

Teacher-coach role conflict essay sample



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Teacher-coach role conflict is an issue that is common to most physical education teachers. Physical educators usually express high interests in coaching since the occupation of physical education is synonymous with sport. In fact, most believe that physical educators must teach and coach simply because of tradition, therefore forcing a majority of physical educators into this dual role of coach and teacher. Role conflict refers to individuals involved in certain roles that are competing against each other. Individuals must meet the demands of each role, hence creating potential conflict and the excessive stress added by the attempt to meet every expectation. The purpose of this paper is to examine the issues of how teacher-coaches perceive their roles, the impact on students from this conflict and how teachers-coaches must fulfill the demands required from each role. Perceptions and Performance of Dual Roles in Teaching-Coaching

Teachers-coaches frequently perceive disparities when attempting to fulfill the duties of the two roles, that of the teacher, and the role of the coach. All teacher-coaches may perceive conflict differently based on their experiences and ideas of their required duties for each role. The way a teacher-coach perceives and performs their role somewhat involves critical concepts in the recruitment stage of teacher socialization: subjective warrant and the apprenticeship of observation. These concepts state, “ subjective warrant is an individual’s perceptions of the requirements for teaching, and their ability to fulfill these requirements, whereas the apprenticeship of observation is the ideas and beliefs one holds about the job of teaching based on experiences in school as a student” (Gaudreault, 2012). How teacher and coaches interpret their occupation

Teacher-coaches obviously will have differences in the way that they perceive the different disparities between the demands of dual roles. These differences may be a result from their previous experiences as a student, athlete, or coach. First of all, it is important to take a look at whether teacher-coaches had different perceptions about their occupation. Subjective warrant and the apprenticeship of observation significantly contribute to whether individuals have different perceptions of the demands required for teaching-coaching. According to Richards and Templin, “pursuing a career in coaching most people see teaching physical education as the only viable route to becoming a coach” (Richards & Templin, 2012, p. 167). Teacher-coaches must recognize that they are directly responsible for the perception of physical education; as a result performance may greatly be affected by the teacher-coaches perception of role importance.

Distinguishing responsibilities between the teacher and coach One could argue that teacher-coaches perform similar structured activities during class or practice. There are several responsibilities that being a teacher and coach share, however there are some conflicting role demands that make teaching a full-time job as well as coaching a full-time job of its own. According to Kwon, “in physical education, the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies as well as an affinity for lifelong physical activity are typically cited as objectives, while athletics seeks to develop students who are talented in a specific sport and to produce winning teams” (Kwon (Donovan, 1997), 2010). Some common components that are nearly the same for each role would include tasks such as verbal instruction, demonstration of the skills to be performed, extending or refining tasks, and

checking for understanding. Therefore, considering the different characteristics, skills, and requirements of each career, it is safe to assume that role conflict will occur with an individual.

How politics influence teacher-coaches behavior

As stated before, coaching can be considered a full-time job itself with the additional responsibilities that are associated with teaching. “ A teacher’s participation in institutional events and presence in the school are critical to the development of the teacher’s identity and success,” (Schempp, 2003, p. 18) is a major factor to the politics of teaching and coaching. Individuals may have difficulty balancing the time spent on each role where one role may take priority over the other, the priorities associated with teaching usually being shoved to the side to fulfill time demands. Physical educators love engaging in sports this one of the main reason they entered this field, therefore coaching time demands seem far more important than ones’ teaching obligations. Impact Role Conflict has on Teachers-Coaches and Students

Teacher-coaches and students are directly affected by the time demands, effort, and lack of accountability that is placed upon the teacher or the coach. All these factors mentioned definitely impact the quality of instruction, relationships with students, peers, and their very own personal life. Coaching will take a great deal of time demand, spending a majority of evening, weekends, or summers trying to balance teaching and coaching trying to avoid burnout. An individual must be aware that there will be pressures and time constraints that come with being a physical educator or coach. Stress and Burnout

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Physical educators who often accept this dual role as a teacher and a coach tend to experience stress trying to meet the demands of both roles, in turn resulting in burnout. According to authors, “role strain, also called role overload, is defined as being exposed to greater demands in terms of time, energy, and/or commitment than the individual possesses or is willing to devote to the role” (Drake & Hebert, 2002, p. 170). Attempting to teach and coach places a considerable amount of pressure on an individual’s personal relationships with friends and family. Drake and Herbert (2002) indicate that a major source of stress resulting in burnout was the role conflict of engaging in each role: Characteristic of teacher-coach positions is a competition for an individual’s resources, and those who occupy this dual role are forced to make decisions about how much time, energy, and commitment to devote to each role (Donovan, 1997). In addition to teacher-coach inter-role conflict, these participants also described two forms of intra-role conflict within the coaching role, which resulted from coaching multiple sports and parental expectations. (pg. 179)

Consequently, if the teacher-coach experiences any signs of burnout it is safe to state that they are far more likely to give their best effort and provide most likely students in the classroom quality instruction. Stress contributes to teacher-coaches favoring one occupation more than the other, which usually tends to be coaching rather than teaching, especially seen in males rather than females. Priorities of Teacher-Coaches

According to Schempp, “the pressure to win and produce successful athletes, combined with the relatively low accountability of physical educators to demonstrate students’ fitness or skill proficiency normally

means that the coaching responsibilities receive greater attention and the student's instruction suffers" (Schempp, 2003, p. 22). According to this view, teacher-coaches tend to recognize that they are more likely to be fired for coaching rather than their teaching performance; consequently, they spend a majority of their time fulfilling the expectations and demands for coaching. The success of an athletic team far outweighs the importance of physical education with most schools since the politics of the school place a much higher value on sports than the value of student learning. Differences in relationships between students and student athletes work in classrooms are often isolated from peers and outside influences compared to coaching which notably gains far more attention from the public eye.

One must be prepared to encounter more pressure from administration, parents, and staff while coaching, subsequently society is highly competitive inevitably making coaches designate more time and effort towards coaching with the excess pressure from outside sources. The influential factor of time greatly affects how relationships differ from students to student athletes for teacher-coaches. An argument could be made that student athletes gain far more knowledge and insight than just students in the classroom due to the fact that they have extended amounts of time with the teacher-coach. Another difference in the relationships between teacher-coaches and student/students athletes is the simple fact that the instructor favors the athletes due to the student-athletes success in the classroom and in practice. Teacher-coaches relationships with their students and athletes is greatly affected by the lack of accountability for teaching, and the pressure

seen from time constraints and perceived effort. Strategies to cope with teacher-coach role conflict

There are probably a variety of methods used to improve coping with this dual role conflict that so often occurs with teacher-coaches. Individuals must grasp and adopt strategies to ensure success as a teacher and as a coach. There are numerous strategies that are designed to obtain optimal performance with two conflicting occupational roles. The following will discuss common strategies and methods that will be beneficial to equally meeting the required demands from teaching and coaching. Differences in teacher-coaches perceived pressure and stress associated with fulfilling both roles will differ with each individual, therefore different strategies may satisfy conflicting demands better for some than others. Adopting methods to ensure success

First to begin adopting methods for individuals to ensure success teacher-coaches must be motivated and willing to change if necessary. As discussed earlier, time demands and effort play a huge role in determining whether or not an individual is experiencing stress and pressure to accomplish their goals for both careers. According to Millslagle and Morley, “time is the biggest frustration for coach/teacher” (Millslagle & Morley, 2004). One reason that time may be the leading problem for the teacher-coaches is the fact that sports are being coach year round, even if the sport is competitive only three months of the year. Planning and forgoing on adopting methods to decrease the pressure and stressors associated with this role conflict may solely be based on the perceptions and time of burnout. Designing strategies to improve performance

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There are specific strategies that have been previously developed to ensure that burnout and problems occurring with teacher-coach role conflict less frequently transpire. When burnout and stress arise three coping strategies are frequently used to reduce job-related stress and role conflict, and avoid burnout. Drake and Herbert identified three strategies developed over time in order to recover from role conflict comprised of: personal release, organization skills, and mentors (Drake & Hebert, 2002). Personal release refers to separating yourself physically and/or mentally from work such as spending time with family or perhaps exercising. Organizational skills will further help you avoid stress from all of the multiple tasks and skills one must possess to be a teacher-coach. Last of all, staying in touch with mentors for teachers-coaches is a great coping mechanism. Establishing strategies and meeting expectations

The high levels of job-related stress will eventually lead to burnout, unless individuals successfully develop and use coping mechanisms to reduce stress. According to Ha, Hums, and Greenwell. “ burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding (Ha, Hums, & Greenwell, 2011). The level of burnout and amount of stress may vary from being moderately low to extremely high all depending on the situation. As a future educator one must be willing to adopt strategies such as those discussed above, which centers methods developed to escape pressure associated with the dual role conflict. Once individuals have adopted strategies that seek to ensure initial role strain is minimal one must begin by

focusing on strategies such as developing time management for one's personal life, organizational skills, and learning from mentors. Conclusion

All in all, a teacher-coach role conflict is a re-occurring issue that is common in the physical education field. Although there are many methods to improve performance for both roles as a teacher-coach, problems will always arise as this matter with pressure to succeed, stress from lack of time, and the amount of effort displayed due to low accountability. After researching the teacher-coach role conflict we should now understand the issues with how teacher-coaches perceive their roles, the impact this conflict takes on their students , and how certain coping mechanisms must be adopted in order one to fulfill the demands required to be a teacher-coach. In my opinion, I think that individuals must be ready to encounter stress and pressures that come from dual roles if they plan to become a physical educator-coach. A key to being successful as a teacher-coach is to recognize the potential role conflicts and develop strategies that will minimize these conflicts.

As schools continue to hire physical education teachers with expectations that they will presumably coach as well will be a source of why this role conflict will always exist. Teacher-coaches must strive to find solutions that will solve the conflicts brought about by the dual occupation of teaching and coaching.

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