A call for clarity and pragmatism in coach education

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While literature on coaching has grown exponentially in the past two decades, there have been only a handful of articles that discuss coach education and few have discussed what constitutes good pedagogy. In this conceptual article based upon observations from the field and our own ongoing action research, we review those discussions and offer a pragmatic, scholar-practitioner approach to coach education that supports the five intentions of coach education (Bachkirova et al., 2017). We offer Ostrowski's The Four Provinces model (2022) – which includes the coaching context, relationship, process, and self – as a navigational map for coaching students as they begin their journey to becoming a coach. Because it is agnostic of any specific knowledge areas, the model affords coach educators the flexibility to emphasise their preferred coaching knowledge areas (such as systems theory, humanistic psychology, adult learning theory, and developmental psychology), while providing structure to their curriculum development. We also share early feedback resulting from the implementation of the Four Provinces within a credit-earning graduate-level concentration in Leadership Coaching and explore implications for future research and practice.

Keywords: *Coach education; Coach training; Coach education pedagogy; Coaching model; Coaching theory; Adult development; Adult learning.*

Introduction

ALTHOUGH coaching practice has led the field, theory and research has come into its own over the past decade (Passmore & Evans-Krimme, 2021). However, little discussion and knowledge sharing, much less agreement, has occurred regarding what constitutes good pedagogy in coach education. With this current state, coach educators are left to experiment with what works in coaching education. In addition, market pressures stemming from the professionalization of the coaching field have increased the demand for education or training that specifically leads to a recognised credential. This raises important considerations for program and curriculum design.

Coach education is now at an inflection-point at which we can begin this overdue discussion. However, given the coaching field has yet to develop an agreed upon definition (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Potter, 2017) or competencies (Vandaveer et al., 2016) this is a complex endeavor. The issues with the few coaching competency studies that have been conducted are discussed in detail by Boyatzis et al. (2022, pp.210–213). In addition, some of those competencies are conflated with job tasks (p.212). Despite this, many coaching programs teach to a set of competencies developed by governing bodies such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). However, the research upon which those are built is not transparent, and is typically based upon survey data, which is considered to be unreliable (Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003). This is not a criticism of those coaching programs that rely on coaching competencies as scaffolding for students and in curriculum development. However, we feel it is important that coaching programs make this choice with a full understanding of the discussion in the literature.

To that point, the results of newly published research are promising (Boyatzis et

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al., 2023). First, the authors offer a concrete and succinct definition of coaching and separate competencies from job tasks. More importantly, the study findings identify a set of six coach competencies that lead to client behavioural change. It is the first research study to empirically demonstrate this link. While additional studies are needed to replicate these results, this is a promising inflection point. More important to the topic of this paper, it provides coach educators with a set of *evidence-based* competencies toward which to develop students. The ways educators accomplish this complex endeavour have been missing from conversations in coaching literature.

In this paper, we offer our combined observations and learning in the hopes of instigating a much-needed conversation. We are coach educators who teach in different U.S.-based universities and use accepted theory to underpin our programs. Separately and simultaneously, we have come to similar discoveries and offer our observations and learning to open this essential conversation and invite discussion. Our approaches are grounded primarily in adult learning theory. We also offer for consideration Ostrowski's coaching model, The Four Provinces (2022), as a simple and useful guidepost for both coach educators and students.

Background

An explosion in the coaching market led to exponential growth of coach training and education programs, the nature of which runs the gamut in terms of duration, focus, and rigor. Early programs in the United States were stand-alone, for-profit private training programs and have driven the coach training market. In other parts of the world, coaching psychology emerged as a branch of psychology offered as an area of study at universities. The first coaching psychology area of study was established in 2000 in Australia at the University of Sydney and university programs spread to the United Kingdom, Europe, and South Africa. In 2006 the International Society for Coaching Psychology was founded. The U.S. market appears to have grown independently, offering some degree programs, but typically shorter certificate programs.

At this point in time there are several tensions for coach educators and programs to navigate. Based upon our conversations with coaching faculty in U.S. universities, in their response to a competitive coach training market, many universities have adapted by offering professional certificates, rather than degreed programs. Those that offer both find greater enrollment in shorter, less expensive certificate programs. Responding to market demand, many certificate programs now fulfill the aims of accrediting bodies such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF) – meaning that their curricula and learning outcomes align with and in our experience constrained by – the ICF Core Competencies. We agree with current arguments that competency-based education may not always be sufficient to address the contextual, relational, and developmental complexities of coaching practice (Garvey, 2017; Bachkirova et al., 2017).

Faculty in these programs are often experienced coach practitioners, sometimes without knowledge or experience as educators or familiarity with current coaching research and theory. Without this underpinning, we've observed a common response to students' predictable confusion and disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 2012; Potter, 2020) is simply to trust the process. While we agree that each student must process their identity transitions in their own ways, we assert that educators with a comprehension of adult learning and development are able to discern what level of scaffolding each student requires.

Several tensions arise in a call for establishment of accepted pedagogy in coach education. The coaching field has evolved significantly in the last 15–20 years. Coaching is no longer new and neither is coach education. Audiences – both students and coaching participants are more discerning. Added to this is a market demand for coach education and training that prepares students to

earn recognised professional credentials, which have become key requirements for many organizations hiring coaches. These conditions require the development of more rigorous and systematic approaches to coach education, beginning with an open discussion of those approaches. At the same time, these approaches must be accessible to those at the beginning of the learning curve – despite their rigor. We also maintain that the lengthy developmental path to becoming a coach be made clear to students who are new to coaching. These competing tensions have helped shape the coach education landscape and revealed the need for new educational models and frameworks.

Despite the fact that little has been written about coach education and pedagogy, some have begun to investigate what makes coaching education different from other types of education and from coach training as well. We explore those contributions in the next section.

Current coach education contributions

Bachkirova et al. (2017) noted that literature on educating coaches is limited but growing. In the six years since their publication, little has changed. The conversation thus far has mostly focused on the impact on coaching students (Beets & Goodman, 2012; Mukherjee, 2012; Kennedy, 2012; Campone, 2014; Potter, 2020; Atad & Grant, 2020; Carden et al., 2021). The results of these studies were remarkably similar, despite geographical and pedagogical differences of the educational programs. These findings indicate that the process of learning coaching fundamentals, *regardless of program and content*, results in increased awareness of self and others, increased reflection-in-action, greater emotional awareness and curiosity, and improved relationships. Two studies suggest that coach education facilitates new ways of seeing and more complex ways of thinking (Kennedy, 2012; Potter, 2017). Potter's exploratory research measured instances of micro-development for those enrolled in a six-month university certificate program.

What these studies indicate is that learning to coach is inherently developmental for students, not simply adding new knowledge and skills, but transforming their interior selves and birthing new ways of seeing, thinking, and being. These are essential personal characteristics that Vandaveer et al. (2016) added to knowledge, skills, and abilities. What has not been offered is what coach educators do to incite these transformations.

Bachkirova et al. (2017) outline the unique challenges in coach education and propose several points to reconceptualise pedagogy, including the view that coaching students would benefit from a shift away from the inherent instrumentalism of competency-based learning models and toward a more pragmatic and developmental approach. At the heart of the argument is the important distinction about what it means to become a coach. Are coaches 'value-neutral' (p.36) holders of coaching techniques and tools or is coaching dependent on the quality of the coach's connection with the coaching client? Is our role as coach educators to teach skills or to develop individuals to be (themselves) instruments of learning and change? The latter represents a rejection of a strictly mechanistic understanding of the role of coach (Bachkirova, 2016) and a recognition of how aspects of one's Self may influence the outcomes of coaching in an increasingly complex world. This includes congruency between personal values, beliefs, and coaching models-in-use; consideration of personal limitations on energy and emotional resilience; continual awareness of habitual patterns of practice that impede flexibility.

If the latter is true, as Bachkirova et al. (2017) suggest, then the intentions of coach education need to be re-imagined. The authors propose five explicit intentions that bring coach education in line with a pragmatist developmentalist philosophy (p.37):

- developing the coach as an instrument of practice (recognizing and encouraging uniqueness of the coach, enabling personally congruent practice, acknowledging personal limitations and habits, etc.).
- increasing reflexivity and criticality (aware-

ness and consideration of personal values, principles, assumptions, mental models, etc.).

- highlighting uncertainty, complexity and paradoxes in the contexts of practice (understanding and embracing diversity of coaching contexts, as well as the inherent ambiguity of practice in a complex world).
- practising and arriving at congruence between the self and style of practice (developing a model of practice that reflects and aligns with the student's assumptions about the world and underlying values).
- development of ethical maturity (systematic exploration of real-world ethical dilemmas—and opportunities to reflect consciously on the values and beliefs underlying them).

We agree with these intentions and acknowledge the inherent difficulty for coach educators in fulfilling these aims, especially given how quickly the landscape of coach education and expectations of incoming students are continuously evolving.

Embracing a scholar-practitioner approach

Where does this leave us then? In this section we share our own experiences and observations from the field and ongoing action research, and offer a practical model to guide educators and students. We also share some of the underlying theoretical foundations we have found useful in designing programs and working with our coaching students.

Observations from the field

What we have observed, both from our own experiences as graduates and as educators, is that students typically leave their programs feeling woefully unprepared. While some of this is natural for any novice, the way bodies of knowledge are presented in many coaching programs contribute to graduates' dis-ease and adds to confusion about what coaching is.

It is essential for both educators and coaching students to understand the differences between coaching skills and topic areas. It is a given that coaching programs offer both bodies of knowledge alongside coaching practice. While coach educators may implicitly understand the distinctions between content that will support new graduates in their practices and coaching skill building, we have observed that coaching students tend to conflate the two. Whatever content their programs provide alongside skill building becomes intrinsically intertwined in their minds. For instance, students graduating from a program offering bodies of knowledge in positive psychology or transformational leadership may assume those bodies of knowledge are the limit of what is required to be a coach. We have found that being explicit about the distinction and connection between content and skills is immensely helpful, not only to students' conceptualization of the field, but also to their understanding of the necessity of continuous learning and development after graduation.

Another content-related challenge is that program bodies of knowledge vary widely across programs. This makes sense in terms of program focus and what is possible for students to absorb within the confines of the program. Whatever a program offers is a good start *and* entirely insufficient, but students often do not understand this. They often graduate without an understanding of the entirety of the bodies of knowledge related to coaching much less where their program fits. Often this results in new coaches applying a scattershot approach to post-graduate learning. Again, being explicit with students goes a long way to helping them realise their starting points and the breadth and depth of their continuous learning after graduating.

The territories of knowledge in coaching conceptualised by Cox et al. (2014, p.46) help pinpoint these starting points. The authors also include recommendations for designing program content that orients students to the specific knowledge area(s) the program targets, not necessarily to infuse them with deep knowledge and understanding. Doing so also assists educators to be more deliberate when designing their curricula.

Another challenge we have observed is that many students struggle to make practical connections between the theoretical content they learn in class and what they personally experience in practice. Again, while coach educators may implicitly (or explicitly) understand many of these connections, new coaches may not. Therefore, the choices they make in practice tend to be informed by skills training, instincts, and/or personal experience. This, we believe, is the main challenge for coach educators, expressly because it requires increasing levels of complex thinking by students.

In our efforts to educate evidence-based practitioners who embody pragmatist developmentalist philosophy, we have longed for a way to help students explicitly and elegantly connect what they know with what they do. Bachkirova et al. (2017) outline some of the issues with an incomplete understanding of the complexity of becoming a coach and propose a three-pronged way of approaching development as a coach which includes knowledge of the field, skills employed, and higher-order thinking, or 'practical wisdom' (p.32).

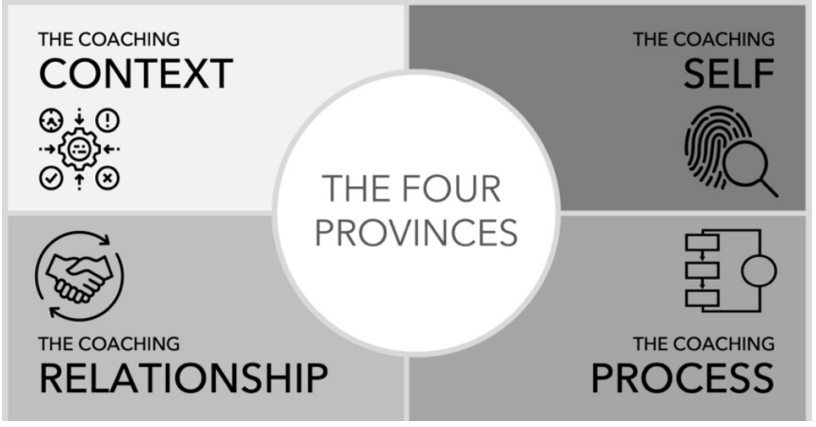
The developmental journey from novice to expert has been outlined first by Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1980) to describe direct skill acquisition, and subsequently applied to coaching by Robinson-Walker (1999) and McLean & Hudson (2012). However, this skill-based developmental journey is often obscured or avoided entirely by coach educators. We have observed that the result of not being explicit about the transformative developmental process is that students who are about to graduate often say, 'I'm not ready!' – in fact, we said this ourselves. Once students graduate and begin to coach, they are often confronted with a sense of inadequacy, and typically attribute it to their lack of knowledge and/or 'tools.' Therefore, we suggest that it is incumbent upon coach educators to be explicit about the journey from novice to expert so students may map their own development and mark their progress.

A useful model for coach education

In our search to find practical and experiential ways of linking theory and practice in coach education, we individually reached three conclusions that have shaped our subsequent thinking and informed Ostrowski's development of a practical model to guide both educators and students.

First, there is a need for cohesive, multi-theoretical approaches to coach education that can effectively enable students to bridge the gap between practical and theoretical knowledge. Second, any useful model or framework must be coherent and accessible for students and must lend itself to immediate application. In essence, not a buffet of abstract theories but a carefully constructed coherent theoretical framework, all elements

Figure 1: The Four Provinces of Coaching.



of which students are able to explore experientially through practice. Third, though initially coherent and easily understood, such a model or framework must allow for continued development and deeper exploration over time. Coaches develop and hone their expertise over time through practice and scholarship. A robust educational model must support and encourage these ongoing learning processes.

We believe there is ample room for alternative models that also accomplish these aims. As an initial volley into what will hopefully become a robust discussion of coaching pedagogy, we propose Ostrowski's The Four Provinces model (Figure 1), which satisfies these three criteria. In the sections below we briefly describe The Four Provinces and share its underlying theoretical framework.

The four provinces

Province /'prävəns/ n. an area of special knowledge, interest, or responsibility

Each of The Four Provinces (Figure 1) represents a special area of interest and responsibility for professional coaches. In addition, each province represents an area of academic study and instruction in the field of coaching. Together, the provinces map the territory of professional coaching by providing a coherent, elegant, and easily scalable architecture to guide curriculum development and instructional design.

The coaching context

In the province of Coaching Context, skillful coaches ask what they need to be aware of and/or to understand about the environment in which the coaching takes place so that they can coach effectively. This perspective helps widen a student coach's lens and guide their attention toward the interrelationships and systemic factors (organizational, historical, social, etc.) that influence coaching outcomes.

The coaching relationship

The coaching relationship is a collaborative partnership, the purpose of which is to promote reflection and meaning making, learning, achievement, and accountability. In the province of Coaching Relationship, coaches work to establish the conditions of connection, trust, psychological safety, and rapport that allow coaching participants to accept and embrace the risks inherent in learning.

The coaching process

Coaching is by nature multi-disciplinary and adaptive. In the province of Coaching Process, artful coaches instinctively draw from multiple bodies of knowledge, weaving together a variety of techniques and tools, to suit a coaching participant's emergent needs and changing context. A flexible and robust coaching process enables coaches to coach effectively in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

The coaching self

Becoming a coach is a continuous journey of self-evolution. In the beginning, students simply struggle to coordinate the complex choreography – in-the-moment thoughts, feelings, and behaviors – of a single coaching session (Potter, 2020). This inevitably creates what Mezirow (2012) describes as the disorienting dilemma that precedes transformation and provides openings for new ways of thinking. In the province of Coaching Self, we focus on creating potent opportunities for exploring growth edges through self-reflection and self-discovery. This enables coaches to recognise and apply their own strengths through their coaching, while also developing the critical awareness to discover their blind spots and deconstruct long held biases and assumptions. As one encounters increasing space and appreciation for the complexity and diversity of human experience, one develops one's own unique identity and presence as a coach.

Foundational theories that inform the four provinces

While cohesive and accessible to both novice and experienced coaches, the Four Provinces model also lends itself readily to theory. Each province can be illuminated

by multiple theories which novice coaches may explore initially through formal education and experienced coaches may continue to explore over the course of their professional careers. The Four Provinces serve as a framework for organizing multi-theoretical approaches to coaching, along with the flexibility to explore various bodies of knowledge in connection with each Province and a structure for extending and deepening that knowledge over time. Although different coaches may associate different theoretical influences with each of the Four Provinces, we offer the following observations about the foundational theories we see informing each Province.

Coaching context: Systems theory

For students exploring the province of Coaching Context, systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) provides a useful home base. A systems lens helps illuminate the landscape of practice by surfacing the systemic patterns and relationships which influence and constrain a coaching participant's experience and action (Stelter, 2012). These systemic factors may include organizational norms and/or values, historical and/or social factors, complex interrelationships between individuals, roles, and/or tasks, and so forth. A systemic approach to coaching recognises that these forces, which are mostly external to the coaching relationship, have considerable impact on the coaching journey (O'Neill, 2007). In essence, focusing solely on the coaching participant's inner world is inadequate to address the complexity of their journey.

In practice, systemic coaching aims to recognise and explore previously unconscious or unnoticed patterns in a coaching client's experience so that they can see their experiences in new ways (Cavanagh, 2006). As Stelter (2012) noted, this involves inquiring into the meaning of the interaction between the coaching client and their context, as well as hypothesizing about how events acquire meaning in this system.

Coaching relationship: Humanistic psychology

The humanistic perspective and person-centered approach in therapy (Rogers, 2004) with their shared emphasis on human choice, autonomy, and self-actualization lie at the heart of coaching and the province of Coaching Relationship. Contrary to many traditional (psychoanalytic, behaviorist) therapeutic approaches, the coaching relationship is characterised by collaboration, empathy, and authenticity (Stober, 2006). The relationship itself is viewed as one source of learning and change. Within this relationship coaching participants are assumed to have an inherent potential for growth and a natural inclination to make choices that enable them to reach their potential. The coach's role, therefore, is not to consult or advise, but to *facilitate* reflection and growth.

One challenge for new coaches is the need to establish a connection with their coaching client quickly. Here, an understanding of High Quality Connections (HQCs) is useful. HQCs are short-term dyadic interactions, which result in a positive felt experience of connection and have cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mechanisms (Stephens et al., 2011). Research indicates that HQCs are associated with positive individual and organizational outcomes. Dutton (2003) suggests ways to foster HQCs in the workplace. While HQC has not yet been connected with coaching, we contend they are at the heart of coaching. Having an explicit understanding of HQCs and their positive individual and organizational outcomes and how to foster them is an important and useful in any coach practice. A recent study of the intersection of HQC and perspective taking, seeking, and coordinating found distinct differences in the enactment of these perspectival skills at different developmental levels (Andree, 2022). Understanding how they are enacted at different development levels is useful as a developmental bellwether for both coaches and coach educators.

Students can practice applying

a humanistic perspective by asking questions that help them gain an accurate understanding of the coaching client's world, giving honest and authentic feedback in the moment, and fostering acceptance and positivity (Stober, 2006). Coaches must tend to the process (rather than the content) of the coaching conversation to ensure it is open and collaborative. It is worth observing that the notions of support, transparency, partnership, and active listening—all of which are deeply embedded in the International Coaching Federation's Core Coaching Competencies (ICF, 2019)—share a fundamental alignment with the humanistic tradition.

Coaching process: Adult and experiential learning

The Coaching Process, as we view it, is fundamentally rooted in theories of adult learning theory. First, it is important for coaches to understand that coaching is about the coaching client's own self-directed learning and change and is facilitated by the coaching process – a fact explicitly addressed in coach competency models such as the International Coaching Federation Core Competencies (2019). Andragogy (Knowles, 1975) describes adult learners as self-directed, responsible for their own learning, and involved in self-evaluation. Others have noted the importance of support with constructive dialogue (Dewey, 1929; Knowles, 1984; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 2012).

Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2014) emphasises the roles and dialectical tensions of experience, reflection, meaning-making, and playful experimentation. Potter (2020) illustrates in detail how experiential learning plays out in a typical coaching conversation (p.280). We contend it is central to the coaching process and serves as a useful guide for new coaches. In practice, coaching students can apply experiential learning theory by working to elicit specific stories of coaching client's lived experiences, asking questions that help deepen their reflection, helping them explore and assign meaning to these reflections, and encouraging them to translate new meaning into meaningful action. A coaching process that is informed by experiential learning theory is also likely to progress cyclically as participants take action to implement their learning between sessions, then in subsequent sessions reflect on the results of their actions and the meaning of these results.

Coaching self: Developmental psychology

In the Province of Coaching Self, students might explore the construction of their coaching identity – both *becoming* and *being* a coach. Here, developmental psychology[1] can help demystify what has in the past been the 'special sauce' of coach education that is, the assumed developmental trajectory of coaching students toward increasingly complex ways of understanding human functioning and the transformative potential of human learning and change. This is both an internal process (we aim for coaching students to gain significant self-understanding) and a relational one (we hope to enable new coaches to co-create shared meaning more effectively with their coaching clients).

In practice, paying attention to the features of Self means reflexively examining multiple expressions of one's self-hood (Bachkirova, 2022), including their impact on the coaching context, relationship, and process. This requires an openness to change within oneself as a prerequisite to enabling transformative change in others (Hullinger and DiGirolamo, 2020). *Self-observant* coaches are able to recognise, surface, and take increasing responsibility for their assumptions and biases that arise in coaching practice. They are able to fluidly observe their own

[1] Developmental psychology has a deep history of research and theory with various branches (Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1975; Kegan, 1994; Loevinger, 1976; Fischer, 1980). We find the pragmatic synthesis and application to coaching by Bachkirova (2022) is accessible for coaches and students.

thoughts, feelings, and reactions and make in-the-moment conscious, deliberate decisions (Baldwin, 1906; Kegan, 1982; Schon, 1983). This enables a coach to move 'more nimbly' and with deeper critical awareness in relation to a coaching client's emergent beliefs, values, and assumptions.

Real-world testing

The Four Provinces are being applied within a university-based master's concentration in Leadership Coaching for the first time as this paper is in publication. Eleven students in a coaching program Ostrowski co-leads are learning coaching through the lens of the provinces. Although it is still early in these students' developmental trajectory, anecdotal excerpts from their written work indicate a level of support and appreciation for the Four Provinces model:

> *'Understanding the provinces and being able to apply that understanding is going to provide a considerable foundation for my coaching career.'*

> *'By drawing on my full body of knowledge and experiences, I will better be able to meet my coaching participants where they are. As the coaching journey progresses, the context for the coaching participant will change and my approach will need to change with it. Coaching is a process that evolves, and [the province of Coaching Process] teaches us how to maintain the connection with coaching participants.'*

> *'In my beginner's practice, the element of The Coaching Process Province that I missed were the flexibility and adaptability. I had followed the rules, and in the moment when I questioned what to do next, I did not know how to respond.'*

> *'In my personal experience, the coaching context was critical to my conversation with [the coaching participant]; in his situation, unveiling systemic and interrelationship factors was key to guiding [him] to next steps.'*

> *'The coaching philosophy we are learning teaches you numerous tools and helpful processes but roots it in a multi-disciplinary approach. This is the province of the coaching process.'*

> *'While we will explore this more over the next few courses in the program, it felt valuable to remind ourselves that these are at the heart of our curriculum and are the why behind our activities and lessons.'*

> *'As I thought of my individual coaching style, and understood my coaching self, I started thinking of the ways I wanted to loop my personality into my coaching style.'*

Discussion

Models and frameworks provide students and novice coaches with the scaffolding that supports making conscious, deliberate, and reasoned choices in their coaching practice. Though not empirically substantive, these comments offer valuable insights into how some coaching students may perceive the Four Provinces model early in their developmental journey. Most notable are the ideas that a framework such as the Four Provinces may help provide a foundational understanding of the connections between theory and practical experience and may allow coaches to adapt their knowledge-based coaching approaches to the changing contexts they encounter. Additionally, this model, and others like it, may help foster early awareness of the systemic factors that shape coaching, appreciation for the rationale behind class content and instruction, and the integration of one's unique coaching style or personality as a coach. These early data from our ongoing action research offer some interesting avenues for future research and inquiry.

The ultimate aim of The Four Provinces model is to provide enough structure to help coaching students organise their thinking about how to approach their craft, combined with enough flexibility to deepen

their own understanding over time through further study and the integration of personal experience. The model is also content and competency agnostic. Educators in other programs may insert their own theories and models within its structure. Much of the theory and research educators may draw upon to explore the Four Provinces (e.g. systems theory, humanistic psychology, adult learning theory, etc.) also inform identified coaching competencies such as those offered by the ICF and EMCC.

The Five Intentions for coach education (Bachkirova et al., 2017) elegantly convey the complex endeavor we undertake with our coaching students. They ground and remind us of the overall objectives for which we aim. We have found The Four Provinces Model supports the intentions by providing both structure and flexibility to navigate the inherent complexity of coach development.

Conclusion

In this article, we've argued for a robust ongoing discussion and exhange of useful approaches to coaching pedagogy. While there is a growing knowledge base for coaching, there have been few discussions about what works in coach education. From our field observations, we summarised some of the challenges in coach education and argued for being explicit with students about the complexity of what students have undertaken, as well as the logic behind the curricula.

The Five Intentions of coach education (Bachkirova et al., 2017) is a useful beginning to the conversation and northstar for coach educators. Our contribution is Ostrowski's The Four Provinces model, which serves as a useful guide toward that northstar and provides a flexible structure for designing curricula and scaffolding student growth and development. The model helps students quickly orient and navigate their in-the-moment decision making in the coaching conversation.

This is one small step into the ocean of areas to explore in coach education. We acknowledge these are the shallow waters and look forward to deeper dives as we continue to explore and learn from our experiences and discussions with other coach educators.

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