



A synthesis of research: Understanding Masters Coaches perceptions of how they've learned to coach adults

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Dr. Callary and Dr. Young's program of research Coaching Masters Athletes has grown since 2013 to include Dr. Rathwell and a number of students in several research studies that illuminate psychosocial issues of working with a fast-growing and understudied cohort of Masters Athletes.

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Research funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT TO DO THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Coach education for coaches who work with Masters Athletes (MAs) is limited worldwide. The purpose of the research study is to articulate swim coaches' perceptions of how they learned to work with MAs and whether their formal coach training meets their needs related to coaching MAs. As a growing cohort of sport participants and with more attention brought to MAs through research, the aim is to uncover where coaches are learning to coach adults and whether they perceive that their formal coach education is meeting their needs.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH GOAL?

The purpose of this article is to explore swim coaches' perceptions of how they have learned to coach MAs and whether they perceive their formal coach training to meet their needs in coaching MAs.

HOW WAS THE PROJECT DONE?

The study was completed by interviewing eleven swim coaches (4 female, 7 male) from six different competitive clubs in Eastern Canada. The coaches ranged in age from 36 to 67 years old, with between three and 20 years of experience coaching MAs (M=12). Each coach was interviewed in four parts: demographic-type questions, reasons for coaching, questions regarding how they learned to coach MAs, and lastly asking coaching whether they think it is important to have certification to coach MAs.

WHY SHOULD YOU KEEP READING?

The coaches had important perspectives to share regarding their formal education and its usefulness in coaching adults, and showed relative ignorance about the importance of psychological and relational coaching issues. Therefore, this article is particularly informative for coaches of MAs, Masters Athletes, and coach developers looking to develop an understanding of how to help Masters coaches learn.

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WHAT WERE KEY FINDINGS?

- With regards to the sources from which coaches learned to coach MAs, with regards to the sources from which coaches learned to coach MAs, six categories, including: learning from coaching experiences, from athletic experiences in swimming, from doing Internet searches and reading books, from networking with other coaches and mentors, from other experiences outside of swimming, and lastly from formal education, including coach certification courses.
- There exists a lack of connection between coach education programs and coaching MAs. Despite some coaches gaining some proficiencies towards coaching MAs in their coach education courses, generally, they were not identifying with the importance of certification/ accreditation through coach education courses because they perceived that they are geared towards working with youth, not adults.
- Masters coaches were interested in being trained with information specific to MAs. Furthermore, some coaches felt that Masters were not serious or competitive enough to make it important for coaches to be certified
- Providing coach education specific to teaching/coaching adults is becoming more of a necessity since the cohort of MAs is growing.

REFERENCES

[Callary, B., Rathwell, S., Young, B. \(2018\). Coach Education and Learning Sources for Coaches of Masters Swimmers. International Sport Coaching Journal. https://doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2017-0056](https://doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2017-0056)

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