



A synthesis of research: Differences in coaching Masters and youth

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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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Coaching Masters Athletes

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WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT TO DO THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

While traditional, coach-directed facilitation have dominated youth sport coaching practice, little is known about how coaches orient their approaches to facilitate adult athletes' learning. The study of how sport coaches' approaches may vary when working with different cohorts is important when considering how to strategically improve athletes' learning.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH GOAL?

This study aimed to use an education-based framework to understand how adult and youth athletes viewed their coach's approaches to facilitating learning situations related to their sport training. The aim was to understand if and how the coach's approaches differed based on the age cohort she was coaching.

HOW WAS THE PROJECT DONE?

This study explored a group of Masters athletes' and a group of youth athletes' perspectives of their common canoe/kayak coach's approaches. Nine youth athletes (five male, four female) aged 14–15 and 12 MAs (six male, six female) aged 27–70 were recruited, and agreed to participate in group interviews.

WHY SHOULD YOU KEEP READING?

Differences in coaching youth and adults exist, even when examining the same coach approaches with the two cohorts. This information is useful to both athletes and coaches at the youth and Masters level, as it provides insight in how coaching approaches vary based on athletes' ages.

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WHAT WERE KEY FINDINGS?

- The coach used collaborative, two-way conversations to engage the MAs and distribute information in ways that each individual could easily interpret.
- With youth, the coach exercised a more authoritative, one-way communication style, to give them all the information upfront.
- Results suggest that the coach incorporated benefits of using learner-centered techniques with youth (such as, video analysis and coach's direct questioning) but still exercised a more coach-directed approach to maintain control over their training.
- The MAs felt the coach focused on instilling notions of social affiliation and peer support, and helping them realize the value in their learning process. Alternatively, the coach had high competitive expectations for the youth.
- Through working with the coach and being exposed to her encouraging, supportive, and athlete-centered climate over time, the MAs became more intrinsically motivated and came to better appreciate the inherent value of their learning above extrinsic reward.

REFERENCES

[MacLellan, J., Callary, B., Young, B. \(2017\). Same coach, different approach? How masters and youth athletes perceive learning opportunities in training. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 13\(2\), 167-178. DOI: 10.1177/1747954117727202.](#)

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