

Coaching the coaches: A coach developer's experiences creating and implementing a positive youth development coach education program

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Coach education programs focused on positive youth development have the potential to equip coaches with the knowledge and tools necessary for them to foster improved developmental outcomes for youth in sport. Coach developers play a crucial role in the creation and implementation of coach education programs designed to promote high quality coaching. The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of a coach developer in creating and implementing a positive youth development coach education program. The intervention was created by a researcher/coach developer and comprised of five 3-hour sessions delivered bi-weekly over a 10-week period to 13 field hockey, tennis, surf, climbing, and soccer coaches. The program also involved one-on-one meetings between the coach developer and coaches. In terms of data collection, throughout course creation and implementation, the coach developer maintained a reflexive journal. Further, he audio recorded his bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with coaches. The coach developer shared how he struggled to overcome challenges such as dealing with extrinsically motivated coaches and helping coaches apply course content in practice. The learner-centered approach used, including the one-on-one meetings, helped the coach developer focus on coaches' thoughts, feelings, experiences and facilitated meaningful learning for coaches. The study contributes to the literature by having a coach developer critically reflect on his lived experiences, which led to insights on how to improve the design of positive youth development coach education programs and overcoming the challenges associated with them.

KEY WORDS: Coach education, Life skills, Sport, Reflection.

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Around the world, there is a growing concern with improving coach development systems in order to equip coaches with the necessary skill set to foster high quality sport experiences for athletes (Clements & Morgan, 2015; International Council for Coaching Excellence [ICCE], Association of Summer Olympic International Federations & Leeds Beckett University, 2014). Coach development systems in different countries present different features that directly influence how coach education programs (CEPs) are created and implemented, and how coach developers provide support for coach learning (ICCE, 2014). Coach developers are key stakeholders in the creation of efficient coach development systems as they provide direct support to coaches by enabling them to learn course material, develop a vast array of coaching skills, and ultimately apply course material in their coaching practice (North, 2010). Hence, “coach developers are not simply experienced coaches or transmitters of coaching knowledge but rather are trained to develop, support and challenge coaches to improve their knowledge and skills” (ICCE, 2014, p. 8). To provide high quality learning experiences for coaches, coach developers have multiple roles and responsibilities. Coach developers need to create and implement sound CEPs, specifically select content, use effective delivery styles, and consider formal/informal learning situations (Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). Fulfilling these roles and responsibilities is a complex endeavour that requires coach developers to continuously reflect on the intricate nature of coaching and learning to coach (Brasil, Ramos, Milistetd, Culver, & Nascimento, 2017; ICCE, 2014).

Although these responsibilities and roles have been described in the coaching literature and the complexity of creating and implementing CEPs has been recognised (Denison, 2019; Paquette & Trudel, 2018), there are still few studies that have investigated the creation and implementation of CEPs from the coach developer’s point of view. Abraham et al. (2013) investigated the work of 15 coach developers through interviews and observations. More specifically, this study aimed to analyze the role played by coach developers and document their professional development needs within the United Kingdom sport system. Findings showed the importance of considering multiple domains while reflecting on the professional development needs of coach developers and their role. Abraham et al. (2013) highlighted the need to (a) understand how coach developers intervene within a specific context (e.g., actively engage and respect the opinions of key stakeholders in planning coach development programs); (b) understand coaches’ mindset and predispositions (e.g., work with the coach to set personalized goals); (c) understand adult learning principles (e.g., develop and monitor relevant learning environments); (d) understanding the coaching curriculum, process, and practice (e.g., make effective and informed curricular decisions that reflect the nature

of coach development); and (d) focus on the self (e.g., conduct evidence-based self-analysis aligned with emergent needs). Brasil et al. (2017) conducted semi-structured interviews with five surf coach developers to understand their learning pathways. The participants considered interactions with family, surfers, and coaches crucial to their learning process. While discussing the role of coach developers within coach education in the United Kingdom, McQuade and Nash (2015) highlighted the fact that coach developers have the challenging role of developing and supporting coaches. To succeed in their challenging role, coach developers must be considered assets in the coach development strategy of any sport organization by being provided with resources and learning opportunities. Although these studies provide valuable insights into the realities of being a coach developer, to date, no research has specifically examined coach developers' experiences creating and implementing positive youth development CEPs.

Positive Youth Development Coach Education Programs

Most CEPs focus on helping coaches understand how to facilitate athletes' technical, tactical, and physical development (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Vella, Crowe, & Oades, 2013). In their analysis of the influence of coach education qualifications on coaching practice, Nash and Sproule (2012) stated that "...coaches viewed coach education courses as key providers of sport specific content but by and large not very effective with other aspects of coaching, for example, decision-making, pedagogy and sports science" (p. 48). An emergent avenue in coaching science research has focused on CEPs that are specific to positive youth development (PYD; Falcão, Bloom, & Gilbert, 2012) as well as life skills development and transfer (Camiré, Kendellen, Rathwell, & Charbonneau, 2018). PYD represents an asset-based approach to youth development that considers the need to focus on fostering the positive assets needed for successful adaptation in adult life (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Within the PYD approach, assets encompass a range of competencies such as life skills (e.g., goal setting, perseverance, leadership), defined as skills that can be developed in sport and transferred to other life domains (Bean, Kramers, Forneris, & Camiré, 2018; Gould & Carson, 2008). Due to the social relevance of PYD and the increased expectations for athletes to learn life skills through sport in many socio-cultural contexts (Coakley, 2016; Denison & Mills, 2014; Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2017), more coach developers are now tasked with striving to make PYD and life skills development a worthwhile approach to pursue alongside

performance. However, given that PYD-focused CEPs are relatively new, they represent a new set of challenges for coach developers.

More and more studies are being conducted to understand youth sport coaches' perceptions as it relates to their experiences taking part in PYD-focused CEPs (e.g., Camiré et al., 2018). Learning to coach PYD has been considered a problematic endeavour in many socio-cultural contexts due to an instilled culture that continues to value performance over PYD (Coakley, 2016; Santos, Camiré, & Campos, 2018). This reality poses specific challenges for coach developers (Stodter & Cushion, 2019) attempting to help coaches learn how to foster PYD and use sport as a platform for holistic development. An understanding of the experiences of coach developers in PYD-focused CEPs may help advance our comprehension about the specific challenges of creating and delivering PYD-focused CEPs, as well as provide insights on how to better support coach developers in their efforts to generate meaningful learning experiences for coaches. Although insights provided by coaches have been beneficial in optimising the design of subsequent PYD-focused CEPs, there is a need to further examine the processes behind creating and implementing PYD-focused CEPs from the point of view of coach developers themselves. Such examinations could shed light on the challenges, decision-making processes, and strategies of coach developers, thereby helping to enhance the quality of coach development systems mandated to provide the necessary support for coach developers to deliver high quality CEPs.

The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of a coach developer in creating and implementing a PYD-focused CEP within the Portuguese context. Considering the increasing number of PYD-focused CEPs that have been created and implemented in recent years (e.g., Santos, Gould, & Strachan, 2019; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013), it is timely to explore coach developers' experiences creating and implementing such courses. The present study can provide insights on the complex interplay of variables that must be considered when creating CEPs focused on PYD.

Method

In the present study, the first author used autophenomenography (Allen Collinson, 2009) as the preferred methodology to reflect and better understand his experiences creating and implementing the PYD-focused CEP, with a particular focus on working one-on-one with coaches taking part in the course. Consistent with the autophenomenographical approach, from this point forward, the paper is framed in the first person. To support my process of introspection, I favoured a "cooperative phenomenology" (Allen Collinson, 2011; Chojnacki, 2004; Spiegelberg, 1975) approach. Hence, two co-authors worked with me and contributed to my reflexive process by prompting reflection throughout the creation and implementation of the PYD-focused CEP, as well as in the analysis and writing of the manuscript. Aligning

with autophenomenography, I conducted the research using an interpretivist lens, focusing on my personal constructions as well as the co-constructions with programme participants. It must be considered that "Autophenomenography is thus an autobiographical genre in which the phenomenological researcher is both researcher and participant in her/his study of a particular phenomenon or phenomena (...) subjecting her/his own lived experience to a sustained and rigorous phenomenological analysis" (Allen Collinson, 2011, p. 53). Thus, I made sustained efforts to follow phenomenological principles (Hockey & Collinson, 2007), expose my biases, and become more aware of my existing preconceptions.

Context

In Portugal, CEPs are typically delivered by national sport organisations that recruit coach developers to create CEPs based on the guidelines provided by the Portuguese Institute for Sports and Youth (Resende, Sequeira, & Sarmento, 2016). When a national sport organisation creates a CEP, the content is discussed with the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth to obtain feedback and sign-off before implementing the course. Based on the duration of the course, a number of credits are awarded to the participants. The current CEP was initiated and approved following this procedure. CEPs may reach coaches from one specific sport or coaches from various sports in the case of more general contents such as pedagogy, didactics, and sport psychology. In Portugal, coach education is compulsory as coaches must renew their coaching certificate by being awarded coaching qualification credits. To be awarded coaching qualification credits, coaches have the choice to attend CEPs focused on general content or sport-specific content. Although there is a growing interest from national sport organizations to develop CEPs focused on PYD that are available to coaches from various sports (National Plan of Ethics in Sport, 2015), most CEPs and coach developers remain mainly focused on athletes' technical, tactical, and physical development (Santos et al., 2017). Coach developers are usually academics that are also certified coaches (such as myself), and play an important part in creating (e.g., frequency of the sessions, assessment format) and implementing (e.g., teaching strategies) CEPs. In contrast to some other coach development systems (ICCE, 2014), to date, there is no program in place within the Portuguese context to educate coach developers on how to teach coaches.

The Researcher-Participant

At the time of the study, I had been working with a national sport organisation for two years, creating a PYD-focused coach education curriculum. PYD has been a crucial component of my professional life in various roles as a youth

football coach, as a physical education teacher, and more recently as a lecturer in two polytechnic institutes. The two co-authors, experts on PYD through sport, supported me in my reflexive process throughout the implementation phase, serving as “critical friends”. At the time of the study, I had been engaging in PYD research projects with the co-authors for three years. Their perspectives were invaluable in helping me take into consideration different strategies and scenarios to improve my effectiveness as a coach developer.

Following the development and implementation of the CEP, I participated in a bracketing interview (Tufford & Newman, 2010) conducted by the second author before I started the data analysis. The purpose of this interview was not about achieving a rigid bracketing of my assumptions but more about revealing “how those attitudes and assumptions, which are subsequently revealed to be integral to the phenomenon, do indeed shape it in important ways” (Allen Collinson, 2011, p. 57). For example, one of the questions asked “Why did you decide to undertake and complete a PhD?” which led me to realise that since starting my academic career, I had been very motivated to study PYD through sport, and I embraced the challenge through completing a PhD in this area. Further, this reflection increased my awareness of how PYD may not be as important to coaches as it is to me due to the fact that technical, tactical, and physical development continue to be the main concerns for most stakeholders within the Portuguese youth sport context (Santos et al., 2017). Another outcome of the bracketing interview consisted of revealing my assumption that PYD-focused CEPs are intrinsically of value to youth sport coaches. Further, the bracketing interview helped me reflect on my approach to learning. I realized that I value the importance of creating a learning environment tailored to fit coaches’ needs instead of packaging information as pre-arranged content (Paquette & Trudel, 2018). Within the coaching science literature, the benefits of learner-centred interventions have been discussed in many studies (Milistetd, Peniza, Trudel, & Paquette, 2018; Nash & Sproule, 2012; Paquette & Trudel, 2018), indicating the need to move beyond broad guidelines and general concepts.

As the fieldwork and analysis progressed, I regularly consulted my bracketing interview transcript to maintain a high level of reflexivity during analysis and writing. Throughout the creation and implementation of the PYD-focused CEP, I discussed the data with my co-authors regularly, asked them questions, shared fears, and discussed challenges.

Creating the Course

Given that PYD-focused CEPs are still scarce in Portugal (Santos et al., 2019), I took the initiative of engaging a national sport organisation and con-

vincing its president of the importance of PYD. Thus, apart from the scientific literature and my own experiences, I had very few Portugal-specific guidelines available to help me understand how I should create a PYD-focused CEP. However, I consulted research on PYD-focused CEPs conducted in other parts of the world (Falcão et al., 2012; Vella et al., 2013).

I deliberately structured the program to cover three main areas: (a) defining PYD and life skills and making the case for the importance of positive coach-athlete relationships (session 1); (b) designing sport programs conducive to PYD outcomes (sessions 2 and 3), and (c) integrating PYD-based strategies into coaching practice (sessions 4 and 5). The first three sessions were conducted online via the Any Meeting platform (Any meeting, 2016). The last two sessions occurred in-person and consisted of practical sessions that took place in a gymnasium at a polytechnic institute where I taught. The decision for structuring the PYD-focused CEP in this manner was based on previous research I conducted in Portugal (Santos et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2018; Santos et al., 2019) that alluded to the need of integrating an online and in-person component for coaches due to their busy schedules and the fact that most of them coach part-time. Past research (Strachan, MacDonald, Côté, 2016) has corroborated the importance of online CEPs due to their easily accessible nature and reach.

In previous research, two approaches to learning have been extensively discussed (Paquette, & Trudel, 2018). First, instructor-centered approaches include a focus on the instructor and the delivery of content through an extrinsically motivating environment and passive teaching methods. Within this approach, the instructor takes all the responsibility for the learning process and determines what will be taught and how. In contrast, learner-centered approaches acknowledge the need to facilitate learning through active teaching methods that place the learner at the center of the learning process. The aim is to create an intrinsically motivating environment by using reflection, critical discussion, and ownership as key guiding principles. I used the principles of the learner-centered approach to develop lifelong learning skills in coaches and empower them to foster PYD.

Given that previous intervention studies indicated the worth of one-on-one meetings with coaches as a complement to formal delivery structures (Santos et al., 2019), while creating the PYD-focused CEP, I decided to integrate one-on-one meetings into the design of the CEP. These meetings consisted of individualised and informal get-togethers during which coaches could ask me questions about the contents I presented in the previous sessions. The goal was to help coaches overcome any challenges they may have been facing in trying to (a) embed PYD principles in their coaching philosophy and (b) apply PYD material in their coaching practice.

Implementing the Course

I delivered the PYD-focused CEP online and in-person from August 9th, 2017 to December 4th, 2017. A total of 13 youth sport coaches from competitive youth sport contexts who were on average 34 years of age and had an average of 13 years of coaching experience took part in the course divided into five 3-hour group sessions (which were delivered biweekly) and five one-on-one meetings (occurring in the off-week between group sessions). In one week, coaches engaged in group sessions and in the following week, they engaged in one-on-one meetings. I delivered four sessions in Portuguese; one session was delivered in English because I invited the third author to guest lecture. During the one-on-one meetings, coaches could choose an online or in-person format. Two coaches asked to have the meetings together since they were coaching the same sport and knew each other for more than five years. The one-on-one meetings did not have a pre-established time limit and occurred at a time and place convenient to each coach. I conducted a total of 38 meetings with coaches. These meetings lasted on average 33 minutes ranging between 15 and 96 minutes.

Based on previous research (Jones & Turner, 2006; Paquette & Trudel, 2018), I utilised a learner-centred approach in this course and attempted to (a) develop PYD material based on the coach participants' needs (e.g., I presented suggestions about how to integrate performance goals with PYD goals, which was an issue raised by the coaches), (b) create problem-based case scenarios to prompt reflection on PYD (e.g., I asked them to reflect on how to foster PYD in specific coaching situations), (c) pose reflexive questions that helped coaches recognise how to apply PYD material (e.g., At the end of each session, I asked coaches to reflect on what PYD strategies they could apply in their next practice), and (d) get coaches to interact with one another (e.g., I invited a surf coach to demonstrate to other coaches how he evaluated his PYD goals through a self-assessment sheet).

Data Collection

Creation. Throughout the creation of the CEP, I maintained a reflexive journal, which facilitated the process of organising my thoughts, feelings, and the meanings I attributed to different events (Boutet, Vandette, & Valiquette-Tessier, 2017). I focused my reflections in large part on the challenges I faced throughout the creation of the course and the decisions I made to overcome such challenges. Additionally, as part of my reflexive process, I paid attention to the components of the course and the candidate coaches, as recommended by Allen and Collinson (2011). I recorded a total of six journal entries during the creation phase.

Implementation. Throughout the implementation of the PYD-focused CEP (including the one-on-one meetings with coaches), I also maintained a reflexive journal. The reflexive journal was comprised of 20 double-spaced pages that included reflections on the implementation of the PYD-focused CEP. I focused my reflections (October 2017 to January 2018) on my perceived performance delivering the course, my interactions with coaches, and the challenges I experienced. A total of nine journal entries were recorded during the implementation phase. In addition to my journal entries, I audio recorded all my interactions with the coaches during one-on-one meetings. The recordings provided valuable information as I reflected on my experiences as a coach developer. More specifically, I listened to the recordings of the meetings and reflected on them to better immerse myself in the experience of creating and delivering a PYD-focused CEP as a coach developer. As part of the Research Ethics Board requirements for the study, coaches provided informed consent to having their one-on-one meetings with the coach developer audio recorded.

Data Analysis

I analysed the data based on phenomenological principles that align with autophenomenography and followed the recommendations provided by Allen and Collinson (2011). First, I gathered my reflexive journal entries and the transcripts of my one-on-one meetings with the coaches. Then, I engaged in a process of data immersion designed to put me in a mind frame to start identifying initial themes. Throughout my process of immersion, I followed a chronological sequence to generate initial interpretations of my experiences as they occurred over time during the creation and implementation of the CEP. This step involved a process of re-memory and lasted several weeks (Sparkes & Smith, 2016). Specifically, I made concerted efforts to read the material line by line and underlined salient segments of text, giving them a colour and a code that was associated to a meaning and/or an emotion, and to a specific phase of the project (i.e., creation or implementation). Throughout this process of re-memory, I carefully documented the rationale behind my decisions, revisited these decisions, and considered divergent perspectives in order to create an intricate and nuanced interpretive map. The outcome of this process led me to identify an initial list of 21 themes. I then engaged in a process of theme refinement, whereby I examined each theme to assess the extent to which it encapsulated, in a genuine manner, my feelings and interpretations associated with the creation and implementation of the course. A total of six themes (i.e., three in the creation phase, three in the

implementation phase) were retained. As discussed by Husserl (1999), my analytical process continued during writing as drafting several versions of the results enabled me to refine my interpretations.

I considered several steps to increase the quality of the present study. Based on Burke's (2016) proposed criteria for judging study quality, I attempted to provide rich quotes to enable the reader to understand my interpretations in relation to my experiences of creating and implementing a PYD-focused CEP. Further, the co-authors served as 'critical friends' by acting as sounding boards in relation to my experiences as a coach developer, increasing my awareness on alternative perspectives that guided my reflection and supported the analysis and writing of the manuscript. The critical friends process followed Smith and McGannon's (2017) recommendations, whereby I engaged with the co-authors in discussions on the analysis. They challenged my interpretations of the dataset by posing reflexive questions (e.g., What is the climate in Portuguese youth sport? Is there place for a PYD approach?).

Results and Discussion

As part of the creation and recruitment phase, I identified three themes that reflect the feelings and thought processes that guided my design of the PYD-focused CEP: (a) a socio-cultural context focused on performance; (b) an extrinsically motivating environment in coach education; and (c) carving a road towards a learner-centred coach education course. Codes were used to protect the anonymity of the participants (e.g. C7 = Coach 7).

Creating a PYD-focused Coach Education Course and Recruiting Coaches

A socio-cultural context focused on performance. Based on my experience, most CEPs remain focused on technical and tactical skill development, game analysis, and quality of play in team sports, which continue to be prioritised by Portuguese national sport organizations as benchmarks for high quality coaching and coach education. I felt I had to take a leading role in altering this culture in which young athletes are overly pressured to perform. In one of the one-on-one meetings, C6 mentioned: "Pressure begins when they play their first [tennis] tournament. It could be at age 7, 8, 13 or 14...it is brutal...parents try to project on their children what they weren't able to achieve. This is part of our sport culture!". I find it quite frustrating to live in a country/culture where, in many cases, the only cause for excitement in youth sport is winning! Why do we struggle to see beyond results and

records? The lack of attention to more holistic psychosocial skills development compelled me to approach several national sport organisations and get them to reflect on the following questions: How can we help coaches learn more about PYD? How can we support coaches to apply PYD material in their coaching? and How can we better equip coaches with PYD-specific knowledge? Many national sport organisations were hesitant in pursuing this line of questioning with me as in Portugal, PYD remains a concept that most people are unfamiliar with and/or not concerned with. Thus, in my quest to advocate for PYD and the need for PYD-specific material in CEPs, I often 'fell on deaf ears'. In one journal entry, I captured my sentiments surrounding my difficulties in getting people to buy into the concept:

Almost no one knows PYD. Even when I speak about it, coaches say it's important, but I don't see real interest in the subject. It all makes me realise there's still a long way to go before we reach a point where we do a PYD course and everyone looks for it because they know what it is and they want the knowledge we have to offer.

Therefore, as I began to develop the current PYD-focused CEP, I had to keep in mind that in Portugal, most coaches are not familiar with the concept of PYD and its implications for coaching youth (Santos et al., 2017). In contrast, in North America, there are more examples of organisations that have included an explicit PYD focus in their programming (e.g., Kendellen, Camiré, Bean, Forneris, & Thompson, 2017). Based on these reflections, I concluded that one of my main tasks in ensuring the success of the PYD-focused CEP consisted of finding ways to convince coaches of the importance of PYD. As I reflected, I accepted that I needed to be a sort of ambassador for PYD in Portugal in order to instil a culture whereby coach development systems would recognise the worth of training coaches to develop young sport participants as people, not just as athletes. Thus, I felt I had taken on a large responsibility to ensure that the PYD-focused CEP was well received and well regarded by the different stakeholders in the Portuguese sport system, in the hopes of changing the mindset. In one journal entry, I alluded to this complex challenge:

Sport organizations still remain passive toward the need to integrate PYD within the coach development system. I need to spread the message about the importance of PYD and meet with coaches and policy makers to highlight the contributions of this approach for children. Each coach and stakeholder counts!

Researchers (Denison & Mills, 2014; Denison et al., 2017) have discussed how in some cases, coaches do not focus on athletes' holistic development and instead use their power to impose their influence on athletes. This perspective considers athletes as mere objects that should fulfil coaches' desires. The work conducted by Denison (2007) highlights that implement-

ing athlete-centred approaches with the aim of fostering PYD outcomes is one of the main challenges for coaches. During the last ten years, coach education in Portugal has gone through many changes related to the content, length, and structure of CEPs (Resende et al., 2016), with the goal of providing coaches with high quality knowledge across age groups and sport contexts (e.g., recreational, competitive). However, these changes have not resulted in a further emphasis on psychosocial development and coaches remain largely unexposed to content related to PYD (Santos et al., 2017).

What I came to realise is that it is not only the coaches' fault. The 'system' carries some responsibility for this deeply entrenched winning/performance mentality. The system reflects the set of forces that influence PYD on macro and micro levels, which together "...entail, for example, equipping coaches with proper knowledge and tools to explicitly teach life skills while also granting them legitimate opportunities to operate in settings where organizational policies promote and mandate explicit life skills teaching approaches" (Camiré & Santos, 2019, p. 31). Still to this day, in many clubs, coaches feel like they must maintain a focus on winning and are highly encouraged by their clubs, peers, and national sport organisations to participate in performance-oriented CEPs. In thinking about this, in one journal entry, I felt deflated that my efforts to motivate coaches to complete this PYD-focused CEP could be seen as inconsequential:

I have seen many sport organizations creating awareness about the importance of integrating technical and tactical skill development with performance. However, there are no explicit CEPs centered around what coaches should do to foster PYD. So clubs only focus on performance, meaning that coaches do not seek PYD-focused CEPs. Top-down and bottom-up changes are urgent to integrate PYD in this context!

Although system change takes leadership, energy, investment, and years (Denison et al., 2017), I felt like I needed to develop strategies to achieve buy-in from coaches and other key stakeholders in order to make a contribution as a coach developer. As a former coach, I've seen highly problematic scenarios in which athletes are mistreated, serving as 'pawns' in coaches' pursuit of victories. There lies the conundrum; because of what I've seen happen in Portuguese youth sport, I'm motivated to promote PYD as an important part of the coaches' toolkit but at the same time, I feel like I'm always facing resistance. I captured this very sentiment in one of my journal entries, which I wrote after five coaches from a high-profile competitive youth sport club withdrew from the course after having initially showed interest:

We just lost five coaches. I saw immediately that it'd be difficult to enrol them in the course. From my conversations with these coaches, I can see they're not familiar with PYD. I constantly have to deal with this performance-oriented focus and misconception that 'winning is not compatible with PYD'.

I realise I am not alone in facing such issues as there has been a recurring debate in the literature on how to integrate PYD with performance objectives (Camiré, 2015; Strachan, Côté, & Deakin, 2009). Unfortunately, many coaches continue to disregard PYD (Kramers, Camiré, & Bean, 2019; Santos et al., 2019) due to the social pressures to win that remain prevalent in numerous youth sport settings (Coakley, 2016). Although I try to alter this culture in Portugal, there needs to be a larger set of forces that promote PYD in youth sport. In the Portuguese context, PYD-focused coach education courses are scarce (Santos et al., 2017), which creates challenges to get coaches to buy-in and become receptive to participate in these programs. It is important to have in mind that in Portugal, coaches can choose which courses they attend in order to renew their coaching qualification credits, which becomes a double-edged sword. On one hand, coaches may choose any type of course and learn diverse materials they deem crucial for their coaching practice. On the other hand, unfortunately, many coaches remain unfamiliar with PYD material and thus consider it unnecessary as their focus lies in becoming winning coaches. Ultimately, I adopt the mindset that coaches can change their perspective on PYD with support from coach developers and exposure to PYD materials, as corroborated by previous research (Camiré, Kendellen, Rathwell, & Charbonneau, 2018; Stodter & Cushion, 2019). The complex Portuguese reality I have to deal with daily lies in helping coaches see the merits of having PYD and performance outcomes as feasible joint objectives (Camiré, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard, 2011).

An extrinsically motivating environment in coach education. From the onset of recruitment, I quickly realised that some coaches were not motivated at all to explore how PYD applies to coaching. Rather, for them, the PYD-focused CEP was merely viewed as an opportunity to accumulate credits towards renewing their coaching certificate. In one journal entry, I discussed this reality: "Some coaches only care about renewing their licence to coach...The importance of PYD is not enough. If the only arguments are 'PYD is great' and 'really important for youth', then it is not enough. I feel like I've only been able to get coaches in the room because of the need to renew their licence". In another journal entry, my emotional response to this situation was genuinely captured:

I was able to get some coaches, but it has to do with the number of (qualification) credits. I can see that PYD by itself is just not enough. Some are just concerned with credits and I have a strong urge to recruit others that are truly interested in PYD.

Given that participation in CEPs is often perceived by Portuguese coaches as simply a means to an end (Santos et al., 2019), they often seek CEPs that are not time-consuming, affordable, and have few demands set by

coach developers in terms of assignments and evaluations. It was difficult to find a balance between creating a CEP coaches would want to register for (i.e., in terms of time, affordability, and demands) while also ensuring coaches registered for the PYD-focused CEP for the right reasons. This was a frustrating feeling, knowing I had to accept that many coaches were not concerned with PYD and simply viewed this CEP as one more extrinsically motivated job on their “to do” list rather than a learning opportunity. During recruitment, while I was reaching out to coaches to enrol, I felt very frustrated but still somewhat surprised at the same time with the amount of convincing I had to do. I became worried that the course was perhaps becoming my own personal quest and was not really of interest to anyone. I felt I had great content, and meaningful messages to deliver, but no audience. I grudgingly accepted that most of my audience was not intrinsically motivated to attend the course, but the silver lining was that if I could get them through the door (i.e., registered), at least I had an opportunity to make them care about PYD, not just performance outcomes. Previous research (Piggott, 2012; Vella, Crowe, & Oades, 2013) has highlighted the notion that coach education programs are not, for many coaches, preferred learning sources due to the lack of access and opportunities to become active learners, which influences coaches’ motivations towards learning.

At this point in the course creation process, my next task consisted of conceiving strategies aimed at motivating coaches to view the CEP not as merely instrumental towards renewing their coaching certificate. To motivate coaches, I needed to straightforwardly consider their needs and their socio-cultural context (Paquette & Trudel, 2018).

My introspections related to coach motivation made me realise that it is highly important for coach developers to consider coaches’ level and quality of motivation to take part in CEPs. In a one-on-one meeting, C8 recognized the importance of this approach: “This CEP is meant to raise our attention, right? For me and for the club, this is a theme [PYD] that we know about... however, we focus on training and competition and do not give enough value to it”. When dealing with extrinsically motivated coaches, the coach developer’s role lies in getting coaches to progressively shift from an extrinsic to an intrinsic outlook (Camiré, 2015). As it relates to PYD, coaches who are not convinced about its importance should be guided through CEP learning material in ways that make it possible for them to explore in a tangible manner how PYD and performance can be two interrelated outcomes of youth sport participation. In Portugal, there is a highly professionalized coaching environment (Taylor & Garratt, 2010) where recruitment practices, in some cases, make coach education inaccessible to many coaches due to costs and also contribute to the lack of interest shown by coaches in PYD (Mallett,

Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Santos et al., 2017). Mallett et al. (2009) discussed how recruitment practices and the criteria used by sport organizations may influence the effectiveness of coach education and coaches' predispositions for learning.

Carving a road towards a learner-centred coach education program.

Creating this CEP was a test of patience and self-control. In addition to all the other important variables I had to consider, I also had to make sure the program fit in coaches' schedules. Given that my goal as a coach developer was to spread the PYD message across Portugal, I prioritised being flexible to ensure as many coaches as possible attended the program so I could influence their views towards PYD. Being flexible meant that I scheduled multiple session times a week, with coaches able to choose which session worked best for them. For example, in the first week, I delivered the same session on four different occasions as some coaches had very limited availability. However, this decision came at a great cost to me as it was tremendously demanding to deliver several sessions a week on top of ensuring I met all of my other responsibilities at work and at home. Many times, in my head, I'd think "Shit, I still have four more sessions to deliver this week!". After a few weeks, I was not sure if I was going to be able to do this until the end as I was investing between 40 and 50 hours of work per week on the PYD-focused CEP. In one journal entry, I discussed how this was an unsustainable format, mainly kept afloat by my passion for PYD-focused CEPs: "The CEP started with many changes. Some coaches were not able to attend the first session. I had to create other opportunities this week for all of them to participate. I had to make tremendous efforts to deliver the same session on multiple occasions".

On top of the added workload, I was also concerned with creating the most beneficial learning environment for coaches. It became clear to me that I needed to become more familiar with what the coaches really wanted from the course, apart from credits. I reflected on how I could engage coaches in discussion forums that would enable me to understand their philosophies and motivations. C5 recognized how the forum approach made it easier for him to share his beliefs: "I think we are much more human when we can talk about a theme... Letting people communicate, share their ideas, and not be criticised for it. You can get much information [from coaches] and create something amazing". Throughout my years of research and practice, I realized coaches favoured guided discovery, a problem-based approach, and learning by doing, which have been considered valuable learning approaches within coach education programs (Cullen, Harris, & Hill, 2012; Trudel, Culver, & Werthner, 2013). However, given the diversity of coaches involved in different sports, this was a challenge. In one journal entry, I discussed this issue:

Another thing that will be important to think about is how to create discussion forums between all coaches. In other CEPs, we had coaches that knew each other for many years and it was easy to have them interact. Here, we have a mix of surf, football, tennis coaches... and I have to lead these discussions and provide specific examples that fit their context. I will try to make it work.

I really wanted to create a CEP that increased the chances of coaches applying the material in their coaching practice. Due to coaches' different needs, objectives, and levels of motivation to foster PYD, I had to think hard to identify strategies that could facilitate the application of the course material. This reflective process made me feel concerned and scared about not reaching all coaches because I was not familiar with the intricacies of some sports such as surfing. I had to make sure I was going to invest time listening to their concerns and piecing together PYD strategies that considered their coaching reality. Sporting knowledge was an important part of my credibility to help coaches integrate PYD materials in their coaching practice, as noted by researchers such as Lyle (2018). Based on my previous experiences as a coach developer, I always felt coaches were more apt to sharing their thoughts individually or in small groups. Social learning mechanisms (Culver, Werthner, & Trudel, 2019; Wenger, 1998) and multiple learning sources have been considered crucial for helping coaches learn. With that notion in mind, that is when I decided to hold one-on-one meetings with each coach during the weeks in between the group sessions. I knew these one-on-one meetings would be key to increasing the odds of coaches applying PYD material in practice. Thus, the meetings were created to help me access and understand coaches' actual needs, concerns, and questions and to ensure the program was learner-centred as much as possible. Taking a learner-centered approach made me realize that the one-on-one meetings, alongside strategies such as peer debriefing and group discussions, would increase the odds of coaches recognising the importance of fostering PYD through sport. These strategies were the ones I thought could better fit coaches' needs as learners (Lyle, Jolly, & North, 2010). I documented in one journal entry how I felt the inclusion of one-on-one meetings could make my role as a coach developer that much more impactful and meaningful:

It's important to organise one-on-one meetings to help them better understand the course. Let's see how they will react to this new feature. I believe they'll like this idea of one-on-one meetings. From the beginning, they'll have to understand this is made for them and it's different from what they've done previously in CEPs.

Once I committed to the one-on-one meetings, I felt both excited and anxious. Is integrating this new initiative going to push me to my psycholog-

ical and physical limit? How am I actually going to manage all of this? Is this going to be worth it? I had all these questions in my mind, thinking I was making all these efforts without even knowing if it was going to make any sort of difference. Beyond these emotions and concerns, I wondered if this strategy would create an environment conducive to meaningful learning and if I had the necessary knowledge and skills to actually deliver a learner-centered approach. As discussed in prior research (Harris & Cullen, 2010; Paquette & Trudel, 2018; Weimer, 2013), it is challenging for coach developers to develop coherent strategies and assess practices and outcomes.

The last issue I wrestled with from a course creation standpoint was between offering the course online or in person. Based on my understanding of the coach education literature, I knew online CEPs were more flexible than in-person CEPs (Strachan, MacDonald, & Côté, 2016) but also limited from a pedagogical point of view (Santos et al., 2019). My previous experiences with online PYD-focused coach education programs (Santos et al., 2019) made me realize that coaches struggled in understanding how to integrate PYD in their coaching practice and required some sort of a 'learning by doing' approach (Vella et al., 2013). Hence, I attempted to combine the advantages of an online format with the benefits of in-person interactions. This decision was based on the premise that I felt coaches needed experiential learning opportunities. Considering Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) and other research (e.g., Newman, Alvarez, & Kim, 2017), I felt coaches needed opportunities to apply PYD materials in real coaching scenarios, and then reflect and engage in critical discussions. I documented in one journal entry how I felt about the importance of experiential learning opportunities: "In the practical component, it will be much easier to have coaches reflect and actively participate in the session. In a completely online format, I wouldn't have much control over their true motivation and engagement".

Implementing a PYD-focused Coach Education Course

Related to the implementation phase, I identified three themes that reflect what I experienced while delivering the PYD-focused CEP: (a) one-on-one meetings supported coach learning; (b) key challenges to delivering a PYD-focused CEP; and (c) some coaches did change their view towards PYD.

One-on-one meetings supported coach learning. Based on my experiences working with the coaches, I believe the running of one-on-one meetings helped them learn PYD material. I was apprehensive at the beginning,

since this was my first time working with this kind of intensive intervention, an approach that was also new to the coaches. My main concerns were related to coaches understanding the purpose of these meetings and on my end, making sure I provided adequate feedback, finding a balance between talking and listening. In one journal entry, these concerns were captured:

I was scared that coaches wouldn't value these moments or wouldn't feel comfortable speaking openly to me about PYD. I tried to explain the purpose, what would be discussed, and that we'd speak about issues they thought should be discussed. I tried to pose more questions than give answers.

To effectively utilise the time I had with coaches during these one-on-one meetings, I focused on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, provided a positive outlook on their coaching, and tried to discuss PYD examples that applied to them. Keeping in mind my strong support for PYD in sport, I made conscious efforts to focus on their thoughts about PYD rather than imposing mine, which was not always easy to do. Initially, coaches were hesitant to provide concrete examples of things they did in their coaching practice to support PYD. I believe they were afraid to expose their struggles and fears surrounding PYD because of how they felt pressured to attain victories at their club. Thus, I invested time in developing a positive climate during one-on-one meetings by speaking about my own struggles and fears as a coach so they could relate to me and open up. With time, coaches shared more feelings and ideas during these meetings and were comfortable getting my support and counselling. I also tried to scaffold (Galatti, Santos, & Korsakas, 2019; Jones & Thomas, 2015) coaches' PYD implementation in order to help them internalize those features. This was crucial to creating an environment that enabled shared knowledge creation and facilitated coaches' buy-in toward PYD (Paquette, Trudel, Duarte, & Cundari, 2019). Aligning with these strategies, I tried to enable coaches to voice their opinions on content and learning methods to foster curriculum ownership. In concrete terms, this entailed me openly negotiating content and learning methods with the coaches.

On several occasions, I was satisfied when I noticed that the coaches felt our interactions provided them with the guidance they needed to solve the real world problems they encountered in their coaching. Over time, I noticed how coaches became more willing and able to integrate PYD material in their coaching. As our relationship continued to develop, I felt increasingly comfortable working with the coaches. From an assessment standpoint, I felt the one-on-one coach meetings facilitated my role as a coach developer by giving me a close lens on how coaches were able to understand the PYD material delivered in the group sessions and apply this material in practice.

In line with previous work conducted with coach developers (Brasil et al., 2017; International Council for Coaching Excellence Association of Summer Olympic International Federations & Leeds Beckett University, 2014; McQuade & Nash, 2015), I tried to make coaches active learners within an authentic environment that helped them develop knowledge and competencies in scenarios similar to their coaching reality that facilitated transfer to their coaching routine. Hence, the one-on-one meetings represented a novel CEP component in that they offered coaches individualised opportunities to work with me, a coach developer, on issues that directly mattered to them. This component, alongside other strategies, were crucial to overall course success as it was consistent with learner-centred approaches (Paquette & Trudel, 2018) by considering coaches' needs and equipping them with the knowledge and support they needed to foster PYD.

There are many challenges to delivering a PYD-focused CEP. Throughout the implementation process, I faced several challenges related to teaching coaches about PYD. Foremost, I had to accept that I was not going to influence certain coaches who simply did not see PYD as relevant coaching material. For example, there were coaches who were resistant to the idea that PYD could be implemented with older age groups while others viewed PYD as something that “just happens”. I felt very frustrated and I had to come to terms with the reality that some coaches just do not grasp (or do not want to try to grasp) how PYD principles can be integrated in youth sport. In one journal entry, I discussed this issue:

I can recognize that coaches have many tasks, obligations and, in many cases, get no financial compensation for coaching. However, I don't believe this justifies a lack of motivation to integrate PYD. Some coaches were just there... However, other coaches didn't look to their watches and they genuinely wanted to know more.

Although I did my best to remain optimistic, by the end of the PYD-focused CEP, the reality was clear that some coaches were “just there” and had not changed in their perspective. In one of the meetings, C1 stated:

C1 - Regarding leadership, honestly, either you have it or you don't. You cannot develop this [with athletes].

Coach developer - One of the things you discussed with the other coaches was the importance of assigning leadership roles to specific athletes to foster learning.

C1 - I think it is interesting, but it's not something I do in practice.

Such mental blockages on the part of several coaches left me puzzled and I often wondered “What do I need to do to break this barrier?”. Taylor and Garratt (2010) discussed the existence of a highly professionalized coaching environment that has created the notion for athletes to be viewed as pawns. This reality creates in the Portuguese context a highly entrenched

culture that separates PYD and performance issues, as if they were discreet and incommensurable entities. This lack of understanding about holistic psychosocial development feeds the need on my part to help coaches reflect on coaching youth and PYD.

When the course was coming to an end, I realised how I needed more time (which I did not have) to influence the prevailing winning at all cost mindset. What stuck in my mind the most was how some coaches saw PYD as a reactive measure, principles to be taught only when a problem occurred (e.g., an athlete disrespects a teammate which prompts the coach to teach respect). In the meetings, C8 stated how he used a reactive approach to PYD:

Coach developer - Looking at your weekly plan, how will you introduce PYD?

C8 - For example, this week, I will speak with two athletes [about emotional control and perseverance]. Things happened and we need to adjust. I will implement this strategy because they had inappropriate behaviors in practice, and the week of practice was bad.

I made every effort to debunk this reactive misconception, such as highlighting how emotional regulation is an important life skill coaches can proactively teach young people that also has value in competitive settings, such as getting athletes to control how they react when provoked by someone in the stands. However, my efforts to eliminate this reactive approach to PYD proved to be generally unsuccessful. In one journal entry, I discussed this outcome: "Coaches still look at PYD as something incompatible with performance goals and cannot grasp the need to strive for athletes' holistic development". Further, the dominant sentiment continued to be that coaches can use PYD strategies in recreational contexts, but such strategies cannot feasibly be integrated in competitive environments and beyond certain ages. In one of the meetings, C8 mentioned: "This work [PYD] should be done at an early age [up to 15-16 years of age]. After that point, [life skills] have to be learned".

Based on a study I previously conducted with Portuguese coaches (Santos et al., 2019), I had already been exposed to the notion that many coaches do not believe PYD is an appropriate approach when working with older athletes (i.e., 16 to 18 years old). In the present study, this sentiment endured and some coaches found it simply unreasonable to pursue a PYD mandate as they felt it would detract them from performing up to their club's expectations. Hence, coaches saw integrating PYD principles in their coaching practice as a legitimate risk, one that could put their coaching position at stake. In the meetings, C8 stated:

C8 - I can't take those big steps [PYD implementation]. I started coaching a team that is on the rise, winning games and this [PYD] process is hard. I have to take it slow.

Coach developer - Exactly! You can start with little strategies such as empowering specific athletes during the week.

C8 - I motivated a kid who is playing for the senior team [to be a role model] and told him 'You have to show your teammates that it is not enough to just get there [the senior team]; you need to continue to persevere and try hard once you reach this level'.

Claims made by coaches that PYD “just happens” reflected a long-standing and oversimplified view of sport participation where personal athlete development is deemed to occur exclusively through implicit means. Convinced that PYD is just a natural by-product of sport participation, many coaches in the present study simply did not see the need to take an explicit approach towards PYD. In one of the meetings, C2 alluded to how the extent of his approach to development consisted of creating a positive climate through the fostering of positive relationships: “The most important thing is that kids enjoy coming to practice. In certain moments during practice, we talk to them and listen to what they have to say. I think this [positive coach-athlete relationships] is the most important thing”.

Within the literature, implicit and explicit approaches to PYD have been discussed (Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014), with a growing consensus building that explicit approaches lead to greater PYD outcomes (Bean et al., 2018; Holt et al., 2017). Implicit developmental approaches rely on creating positive coach-athlete relationships and a physically and psychologically safe environment. On the other hand, explicit approaches imply that coaches use specific strategies to foster PYD outcomes (Bean et al., 2018). Some coaches struggled with embedding PYD within their coaching program and seeing PYD as part of an integrated performance agenda.

In sum, although my dual role as researcher and coach developer have convinced me of the worth of explicitly teaching PYD in youth sport, the results of the present study clearly highlight how significant persuasion is left to be done with many coaches.

Looking back on my efforts, I now see the program format I created as mostly unsustainable for a single coach developer. Thus, while the program format I created allowed coaches (a) to attend the group sessions and (b) benefit from my individualised support, I underestimated the resources I needed to sustain such an approach. In the creation phase, I believed that this was a necessary step to promote PYD in Portugal and it was a challenge I accepted. Despite the challenges posed, I truly believe that coach developers creating PYD-focused CEPs should integrate within their program design one-on-one meetings with coaches. Thus, future CEPs could use meetings with coaches to develop a learner-centered approach and prompt reflection and critical discussion around PYD.

Moving forward, other coach developers looking to integrate one-on-one meetings as part of their CEP delivery should take lessons from my story

and surround themselves with much more resources than I did. Future studies could be conducted to explore in greater detail how one-on-one interactions between coach developers and coaches facilitate PYD integration in coaching practice.

I faced several challenges in implementing the PYD-focused CEP but learned many lessons during the journey. My main recommendation is that we need to make best practices for coach education curriculum development widely available to all coach developers. In many contexts, such as in Portugal, formal education for coach developers is still non-existent, which restricts the extent to which we can, for instance, expect coach developers to overcome challenges faced throughout the creation and delivery of PYD-focused CEPs. This is needed to avoid having to reinvent the wheel every time a new course is built. Such resources for coach developers could be created and investigated, as suggested by Resende et al. (2016). Moreover, future studies are needed to investigate how train-the-trainer programs could be created to increase coach developers' effectiveness in teaching PYD to coaches, and in turn, impact coaches' effectiveness in teaching PYD to their athletes (Santos et al., 2019). More specifically, studies in the area of PYD must go beyond description and researchers must focus on using intervention protocols that focus on coach developers and their influence on coaches' PYD behaviors. There is the need to develop studies that create, implement, and evaluate the impact of a PYD-focused curriculum designed to help coach developers teach coaches to foster PYD. By making efforts to truly prioritise PYD, youth sport clubs have an opportunity to influence what coaches decide to seek out in terms of coach education. In order to create a shift in culture, clubs must legitimately buy into the PYD approach and adjust their reward structures to consider PYD as a worthwhile outcome to be sought by coaches. If clubs buy into the PYD approach, coaches inevitably will follow suit (Kendellen et al., 2017; Strachan et al., 2016).

Some coaches did change their view towards PYD. Despite all the challenges I have reported, I noticed some meaningful changes in certain coaches. During one-on-one meetings, some coaches shared with me how they managed to apply in their coaching the PYD material they were exposed to in the course. From a behaviour change perspective, I strongly believe the one-on-one meetings I led made a difference in facilitating coaches' ability to apply PYD principles in their coaching. In one journal entry, I captured moments when I observed changes in coaches' perspectives related to PYD and how they applied PYD material: "Coaches felt fulfilled by having the chance to apply what they have discussed with me in one-on-one meetings and some tried to apply PYD material with their teams". In the meetings, C4 added: "I believe it [the PYD-focused CEP] was very useful. I

had been thinking about new drills. Because we are talking about PYD, this was a perspective that I was not aware of". C7 also added "For me, the meetings were golden. In a competition this weekend, at the end of the day, I had a conversation with the athletes and highlighted the need to value sport and learn how to deal with emotional distress later in life in exams or even in a job interview". I believe all the hard work and time I invested in the course did make a difference, not for all but assuredly for a few coaches.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted as a means for me to make tangible my autophenomenographical reflections derived from the process of creating and implementing a PYD-focused CEP situated within the Portuguese youth sport landscape. It is key to consider that the study was conducted within a specific socio-cultural context with its own approach to coach education that might differ from coach development systems in other countries. Nevertheless, in focusing on my lived experiences and interpretations of creating and implementing a PYD-focused CEP, the findings can prompt reflections and offer guidance to coach developers looking to create PYD-focused CEPs in other sport systems.

It is my hope that the present study can help inform Portuguese policy makers and stakeholders regarding PYD-focused CEPs, and further elucidate the intricacies of the role of coach developer within PYD-focused CEPs. The Portuguese sport system, in which I have been involved for some years now, was highly influential in the way I was able to reach coaches and overcome challenges throughout the creation and delivery of the PYD-focused CEP. I had to come to terms with the notion that at the time of the study, PYD within the Portuguese coach development system was neither a priority nor a highly popular topic of discussion within the coaching community. Findings showed how I personally struggled in overcoming the challenges of dealing with extrinsically motivated coaches. This meant that I had to structure the PYD-focused CEP in a manner to increase the chances of convincing coaches to be open to the content and thus implement PYD in their coaching practice. This predicament posed numerous challenges. In the essence of sustainability, one-on-one meetings were highly useful but may prove difficult to be utilised by sport organizations on a large(r) scale as a strategy to foster coach learning. Nevertheless, one-on-one meetings helped me focus on coaches' thoughts, feelings, and experiences, which I strongly feel facilitated meaningful learning for coaches. Further, conveying the importance of holistic athlete development and PYD to coaches was chal-

lenging within a culture where a focus on performance outcomes remains engrained. Leaving coach developers with no concrete guidance and logistical support may negatively influence the impact on coaches and increase the complexity of the challenges they face. I offer my experiences in a genuine manner in the hopes of providing insights into the complex thought process and logistical puzzle I had to manage to deliver the course and its multiple components. The findings can be used to prompt reflections in coach developers interested in promoting PYD as well as inform CEP development as a whole. This is my intended contribution to the literature.

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