanted to change their behaviors, problematized their coaching practices and worked to transform themselves using the content of a course based on critical reflective practice. The research question that guided this project was: How can and do coaches reflect on their practices in their attempt to transform themselves into their idea of a good coach? The results could contribute to the understanding what coaches think they need to transform or change, and why they want to change. We assumed that the results also provide insight into the ways coaches construct and constitute a good coach. An exploration of processes of perceived change may also reveal insights into the use of the method of critical reflection by coaches and how it could be incorporated into CE. Furthermore, we wanted to contribute to knowledge building about course development by using a bottom-up method.

Methodology

The context

Soccer has the most participants of all youth sports in the Netherlands. Most coaches are volunteers. Although the Dutch Soccer Association (KNVB) encourages volunteers to be certified as a coach, the teachers of the Dutch Soccer Academy estimate that only 4 out of 10 have followed such a course. Similar to many coaches

elsewhere, many Dutch coaches, therefore, base their practices on an 'implicit coaching model' based on feelings, emotions, intuitions and previous experience (Knoppers & Bouman, 1996). The current certification courses in soccer emphasize strategies and physical skills and pay little attention to the sociocontextual aspects of coaching.

Course development

Those who developed the course that was part of this study used feedback from coaches to create a course that emphasized stimulating pro-social behavior and where necessary, changing behavior, through the use of critical reflective practice. The behavioral emphasis was chosen because coaches had identified coping with behavioral problems of athletes as their most pressing problem (see below as well).

We chose what we called the Knaus (1974) approach as the theoretical framework for the course because we assumed coaches needed tools to reflect critically on their own behavior before they could think about the behavior of others (see Appendix 1 for a description). This approach assumes the thoughts that individuals have about an event to inform their behaviors. Self-understanding means examining and understanding how attitudes, beliefs and values may influence thoughts that result in feelings and behavior. Although Knaus and Foucauldian theorizing are based on different assumptions about reality approach, they both emphasize cognitive work that involves critical thinking, self-understanding and behavioral change. The Knaus approach assumes individuals can learn to change these thoughts and, therefore, behavior. We used this framework to teach coaches to ask questions that enabled them to critically reflect on and analyze, and when necessary, change their behavior. We assumed that if coaches understand how to develop the practice of critical reflection and integrate it into their thinking and doing, they may also be able to influence the behavior of others when necessary by asking questions so that players also learn to reflect on their behavior.

Subjects

Thirty-five coaches were involved in this study. These 30 men and 5 women ranged in age from 18 to 62 years. The mean age was around 41 years. Their experience in coaching ranged from 1 to 26 years; the mean was about 7 years. The educational background of the participants ranged from secondary school to university. All of the participants were volunteer coaches and had a paid job or were full-time students. More than half of the group coaches participating in this study had not followed a coach education course. All the coaches in this study worked with youth between 6 and 18 years. The levels of play these coaches coached ranged from recreational to selection teams.

Data collection

Our desire to use a bottom-up approach necessitated collaboration between researchers and practitioners/coaches and the Dutch Soccer Union prior to designing the course. Coaches who were interested in participating in a course emphasizing the development of creating a positive pedagogical climate (social and moral skills) were asked to partake in roundtable discussions. The KNVB recommended coaches who were interested in changing their coaching practices. These coaches then recommended peers who might be interested in participating. The content of the course was based on the results of two discussions, each with 10 different coaches. The topics that were used in the roundtable discussions were initially based on comments the KNVB had received about problems coaches faced in coping with behavioral problems of athletes and parents. Coaches who participated in the roundtable discussions added other topics. In these discussions, the first author attempted to gain insight into the coaches' perceptions of a good coach, of their relationship with athletes and of what they needed to develop in their direction of a good coach. These sessions were taped and transcribed. The data were not only used to aid in course development but were also analyzed to describe changes that may have occurred in the perceptions of these coaches.

The content of the roundtable discussions suggested that the coaches felt inadequate in what they identified as problematic or difficult situations. The subsequent design of the course was based on ideas that came from these discussions, from the emphasis in the recent literature on the complexity of coaching and from the necessity of coaches learning to engage in self-reflection (Cassidy et al., 2006; Cushion et al., 2006).

We describe the course as part of our analysis below. Since we approached this research project from a critical interpretative perspective, this analysis is based on the perceptions of change as described by the coaches. The results reflect their descriptions of their lived experiences and various 'truths' (Boeije, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; see also Nelson et al., 2013).

Since this was an exploratory study, we gathered data in four ways. During the project, the first author kept field notes in the form of a daily diary. These field notes were used to trace possible processes of change or resistance. We used three interactional methods to explore how coaches perceived they had changed during and following the course. We arbitrarily selected 8 men and 1 woman to participate in semistructured interviews, 17 men and 3 women to complete open-ended questionnaires and another 5 men and 1 woman to participate in a focus group. All of the coaches who were asked to participate in these various methods of data gathering did so. They were promised anonymity and confidentiality.

The first author and a trained assistant conducted the semistructured interviews; the first author and a trained colleague led the focus group. The purpose of the open-ended questionnaire was to confirm, challenge and possibly add to the findings of the interviews and focus group. The questions in the open-ended questionnaire were parallel to the topics that comprised the interviews and focus groups (see Appendix 2). Coaches were asked to describe themselves as a coach before they took the

course, their expectations for the course and their experiences during the course and its usefulness. They were asked to give examples wherever possible. The resulting data, consisting of roundtable discussions, interviews, a focus group, open-ended questionnaires and field notes provided a rich source of data and gave insight into the perceptions of coaches who tried to transform themselves.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed with the use of a qualitative data analysis package (NVIVO, 2008). The first author initially used deduction to sort the data based on the research question and the theoretical framework. Specifically, he used Foucault's modes of subjectivation to place fragments of the data within one of the modes (ethical substance, mode of subjection, ethical work and telos). For example, the remark, 'Every time opponents scored, the mother yelled at her son "you're never going to be a goalkeeper again" while I was busy trying to approach the athletes in a positive manner' was assigned the mode of the ethical substance since it suggests the coach was searching for ways to approach the mother that was consistent with his positive approach. Our use of the four modes to make sense of the data does not mean we viewed the process of transformation as fragmented. We used the various modes as a heuristic device to enable us to highlight how these coaches understood and constructed their transformation.

After the initial sorting by the first author, the research team then discussed and, at times, revised the results of the sorting process. We attempted to engage in a process of open to axial to selective coding, using induction and deduction (Boeije, 2005) within each mode of subjectivation to discern themes embedded in the data. However, although the commonality in the data was change, the ways this change was described varied greatly. We, therefore, elected to focus on the processes of change as described by the various participants instead of searching for themes across the modes of subjectivation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Findings

The results are presented per mode of transformation or subjectivation. The results of the roundtable discussions described what, if anything, coaches wished to change in their behavior as a coach (ethical substance). The second section summarizes the contents of the course and the reactions of coaches to it. Subsequently we focus on how the coaches perceived they developed or transformed, if at all.

Wanting to transform coaching practice (ethical substance)

The coaches who participated in the roundtable discussions described various difficulties they encountered in their coaching practice and how they were unable to meet their own definitions of the good coach. They often felt overwhelmed by the complexity of their task. For example, a coach described how:

> In our club you are an educator, coach, father, you have to do it all. Our athletes come from various cultures. Some live more on the street than at home. All that makes the coaching job complex and difficult, how can I handle that?

Another coach exclaimed that 'some of my players are well known by the police!' Such remarks suggest that these coaches experienced situations in which they did not know how to act like a good coach and meet their own expectations. Others described the relational aspect of coaching and paradoxically, how coaching practice has become more individualized:

> You cannot just talk to the group as a whole but you have to adapt to each individual. Some players you have to treat affectionately, others the opposite, and some you must discretely pull aside when talking with them. If I behave in the 'wrong' way, their mother or father telephones me! I don't want to be placed in such a position but sometimes it just happens.

These coaches were often unsure how they should react or behave in some of the situations they encountered.

Dealing with parents was a frequently described difficulty that may have added to the uncertainty of the coaches. These coaches seemed to define the social aspect of coaching as consisting of continual interaction with athletes that were informed in part by the expectations, values and norms of parents of the players. For example, some of these coaches said:

> Every time opponents scored, the mother [of the goalkeeper] yelled at her son 'you're never going to be a goalkeeper again' while I was busy trying to approach the athletes in a positive manner.
> I was watching a youth soccer match and I heard parents insulting the coaches mentioning diseases for which there are no drugs or cures.
> A father shouted an ugly word so frequently when his son played that the boy began to cry. That was the limit, but what can I do?

These quotes suggest that these coaches experienced a gap between their ideas about how they have to deal with parents, how to be a good coach (ethical substance) and their possibilities to put these ideas into practice (ethical work).

Coaches stated how they felt inadequate and unsure in dealing with the social development of their athletes. Two coaches explain:

> Nobody who works here as a coach has had a coaching education course but parents expect us to be didactically capable. They expect us to have knowledge about the social emotional development of the players, but we don't.
> A coach has to be able to deal with players in a good way; they have to know when to intervene. I agree but I don't feel competent to do this.

According to these coaches their lack of competency in part stemmed from their lack of CE. 'Most of us behave the same way as our coaches did when we were players ourselves.' This confirms our assumption that coaches often rely on an implicit coaching model based on their previous experience as players and thus may be trapped in their own history.

Becoming a good coach (mode of subjection)

These coaches thought and felt morally obliged to behave according to their idea of a good coach (their telos). They assumed this could strengthen their influence on the players. A coach said, 'As a coach I think I have more influence on the players than their parents, maybe because the athletes are at the club voluntarily.' Another coach exclaimed, 'You have God, then the coach and then the parents!' The coaches assumed they influence players because they had experienced that athletes often place them on a pedestal. The coaches participating in this research project perceived this as dangerous because it meant athletes often do exactly what the coach says even if it harms them. This perceived influence on the players also pressured these coaches to behave in ways they associated with a good coach (their telos). This perceived influence is one of the main reasons they wanted to change. Coaches also engaged in what Foucault (1983) calls the confessional practice. For example, coaches said:

> I am ashamed of myself. Two boys fight a lot in practices. When I see it I just look away because I don't know how to solve that conflict.
> I think ignoring behavior happens a lot. Many of us are not capable of handling that and of solving fights, especially not when the players become older. We need to change this.
> I will do what is necessary to change this, even change my own coach behavior.
> I want to give the young talent all the possibilities necessary to develop. Yet other coaches in my club ask every week if we won the game. I feel the pressure to win and that conflict with my idea to give young players time to develop.

These coaches used confessional practice to establish causality. They saw themselves as subjects who must behave in ways that fit with their perceptions of a good coach. They think a good coach is someone who knows how to solve all problems. If they know what to do when players fight, then their problem of coping with fights between players will be solved.

  In summary then, these coaches thought and felt they had to deal with individualization, an increase in aggression and complexity and with high expectations from others (parents, athletes and the Dutch Soccer Union) or themselves. They expressed feelings of inadequacy, insecurity or powerlessness. They wanted to change this by engaging in what Foucault calls transformation or subjectivation. Specifically, they wanted to follow a course that addressed these issues to enable them to transform their coaching practices.

Enabling change (ethical work)

Scholars and coaches involved in the study worked together to produce a course that they assumed would meet the needs (ethical substance) of the coaches. During the roundtable discussions, and as the data in the previous section indicated, the coaches described problems with athletes and parents as topics that needed to be solved or changed. They wanted answers on how to cope with a specific situation. As we indicated earlier, the scholarly literature on coaching suggests that coaches should develop critical thinking skills rather than learn solutions to specific problems. Given

these suggestions and those of the coaches involved in the roundtable discussions, a team of academics and coaches including the first author, developed a course to transcend the specific needs of the coaches. Its aim was to use the Knaus (1974) approach to teach them to critically reflect on their knowledge and assumptions that informed their problem-solving approach so they might be able to deal with current and future issues and transform themselves into their perceptions of a good coach (see also Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004; Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2008).

We assumed that the constant emphasis on critical self-reflection enabled these coaches to change and, therefore, move closer to their idea of a good coach. The use of the Knaus framework was meant to guide coaches in their reflection of an event and on their feelings and behaviors about it. Subsequently, teachers of the course and peers asked questions about how the coaches wanted to behave and what they would like to do or change to reach their goals. The coaches were taught to constantly reflect on their behavior and to think of options for change when their behavior was incongruent with how they wanted to behave (their telos). The course can be seen as transformative work; the coaches learned, practiced and perceived they could change their behavior to create new ways of performing and being.

Transforming the self (telos)

As we indicate above, during the course, the coaches were stimulated to work on the self and, therefore, move closer to their idea of being a good coach. The coaches used the critical reflection methods in various ways:

> I learned to explain my own behavior through my thoughts and feelings, and I was not always pleased with my behavior, but I learned that when I develop other ideas through questioning my feelings, behavior could be changed.
> I use the [Knaus] approach to reflect on myself, the players on my team, but also at my work where I manage more than 40 colleagues.

Another coach found that the Knaus framework 'was something simple and good to work with.' These remarks seem to suggest that the model was easy to understand and use. Although the model was easy to understand. Some coaches found it difficult to apply it on their own. A coach admits [described] that 'some of the exercises seem strange' while another coach described how 'I did not feel comfortable talking about my behavior, my thoughts and feelings' (Field notes, 4 June 2009). Possibly the implementation of this model confronted coaches with their own perceived shortcomings, which they may not have wanted to admit. Reflection and/or exercises that stimulate reflection within a course may have produced feelings of vulnerability in coaches.

The process of self-transformation varied per individual. Some of the coaches had a difficult time reflecting on and articulating their development. Stories about their development were fragmented. For example, a coach described how he now reacted to what he saw as problematic behavior of players, 'Before the course I reacted immediately without thinking but now I first think what could be the problem when a player misbehaves.' Another coach described how he now communicated with parents:

> Before the start of the season I now talk to all the parents and tell them how I am going to work and what they can expect from me and I also discuss what I expect and not expect from them as parents. This works reasonably well.

Because many stories about how coaches perceived they transformed were fragmented, we selected three narratives or confessional practices about personal development (transforming the self) that were illustrative of the data and reflect this variation.

The first narrative describes the story of a male coach in his forties. He had six years of experience as a coach and coached a selection team. He wanted to change his perfectionism:

> Perfectionism, it is simply in me. When I am coaching for example, I work to make my players be perfect [players], they can always do better. The same in my work. When I write a policy document, I am continually cutting, pasting, polishing, and deleting even when it is adequate. That perfectionism gives me trouble, unrest; I want to get rid of it … I don't know for sure but maybe it is related to uncertainty. Perhaps it is a specific type of uncertainty. Sometimes I have a situation when I am coaching and then I 'freeze,' like last time, I did not know how to deal with the strange behavior of one of the players and it caused trouble.

His telos was the opposite:

> A good coach is someone who conveys calmness. I want to be like my colleague working at the KNVB. When he works with his athletes, he stays calm and at the same time he stimulates them to improve. I never see problematic situations arising when he is coaching, that is the coach I want to be.

This coach wanted to change his coaching practice to create a better alignment with his perception of a good coach. He wanted to be a coach who conveys calmness like his colleague at the KNVB. This required him to change his behavior. This desire also suggests that for him a good coach (and manager) is not a perfectionist especially if such perfectionism creates unrest in himself or others. He, therefore, developed strategies to transform himself and reach his telos:

> If I feel that I am too tense and demanding too much of my players, I can talk about that with our head coach.
> I am going to read about it [the problem], because that should give me a better idea of how to handle that situation. I feel better and more relaxed when I know more. For this interview I wrote some notes to myself, which relaxes me. I learned to think about myself. I am now using a voice recorder to talk about my experiences and problems so I can hear them again and think about a possible solution.

This coach was engaged in transformation by continually questioning and reflecting on his thoughts and practices. He assumed his perfectionism and uncertainty were related. His work on the self was and will be an ongoing process that may reduce his efforts to be perfect. If he develops an awareness of how it works and copes with his uncertainty, he may eventually encounter fewer problematic situations that he feels are caused by his perfectionism. He, however, assumes causality, that is, that his perfectionism is the major cause of his difficulties. He did not say anything about his context and how possibly pressure from players, spectators or the board of directors of his club may also have contributed to his feelings of inadequacy.

A second narrative describes a male coach in his fifties, who had 17 years' experience as a coach and coached a recreational team. This coach constituted himself as a prisoner of his own sport history. As a player, he had to obey his coaches. As a coach he continued to define obedience and discipline as desirable virtues:

> I am a coach who likes discipline. I believe that coaches must not pamper the players. They have to obey the coach, just like I did when I was a player. Not everybody likes my approach, sometimes there is some friction. The head coach advised me to follow a course (the club paid, ha, ha). During the course I saw a video of Foppe de Haan [the coach of the Dutch junior men's team] made to coach other coaches. In my opinion he is a good coach who also likes rules and discipline. I saw that Foppe encouraged coaches to communicate frequently with the players. Normally I am not a big talker but since then I intended to communicate more often.

Possibly, this coach wanted to change because he recognized his approach caused friction. His use of confessional practice illustrates his search for causality, that is, for the cause of the friction. The video of Foppe de Haan, whom he sees as a good coach, stimulated his process of transformation. This transformation consisted of attempting to improve his communication with his players. He described what happened when he tried to put his intention into practice:

> A player was doing something that is not allowed and I did not react by punishing him. Instead I went to the player and discussed what happened. I sat down with him and we talked. That worked well. He understood the problem and could act normally; problem solved.

He described his perceived transformation at the follow-up session:

> I now talk more with the players and not only when something happened. Sometimes I talk to a player separately and tell him about the position he is going to play the next match. I also explain why I choose him to play that position.

This coach wanted to reduce friction (although he did not indicate what that meant) and to transform himself to be a coach like Foppe de Haan. He assumed that the friction he experienced would be reduced if he talked more with the players instead of issuing commands. When coaches think they changed their behavior as this coach did, this perceived change may influence their relationship with the players and possibly result in changes in the players behavior as well. This change in turn can affect the coach so that the coach is both subject and object of the transformation.

The third narrative describes woman coach in her forties. She had three years of experience as a coach and coached a recreational team. She described how she identified so much with her athletes that she did not know how to change their behaviors when she wanted them to give 100%:

> I am an empathic person; I really empathize with the players of my team. Sometimes I know where a problem [of a player] comes from and I can empathize with the behavior but I do not know how to change it. I try but the behavior did not change. I wondered how I should handle this player.
> I find it difficult to substitute players because I know how they do not like that.
> In another situation I also had to cope with a difficult player and I was unsure of how to handle it so that he, like the rest, is going to do what I want.

She wanted to be able to change behaviors of players to create a better alignment with her telos as a coach:

> A good coach is in my opinion someone who can empathize with the players, and the same time works towards a specific aim. But primarily, I want them to give the full 100%. I expect them to give all they have.

The primary focus of the perceived transformative work of this coach was based on her wish or goal that players should give 100% and her assumption that her empathy sometimes prevented her from realizing that. She described how she is learning to constantly reflect on her behavior and thoughts in order to move closer to her telos of good coach. She thinks she changed her self-perception as a coach (see also Niesche & Haase, 2012):

> I am always thinking of what and how I work with my athletes. I am trying to change my behavior by thinking how I should act differently next time. I do that [analytical reflection] in my head, preferably when I am driving. It comes naturally, for example after training … I try to learn when looking at other coaches, see how they try to change players and I watch how players respond. Sometimes I ask another coach to try to work with one of my players and then I observe and ask what the opinion of the other coach is.

This coach knew what she wanted to reach and drew on the behavior of other coaches to reflect on and enact change. This work is part of her transformative process. This narrative, like the other two, can also be summarized as works in progress that enabled the coaches to move closer to their telos.

We have used these three narratives to provide a way to understand how these coaches described their use of critical reflection to think about themselves and their coaching. According to them, they learned to focus on first themselves and their behavior rather than on solely trying to change the behavior of the athletes. The coaches wanted to act more in congruence with their idea of the good coach but often did not know how to become such a coach. Possibly then the strength of this course was not so much in the knowledge about coaching that the participants may have shared with each other, but in the ways the coaches thought the course supported them in learning to first reflect critically on their own behavior and second to look for a solution that enabled them to behave more in accordance with their description of a good coach. As we have noted above, their analysis of the situation seemed to ignore possible contributing contextual elements.

Discussion and conclusion

Our use of the Foucauldian ethical framework provided a way to understand the descriptions of these coaches of how they thought they changed in their behavior in their efforts to move closer to their telos, which was their perception of a good coach. In their narratives, they spoke about the importance of learning and practicing to constantly reflect. We reflect on these findings and the approach.

Good coach

The specific problems that these coaches described that prevented them from being the kind of coach they desired to be, reflected the current literature that suggests that an effective coach is one who provides optimal encouragement and learning opportunities for participants and who needs effective interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge and skills (see, for example, Cushion et al., 2003, 2006; Denison & Avner, 2011; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Similarly, the coaches in the roundtable discussions described difficulties with players and parents. They felt they lacked in interpersonal skills and dealing with what they saw as problematic situations.

These perceptions or descriptions of a good coach revealed the complexity of coaching practice, the different forms of normative power as the data indicated they all wanted to become what they perceived as a good coach and also the heterogeneity in perceptions these coaches held. Their desire to be a good coach suggests that it was this norm or telos they were trying to achieve. They differed across coaching experience, personal preferences and coaching contexts and, therefore, also in what they felt they needed to transform into a good coach. They wanted to be seen as a good coach, although they defined that in different ways such as being calm, being decisive and communicating openly about their thoughts with the players. The definition of a good coach or telos and the goals of the coaches in their processes of perceived transformation varied by individual. This diversity suggests that the needs of coaches with respect to formal CE may differ (Nelson et al., 2013; see also Werthner & Trudel, 2006) and that a system of formal and normative coach education may not meet the perceived needs of many coaches. Despite the heterogeneity among the coaches who participated in the study, the data suggest that they perceived that the practice of critical reflection met their needs.

Critical reflection

The learning of and implementing techniques of critical reflection using a concrete theoretical model seemed to work for these coaches. This model may have enabled them to continually examine and reflect on their behavior, to reconsider their normalized taken-for-granted beliefs and to develop themselves in the direction of their notion of a good coach. Many scholars have argued the necessity for coaches to engage in such critical reflection (for example, Cushion et al., 2003; Denison & Avner, 2011; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne, & Eubank, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Our results suggest that critical reflection does not occur automatically, however, but is a skill that requires continual practice and needs to be situated within a theoretical framework.

At the same time, reflective practice such as what we described is not without its own difficulties. Foucault describes transformational work as being liberating. Yet we mobilized reflective practice to encourage these coaches to work on themselves to become what they perceived to be a good coach. They engaged in confessional practices to describe how they fell short of their ideal. The coaches were subsequently

taught and encouraged to use critical reflection to shape themselves into their ideal as a coach. It is questionable, therefore, if the practice produced freedom in the Foucauldian sense. Possibly, the normative power that acts upon coaches shaped the definition of a good coach to which these coaches aspire. This process of self-reflection these coaches used to reach their telos can also be seen as a form of normative control of coaching practice in itself (Fejes, 2011).

The normative control exercised by the course does not mean that critical reflective practice should, therefore, be abandoned. Fejes argued that reflective practice contributes to transformation only when it 'is analyzed as a situation in which one is to learn about oneself' (p. 244). Reflection then becomes ontological. Reflection as an ontological practice would require coaches not only to think about problems as problems to be solved but also about *why* they see them as a problem. In addition, it might teach them to ask questions about context and also to critically reflect on their construction of a good coach. This use of critical reflection may enable coaches to possibly gain a feeling of freedom instead of guilt and shame for failing to live up to what they see as a good coach (see also Niesche & Haase, 2012). The use of ontological reflection together with attention to normative power of the context could help coaches in creating a positive pedagogical climate.

We do not mean to place all the responsibility for change on the individual coach. The process of transforming oneself can be seen as a form of resistance against normative power (Foucault, 1983). A transformed coach often continues to work in the prevailing context of the club that has a culture and ideas about a good coach that may be primarily associated with winning. Such a context may seem to require disciplined and harsh coaching practices. Yet these practices may act in opposition toward a coach's ethical substance and may leave them with (new) ethical dilemmas. To what extent can a coach who engages in reflection as ontology resist such forms of normative power such as that exerted by an (over) emphasis on winning? This question needs attention in future research. In addition, these coaches created coaching as a separate practice without taking the context in which this activity took place into account. This suggests that coaches need to not only engage in self-reflection of their own behavior but also engage in sociological work and be taught to critically reflect on the connection between context, their own behavior and their telos.

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Appendix 1

Course description

Course title: Er is meer te winnen [There is more to winning]

Precourse inventory: Roundtable discussions with coaches about their preferred content for a CE course. They identified their inability to cope with anti-social player and adult behaviors on and around the soccer field as the problem they wished to see addressed in such a course.

Objectives: Equipping coaches with skills that include preventing and/or changing (anti-social) behavior of players and adults and teach them to critically reflect on their own thinking and behaviors.

Theoretical framework

- Preventing behavior: 'structuring,' 'stimulating,' 'ignoring,' 'isolating' and 'communicating' (Forgatch & DeGarmo, 1999).
- Changing behavior: identifying thoughts and feelings in a situation and their influence on behavior; changing behavior in the desired direction by influencing/changing thoughts based on rational-emotive education (Knaus, 1974).
- Critical reflection: rational-emotive education stimulates critical reflection. Participants are taught to ask questions pertaining to thoughts and behaviors. These questions and the answers that emerge from this questioning combined with the knowledge coaches receive about changing behaviors gives coaches skills to enable them to transform themselves.

Methods: Discussions with other coaches/instructors; instruction; practice exercises; discussions of visual examples of soccer practices (with the use of DVD); role play

Session content: learning to ask questions that enable coaches to reflect on their thoughts and behaviors and to reframe them. They first learn to ask these questions of themselves and later of others

- Session 1: Preventing behavior; critical reflection introduction.
- Sessions 2–5: Changing behavior/thoughts through practice. Beginning to learn critical reflection.
- Session 5: (3 months later): Reflecting on experiences as coaches in their soccer practices and implementation of the content; group discussions: practicing critical reflection.

(A complete manual of the course is available in Dutch. If sufficient interest is shown in using this manual, we will translate it into English).

Appendix 2

Topics
Topics (semistructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus group):

- Would you describe yourself as a coach before the course? (Examples)
- How do you as a coach perceive/experience your relationship with the athletes?
- Why do you wish to participate in the course?
- Would you describe your idea of the ideal coach? (Examples)
- What do you want to reach in (changing) your coach behavior? (Examples)
- What were your expectations of the course? (Examples)
- How did you experience the course? (Examples; positive and negative)
- How useful, if at all, is the content in your coaching practice? (Examples)
- How, if at all, did the course contribute to your ability to be what you see as a 'good coach'? (Explain examples)
- Would you tell me more about how you changed yourself as a coach and reflect on that process? (Examples)
- Is there something we have not mentioned in this interview/focus group/questionnaire that played a role in your process of changing your coach behavior? Please explain.