

**COACHING STRATEGIES WHILE TEACHING LIFE SKILLS -  
MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF ESTONIAN YOUTH COACHES**  
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## ABSTRACT

Positive youth development and learning life skills through sports have lately gained attention in Europe and Northern America, now the phenomenon needs to be studied in Estonia, having special focus on youth coaches. The purpose of the study was to explore the coaching strategies Estonian coaches use while teaching life skills. The four sub-topics investigated were coaching strategies, coach education, the development of coaching philosophies and intentionality in teaching life skills.

A multiple case study analysis was conducted and it consisted of three parts. A screening questionnaire traced the usage of teaching life skills; observations of the practices found supportive and additional data and finally, the interviews aimed to discover more about the coaching philosophy and intentions. Participants were four Estonian youth coaches in team sports with the mean age of 34,7.

Current results revealed the range of knowledge Estonian coaches have about life skills, the intentionality of teaching life skills and the varied list of coaching strategies. Each coach stood out with their personal way of teaching life skills. When comparing the cases, two strategies were noticeable in the behaviour of all coaches studied. First, the coaches have intentionally created spaces for discussions to get better contacts with the athletes. Another common coaching strategy is supporting autonomy by giving choices to athletes.

Furthermore, the study gave insight into the coaching philosophies and the influence of the coach education. All the coaches had a good educational background, felt themselves quite confident in their competences and had well-thought coaching philosophies when supporting positive youth development. When delivering practices, all coaches consider it important to make athletes think for themselves. Another aspect all coaches stress was to create a positive and playful atmosphere.

In a nutshell, three core notions could be stressed. First, teaching life skills can be integral part of the whole coaching behaviour. Secondly, coach education should gain more attention, especially ways of self-reflection as part of the development opportunities for coaches. And finally, the present study has given more insight to the importance of the coaching philosophies. Implications are presented for youth coaches and coach educators.

Besides expanding the knowledge about Estonian coaches teaching life skills, the results of the study can be beneficial to the youth sports field as general to promote and value the role of the coach in youth sports.

Keywords: coaching, life skills, positive youth development, youth sports, multiple case study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ABSTRACT

1 INTRODUCTION .....	5
2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	17
3 METHODS .....	18
4 RESULTS .....	25
4.1 COACH MATT .....	25
4.2 COACH MARK.....	34
4.3 COACH LUKE .....	40
4.4 COACH JOHN .....	47
4.5 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS.....	52
5 DISCUSSION .....	55
6 CONCLUSION .....	68
7 REFERENCES.....	69

### APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Screening questionnaire

APPENDIX 2 – Observation tool

APPENDIX 3 – Interview guide

APPENDIX 4 – Case study database

APPENDIX 5 – Outlining table of the themes of all cases

APPENDIX 6 – Participant verification form

APPENDIX 7 – Participant consent form

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*You would have never done something like this in a million years.*

*It shows all kinds of skills on so many different*

*levels: focus, collaboration, discipline.*

*(quote from the movie “Silver Linings Playbook”)*

### 1.1 Introduction

The guy in the movie found himself in the complicated position: he had to participate in a dance competition first time in his life to get the love of his life back. Just in the middle of the preparation his coach/co-athlete brings up additional values in doing the sports: he has surprised everybody, even himself, and there are so many skills one can learn in sports. This is one way of describing learning life skills via sport.

The value of doing sports has been discussed for some time in Estonia. Though its health benefits are widely understood, it is a bit harder with the soft value of the sports. Sports are not seen as intelligent way of learning something as it is through social skills training or organisational team meetings.

Recently in sport psychology, positive youth development and gaining life skills through sport have gained more attention in international research both in Europe and in Northern America. Learning life skills through sport needs to be explored also in Estonia.

Especially important is to pay attention to the coaches, as they are the key players in teaching life skills. How do they teach life skills and how intentionally they do it? That is the focus of the present study. The study aspires to show that life skills should not act as an emergency motivator for the athletes – as it happened in the movie – but its value is to teach life skills systematically and mindfully during the athlete’s career from an early age.

## 1.2 Definitions

For better comprehension of the topic, main concepts have been defined: life skills and positive youth development, coaching strategies and coaching philosophy.

For explaining life skills, three definitions have mainly been used. According to Gould and Carson (2008), “life skills are internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal-setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings” (p. 60). Three focus points can be drawn from the definition: being personal assets, being facilitated and developed and should be transferrable into other settings beyond sports. Another definition has been suggested by the World Health Organization (1999) stating that life skills are “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO, 1999, p. 3). Being not so sport-specific, the definition stresses the adaptability and positive behaviour, as well as the usability in everyday situations.

The third definition has been used by Danish and his colleagues: “Life skills enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods. Life skills can be behavioural (communicating effectively with peers and adults) or cognitive (making effective decisions); interpersonal (being assertive) or intrapersonal (setting goals)” (Danish, Forneris, Hodge & Heke, 2004, p. 40). Significant added value of the definition is the categorisation of different types of life skills. In the present study all the definitions are kept in mind when interpreting the results, however the main focus is set on the first explanation.

When studying life skills in sports, positive youth development as a broader concept cannot be overlooked. As Holt and Neely (2011) indicate, “positive youth development is used as an “umbrella term” referring to ways in which children and adolescents may accrue optimal developmental experiences through their involvement in organised activities” (p. 300). Positive youth development in the sports setting includes the following: learning positive health habits, becoming physically fit and developing psychological attributes and dispositions and specific skills. For example, a

psychological attribute can be a sense of optimism, and specific skill may be the ability to set goals (Gould & Carson, 2008).

The uniqueness of the concept lies within its philosophical approach. Instead of focusing on negative behaviour patterns, positive youth development emphasises gaining various competencies (Camiré, Forneris, Trudel & Bernard, 2011). Similarly, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) stress the strength-based approach saying that youth are to be considered as resources rather causes of the problems. Hence, it has a wider perspective. Positive youth development can be defined via needs of the society as general. Likewise, Flett, Gould, Griffes & Lauer, 2012 explain positive youth development as a way of promoting socially desirable competencies in young people, for example development in ethics, self-worth and creating a positive future perspective.

In sport, research in positive youth development has noticed various positive outcomes, for example increased self-awareness, goal-setting, time management, emotional regulation skills, positive peer relationships, leadership skills, sense of initiative (Johnston, Harwood & Minniti, 2013). Johnston et al, 2013 explain, that “positive youth development promotes positive psychosocial development by encouraging social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive qualities in children and young people through social and environmental interactions” (p 392). That resembles the definition of life skills brought by Danish et al, 2004, and it reveals some overlapping of the terms. Positive youth development involves life skills as one part of the concept. In the present research main focus is on the life skills, however, as the terms are overlapping, both concepts are kept in mind in interpreting the results, where applicable.

Two coach-related terms – coaching strategies and coaching philosophies – need to be defined. Surprisingly, finding clear theory-based definitions for coaching strategies is challenging, probably because of coaching strategies as a term being taken so naturally. Nevertheless, Lyle, 2005 explains the general term “coaching practice” that involves observable and cognitive coach’s behaviour, but also takes into account the environmental context. Coaching strategies are seen in the context of this study to be observable part of the coach’s behaviour during the practices. Another key term regarding the thesis topic is a coaching philosophy. Based on Lyle (2005), coaching

behaviour is influenced by the values about coaching, that is named as one's coaching philosophy. They may be defined by guiding principles for coaching practice. As McCallister, Blinde & Weiss (2000) state, coaching philosophy can be revealed by observing the coaching behaviour.

The following literature review covers main topics in coaching both in teaching life skills and positive youth development in general. List of concrete coaching strategies are followed by prevalent topics that appear in the literature regarding sport coaches teaching life skills and facilitating positive youth development: coach education, intentionality in teaching life skills, development of coaching philosophies, including the dilemma of winning and development.

### 1.3 Coaching strategies for teaching life skills

Coaches can use specific strategies to foster life skills that will be applicable in sport context and beyond (Holt, Tink, Mandigo & Fox, 2008). Numerous studies have named several coaching strategies that will be described below in more detail. Based on the review of life skills, Gould and Carson have developed a model of coaching life skills that map the strategies used by coaches and help to describe the approaches from coaches (see Gould & Carson, 2008). According to the model, teaching strategies can be divided into direct and indirect strategies. The direct teaching strategies are delivered intentionally, such as developing clear and consistent rules, instructing with quality, offering leadership and decision-making opportunities, paying individual attention, showing fairness and contributing to team building. Indirect strategies are not in the control of the coaches, such as demands of the sport, program success, modelling, social reinforcement, positive social norms. That model is one of the basis for the framework of coaching strategies while teaching life skills.

Another source for the framework is a study by Flett et al (2012) focusing on the developmental youth coaching. That includes strategies, such as developing trust, facilitating autonomy, allowing player input, allowing players to make mistakes, creating positive and supportive group dynamics, and encouraging active problem solving.



The following nine strategies are concrete ways coaches behave during their everyday work with young athletes. Strategies are categorised according to the recent research in both teaching life skills and promoting positive youth development in youth sports. In addition to naming and describing the common teaching strategies also concrete examples are given (see the overview on figure 1, page 13).

One way to support life skills development is to facilitate athletes' autonomy. Coaches, who value life skills, desire that the players better understand the game, not just play tactically and technically well. Therefore, coaches often take time to explain the reasons behind the instruction. For example, while teaching leadership, coaches report their proactive approach in training and preparation techniques (Gould, 2012; Flett et al, 2012).

Supporting autonomy is related to the autonomy-supportive coaching style. Coaches who adopt an autonomy-supportive coaching style meet better their athletes' needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness giving choices and explaining the reasons behind rules and limitations (Gould, 2012). Flett, Gould, Griffes & Lauer, 2013 add that supporting autonomy involves teaching athletes to think for themselves and developing individual decision-making skills. Coaches provide athletes with choices, acknowledge their perspectives, give them opportunities to take initiative, and explain the reasons behind rules and limitations (Gould, Voelker & Griffes, 2012). They create a social environment in practices that focuses on the mastery of skills and self-improvement in a manner that supports the autonomy of young athletes. For example, coaches can allow young athletes to make choices and participating in decision-making responsibilities (Holt & Neely, 2011).

Another coaching strategy named in the literature about life skills and positive youth development seems to be creating meaningful relationships between coach and athletes. For positive youth development, it is crucial to create lasting and meaningful relationships (Camiré et al, 2012; Gould, Collins, Lauer & Chung, 2007; Flett et al, 2012). Therefore, the coach has to be able to relate and communicate effectively with the players. One of the aspects is to keep horizontal relationships where the coach is on the same "level" with the athletes rather than prescribing all possible actions of the

athletes. Coaches who value positive youth development make efforts to create horizontal relationships where the coach can engage closely with the players. That may show in situations when correcting the players, coaches also consciously incorporate friendly talk to their instructions (Camiré et al, 2011).

Another important aspect in relationship-based coaching is caring about players. Coaches supporting positive youth development put much effort to get to know each player and treating players equally. A practical and effective activity used by many coaches is organising team activities out of the sporting context (Camiré et al, 2011). For example, after the teams have been selected, some coaches organise a dinner as a team-bonding activity. Coaches purposely plan discussions on specific themes (e.g., having athletes discuss where they are from and what their goals are for the upcoming season) and provide all their athletes an opportunity to share. They also actively participate in these discussions by sharing information about themselves and by informing their athletes that they could be approached in any situation, on and off the playing surface, if athletes had questions, comments, or if they simply wanted to talk. Flett et al, 2012 brings in mutual trust and respect as important elements in creating positive relationships. That means the coach's attitude towards athletes is respectful. Very often coaches make the players aware that their opinions are important and valued. While teaching leadership, the coaches value good communication with team captains (Gould, 2012). Coach/captain meetings have been organised to encourage and focus on leadership.

Third strategy is supporting athletes' self-reflection. Coaches, who teach life skills, seem to value athletes' self-reflection and use concrete methods to encourage the self-reflection and recognise athletes' achievements (Harrist & Witt, 2012). For example, one activity used by coaches to foster self-reflection could be to ask athletes to keep a journal. Athletes are asked to discuss, analyse, and evaluate personal events related to sport and/or life (Camiré et al, 2011). In addition to fostering introspection, reflection, and problem solving, this type of activity allows also to get to know the athlete.

Fourthly, coaches facilitate life skills development by providing opportunities to exhibit those skills (Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2012). Offering leadership and decision-

making opportunities seems to be an important part of teaching life skills. Empowering youth by taking into account their input on important group decisions is repeatedly emphasised in youth leadership research (Gould et al, 2012). For example, coaches negotiate with their athletes' practice drills and have them decide on one goal they want to achieve by the end of practice. Another activity used by coaches to practice the life skill of leadership consists of providing team captains with greater responsibilities on and off the playing surface (Camiré et al, 2011). Research on team captains also noticed that coaches offer opportunities to lead and involve captains in decision-making (Gould et al, 2012).

Fifth coaching strategy, taking advantage of teachable moments, is related to the teaching transferability of life skills. To encourage the transfer of life skills, youth coaches must become efficient in recognising and taking advantage of teachable moments where life skills reveal (Camiré et al, 2012). Coaches understand the fact that transfer of the life skills is not an automatic process and that it is something that must be reinforced continuously in an explicit manner. Whenever teachable moments present themselves, coaches should take advantage of them and talk to their athletes about the transferability of life skills, as well as provide athletes concrete examples of situations and contexts in which life skills can be transferred. For example, a coach may discuss how learning to work with teammates is important because the ability to work in a team environment is a valuable skill to have in the workforce (Camiré et al, 2011). That is also shown as a specific feature in the study about effective youth coaches (Flett et al, 2013).

Sixth manner in coaching while teaching life skills is using volunteerism. Conscious offers for voluntary work can be a good learning experience offering a wide range of life skills. Athletes may be put in a position where they have to meet a challenge in teaching and need to practice their leadership skills outside of their sports team (Camiré et al, 2012). For example, rather than organise a traditional practice, an ice hockey coach may take his athletes to a community centre and have them donate their time to teach children how to skate (Camiré et al, 2011). Also experienced coaches value giving responsibilities to players, such as giving meaningful tasks, letting them start the practice, etc (Flett et al, 2012).

Seventh strategy is supporting athletes' academic development. Coaches working with student athletes bring up as one of their strategies in teaching life skills supporting athletes' academic development. Gould, Chung, Smith & White (2006) found that award-winning coaches took a special interest in their players' academic performance whether it was monitoring academic progress, encouraging good grades or tutoring players.

Another coaching behaviour visible could be encouraging peer evaluation and learning from others. Coaches who teach consciously life skills encourage athletes to learn from each other. Peer evaluation is considered a strategy that helps athletes increase their self-awareness and hence improve life skills (Camiré et al, 2012). For example, coaches, who teach leadership, note the importance of encouraging youth to learn from others and follow examples of good leadership in general, either from each other, from past captains, older athletes and important adults (Gould et al, 2012). Also, coaches are stated to be aware of the important role of the peers and therefore they create purposefully positive peer pressure (Flett et al, 2013).

The last strategy in the present list is intentional planning of the developmental strategies in the coaching practice. Life skills have to be taught in a systematic manner to be learned. Coaches make efforts to educate their athletes on life skills and their value. Coaches may have activities organised for athletes improve various life skills. For example, in practicing goal-setting, some coaches teach their athletes how to create SMART goals (i.e., specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) and have them elaborate short and long-term goals following these principles (Camiré et al, 2011).

Those nine strategies are brought as an overview in the following figure presenting the strategy provided with an example (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Coaching strategies while teaching life skills**

#### 1.4 Intentionality of teaching life skills

To study teaching life skills, one can face quite natural question: how intentionally do coaches teach life skills? Does it have to be purposeful? Although there are some studies showing that coaches consider positive youth development happening just by participation in sports (see Camiré et al, 2014), youth sports literature seems convincing that life skills should be taught intentionally (Gould et al, 2006; Gould & Carson, 2008; Danish, Fazio, Nellen & Owens, 2002). For promoting positive development of athletes, coaches must have intentional and systematic strategies in teaching life skills. That applies to both teaching concrete life skills during the practices and ways how to transfer them to different areas (Camiré et al, 2012).

Although it has to be intentional, coaches are reported to struggle with describing their strategies or even be unable to express their ways on how they teach life skills (McCallister et al, 2000). Many of the coaches admit they do not teach life skills intentionally, and have not paid too much attention to the goals and methodological approaches in their coaching practice (Harrist & Witt, 2012). However, there are examples of research where coaches have been successful in describing their coaching strategies. For example, Collins, Gould, Lauer, and Chung (2009) found that coaches

knew quite well, what life skills were important for their athletes to acquire and had a clearly defined plan to teach them.

Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2014 suggest that experience and education are aspects that make the important difference amongst the coaches who facilitate positive youth development intentionally and those who do not. Hence, it is important to get more detailed about coach education and development.

### 1.5 Coach education

Some studies stress the importance of quality adult supervision in positive youth development (Flett et al, 2012, McCallister et al, 2000). Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) confirm its importance with two statements: (1) coaches are seen to have expertise knowledge by the youth athletes; and (2) in the context of sport many coaches tend to have more influential relationships with athletes compared to their other significant adults.

Coaching practice is dependent on the coaches' knowledge and therefore education. Decision-making in coaching (working on the drills, evaluating the drills, approaches towards athletes etc) is quite intuitive. That means, the coaches are able to explain their practice afterwards, but during the behaviour it was undertaken without giving a careful thought (Lyle, 2005).

Since coaches are the primary developers of youth in sport, it is critical for them to understand youth and have the skills to develop a mentoring relationship to facilitate the learning of life skills and character. That refers to the importance of different development opportunities for coaches. Research shows that coaches' knowledge develops mainly by direct coaching experience (Gilbert and Trudel, 1999) and via sharing with other coaches (MacDonald, Côté & Deakin, 2010). Flett et al (2013) found that coaches higher in effectiveness valued lifelong learning opportunities being knowledgeable and flexible and being open to training and others' ideas. Also some examples can be brought where education raises the quality of coaching. For example, trained coaches are said to communicate more effectively and they were more highly valued by the athletes than untrained coaches (Bloom, Crumpton & Anderson, 1999).

Although coach education may be considered important part of developing coaching philosophy while teaching life skills, one has to consider also limitations in coach education. It may be seen as a time-consuming activity without much benefit. Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) note that goals focused on positive youth development might not seem realistic and inevitable for coaches and it is just another task amongst other responsibilities. It should be kept in mind that youth sport coaches often work as volunteers, having relatively little training and main focus of the training has been on technical skill development. However, Lyle (2005) offers a tool for the coaches, self-reflection, to help them with wording the coaching philosophy, and furthermore, he stresses the importance of it as an integral part of the coach education.

Positive youth development involves also age-related developmental strategies in coaching. Research seems to have a critical viewpoint on coaches' approach towards coaching children. Muir, Morgan, Abraham & Morely, 2011 state that very often children's coaching has been viewed as a minor model of adult coaching that is narrowly sport-specific. Practices are focused on improving performances, specific techniques and does not allow making mistakes (that is considered important part for children's skill-learning), also children with better performances are having advantages. Success is measured by the records of winning and losing. However, in the other end of the continuum practices appear where the structure is vague and where the learning might not happen in the end. Both approaches can increase the drop-outs in youth sport (Muir et al, 2011).

### 1.7 Approach towards dilemma "winning versus development"

It is common for coaches to evaluate their success from win-loss records, trying to copy the behaviours of "high-performance" coaches (Muir et al, 2011). When focusing on positive youth development, a coach needs to find his own philosophy in balancing the conflict between the will to win and the developmental goals. Research shows that coaches supporting positive youth development put the athletes' personal development first (Holt & Neely, 2011). Flett et al (2012) notice critically that coaches tend to focus too much on winning and losing rather than focus on their developmental role. But Bloom et al, 1999 found that youth coaches used praise and encouragement

significantly more than coaches of adult athletes did and one of the reasons might be because of the lower competitive level.

It seems that creating the efficient philosophy to solve the dilemma requires some time. Collins, Gould, Lauer & Chung (2009) found that experienced model coaches developed their philosophies over time and that helped them to overcome the traditional conflict “winning versus development” stating both as important elements of successful coaching.

### 1.8 Coaching philosophy and its development

To foster positive youth development, coaching philosophy has to be clearly defined, but its development takes time. Coach’s philosophy has a significant part in delivering life skills (Flett et al, 2013; McCallister et al, 2000; Gould et al., 2007). Good coaching strategy balances the physical, psychological, and social development of athletes and is clearly communicated amongst different target groups (Camiré et al, 2011).

Moreover, the philosophies of coaches and their ability to carry out these philosophies are crucial in influencing the type of learning that takes place in the sport context. For example, the extent to which coaches can articulate their philosophies and the degree to which their behaviour parallels those philosophies are important in determining the nature of the participant's experience. Expert coaches having good impact on the development of their players have a personal coaching philosophy and intentional style that emphasised character elements within their players (Flett et al, 2012).



## 2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to describe and acknowledge the coaching strategies Estonian coaches use in teaching life skills. Four sub-questions will be focused on:

- (a) which coaching strategies are used while teaching life skills;
- (b) how has the coach education influenced teaching life skills;
- (c) how are the coaching philosophies developed;
- (d) how intentionally Estonian coaches teach life skills.

### 3 METHODS

#### 3.1 Methodological approach and research design

After reviewing the literature, suggestions for future research and researcher's personal strengths in research methods, case study research was decided to be the most appropriate design.

Based on Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, three arguments favour the choice of the case study. First, the present study focuses on a phenomenon – the scope of teaching life skills amongst the Estonian coaches. Hancock & Algozzine (2006) support that case study not just focuses on the individual – that is often misinterpreted – but also on a phenomenon. Secondly, during the study it was aspired to get as close to the coaches as possible to explore their daily reality in coaching. The above-mentioned research confirms the importance of a natural context in the case studies. Thirdly, case studies are rich in information because of its deep and varied sources of information. The final research design turned out to triangulate the sources to get deeper understanding of the coaches' practice.

Furthermore, multiple case study as a methodology was chosen to have a comparable and yet richer information on specific phenomenon – teaching life skills in youth sport in Estonian context. Theory states that it is more persuasive than single-case studies offering broader descriptions of the phenomenon (Chmiliar, 2010). The stages of the data analysis in multiple case study involve analysing each case separately followed by the cross-case analysis.

Research consisted of three parts: purposeful sampling via screening questionnaire, observations of the practices and interviews with the coaches. Following is the description of all the parts.

To select appropriate coaches with adequate experiences purposeful sampling was implemented. According to Patton (2002), the method of the criterion sampling was used, as the specific criteria had to be met to participate in the study. To identify the

indicators to meet the criteria, a self-report questionnaire was worked out. The questionnaire was developed by the author based on the literature of coaching strategies amongst awarded youth coaches in the United States (see Gould et al, 2007).

Questionnaire consisted of four parts: knowledge about the teaching strategies, transferability, demographics and agreement. First part of 10 items describes the behaviours that coaches use during their practice. Next 10 items compile the list of life skills that coaches teach. Respondents have to reply on Likert 4-points-scale (from “always” to “never”) with additional option “Not applicable/I don’t know”. The next question is a free area to comment on the ways they teach transferability of life skills. Third part sets the demographic information about the respondents and the teams they are coaching (i.e age, coaching experience altogether and with specific team they kept in mind when replying). Fourth part focuses on the possibility to receive the results of the study and ask to volunteer in the further parts of the study. Tool can distinguish the coaches – by their own opinion – who are intentionally teaching life skills and identify the awareness of the coaches and their obvious strategies. See the screening questionnaire in appendix 1.

Second part of the study was carrying out observations of the pre-selected coaches. One way to get the information close to the natural context, as case study methodology prescribes, was to use the observations of the practices. Patton, 2002, brings several advantages of the observations. Besides having a deeper understanding, observations as a method allow insights that may seem natural for the participants. Further, it can open the topics that are not discussed in an interview and can reduce biases.

Preference for observations in life skills research has been stated by Gould & Carson, 2008, p 70, “... while self-report measures will be critical for advancing the field, efforts should not be restricted to this type of measure alone. Observational instruments should be employed. A number of observational measures exist in the general youth development literature and should considered for their utility in different sport contexts.”

Youth Program Quality Assessment was used as the basis for the observational instrument. Originally, it was developed specifically observing the strategies and approaches for teaching life skills and positive youth development by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Observation tool is in appendix 2. As the YPQA-tool measured just supporting the positive youth development, additionally, results of the screening questionnaire were compared to the notes of the observation and concrete examples were brought to support the use of the strategy.

Third part of the study involved interviews with the pre-selected coaches. For exploring the coaching philosophies, coaching background and education, interviews were conducted to explore things that are not visible during the observations. Conversations focused on four major sections: coaching philosophy, coaching styles perceived and explained by the coaches themselves, coach education, including self-reflection, and coaching philosophies. Semi-structured interviews were used to get most insight from the significant topics for coaches. Interview guides were developed using the research by Gould et al, 2007 that had the similar explorative questions as the present study. Interview guide is in appendix 3.

The table below gives the overview of the logic behind creating the case study. The case study was compiled from three sources answering the sub-questions of the main research question. First, coach was asked via the questionnaire to identify if he/she teaches intentionally life skills and which strategies he is reporting himself to be using. Then, supportive information about the coaching strategies was gathered during the observations and interviews mainly looking for concrete examples of strategies. The teaching was considered intentional when information was consistent throughout questionnaires, observations and examples brought during the interviews. The teaching was considered unintentional in case there was proof of teaching life skills during the practice, but coach did not refer to that during the screening questionnaire and did not pay attention to that during the interview when asked about it.

**Table 1. Description of the case study approach and type of data gained**

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Data gained via screening questionnaire</b>	<b>Data gained via practice observations</b>	<b>Data gained via semi-structured interviews</b>
Do Estonian coaches teach life skills?	X		
Which strategies Estonian coaches use to teach life skills?	X	X	X
How intentionally do they teach life skills? - Intentional teaching - Unintentional teaching	- X	- X - X	- X - --
How has coach education influenced teaching life skills?		X	X
How is coaching philosophy being developed?		X	X

### 3.2 Procedure

As the first step in data collection, a website <http://eluoskused.wordpress.com> (in translation “lifeskills.wordpress.com”) was created with the brief introduction of the research and the open access to the screening questionnaire. The open call was delivered electronically via coaches’ database managed by the Foundation of the Sports Education and Information. Foundation being a central body responsible for the systematic collection of the sports information, including coach development, manages the database of all the certified coaches in Estonia (3401 altogether in April, 2014). However, some limitations were set before delivering the questionnaire – the link with the cover letter was sent to the Estonian team sport coaches.

Altogether 24 coaches replied. Based on the results of the initial screening most descriptive cases were contacted. Five coaches stood out with their results as teaching intentionally life skills and doing it more often than others. Two out of five agreed to participate in the following stages of the study. Additional call was made to broaden the

scope of the coaches, also using some personal contacts, however filling out the screening questionnaire was a presumption for participating in the study.

The final sample observed and interviewed included 4 youth coaches who were currently coaching team sports: volleyball, basketball, football and handball. All of them provided informed consent (see the form in appendix 7). The mean age of participants was 34.7 years with a range in age of 21-51 years. The experience of the coaches divided clearly into less experienced coaches having less than 2 years of experience and 3-5 years of experience, while more experienced coaches had 6-10 years and over 11 years of experience.

The screening tool was delivered in October, observations and interviews were conducted during in January and February 2014. Observations were followed by the interviews usually in the coach's office, with one exception when the interview was taken on the following day. All the interviews were recorded and averaged about 27 minutes in length. For showing the gratitude for participating in the study, all the coaches got the present – modified coaching profile as a self-reflection tool.

Two coaches were observed and interviewed twice, two of them were observed and interviewed once. Altogether six observations took place. Unfortunately two coaches were not observed twice due to scheduling conflicts. According to Gray, 2014, the number of the cases is sufficient as it is suggested to have four to ten cases for multiple case studies. All the data collection was carried out in Estonian language to provide safer environment for the coaches.

Several steps were taken to meet the ethical standards of the research. When delivering the screening questionnaire, it was stressed that all the information would be kept confidential and participants were given a free choice to participate in the further steps of the study. In the following steps of the study informed consent form was asked to sign in the beginning of the observations and interviews. Informed consent form gave the general objectives of the study, stated the principles of voluntary participation, and gave free choice to withdraw from the participation at any time. Participants were given

additional time to read and sign the form. The form can be found both in Estonian and in English in the appendix 7. After the case studies were written, the transcripts of the interviews and case study database were shared with the participant. During the whole process codes and/or nicknames were used when discussing about the cases.

### 3.3 Data analysis

Collected data was analysed in a systematic way taking into account the principles of the analytic induction. The steps of the data analysis have been set in the scheme below (see Figure 2) according to the theoretical principles presented by Patton, 2002. Based on the statement of Bogdan and Biklen (2007), qualitative research often uses parts of the analytic induction, therefore the following description allows some flexibility to reply the research questions the best.



**Figure 2. The process of data analysis.**

First, the analytic induction starts from the theoretical propositions. Research questions were developed from the thorough reading and synthesizing of the literature. From the propositions raw data was collected from each case: some statistical information and perceived use of the coaching strategies from the screening questionnaire, lists of the

coaching strategies from the observations and the background principles from the interviews. In addition, fieldnotes were taken by the researcher that was based on the literature and her previous knowledge.

Raw data was “condensed” into the case study database. It is systematically and logically ordered and allows other researchers review the data (Gray, 2014). In the present study, raw data was generated into the profile of the coach including all sources and highlighting the convergent and divergent information. Based on Gray, 2014, both approaches were used in within-case analysis, when themes were noticed that were already presented by the previous literature, but also new codes were developed. As the next step, common themes were noticed under the four sub-questions. From the database descriptive case studies were written capturing the most characteristic issues of each coach. See the case database in appendix 4.

After case-by-case analysis, cross-case comparison was compiled looking for the patterns across cases. Analysis consisted of comparing the results of the different coaches and marking the common codes for each sub-topic. Overview is brought in the format of the table in the appendix 5, where common themes by the separate coaches and by the separate sub-questions are highlighted.

### 3.4 Trustworthiness

Several measures were taken in implementation phase of the study to support the trustworthiness. Content validity of the screening questionnaire was established by having two experts giving feedback on the statements of the questionnaire evaluating the statements’ readability and clarity for the coaches. Secondly, the transcripts of the interviews and the written case studies were checked by the participants in the study. Participants were asked to review the interview transcript in Estonian and the written profile in English and send back the verification by e-mail. See the participant verification form in appendix 6. For establishing the validity in coding and interpreting the results of the profiles, two coders were invited to confirm the initial coding. Both coders had preliminary knowledge about teaching life skills and confirmed the correctness of the initial codes.



## 4 RESULTS

Findings of the study are presented in the format of descriptive case study reports based on the four pre-set sub-topics and two additional topics: (1) coaching strategies; (2) life skills; (3) coach education and background; (4) coaching philosophy; (5) intentionality; (6) any other relevant information of the case. In the descriptions of the coaching strategies and the life skills the results of the self-report questionnaire are presented. As there are also findings from the other coaches filling the questionnaire, comparison is made between the mean result of all 24 coaches, who replied, and the coach under review. Comparison is followed by the evidence about the coaching strategies and life skills provided with examples and notes from the observation of the practices and interview protocols.

Each case starts with a quote that captures the main approach and atmosphere during the practice or interview. In the end of each case any other relevant information is provided that might influence the interpretation of the qualities of the coach teaching life skills and/or supporting positive youth development.

### 4.1 COACH MATT

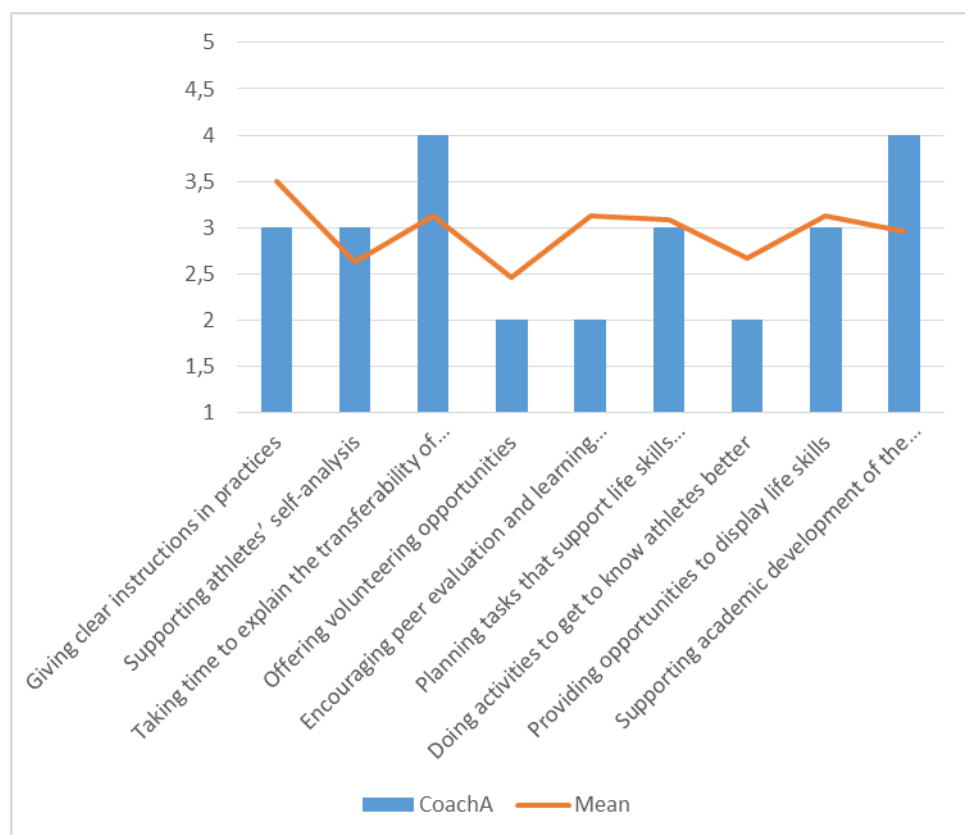
*Last time it appeared that one guy cannot even use a cordless drill. Is this ok that he can make 20 points on the court, but cannot use the drill?*

Practices of Matt usually start with lining up the players and sharing some thoughts, either on the previous basketball games or emphasizing some elements of the positive youth development. Such as supporting athletes' initiative by this voluntary activity as setting up the baskets to the correct height.

Matt is 28 years-old basketball coach working in the prestigious basketball club with the youth team of 14-16-years. He has a 7-years coaching experience and has worked with this team for 4 years. He has a coach licence, an education as a physical educator and works in that position with some players from his team.

#### 4. 1.1 Coaching strategies while teaching life skills

The pool of his coaching strategies while teaching life skills seems varied and well reflected. His self-estimation reports that he is most aware of constantly taking time to explain the transferability of life skills, supporting academic development, but also giving clear instructions, supporting athletes' self-analysis, planning tasks that support life skills and provide opportunities to display life skills. Compared to the other coaches it seems to be more dominant to take time to explain life skills and support academic development of the athletes (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Coaching strategies of coach Matt compared to the mean.**

Below convergent information is brought about the coaching strategies with examples and notes from the observation of the practices and interview protocols.

**Supporting academic development of the athletes.** Stressing the importance of studying at school is one of the meaningful elements in supporting positive youth development in youth sports. Matt says to have consistently supported going to school, for example, academic shortcomings were punished.

*When the guys were younger, we asked them to bring the information about the grades in the end of the semester. We have had a case when the guy was not taken to the competition because he had a lousy situation at school grades.*

Furthermore, Matt has delivered short sessions on goal-setting focusing on academic improvements. Although it can be brought as the example of teaching life skills (goal-setting), it as well is the great example of supporting academic development of the youth athletes.

**Supporting athletes' self-analysis.** Matt stresses repeatedly the importance that the athletes would “think for themselves”.

*(When the competition is over) I always want the guys themselves do the talking. We always sit together in a circle and I ask them, how the game went and why it went this way; that they would talk themselves; sometimes few guys come up to me independently to ask me what they should do to change this or that ...*

The approach echoed at practices where asking “Why is this important?” seems to be a common strategy of teaching. This is brought up also in the coach's philosophical principles (see below).

**Offering volunteering possibilities.** Although it was not highly reported in the screening questionnaire, observations of the practices verified that there were some volunteering possibilities offered to the youngsters. Example brought in the beginning of the chapter explains that. It seemed to be a regular activity in the beginning of the practice to set the baskets up to a proper height. When just few players did that, coach addressed that stressing everybody's capability to help out.

**Encouraging peer evaluation and learning from others.** It might not be easy task to support teenaged players to learn from each other. Nevertheless, Matt has found some clever ways to encourage that. In practices, when the drills are done in pairs, he describes that peer evaluation is the expected way of behaviour.

*I liked the pair of (names two athletes). Why? Because he tells how the other is doing. And that's right: you are close to him, you can see better, you can tell how your friend can improve.*

During another drill in groups of three one can hear coach saying, "You cannot see yourself so well what are you doing, but you can see others in your group and tell them". And similarly in another practice, "You should bounce the ball 4-5 times when running across the pitch. It is difficult to count it yourself, but you can count your friend's bounces".

**Contributing to get to know the athletes.** What are the possibilities to create close relationships with athletes during the practices? At the interview Matt admits that there is really limited time during the practices, just couple of minutes here and there. This is supported by the observation when the coach invited one athlete in the end of the practice to talk to him for a longer period. But Matt refers to the training camps: there teaching life skills is much more common and there are more possibilities to get to know people personally.

**Creating positive friendly atmosphere.** At the practices it was noticed that he calls all the athletes "friends/buddies", for example, "Wait, until your buddy gets the ball, then go ...", or in the middle of the practice you can hear the following wrap-up, "There should be moments in practice when there is a good feeling. Give a high five to your friend."

Investigating, how deliberately he has thought of this topic, the answer seems convincing, "You have to call them somehow .... I believe it creates a better team atmosphere".

**Fostering social support.** One of the very descriptive feature of the practices was encouraging social support amongst the athletes. From the observations it was noticed that coach gave good feedback to the athlete who showed social support, "Good, (name of the athlete), that you helped him."

**Fostering hard-work atmosphere.** Stressing the importance to put maximum effort in practices and also in competitions appears to be an important part of the coaching style. During the observation an athlete thought that the researcher was a scout in the practice. Athlete stated, “Then I have to push myself”. Coach replied to that quite emotionally, “So now you think you have to push yourself??? You have to push yourself always!”. Also when explaining his coaching philosophy, he stresses the importance of the hard work:

*I want to tell them that they work for themselves; not that “I contribute only in case the coach is watching”.*

**Using punishment as a way to correct behaviour.** Matt has a clear-thought attitude towards punishment. In the interview he explains that punishment is a useful tool to teach discipline.

*If they don't understand (how we work here), I have kicked them out of the practice as well.*

**Using teachable moments.** When there is the possibility to teach life skills in the practice setting, Matt tends to use the chance. He shares during the interview that he pays attention to teaching life skills on purpose. Below he describes his reaction to the situation when somebody has inappropriate clothing in case of cold weather.

*When somebody is ill, then it is good to bring this as an example.*

**Creating space for discussions.** Matt has created a custom where it is possible for him to share his thoughts and support positive youth development. Every practice starts, athletes standing in the line, where coach has opening phrases, shares some ideas, sometimes introduces the set-up of the practice. During both observations the comments were related to improving life skills.

#### 4.1.2 Life Skills Taught

According to the self-report questionnaire, Matt teaches numerous life skills, most often communication, goal-setting and self-understanding, but other life skills seem also to be intentionally in the mind of the coach (see Figure 4).

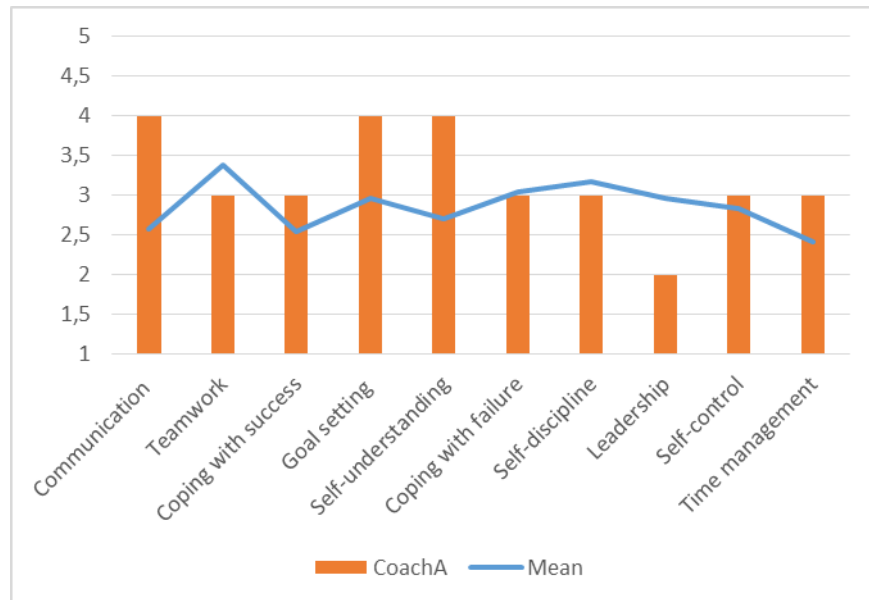


Figure 4. The list of life skills taught by coach Matt compared to the other coaches.

While collecting data, some evidence was found. Following list is the life skills noticed being taught during the practices accompanied with the examples from the observation protocols (referred as OP) or interview protocols (IP).

Table 2. Life skills taught by coach Matt

Life skill taught	Evidence from the observation or interview protocol
Giving feedback	“I liked the pair of (names two athletes). Why? Because he tells how the other is doing. You are close to him, you can see better, you can tell in what your friend can improve” (OP)
Communication	“I wanna see you talking to each other” (OP)
Goal-setting	We have good facilities here. Sometimes I have delivered short sessions on goal-setting and then it is not even on sports-related goals, but school-related (IP)
Hard work ethic	“I want that the comfort zone to be your greatest enemy” (OP)

Teamwork	“Look with whom you are in the group. You should be able to watch your two friends. You cannot raise the speed so high that others cannot follow. Take the tempo that is appropriate to your abilities” (OP)
Coping with success and failure	Especially when they were younger, it was very thoroughly explained how to think in case of losing and in case of winning. I have to explain that this is part of the basketball. (IP)
Self-discipline, self-control	Shares an example of a guy with attention deficit disorder - extra effort was made to make him control over himself (IP)
Self-analysis	“You are responsible for your own behaviour. You make a mistake, you will get punished for that” (OP)
Healthy living-style	“(Name of the athlete) sent me a text today that he has a fever 37,5 and won’t come. And that’s right. Better take some time off rather than let the fever get even higher and suffer more” (OP)
Polite behaviour	Players should behave (not being rude), both during the practice, games and out of competitions as well. (IP)
Healthy eating habits	At training camps you can see their eating behaviours. (IP)

#### 4.1.3 Coach education and background

Matt has a coach licence and a qualification as physical education teacher and this has had an impact on his way of coaching. Furthermore, he brings up the importance of the sport psychology course at the university where the discussions there helped a lot to reflect on himself and become a coach as he is now, especially referring to supporting positive youth development. Also he recognises the importance of the role of other coaches saying that he has learned a lot from them. Self-reflection seems to be quite common to him, as he is using the phrases “I sometimes analyse myself .... after the practices, but especially after the competitions”.

#### 4.1.4 Coaching philosophy and its development

For understanding the underlying motives for teaching life skills, it is important to understand the coaching philosophy. Matt seems to be troubled to define coaching philosophy, nevertheless few principles can be outlined during the interview.

**Making athletes think for themselves.** During the practices it is notable that asking “Why is this important?” seems to be a common way of teaching. This is confirmed by the interview when talking about the philosophy, “I want to tell them that they would learn, start thinking why they do something”.

**Creating positive atmosphere.** While describing his principles during the practices, he explains that positive atmosphere is very highly valued. Matt puts great effort into creating positive atmosphere during the practices.

**Approach towards the balance between fun-win-development.** Matt is convinced that there should more focus on fun rather than winning in youth sports.

*Sometimes I think that there is too little fun at our practices. But I am not fixed to winning, it brings some negative effects, when there is just winning all the time. Some guys have dropped out already at the age of 14-15, because they win all the time and then what next ... it is an external motivation, you cannot fill it endlessly.*

**Defining his role.** When talking about his role as the coach, he explains, “I am not a coach, but a teacher”. He sees himself to have several roles and has acknowledged the importance of it.

**Valuing discipline.** One underlying principle that Matt brings up as part of his philosophy is valuing discipline. Even if it is not so visible in the practices, coach is convinced that it is an important part of his philosophy, “Also discipline is very important at practices. When the coach talks, then others should listen.”

**Appreciating athletes' opinion.** One interesting viewpoint of his philosophy is the approach towards athletes who share their opinion. As mentioned earlier, his philosophy



was to make athletes think. Furthermore, he seems to appreciate when athletes also appear to analyse.

*In some cases some guys have come up to me themselves and asked about the defence etc. and it is a good thing that they have started to analyse themselves.*

Matt admitted the change in his philosophy. He has changed from having strict coaching strategies into more democratic strategies and apparently university education has had impact on that.

*When I thought for a long time that when the youngsters do not understand, then you have to shout and swear at them, then in those (sport psychology) courses we discussed about this and it helped me a lot to become a coach that I am now. Now I try to explain more and talk and teach.*

#### 4.1.5 Intentionality in teaching life skills

Based on the data from the self-report measure, observations and interview, one can notice intentionality in teaching life skills to some extent. There is a lot of convergent information along the practices, but also he can explain his approaches during the interviews and he has thought of his philosophy, although it was a bit challenging for him to define coaching philosophy and coaching strategies himself.

## 4.2 COACH MARK

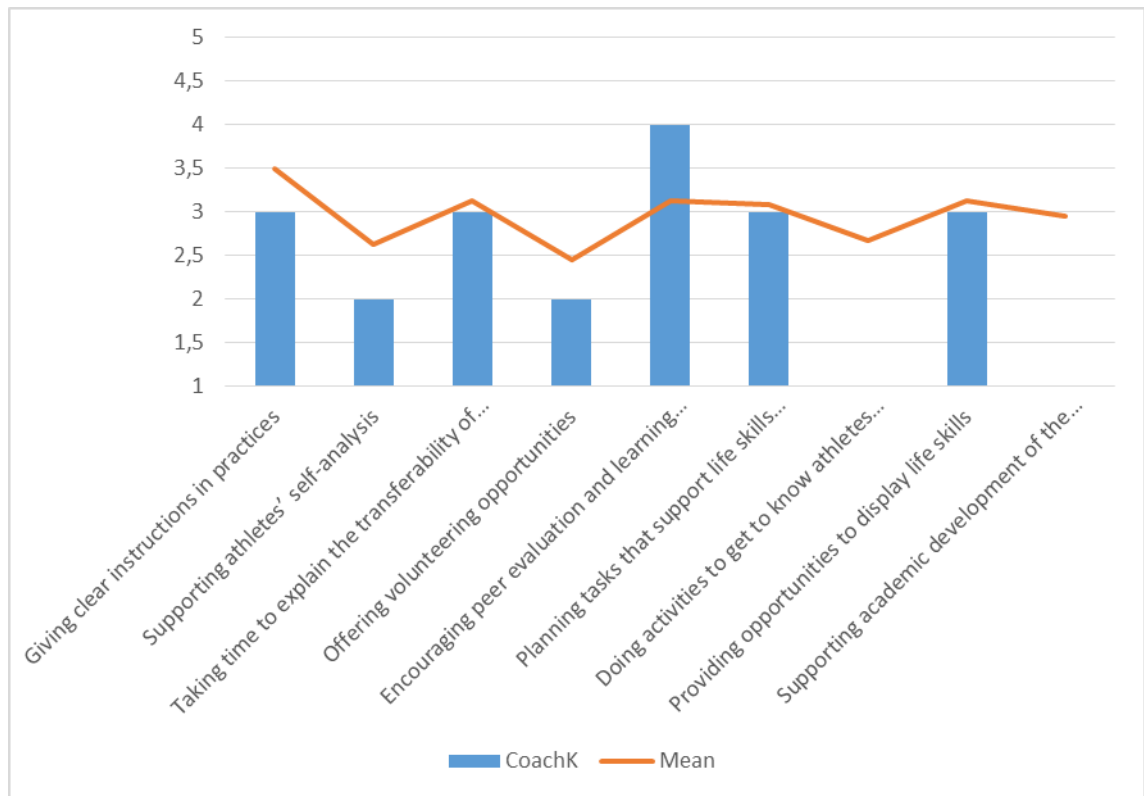
*I prefer to have emotional atmosphere where everybody finds the practices interesting, drills are playful and there is action all the time. The athletes need the excitement, they practice things through that and it is up to the coach to “hide” all the learning moments in there.*

Mark seems to be quite good at hiding learning moments. Observing his practices does not give too much evidence of teaching life skills. However, during the interview strong philosophical principles appear that support positive youth development.

Mark has been a volleyball coach for four years. He is 37 years old working with the team of girls aged 14-15. This was his first team in his coaching career and hence he has coached them for four years. Besides coaching, he has numerous other roles. One role, that may have effect on him more as a coach, is the lecturer of sport sciences at the university.

### 4. 2.1 Coaching strategies while teaching life skills

When comparing the coaching strategies used intentionally by Mark with the pool of strategies from all the participants of the screening questionnaire, not too impressive results appear. His self-estimation reports higher focus on encouraging peer evaluation. All the other strategies seem to be on the average level where more often he states to use clear instructions, take time to explain transferability, plan tasks that support life skills and provide opportunities to display life skills. Seldom he does activities to get to know athletes better and supports the academic development (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5. List of coaching strategies taught by Mark compared to other coaches.**

Interestingly, no data was found during the observations or interviews that would confirm the results of the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the following three strategies could be pointed out that supports positive youth development.

**Fostering hard-work atmosphere.** It was clear both from the practice and the conversation with the coach that hard-work ethic is an important value. Coach also showed several examples to prove it, such as telling the athletes, “Let’s have a shorter practice, but let’s do it properly, until the very end; let’s push ourselves a little bit more” or as an encouragement “Don't give up in defence, don't become lazy!”.

Coach confirms having strategy to stress the importance of the hard work also during the interview. He states, “I think that in this age they already understand that if they don’t give their maximum, the result will be worse ... And we talk about that regularly, like once a week and more often at the autumn when the school starts and they are less concentrated.”

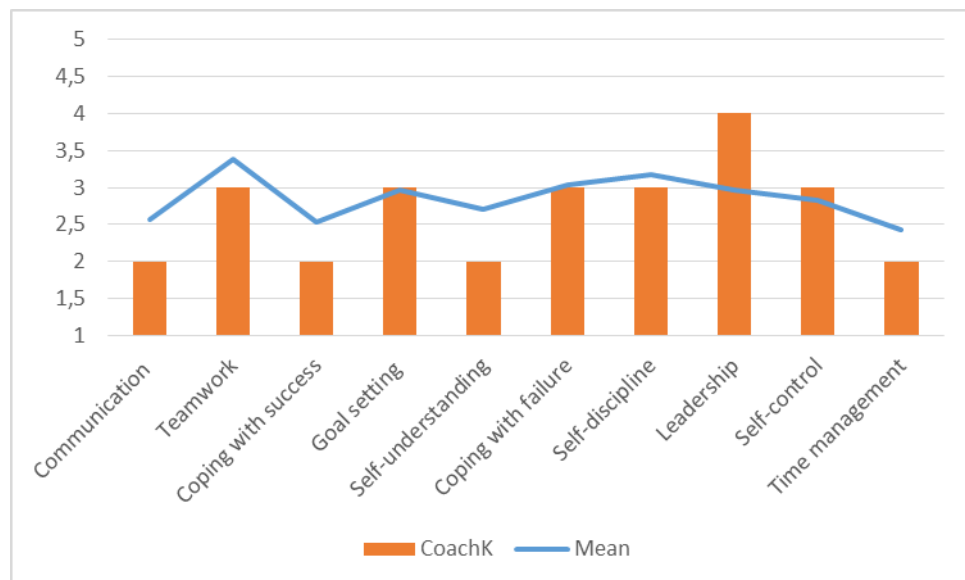
**Correcting immediately athletes' behaviour.** As the discipline appears to be very highly valued by the coach, some strategies appeared how this was approached. It is meaningful to pay immediate attention to the unwished behaviour to make the change in the athlete's behaviour.

*When somebody comes late to the practice I have to handle it, so that the kid does not want to do that again and that she would understand that it is important not to be late.*

**Supporting autonomy.** Some examples of giving choices can be noticed during the practices. "If you want, have a water break," states the coach. Also during the drills he tries to add some autonomy-supporting approaches, "Take up your own speed".

#### 4.2.2 Life Skills Taught

According to the self-report questionnaire, Mark teaches few life skills, most often leadership, less often teamwork, goal-setting, coping with failure, self-discipline and self-control. See Figure 6 for explanation.



**Figure 6. List of life skills taught by coach Mark compared to other coaches.**

While collecting data from the practice, just few notes were made about concrete life skills taught. The most obvious was about teaching communication when the coach

instructs the athletes, "You need to talk to each other". Yet, it might not be the obvious sign of teaching life skills, but rather giving instructions for improving the game.

#### 4.2.3 Coach education and background

Mark has a coach licence and a qualification as a physical education teacher. He states that his way of being a coach is mostly influenced by his own experience as an athlete.

*I think that high education does not give so much to being a coach, my own sports experience has influenced me more.*

Interestingly, he does not refer to his role of the lecturer in sports science and does not imply too much influence on it.

When talking about self-reflection, he is obviously smiling at the question and says that due to the many roles and tough daily schedules the self-reflection is not possible. What makes him think as a coach is when they lose the game, then it is important to analyse what went wrong and how other coaches have achieved better results.

Although he does not say about self-reflection, he gives an intriguing hint. As he took the team over from his wife who got pregnant four years ago, they discuss about coaching amongst themselves.

*We have discussed that a lot with my wife that we do not do this mistake that has been done to some.*

It seems to have an important part in self-reflection to have another person with whom it is possible to share thoughts about coaching.

Another interesting thing that arises, is that he seems to be open to development possibilities as a coach. He has chosen intentionally different teams and areas of volleyball to give himself more possibilities to grow as a coach.

#### 4.2.4 Coaching philosophy

Although it seemed during the practice and looking at the self-report measure that Mark does not teach life skills or support positive youth development, his views on coaching philosophy seem to support strongly positive youth development.

**Creating positive and playful atmosphere.** He describes his coaching style by creating a positive atmosphere and meanwhile creating the teaching opportunities.

*I prefer to have emotional atmosphere where everybody finds the practices interesting, drills are playful and there is action all the time. The athletes need that there is some excitement, they practice things through that, it is up to the coach to “hide” all the learning moments in there.*

**Valuing discipline.** One of the underlying beliefs that Mark repeatedly reports is discipline.

*Discipline is very important to me, to my mind practice has to start at the correct time, usually our kids rarely come late either to practices or games.*

**Making athletes think for themselves.** Offering challenging drills where athletes need to think appears to be one important approach for Mark.

**Winning is more important than development.** When discussing about the balance between the win-fun-development, he seems very convinced that winning is crucial.

*I am very ambitious myself, I want to win in any case, no matter what age; I do not believe in living for the future, it is not possible in sports, on certain level; I think also that the kids participate in the practices better, when they get the feedback from the games.*

**Having humanistic approach.** One of his philosophical approaches is to have respect towards athletes.

*I try to be human to everybody, try to talk calmly to everybody. I don't humiliate them as people.*

**Keeping the practice interesting, exciting for the athletes.** One of the principles in his coaching behaviour is having varied approaches in practices.

*The most important is that the practice should be exciting/interesting to kids. The practice has to matter for the kids, then they want to come back. (Also support from the observation protocol:) "Try to make the exercise interesting for yourself"*

**Believing in constant pressure towards athletes.** Mark seems to be a big believer in pushing the athletes, though he understands that it might not be the best way of handling them.

*More you will push them, better training will be. Sometimes you are not able to, but try on most cases. When I am on them, also on the court, they do better unfortunately.*

**Supporting positive youth development.** Mark has a nice way to define positive youth development as his philosophical principle.

*It would be nice if they could grow up to be healthy persons, not physically, but mentally healthy.*

#### 4.2.5 Intentionality in teaching life skills

Although some intentional teaching of life skills seems to appear in his philosophy, it does not reveal neither in his practices nor in his descriptions of the practices.

#### 4.2.6 Anything else related

Interestingly, in discussions about the life skills it appears that the coach sees the team sports as a model for life.

*I think that the team sports are the most healthy form of sports, the small team is like a small life, you learn here to communicate, take others into account, you learn life skills through process ... that you cannot tell about individual sports, there they are just them and the world ...*

### 4.3 COACH LUKE

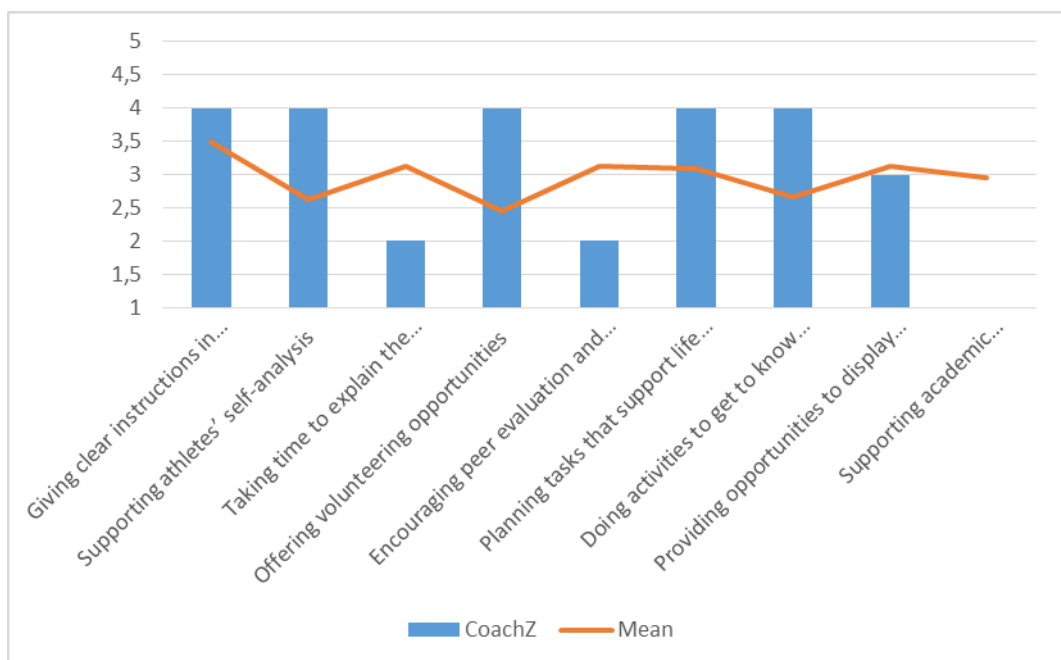
*Let's gather together. How was the game? How did you like it?*

Who gives so many opportunities to the athletes to show their opinion and give feedback? It is the coach who is certain that teaching life skills and supporting positive youth development starts from the early age.

Luke is a football coach for 4-5-years-old boys in a prestigious football club. He is 23 years old male coach who has two years of experience. Besides being a coach he is also a volunteer in the sports club organising youth projects.

#### 4.3.1 Coaching strategies while teaching life skills

Compared to the other coaches who replied to the questionnaire Luke stands out in five strategies when teaching life skills. It seems that he very often gives clear instructions, supports athletes' self-analysis, offers volunteering opportunities, plans tasks that support life skills and does activities to get to know athletes. He says that he never supports academic development and it is not applicable, as so young kids do not go to school in Estonia. It is illustrated by Figure 7.



**Figure 7. Coaching strategies used by Luke compared to the other coaches.**



During the observations and interviews several strategies were noticed that develop life skills of the athletes or support positive youth development in general.

**Supporting athletes' self-analysis.** Supporting to realise the cause-and-effect in one's behaviour seems to be very consistent approach in practices and it also appears during the conversation. Coach shares a concrete example in case kids hurt each other.

*When somebody hits another, I first let him apologise. And then I send them off the court, so he thinks there in the corner and I go up to him and ask, why are you here, can you behave this way ... in most cases they remember and know why are they there ... verbalising is important.*

It was consistent approach throughout two practices observed, also coach shared the approach during the interview that shows the intentionality of the teaching. It is remarkable how he stresses the importance of talking about it.

**Offering volunteering possibilities.** During the practices part of it seems to be helping to gather the equipment after the drill. Coach asks to pick up the equipment after the exercise and comments in the interview, "I do it intentionally and kids really enjoy doing that!"

**Creating positive friendly atmosphere.** Luke uses rules to create a good atmosphere for practices. Every practice starts with a routine where they revise the rules: "Let's gather together. Are we going to listen to coach's instructions? Can we hurt each other?" In the interview coach explains,

*The practice has to be very inclusive, it is important that everybody would participate, I try to pay attention to everybody and have a positive attitude towards them. One of the goals is to have fun for everybody ... I try to create as positive and safe environment as possible.*

**Fostering social support.** Luke seems not to be too convinced about the strategy other than stating the rules not to hurt each other.

*It is important for them to get along with each other, but I have consciously not paid attention to that.*

**Using punishment as a way to correct behaviour.** Luke has developed a way to correct the behaviour at the practice: boys who disturb the practice are sent to sit in the corner. Although it might seem conservative way, it has paved the way to develop one's self-analysis (see above "supporting athletes' self-analysis").

**Creating space for discussions.** Luke has made the space for conversations with kids. Every practice starts with the routine where they revise the rules: "Let's gather together. Are we going to listen to the coach's instructions? Can we hurt each other?" Also, after every drill coach asks everybody to gather around and asks for some feedback, "How was the game? Did you like it?" Having these spaces to discuss with kids created nice way to have interaction with kids and also calming them down and disciplining.

**Correcting immediately athletes' behaviour.** In case some disciplinary issues arise, the coach pays immediate attention to it and considers it to be very important.

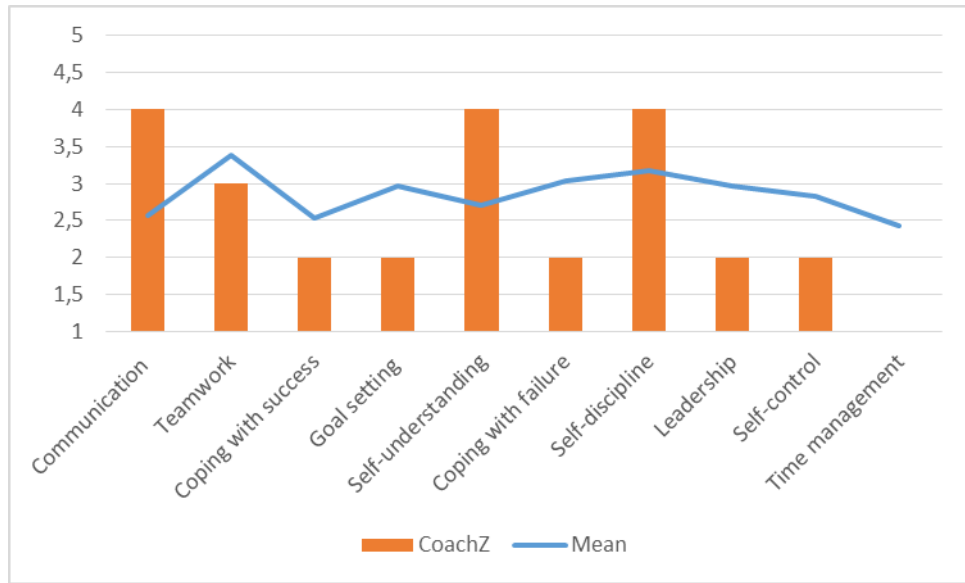
*When somebody hits another, I pay immediate attention to it and let them apologise to each other.*

Besides showing the correct behaviour, it also models one way how to resolve conflicts.

**Supporting autonomy.** In spite of young age of the athletes, Luke seems to value kids' feeling of autonomy and gives them choices. For example, in the nest-game (they have to run from one nest to another) he asks also from the athletes where do they want to go. In another practices he asks the kids, "Are we going to make a water break or shall we play on?"

#### 4.3.2 Life Skills Taught

According to the self-report questionnaire, Luke teaches numerous life skills, most often communication, self-understanding and self-discipline, teamwork is also mentioned as more common, but other life skills seem to be not so intentional, especially compared to the other coaches who replied to the self-report measure (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8. List of life skills taught by Luke compared to other coaches.**

While collecting data, several evidence were found to expand the list of life skills being taught. Following list is the life skills noticed during the practices accompanied with the examples from the observation (OP) or interview protocols (IP).

**Table 3. List of life skills noticed at the practices of Luke.**

Life skill taught	Evidence from the observation or interview protocol
Giving feedback	Asking for feedback seems to be a constant strategy. After every exercise: “Let’s gather together. How was the game?” Or questions like “Did you like the game?”, “How did you succeed?” And in the interview he explains, “I ask them feedback, so that they are open to express themselves, not just being quiet.” (OP and IP)
Communication	Makes athletes to apologise to each other by hugging but in the interview he admits that he has not paid conscious attention that they would communicate to each other. (OP)
Conflict resolution	Makes athletes to apologise to each other by hugging. (OP)

Self-discipline, self-control	And with this one guy who understands less, it was very difficult at first, but now when I send him out of the game, he really stays in the corner and he really gets it .. and he is not so aggressive any more .. so it has really helped. So I have been explaining him that if the ball is taken from you, you do not need to hit him ... so, that he needs to control himself. (IP)
Discipline	Sometimes I ask in the beginning of the practice what will happen if they do not listen to the coach; so that they'd know ... (IP)

#### 4.3.3 Coach education and background

The drive of Luke for becoming a coach came from his own experience as an athlete. He wished to become a football player himself, but for various reasons did not succeed. Still, participating in the practices gave him insights for the coach's role.

*When I participated in practices myself, I learned what the coach should do ... and what is happening in football.*

Luke has a first-level coach licence from participating in the grassroots-level coach training organised by the National Football Association. However, he had an experience as an athlete himself, which was not a positive experience.

*When I went to the practice by the age of 17, the quality was not so good ... and the coach smoked next to me and the overall picture did not seem good.*

As a response to that, he decided to become a coach for himself and create better opportunities to youth.

His way of coaching is greatly formed by the voluntary experience. He volunteered in a club for two months and he got the main methodology from there. That applies also for teaching young age group and supporting positive youth development. He worked together with another coach there about how to get a good contact with kids etc,

Luke reflects his activities as a coach, although he admits the need to do it more often.

*But I do sometimes, when I have solved some situation well, for example, when the guy did not participate and now he participates better, so I think what did I do last time that worked, which method did I use.*

#### 4.3.4 Coaching philosophy

Luke seems to be troubled to define coaching philosophy, however few principles can be outlined during the interview.

**Making athletes think for themselves.** Coach Luke seems to value the importance of the self-analysis of the athletes. He shares that he asks questions very often, for he tries to make athletes think.

**Creating positive and playful atmosphere.** When talking about the atmosphere he shares his own negative experience.

*It is important to have a positive environment; when I went to practices myself, there was much of swearing and bad attitude ... it won't create a good environment, so I try myself now that there would be a positive environment and nobody would feel that ... that anybody gets hurt.*

**Belief that there should be more focus on fun rather than winning.** Coach Luke seems quite convinced about the balance in win-fun-development-issues. Maybe it is easily influenced by the fact that the athletes do not have competitions as a part of the sports routine.

*We do not go to the competitions ... but my principle is here that the winning is not most important. I compile these games also in a way ... showing that winning is not important, but rather to that everybody can participate ... and I do not stress that winning is important, unlike some other youth coaches ... that is not good ... so fun is really important.*

**Appreciating athletes' opinion.** Asking for feedback seems to be a constant strategy. After every exercise they gather together, "Let's gather together. How was the game?"

Or questions like “Did you like the game?”, “How did you succeed?” And in the interview he explains:

*Also I ask them feedback, so that they are open to express themselves, not just being quiet.*

#### 4.3.5 Intentionality in teaching life skills

Based on the data from the self-report measure, observations and interview, one can notice intentionality in teaching life skills to some extent. There is a lot of convergent information between his practices gathered, but also he can explain his approaches during the interviews and he has thought of his philosophy, although it was a bit challenging for him to define coaching philosophy and coaching strategies himself.

#### 4.3.6 Anything else related

Two aspects stand out when discussing about teaching life skills and positive youth development. Coach Luke has a vision for future how to integrate positive youth development into the activities of the sport club.

*I want to create such a football club where .... Now they organise just practices, but I want to combine it with youth work, so that football club can be as a youth organisation, organising different non-formal trainings on goal-setting or self-development or ...*

The second aspect is that he is very aware of not transferring the life skills into daily situations. He mentions in the interview, but also comments in the questionnaire, that “I have not drawn transferability of the life skills; I teach them in the practice but do not explain how you can transfer.” It shows partly the self-reflection of the coach behaviour, but probably improves the knowledge about teaching life skills.

#### 4.4 COACH JOHN

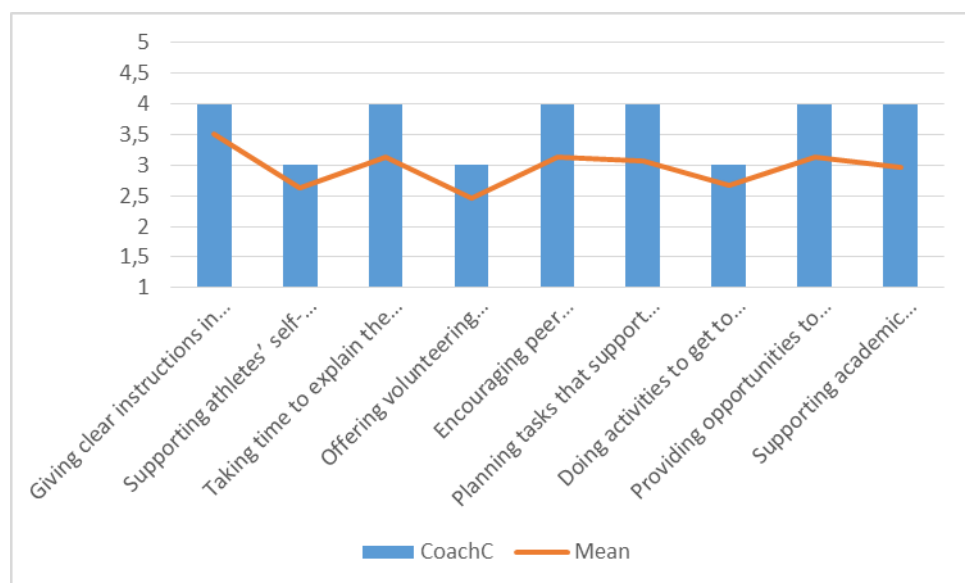
*“Can you please wait for a bit?” Coach hardly looks at me, surrounded by three silent boys, and explains to me thereafter, “I am having a conversation here with these guys, why do they think they got kicked out of the classroom.”*

Using teachable moment in supporting positive youth development is right there in front of my eyes.

John is a 51-years-old handball coach working with the youth handball team. He is an experienced coach having over 11-years-of-experience in different sports games. His athletes are 9-10 years old and he has coached them 3-5 years.

##### 4.4.1 Coaching strategies while teaching life skills

The self-report measure of John shows remarkable results (see Figure 9). He is most often giving clear instructions, taking time to explain the transferability of life skills, encouraging peer evaluation, planning tasks that support life skills, providing opportunities to display life skills and supporting academic development. But also other strategies checked are above the average compared to the other coaches.



**Figure 9. Coaching strategies by the coach John compared to the mean of the all coaches**

Below convergent information is brought about the coaching strategies with examples and notes from the observation of the practices and interview protocols.

**Contributing to get to know athletes.** Already from the very first moments at the practice the warm and close contact between the coach and the athletes is visible. But he refers that besides practices actually the training camps are the places where the good contact can be created.

*More life skills can be taught at the training camps, there you can build one-on-one contact, can get to know them better and see what kind of person he is.*

**Using teachable moments.** Before the practice starts, coach is having a discussion with the players, why they were thrown out of the class. This is remarkable, for shows that in case there is a chance to teach life skills (discipline in that case), coach uses that, pays attention and make athletes analyse their behaviour.

**Creating space for discussions.** In the end of the practice there is a short session of fitness training where there is also possibility to talk to each other, e.g coach reminds the forthcoming competition. It seems to be an ordinary activity. During the interview coach reveals also another space where discussions happen.

*Usually I am in the dressing-room with them; because just there they start bullying each other.*

**Correcting immediately athletes' behaviour.** From the observation it seems that he pays immediate attention when somebody behaves undisciplined way.

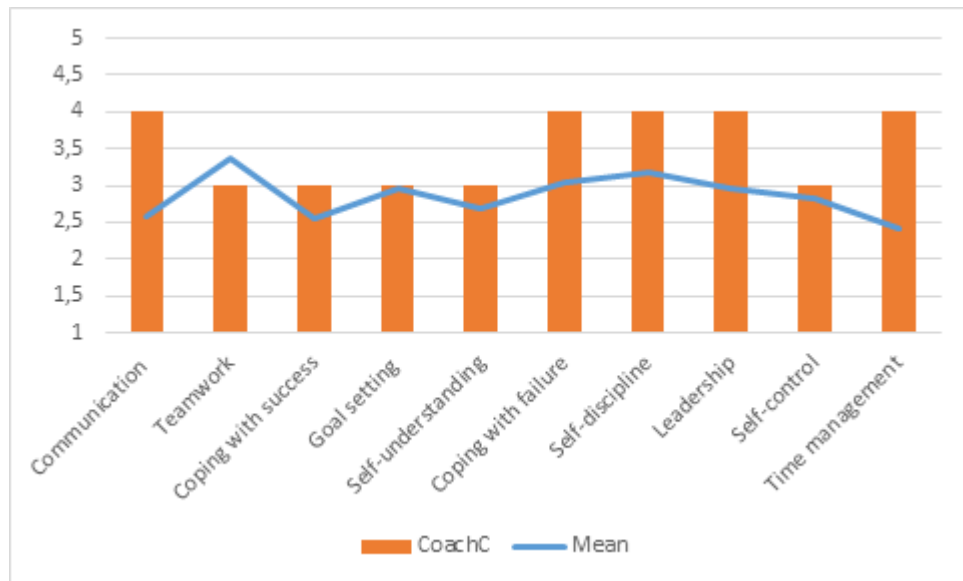
**Supporting autonomy.** Coach shows respect towards athletes and in spite of their young age, they initiate freely ideas and coach seems to support that. At the interview he confirms that.

*It is nice when the guys will come with their own ideas, when they propose what they would like to do. It is the best when they can suggest things (drills) for me. But it should be also clear that I will make the final decision.*



#### 4.4.2 Life Skills Taught

According to the self-report questionnaire (see Figure 10), John teaches numerous life skills, all life skills named are above the average compared to the other coaches. Most often he teaches communication, coping with failure, self-discipline, leadership and time management.



**Figure 10. List of life skills taught by coach John compared to other coaches**

However, while collecting data during the practice and the interview, not too much evidence was found to expand the list of life skills being taught. Two of them are listed in the table 4.

**Table 4. List of life skills taught by John.**

<b>Life skills taught</b>	<b>Comment from the interview protocol</b>
Healthy eating habits, healthy lifestyle	(I try to teach) we do not eat fries all the time .. of course sometimes it is ok, but not all the time, this healthy living-style and that the drink for the practice is water. (IP)
Polite behaviour	At the competitions we say hello when you enter the room, you take off your hat, we eat properly with fork and knife and ... (IP)

#### 4.4.3 Coach education and background

John has the education of physical education teacher from 20 years ago. He has had several training possibilities and he does not think that there are too limited educational opportunities in developing his competencies as a coach. He has had many different coaches himself and there is always to learn something from them.

He does self-reflection, mostly after the competitions. He comments amusingly, “I think that every coach does self-reflection when they lose. When you win, then you do not reflect really ... “

Although the discussion about the education is brief, his attitude towards educational opportunities seems very open. He is sure that, “you have to educate yourself continuously ... more you learn more you’ll get how stupid you are”.

#### 4.4.4 Coaching philosophy and its development

Several principles can be brought when talking about the philosophy of John. But it seems that the topic is not vague for him.

**Making athletes think for themselves.** One of the core principles during the practices seems to be making athletes to understand.

*My principle is that everybody would understand what I want.*

**Creating positive and playful atmosphere.** When talking about the coaching style, John mentions the atmosphere he wants to create.

*One goal of the practices is that the guys would be in a good mood and that they would want to come again to the practice. It is important that they would consider the practice a pleasant experience.*

It is confirmed by the information from watching the practices where there are many playful moments and coach seems to be very spontaneous and creative.

**Belief that there should be more focus on fun rather than winning.** When talking about the balance between winning-fun-development, the coach is not so certain about

the topic. But he refers to the adult team he coaches and compares that for this certain age (10-11) the winning is not so important as in adults' team.

**Defining his role as a coach.** One way of describing the philosophy is to look at the way the coaches explain their role. John seems to value the importance of the coach's role for the young athletes and he sees the responsibility.

*I consider that as one of the roles of the coach to provide safety for everybody. The role of the coach is a very powerful role. Many guys see me more than they see their own father, I am together with them for three days, not mentioning the training camps.*

**Athletes' opinion is appreciated.** One aspect already mentioned before was the approach that athletes' autonomy is supported. When talking about the underlying beliefs and principles, coach's positive attitude can be seen.

*It is nice when the guys will come with their own ideas, when they propose what they would like to do. It is the best when they can suggest things (drills) for me. But it should be also clear that I will make the final decision.*

Nice balance between the autonomy and discipline is aimed for at the practices.

#### 4.4.5 Intentionality in teaching life skills

Based on the data from the self-report measure, observations and interview, one can notice intentionality in teaching life skills to some extent, focusing more on the positive role modelling.

#### 4.5 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

A typical characteristic of the multiple case study is to have a cross-case analysis between the findings of the separate cases, emphasizing the convergent information. As explained in the section “Data analysis”, the analytical induction is used throughout the master thesis and therefore the cross-case analysis is organised by the four main sub-topics: coaching strategies, coach education and background, coaching philosophy and intentionality while teaching life skills. However, one of the findings was the list of the life skills taught during the practices, but it is not the focus of itself, but it is rather a way to recognise coaching strategies. Cross-case analysis was made with the help of the outlining table where all the themes are analysed and the occurrence is calculated by sub-topics (see appendix 5). Extract of the table is brought below (see table 5) where the number of themes are brought across cases.

**Table 5. Representation of the sub-topics across cases**

<b>Sub-topic of the research</b>	<b>Matt</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Coaching strategies while teaching life skills	12	3	8	5
Coach education	6	7	6	5
Coaching philosophy	7	8	4	5
Life skills taught	11	1	4	2
Intentionality of teaching life skills	3	1	1	2

As the table shows, coach Matt teaches life skills most and he has also clear coaching strategies for teaching life skills, compared to the other coaches. As noted also in the individual cases, Mark seems to teach life skills the least, however his philosophical principles seem well-thought and quite clear. There are no remarkable gaps amongst the sub-topic of the coach education and it was supported by the individual data – all the coaches had a good educational background and felt themselves quite confident in their competences. Intentionality of life skills is represented less as it cannot be measured directly.

Following are the brief descriptions of all the sub-topics and common or very characteristic features across cases.

One strategy that is noticeable in the behaviour of all coaches studied is that they have created spaces for discussions. They are not just having drinking breaks, but they tend to use the breaks for developmental objectives. Also discussions and teaching take place in the beginning of the practice and after the practice. Another common coaching strategy is supporting autonomy by giving choices to athletes. It seems to be common to ask athletes if they want to have a drinking break, which drills they want to do, also athletes' own initiative is supported.

Three coaches tend to correct immediately athletes' behaviour when mistakes or inappropriate behaviour is noticed. Interestingly, it is mentioned by three coaches who are not so obviously teaching life skills during their practices. However, due to the nature of the case study analysis, it is not aspired to explain or find reasons behind this pattern. But it would be interesting to investigate further.

No common life skills were found to be taught, except communication that is taught by three coaches - Matt, Mark and Luke. That shows the wide range of possible life skills learned in sports and it could be one of the further research issues.

From all the categories, coach education has the most evenly spread information in the calculation of the categories. That shows that coaches' background is quite similar: most of them have a qualification as a physical education teacher, all of the coaches have a coach licence. When asked about the self-reflection, just one coach mentions it by himself, others feel quite uncomfortable talking about it, mentioning the lack of time and knowing, that it should be done more often.

Regarding coaching philosophy and its development, four aspects can be noted, two of them is relevant for all coaches, two of them are mentioned by three coaches. All coaches consider it important to make athletes think for themselves, when delivering practices. It seems to be meaningful to develop youngsters into independent thinkers, not only in sports, but also in life in general. Another aspect all coaches want is to create a positive and playful atmosphere, where the athletes are enjoying practices. Coaches

see that this is a crucial part why athletes want to come back to practices and enjoyable environment seems to be a key.

Three coaches – Matt, Luke and John – believe that there should be more focus on fun rather than winning, because the winning in youth sports may serve the role of the external motive and end up in dropouts. The same three coaches show their respect towards athletes' opinion. Various situations during the practices give proof that athletes dare to show their opinion and attitude and furthermore, their opinions are taken into account, for example in designing the practices.

#### 4.5.5 Intentionality in teaching life skills

It appears that intentionality is quite complicated issue to measure in coaching practice. It seems that intentionality should be looked as a continuum where it can vary from weaker presence to stronger evidence. It seems that just one coach, Matt, is very intentional in teaching life skills, while Luke and John are aware of the importance of the intentions, however they struggle with bringing concrete examples and also the observational data does not support the intentionality. Fourth coach, Mark, does not seem to believe in the importance of teaching life skills in general, though his philosophy reflects supporting positive youth development. Intentionality within the cases is explored in more detail in the following section.

## 5 DISCUSSION

For generalisation and interpretation of the results, all four sub-topics will be looked at in detail and supportive and/or contradictory literature will be mentioned to explore the scope of the remarkable questions within the study.

### 5.1 Coaching strategies coaches use while teaching life skills

Concrete strategies for teaching life skills were one of the specific interest in this master thesis. The way coaching style usually develops is by the experience being athlete themselves or observing various role models (Lockwood and Perlman, 2008). Also the present study shows some support to that: coach Mark and coach Luke say that their way of coaching has been greatly influenced by their own experience of being an athlete.

As seen from the cross-case analysis, just few coaching strategies were overlapping that seem to teach life skills. Just one strategy, creating space for discussions, is prevalent for all coaches. Two other strategies that stand out are interestingly characteristic just for three coaches who are not so intentional in teaching life skills. These will be tackled in the following paragraphs.

One manner that is characteristic for all coaches in the study – less regarding coach Mark though – was that the coaches used the possibilities for having meaningful conversations. For example, drinking breaks were used to stress the healthy living-style, beginning of the practice focused on developing the discipline, being in the locker room allowed coaches to get to know athletes better. It seems to be the significant cornerstone for teaching life skills. It is noticeable that although the practice may last for a very short time (some just 45 minutes), coaches observed were using all possible moments to make maximum use out of it. It is also remarkable that spaces for the discussion have been created to very young athletes.

Another quite prevalent behaviour across coaches was correcting immediately athletes' behaviour. The correcting behaviour was noted with three coaches who were not so intentional in teaching life skills. It is worth noting that the immediate reaction to the unwished behaviour (for example, ruining the discipline) seems to be valued.

Interestingly, Estonian coaches reported using punishment as a way to correct athletes' behaviour. Two coaches had clear approach in using punishment as a way to demonstrate the correct way of behaviour, both related to the discipline. No similar strategies have been found in the literature, though it has been reported to use punishment for failing to show respect (Holt et al, 2008). Contrastingly, it is important to note the potential danger of the punishment. Camiré et al (2011) showed that athletes who experience less punishment-oriented behaviours report higher self-esteem, competence, enjoying and staying in sports.

Third coaching strategy that was dominant amongst Estonian coaches was supporting athletes' autonomy. The coaches gave choices in different aspects of the practices: in the choice of the drills, rhythm of the practice. Literature quite consistently reveals that autonomy of the athletes should be supported by giving choices (Horn, 2008; Camiré et al, 2011). Furthermore, regarding leadership studies, Gould et al (2012) are in strong opinion about adults' role in the sports – to promote leadership, the adults should not dominate during the practice.

When comparing the strategies Estonian coaches use to the strategies brought up in the first section of the study, three overlapping strategies appear. Besides facilitating autonomy that was described above, contributing to get to know athletes is one approach that is supported by the literature and is also present in the practice of the Estonian coaches. Creating space for discussions is closely connected to the development of good relationships with athletes. Literature supports that good relationships pave the way to the possibility for teaching life skills (Camiré et al, 2012; Holt et al, 2008; Horn et al, 2009; Gould et al, 2007; Flett et al, 2012). Although it was not very obvious during the practices, coaches seemed to stress the importance of the training camps where there is more time to get to know athletes and build one-on-one



relationships with them. Furthermore, it is not just good for developing life skills, but personal contacts may help to prevent dropping out of sports (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2008), so there is also clear sports-related reason why coaches should integrate this strategy in their daily practice.

Another coaching strategy is fostering social support. Besides so-called vertical relationship between the coach and the athletes, it is significant to have good relationships horizontally amongst the athletes, especially in youth sports. It seems to be a crucial role of the coach to encourage good relations in the team. Fraser-Thomas et al (2008) also put the role on the coaches to create the good social networks. From our study, several examples can be found where coaches create the situations where athletes can support each other. Coach Matt encourages “giving high fives” during the practice to each other, coach Luke asks the young athletes to hug each other in case of aggressive behaviour. Beyond that, the study by Watson, Connole & Kadushin, 2011, suggests that idea of mentorship amongst the athletes should be more strongly cultivated in youth sports. Gould et al, 2012 asserts that regarding the leadership studies. Some relation can be found also from the strategy of the coach Matt where he encourages peer evaluation and learning from each other.

Interestingly, additional strategy seems to be using humour as a strategy for positive youth development. Although it did not appear in concrete practices during the present study, humour as a strategy was mentioned to calm the players (coach Matt). The evidence was found by Cowan, Taylor, McEwan & Baker, 2012, who stressed the importance of humour in coaching, especially in developing close relationships.

Finally, an intriguing question appear in the results – can talking be considered as a strategy? In many cases when coaches were asked to bring examples in teaching life skills the coaches could not explain it in detail, but summed it up in one sentence, “We talk about it.” For example, coach Matt explained how he has taught about the coping with success and failure that “in the younger age it was often talked about, now a little less.” And it seems to be a valid explanation for the coaches. That brings in an intriguing question: is talking a strategy or how can you specify different “talks”?

McCallister et al (2000) found similar issues: coaches found it really challenging to explain their strategies and in many cases coaches explained their strategy by “just talking”.

To present the coaching strategies that Estonian coaches use, the following scheme may give a better overview (see Figure 11).



**Figure 11. Overview of the dominant coaching strategies Estonian coaches use while teaching life skills**

As a conclusion, compared to the Figure 1, one can notice that just three strategies are overlapping in both figures – facilitating autonomy, fostering social support and creating space for discussions. Furthermore, it is important to note that the underlying aspects of those strategies may be more varied that shows the complexity of defining and teaching life skills.

## 5.2 Coach education

To get the insight in the coaching style and coaching philosophies of the Estonian coaches, deeper look was taken into the coach education, focusing on the possibilities for coach training and its relatedness to supporting the positive youth development. Attention was paid to self-reflection as one way for coach to develop himself.

Coaches had interesting influences, notably related to teaching life skills, developing their coaching philosophies and supporting positive youth development. University education seemed to have an influential role just on one coach, but it seemed to be very significant: the coach stated that discussions in the sport psychology lectures helped him a lot to develop and amend his coaching philosophy.

Another coach had an experience becoming a coach by volunteering (the process is systematically described by Bouchet & Lehe, 2010). The way to become a coach by volunteering is also presented in the example of coach Luke, who got the basic coach education from the Estonian Football Association, however he got his approach towards teaching life skills participating as a voluntary assistant coach. Coach Mark and Luke stressed the role of their own athlete's career that helped them to develop their coaching style. That is supported by the study by Camiré et al (2014) who stated that coaches' previous experiences as athletes as informal learning situations and made them think the influence a coach can have on youth.

When explaining how the coach got the good skills in getting good contact with athletes, coach John also brought his experience as being a parent for four kids. The experience of the parenthood is also described as the great informal learning experience by Camiré et al (2014). They described how being a parent helps to create a coaching style that is much more oriented towards facilitating positive youth development.

Some coaches used the possibility to share their experiences and ideas with others, about the effective practices in particular. That is consistent with the research by Wiersma & Sherman (2005) and MacDonald et al (2010), who value the importance of the mentoring in coach education. However, in real life sharing ideas with a colleague is not common, says the study by Gilbert and Trudel, 2001. It is said to be more common that coaches find a peer somewhere else, e.g parent. That is supported by the results of the present study where two coaches named their peer, one of them being his spouse.

That brings to the importance of sharing the ideas about coaching. It has been studied and hence suggested that coaches should have conversation partners or several

opportunities to share their experiences (Camiré et al, 2014). Interestingly in the present study coaches did not bring up the importance of sharing, but it came up “hiddenly”. Most coaches had somebody with whom to talk about coaching. And that shows the need for the coach educators in Estonia to provide the possibilities to share the experiences. Also MacDonald et al, 2010 confirm that including the discussion about the positive youth development to coach training programmes has a value. An interesting example could be brought from Estonian coaching practice. Based on the website describing the coach education system in Estonia, it is possible to use observations of the fellow coaches as the official educational experience that is taken into account while giving the coaching licence. However, coaches under the present review, did not seem to be aware of the possibility.

Although it is said that coach education should be more practical, it does not necessarily mean more skill-learning, but rather focusing on the personal strengths and resources that stresses the importance of the reflection in coaching (Vella et al, 2013). The coach education literature is very thorough about the reflective practices in coaching (see Gilbert and Trudel, 2006, 2001). Furthermore, Nelson and Cushion (2006) stress that reflection is an important mediator between the theoretical knowledge and the practical experience. Reflective practice is especially useful in coaching that is a complex, practical and contextualised setting (Lyle, 2005).

Gilbert and Trudel (2001) divide the reflection into three types depending on the context: (1) reflection-in-action when a coach is analysing during the game or practice; (2) reflection-on-action where analysis is done after the practice or the game, but the results of the reflection can still have effect on the process; (3) retrospective-reflection-on-action, where the coach reflects after a long period following the practice or competition.

Examples from the Estonian coaches regarding the self-reflection do not seem too encouraging. With just one coach the self-reflection as an activity comes up spontaneously in the conversation. Others admit, when asked, that more self-reflection should be done, and one coach seems obviously smiling about the question showing

clearly that there is no time for self-reflection during the coaching practice. Time affects the analysis and learning of coaches, found Camiré et al (2014) in their study. Assuredly, all the coaches could relate to the topic somehow and most of them admitted reflecting after the competitions when they lose – that refers to the reflection-on-action according to Gilbert and Trudel, 2001, also their research findings confirm that to be the most common way of reflection amongst sport coaches.

Concluding from the present study and comparing the heuristic model in the review study by Gould & Carson, 2008, a small amendment is proposed. Coach education should be added to the scheme as part of the coach characteristics to emphasise the importance of the coach education, including self-reflection routine, as an important factor in supporting the development of life skills in sports.

### 5.3 Coaching philosophy and its development

One aspect clearly appeared during the interviews: all coaches interviewed had troubles in explaining their coaching philosophy. Most of them asked for specifications what is actually meant by philosophy and interviewing probes had to be used. Actually it is not an embarrassing notion. Study by McCallister et al, 2000, shows that coaches had difficulties explaining both their coaching philosophy and coaching strategies as well. Yet, several principles and values are brought out during the interviews.

Camiré et al (2014) share how both experience and education help the coaches to develop and describe their philosophies. Coaches with more experience seemed to have a wider view of their role as a coach. This was seen also in the present study where the experienced coach John showed more confidence in describing his coaching style and philosophy. But there is a contradictory finding where Camiré stated that more educated coaches were better able to describe their philosophies - all the coaches in the present study had high education, though they were still struggling with articulating their coaching philosophies. All the coaches had troubles in describing their philosophies, despite their education, but the decisive factor seemed to be the experience.

Despite the difficulties, some common principles in coaching can be brought out. Two coaching philosophies were common to all coaches: making athletes think for themselves and creating positive and playful atmosphere. And two other dominant principles will be also discussed here more in detail: bigger focus on fun rather than winning and appreciating athletes' opinion.

Although the Estonian coaches did not reflect themselves, they wanted to make their athletes think and that was a dominant feature for all Estonian coaches under review. For example coach Luke gave choices on drills, but expression "making athletes to think" as part of the philosophy was described from all coaches. Watson et al, 2011, supports the idea: giving athletes opportunity to choose their drills supports athletes' autonomy. Another principle that all coaches brought up when describing their philosophy was creating positive and playful atmosphere: it is an important principle for Estonian coaches that everybody participating in the practices would enjoy the practices and have fun. McCallister et al, 2000 also back this idea up saying that coaching philosophy of the youth coaches involves having fun.

Related to fun-element in sport practices is another central topic in coaching philosophies in supporting positive youth development – the approach towards the conflict "winning-fun-development". It seems that coaches who teach life skills tend to value having fun over winning. Also Camiré et al (2011) state that coaches who have clear philosophies about the positive youth development tend to focus more on the personal development rather than competitive success. Kirk (2005) offers strong evidence why focusing on winning should not be in the centre of sports in younger age, 5-12, whereas winning becomes more significant in the age of 13-14. Estonian coaches show interesting viewpoints on these challenges. Although no generalisations can be made because of the low number of the participants. Just one coach, Mark, who does not visibly teach life skills, focuses on winning referring to his own winning-focused character. Coach Luke does not see the competitions as part of his work due to the young age of the athletes. And coach Matt has a strong viewpoint about winning: it should not be overemphasised, for it may lead to dropouts. The latter is also supported by the studies of McCallister et al (2000) and of Fraser-Thomas et al (2008).

Finally, quite common principle underlying the coaching behaviour was appreciating athletes' opinion. Although it was hardly publicly expressed during the observations, then it seemed to be a strong philosophical basis for teaching life skills and supporting positive youth development.

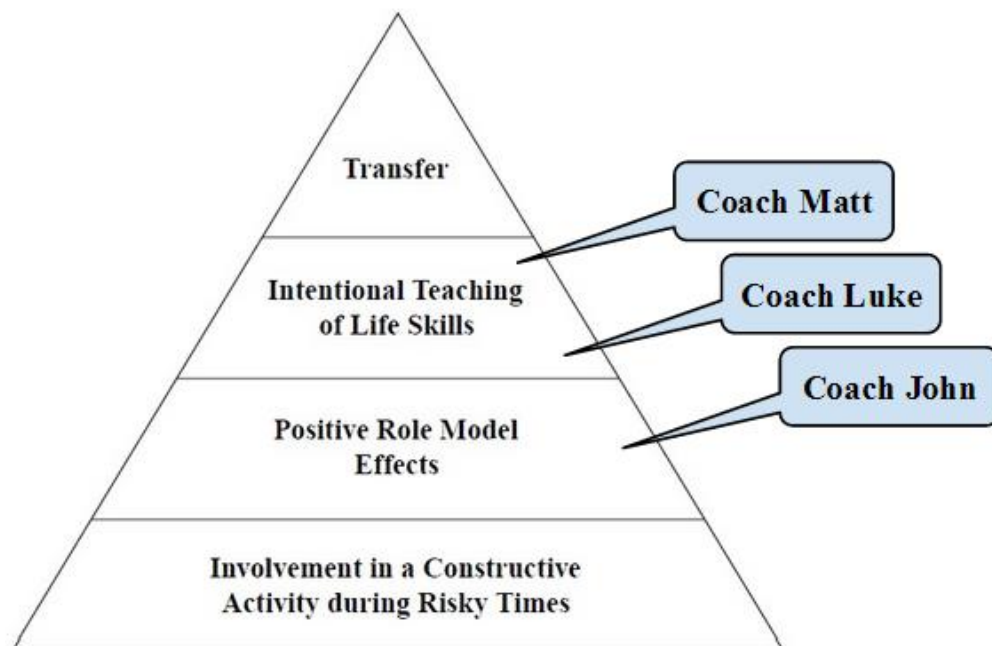
For the concluding comments regarding coaching philosophy, its importance and development should be tackled. What is an important notion from the present study is that although it was difficult to verbalise the philosophy, every coach had specific approaches towards coaching that could be defined as philosophies. That may be interpreted as the philosophy is one inevitable asset of a coach, even if being unaware of it. Collins et al, 2009 stated that special support is needed particularly for young coaches to help to develop their coaching philosophies. That refers to the effective coach education and is supported by Fraser-Thomas et al, 2008 who stress the importance of the philosophies of the sport programmes. Coach Matt described in detail how his philosophy has changed over the time, from being a yelling coach becoming into more talkative and revealing coach. That is consistent with Lockwood and Perlman (2008) who stated that many young coaches tend to be authoritarian.

#### 5.4 Intentionality in teaching life skills

Intentionality in teaching life skills seems to be one intriguing question under the discussion in the literature. Already in 1997, Danish et al support strongly the idea of intentional teaching stating that life skills should be learned the same way as sports skills – via demonstration, modelling and practice. Holt et al (2008) stress the potential of modelling where they seem to convince that coach does not teach, but shows the expected behaviour.

Gould & Carson (2008) seem to offer a compromising scheme in their review study indicating four different levels of life skills development, where intentionality is just one level. Just by participating in sports one can be away from the criminal activities or destructive environment. The second level is the effect of the positive role model and that is strongly related to the coach's role. Coach can be a strong role model for the youth even if he or she is not even mentioning any life skills during the sports activities.

Hereby it is appropriate to refer to the study by McCallister et al (2000) who state that social learning cannot be taught by talking or role modelling. Looking at the findings of the present research it finds some confirmative evidence. Coach John states clearly that his role as a coach is to serve as a role model for the youth. He says that as youngsters nowadays do not really see their fathers or they may see their coaches more often than, it puts a concrete role for the coaches. The next level is the intentional teaching of life skills, so that coach is aware that he is teaching life skills. Support can be given from the stories of coaches Matt and Luke: both of them know which life skills they are teaching and can bring concrete examples from their practices. The fourth level of the life skills development is the transferring of the life skills where the focus is on specifically on shifting the use of skills to other contexts. In Figure 12, the model of Gould & Carson, 2008 has been brought added with the coaches from the present study.



**Figure 12. Three coaches of the present study added to the table by Gould & Carson, 2008**

### 5.5 Strengths and limitations of the study

The present master thesis shows numerous strengths, supported by the recent literature. The choice of the topic and the nature of the questions can be considered as strengths.



Jones, Dunn, Holt, Sullivan & Bloom (2011) state that future research should explore the contribution of the coaching styles to the development of young people. Another strength can be considered the methodology, the case study approach. Gould et al, 2006 give a hint, “Case studies of how coaches teach life skills may be particularly useful to conduct as little is known about the process of doing so.” (p. 36).

The choice of the participants enabled comparison to some extent that also raises the quality of the study. The characteristics of the participants were quite similar: they were all active youth coaches from team sports, coming from the similar background (Estonia).

Keeping in mind the limitations, the way of collecting data may be concerning. Due to scheduling conflicts it was not possible to study some of the coaches with such an extent as the others. Also some time restrictions appeared during the interviews that might have caused some tension in the conversation. Self-report measures were used as the mapping tool for the use of the coaching strategies while teaching life skills. Although it is a common way to study teaching life skills and the data source was triangulated by practice observations and interviews, some social desirability and biased approach should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

#### 5.6 Implications of the study

Several implications for different target groups can be concluded from the present study: youth coaches and coach educators. Youth coaches could keep five aspects in mind that help teaching life skills and support positive youth development. They should aspire to be more expressive and talkative coaches, using more thorough explanation of the drills or sharing her/his own ideas and personal opinions. Opening up can create good ground for close relationships with athletes. Another aspect to share about is the psychological side of the sport – talking openly about the team spirit, supporting learning from each other and encouraging athletes to show their opinion can create supportive developmental environment for sports.

One obvious argument for not teaching life skills intentionally is time restriction – there is just not time enough for talking about the goal-setting and teaching time management etc. As it was shown in the present study, teaching life skills are incorporated into the daily rhythm of the practices. Coaches who teach life skills use the drinking breaks in more meaningful way having brief, but sharp comments, hence showing that teaching life skills seems to be a process that is more effective in quality rather than in quantity. Youth coaches should invest time to get to know their athletes, they can create their own way how to communicate with them, either during the training camps or in the beginning of the season or in the dressing-room when the practice ends. Already intention to get to know the athletes seems to have a good effect. Finally, in addition to the work with the athletes, youth coaches could pay attention to their own learning. Significance should be put on the self-reflection of the coach, stating the main principles of his/her philosophy and ability to describe the coaching style and reasons behind that. Being aware of his/her own approach helps to build the knowledge of his/her own style in supporting positive youth development.

Coach educators – either lecturers or people responsible for the coach education system in general – may be able to take three main messages from the study. They should pay attention to the importance of the self-reflection of the coaches. Effort should be put on showing how the self-reflection is helpful and useful in the coach's everyday work. They should pay attention to teaching life skills and positive youth development in general to promote and stress the important role of the youth coaches in the society. Thirdly, they should value the role of the youth coaches not as the pre-phase into competitive sports, but as a separate role.

### 5.7 Teaching life skills and supporting positive youth development as a value to the society

For the final comments, it is important to bring out the coach's role in supporting positive youth development and contributing to the welfare of the society in that way. Several studies show the importance of the sports in developing youth into responsible members of the society rather than just competing in sports (Danish et al, 1997; Fraser-Thomas et al, 2008). Gould et al, 2012 argue the appropriateness of the sport context as

young people are very enthusiastic when participating in sports and where they can see outcomes of their own efforts.

From the present study coach John stated very clearly that he sees his role as a coach in much broader sense than just a coach, being a role model and having more meaningful conversations with athletes compared to their fathers, for example. Two coaches also drew the parallel of their sports and the life in general. Viewing the team sports as the model for the small society where several skills can be learned is also reflected in the review study of Gould and Carson, 2008, where the demands of the sport have been considered.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to explore the coaching strategies Estonian coaches use while teaching life skills. Four sub-topics were coaching strategies, coach education, the development of coaching philosophies and the intentionality of teaching life skills.

The present research offered exploratory ideas for ways to improve teaching life skills in sports. Study presented some good examples that show and foster teaching life skills. Hopefully coaches can get inspired from that and maybe some scepticism can be refuted.

In a nutshell, three core notions could be stressed. First, teaching life skills can be integral part of the whole coaching behaviour and may not be time-consuming or taking extra-efforts. Using natural breaks during the practice for ways to communicate with the athletes can pave the way for teaching life skills in the future. Secondly, coach education should gain more attention, especially ways of self-reflection that seem beneficial for the coaches.

And finally, the present study has given more insight to the importance of the coaching philosophies – the underlying principles that the coaching behaviour stems from. Whether a coach sees him/herself as a role model or more on the same level with the athletes, as far as s/he can describe the coaching approaches, more teaching life skills can be supported and developed.

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## Screening questionnaire about teaching life skills

I am a master degree student at Jyväskylä University studying coaching strategies that Estonian coaches use while teaching life skills.

What are life skills? They enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods. These are internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal-setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings (Gould & Carson, 2008).

All the information gained via this questionnaire will be kept confidential and all the responses will be generalised. Summary of the research will be shared if noted below. Also as the study consists of three parts, I would welcome you to participate in other stages. Therefore add your e-mail address below. Your e-mail will only be used for the purpose of completing the study. It takes around 10-15 minutes to fill in the following questionnaire. When replying to the questions, keep a specific athlete/team in mind. Be aware that there are no right or wrong answers, it is strongly suggested to reply by intuitive first choice that comes to mind.

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- Below you will find the statements you have to rate how frequent is the activity. Below the statements there are also some examples that could help to lead thinking about your work. When somebody would see my coaching style/approach, they would describe it as follows:

	How often?				
	1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Very often	0 Not sure/ not applicable
Giving clear instructions in practices <i>Instructions are not confusing athletes</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Supporting athletes' self-analysis <i>Encouraging to keep a journal</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Taking time to explain the transferability of life skills <i>Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Offering volunteering opportunities <i>Helping in tasks that are not directly related to attaining sports skills</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Encouraging peer evaluation and learning from others <i>Providing opportunities to give feedback to each other</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Planning tasks that support life skills development <i>Coming up with tasks that improve e.g communication skills</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Doing activities to get to know athletes	1	2	3	4	0

APPENDIX 1 – Screening questionnaire used for purposeful sampling

better <i>Planning discussions on specific themes and encouraging athletes to share</i>					
Providing opportunities to display life skills <i>Giving chances for cooperation, team-building</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Supporting academic development of the athletes <i>Stressing the importance of studying at school</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Promoting positive development <i>Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings</i>	1	2	3	4	0

**2. During my daily practices with athletes I deliberately/intentionally teach the following skills:**

	How often?				
	1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Very often	0 Not sure/ not applicable
Communication <i>How to express ideas, feelings, thoughts to someone else</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Teamwork <i>How to work in the team to achieve the common goal</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Coping with success <i>How to react when winning</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Goal setting <i>How to set appropriate goals for training sessions</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Self-understanding <i>How to analyse own behaviour</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Coping with failure <i>How to overcome the sadness of losing</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Self-discipline <i>How to correct own behaviour</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Leadership <i>How to lead group towards a common goal</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Self-control <i>How to control himself in stressful situations</i>	1	2	3	4	0
Time management <i>How to plan a schedule</i>	1	2	3	4	0

**3. Thinking of the skills brought above, do you make the connection to the settings outside of sports? Feel free to bring some examples. (open question)**

**4. Coach information**

4.1 Age (yrs)

4.2 Gender

4.3 Coaching experience altogether (yrs)

1-2 years; 3-5years; 6-10 years; over 10 years

4.5 Do you have other roles besides coaching (athletic director, teaching, PE, etc)

**5. Athlete/team information**

5.1 The sports

5.2 The age group of athlete(s)

5.3 Coaching experience with the athlete/team

1-2 years; 3-5years; 6-10 years; over 10 years

5.4 Town, where are you coaching

**6. Final confirmation**

6.1 I agree to participate in the next phase. Please write just your e-mail where you can be reached:

6.2 I am interested in the final research, when it is ready. Please write your e-mail (unless you already wrote that above).

**7.This was the last question. Thank you very much! If you have any other comments regarding teaching life skills, please share your thoughts below (free space for writing)**

**I. Safe Environment**

- A. Psychological and emotional safety are promoted.
- B. The physical environment is safe and healthy for youth.
- C. Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present.
- D. Rooms and furniture accommodate activities.
- E. Healthy food and drinks are provided.

**II. Supportive Environment**

- F. Staff provides a welcoming atmosphere.
- G. Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth.
- H. Activities support active engagement.
- I. Staff support youth to build new skills.
- J. Staff support youth with encouragement.
- K. Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict. (OR manage feelings and resolve conflict)

**III. Interaction**

- L. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.
- M. Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups.
- N. Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors.
- O. Youth have opportunities for adult-youth partnership.

### **Outline of the Interview**

Interview guide was based on the research made by Gould et al, 2007. And some structure has been used derived from the model of review study by Gould and Carson, 2008.

Interview is carried out after the trainings being observed. So the interview starts with the notions from the training and then builds into more general topics, such as coaching philosophy etc. Probably the interview will be completed in three sub-parts. And also asking about the notions during the observations.

Also the answers from the screening questionnaire will be delivered to have some comments on that and use it as a starter for the interview. Asking examples and explanations is a constant interviewing strategy.

#### **Beginning of the interview:**

- Introduction of the main topics that the interview will be focused on
- Was today's practice somehow unusual?

#### **Coaching Strategies**

- How would you describe your style of coaching?
- What type of climate or environment do you create for your players? (psychological, emotional, social)
- How do you typically react to misbehavior, bad calls, close games, win/loss?
- What strategies do you use to develop these life skills or attributes?

#### **Coach education**

- What is your educational background?
- What are your experiences about your coach education that influenced your way of teaching life skills and supporting positive youth development?
- Who has influenced you in being the coach you are? Have you had role models?
- Do you have other roles in the school besides coaching? (athletic director, teaching, PE, etc) How does your other role influence you?
- How often do you do self-reflection?

**Coaching Philosophy**

- How would you describe your philosophy of coaching high school sports? Do you have principles that you do not give up in practice settings, no matter what?
- Has your philosophy changed over time?
- How would you describe your philosophy relative to the emphasis you place on winning, fun, and development objectives?
- Do you find conflicts between winning, fun, and development? How are the conflicts between winning, fun and development objectives resolved?

**Final comments**

- Profile from the screening questionnaire, asking examples
- Information from the observations – anything that caught attention during the practice
- Do you have anything else to add related to teaching life skills?

**References**

Gould, D., & Carson, S. (2008). Life skills development through sport: current status and future directions. *International Review Of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 1(1), 58-78.

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## Case Study - Coach A

**Background information:** 28, male      **Experience as a coach:** 6-10 years      **Geographical area:** Tartu  
**Sport:** basketball      **Athletes:** boys, 14-16 years, has coached them for 3-5 years      **Other roles:** physical education teacher

**Data collected:**

- Screening questionnaire filled on October 10, 2013
- Practice 1 observed (1,5h) and interview 1 (30min) – January 8, 2014
- Practice 2 observed (1,5h) and interview 2 (12min) – January 15, 2014

**Convergent data about strategies teaching life skills**

Below are the statements from the screening questionnaire that are supported by the data from either observations or the interview. Also the relevance/importance and intentionality of the strategy is rated (to my mind)

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
<b>Strategies teaching life skills</b>		
Very often supports academic development of the athletes (Stressing the importance of studying at school)		<p>When the guys were younger, we asked them to bring the information about the grades in the end of the semester. We have had a case when the guy was not taken to the competition because he had a weak situation at school. Though he managed to fix the situation during couple of days he was still not taken to the competition because it would have supported his similar behaviour in the future.</p> <p>Sometimes I have delivered short sessions on goal-setting and then it is not even on sports-related goals, but school-related</p>



APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
Often supports athletes’ self-analysis (Encouraging to keep a journal)		When the game is over, I always want that the guys themselves do the talking. We always sit together in a circle and then I ask them how the game went and why it went this way and that way; that they would talk themselves; sometimes some guys come themselves to ask me what should they do to change this or that ...
Often plans tasks that support life skills development (Coming up with tasks that improve communication skills)	Asking “Why is this important?” seems to be common way of teaching	
Sometimes offers volunteering opportunities (Helping in tasks that are not directly related to attaining sports skills)	Setting up the baskets to the correct height in the beginning of the practice is a regular activity. Coach starts a training pointing out that just some guys do that and other 10 guys are just sitting. “Last time it appeared that one guy even cannot use a cordless drill. Is it normal that he can make 20 points on the court, but cannot use the drill?”	
Sometimes encourages peer evaluation and learning from others (Providing opportunities to give feedback to each other)	<p>“I liked the pair of (names two athletes). Why? Because he tells how the other is doing. You are close to him, you can see better, you can tell in what your friend can improve”</p> <p>(another drill in groups of three) “You cannot see yourself so well what are you doing, but you can see others in your group and tell them”</p> <p>(also in the practice 2)</p>	

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
	“You should bounce the ball 4-5 times. It is difficult to count it yourself, but you can count your friend’s”	
Does activities to get to know athletes better (Planning discussions on specific themes and encouraging athletes to share)		Refers to the training camps – that these are the places where teaching life skills is much more common.
<b>Life skills taught</b>		
Very often teaches communication (How to express ideas, feelings, thoughts to someone else)	“I want that everybody counts aloud, that everybody talks to each other”  “I wanna see you talking to each other”	
Very often teaches goal-setting (How to set appropriate goals for training sessions)		We have good facilities here. Sometimes I have delivered short sessions on goal-setting and then it is not even on sports-related goals, but school-related
Very often teaches self-understanding (How to analyse one’s behaviour)	“You cannot be so comfortable that you just play in your comfort zone”  (also repeats in the training 2) “I want that the comfort zone would be your greatest enemy”	
Often teaches teamwork (how to work in the team to achieve the common goal)	“Look with whom you are in the group. You should be able to watch your two friends. You cannot raise the speed so high that others cannot follow. Take the tempo that is respective to your abilities”	
Often teaches coping with success (How to react when winning)		Especially when they were younger, it was very thoroughly explained how to think in case of the losing and in case of winning Have to explain that this is part of the basketball

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
Often teaches coping with failure (How to overcome the sadness of losing)		Especially when they were younger, it was very thoroughly explained how to think in case of the losing and in case of winning  Have to explain that this is part of the basketball
Often teaches self-discipline (how to correct one’s behaviour)		Shares an example of a guy with attention deficit disorder
	Calls all the guys friends/buddies. “Wait when your buddy gets the ball, then ...”	Comments on that in the interview: “You have to call them somehow .... I believe it creates a better team atmosphere”

**From the screening questionnaire that did not reflect during the practice or the interview**

Maybe I should not use the following in the findings, but just as the mean to screen the coaches who use life skills.

Statement from the questionnaire	My comments or smth smth?
Very often takes time to explain the transferability of life skills (Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce)	
Often gives clear instructions in practices (Instructions are not confusing athletes)	
Promotes positive development (Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings)	
Often provides opportunities to display life skills (Giving chances for cooperation, team-building)	
Often teaches self-control (how to react in stressful situations)	
Sometimes teaches leadership (how to take responsibility)	
Often teaches time management (how to plan a schedule)	

**From the observations – strategies that did support positive youth development but were not in the questionnaire**

This shows that coach is teaching life skills unintentionally, doesn't it?

<b>Comment from the observation protocol</b>	<b>Strategy for teaching life skills / positive youth development (my comments/hypotheses) STR</b>
"You are responsible for your own behaviour. You make a mistake, you will get punished for that"	Teaching self-analysis?
Common strategy to give praise for asking questions "Good question, (name of the athlete)"	Supporting initiative and active engagement (see, you have literature supporting that!)
"Good, (name of the athlete), that you helped"	Giving positive feedback to helping?
"There should be moments in practice when there is a good feeling. Give a high five to your friend. Then it will be better in the game as well."	Creating the sense of belonging
(A guy thought that I was a scout in the practice 😊) Athlete: "Then I have to push myself". Coach: "So now you think you have to push yourself??? You have to push yourself always!"	Fostering discipline and hard-working atmosphere (see McCallister, et al 2000 and it also comes up from the interviews with other coaches)
"That shows me that you are not fully in the training"	Fostering hard-working atmosphere (see above)
"(Name of the athlete) sent me a text today that he has a fever 37,5 and won't come. And that's right. Better take some time off rather than let the fever get even higher and suffer more"	Stressing the importance of healthy lifestyle (also coming up from the interview with coach C)
(after the drinking break) "What did you do, (name of the athlete)? Talk out loud, then the others will get to know as well. You drank from the other's bottle. Right now there are so many viruses going around ..."	Stressing the importance of healthy lifestyle

**From the interview:**

- **The coaching style** – mainly I want to tell them that they would learn, start thinking why they do something; that their work is for themselves; not that I do only then when my coach is there; and I have stressed that a lot during the practices;
- **Atmosphere at practices** – I try to create as positive atmosphere as possible; sometimes of course I am strict with some guys as well, in order to get to know how they stay under pressure; but sometimes you need to create relaxed atmosphere; during the

games you see some boys are so tense that they cannot think of anything, so you make a joke just to bring them out their cramp ... yeah I want to create generally positive, hard-working and this kind where you can have fun as well ...

- **Balance between winning, fun and development** – I sometimes analyse myself and think that there is too little fun. But I am not stick to winning, it brings some negative effects, when there is just winning all the time, some guys have dropped out already at the age of 14-15, because they win all the time and then what ... it is an external motivation, you cannot fill it endlessly.
- **Educational background** – I am a very young coach; got interest in high school when it was allowed to go along with younger players and I was a bit more active than others and got extra tasks; I have learned a lot from different coaches; has an education as a PE-teacher; here it is the most important thing that I am not a coach, but a teacher; sport psychology lectures at the university helped a lot to reflect and create your own attitude, when I thought for a long time that when the youth don't understand then you have to shout and swear at them, then in those courses we discussed about this and it helped me a lot becoming a coach that I am now.

The role of being PE-teacher impacts.

Self-reflection, after the practices, but especially after the competitions. Level of the difficulty at exercises.

- **The coaching philosophy, your principles that you don't give up** – that guys should behave (not being rude), both during the practice, games and out of competitions as well. Also discipline is very important at practices. When the coach talks, then others listen. If they don't understand, I have kicked them out of the training as well. My philosophy has changed a lot, for sure. When I used to think at high school that you have to shout at them, then slowly I have changed that and I try to explain more and talk and teach.

Also I was more directive in the beginning – like other coaches, who tell very concretely to the kids; I was the one myself in the beginning, but now I hope they have to understand themselves. Now I am more silent and try to make them think more. On some cases some guys have come themselves and asked about the defence etc. and it is a good thing that they've started to analyse themselves.

I have explained the rules here, how we behave, like human approach, and it has to be clear.

- **Your own self-reflection as a coach**
- **Other relevant:**
  - At training camps you can get to know them better, also you can see their eating behaviours; and there are much more opportunities to teach them
  - Also at practices I stress the importance of hats and scarfs and when somebody is ill, then it is good to bring this as an example
  - Creating positive atmosphere by calling the athletes friends
  - Life skill teaching examples from other coaches – cultural programme besides the competition;
  - Teaching politeness – in camps you take the hat off and say hello to the chefs etc (refers to older coaches)
  - Teaching communication – I have forbidden phones during the camp
  - Case of ATT – teaching self-discipline and self-control; sports has a positive impact on him

**Researcher’s reflection**

- Very amazed by the practice. Just 1,5 hours, but can really integrate lots of life skills/positive youth development teaching in the practice.
- I had a good contact with the coach, we were laughing and sharing things quiet freely.
- Might be some “cultural differences” as I don’t know the context so well.
- Coaching philosophy as a term was not clear.
- Compared to the other coaches, his interview was the most detailed and I was also pushing very hard to get the examples. But very often he brought the examples of practice techniques rather than teaching life skills or supporting positive youth development.

## Case Study – Coach K

**Background information:** 37, male

**Experience as a coach:** 3-5 years

**Geographical area:** Tartu

**Sport:** volleyball

**Athletes:** girls, 14-16 years, has coached them for 4 years

**Other roles:** lecturer of sport sciences

**Data collected:**

- Screening questionnaire filled on October 11, 2013
- Practice observed (2h) – February 4, 2014
- Interview (30min) – February 5, 2014

**Consistent data about strategies teaching life skills**

Below are the statements from the screening questionnaire that are supported by the data from either observations or the interview. Also the relevance/importance and intentionality of the strategy is rated (to my mind).

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview		
<b>Strategies teaching life skills</b>				
Very often encourages peer evaluation and learning from others (Providing opportunities to give feedback to each other)				

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

Often gives clear instructions in practices (Instructions are not confusing athletes)				
Often takes time to explain the transferability of life skills (Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce)				
Often plans tasks that support life skills development (Coming up with tasks that improve communication skills)				
Often provides opportunities to display life skills (Giving chances for cooperation, team-building)				
Sometimes supports athletes’ self-analysis (Encouraging to keep a journal)				
Sometimes promotes positive development (Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings)				
Sometimes offers volunteering opportunities (Helping in tasks that are not directly related to attaining sports skills)				
<b>Life skills taught</b>				
Sometimes teaches communication (How to express ideas, feelings, thoughts to someone else)	“You need to talk to each other”  “Make some noise/voice”			
Very often teaches leadership (how to take responsibility)				
Often teaches goal-setting (How to set appropriate goals for training sessions)				
Sometimes teaches self-understanding				

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

(How to analyse one’s behaviour)				
Often teaches teamwork (how to work in the team to achieve the common goal)				
Sometimes teaches coping with success (How to react when winning)				
Often teaches self-discipline (how to correct one’s behaviour)		<p>We start the practice, we gather together ... see who has had unexcused missed practices, maybe talk to those who has missed, yesterday we had such case with a girl</p> <p>(talking about coaching philosophy) Discipline is very important to me, to my mind practice has to start at the correct time, usually our kids rarely come later both to practices and games</p> <p>When somebody comes late to the practice you have to address that/ make an issue out of it, so that kid does not want to do that again and that she would get that it is important</p> <p>Also I think that when there is a male coach for girls, that is already disciplining.</p>		



**From the screening questionnaire that did not reflect during the practice or the interview**

Maybe I should not use the following in the findings, but just as the mean to screen the coaches who use life skills.

Statement from the questionnaire	My comments
Often teaches self-control (how to react in stressful situations)	
Often teaches coping with failure (How to overcome the sadness of losing)	
Sometimes teaches time management (how to plan a schedule)	
Never does activities to get to know athletes better (Planning discussions on specific themes and encouraging athletes to share)	
Never supports academic development of the athletes (Stressing the importance of studying at school)	

**From the observations – strategies that did support positive youth development but were not in the questionnaire**

This shows that coach is teaching life skills unintentionally, doesn't it?

Comment from the observation protocol	Strategy for teaching life skills / positive youth development (my comments/hypotheses)
"If you want, have a water break" (everybody starts moving) "It seems that everybody wants it"	Supporting autonomy
"Do you want to drink?"	Giving choices, options
"Take up your own tempo/speed"	
During the second half of the practice more individual instructional feedback is given	
"Let's have a shorter practice, but let's do it properly, until the very end let's push ourselves a little bit more"	
"When something like this happens during the game, on whom will you rely on?"	Is related to his philosophy to make the athletes think for themselves
"Try to make it interesting for you"	Is related to his philosophy to make the practice interesting for the athletes
"Don't give up in defence, don't become lazy!"	Supporting hard work ethic

**From the interview**

- **The coaching style** – The most important is that the practice should be exciting/interesting to kids. The practice has to matter for the kids, then they want to come back. When I see during the practice that some drills do not work, I change that; when it is efficient, we do it for longer time; through this excitement you can teach them as much as possible  
I can see it is exciting for kids, when time runs fast, when the kids are participating properly, when they ask leading questions, why are we doing this or how do you know ...  
Also, what I like, is to make them think ... that I explain them the drill and then they need to think a little bit to see, where they need to move ... the level of difficulty needs to be appropriate  
Also, more you will push them, better training will be. Sometimes you are not able to, but try on most cases. When I'm on them, also on the court, they do better unfortunately; then it is different for kids.
- **Atmosphere at practices** – I prefer to have emotional atmosphere where everybody find the practices interesting, drills are playful and there is action all the time, not that ... there is someone lecturing or somebody is put under the pressure, at least in their age, 15-16 girls; they need that there is some excitement, they practice things through that, it is up to the coach to “hide” all the learning moments in there
- **Balance between winning, fun and development** – I am very ambitious myself, I want to win in any case, no matter what age; I do not believe in living for the future, it is not possible in sports, on certain level; in case somebody talks that, I do not believe he actually thinks that or he may stay at his hobby level ... we play for higher positions and I want them (the girls) to try as hard as it is possible for them ... of course it does not happen all the time, but at the competitions ... of course, as good as they can get, and if there is possible to win somebody through the tactics or with better skills, then it is important  
I think also that the kids participate in the practices better, when they get the feedback from the games; it is difficult to reason for them that yes, you are at the 28<sup>th</sup> place, but you are good and beautiful. I do not believe in that ...
- **Educational background** - I have been coach for about 4 years. Four years ago I quit professional sport myself ... when my wife got pregnant for the first time, I took the team over and now different stuff has come up, such as beach volleyball and this group from Lähthe (a geographical place in Estonia ☺) has been for a year and a half. It has slowly grown that in case something interesting comes up, I have wanted to try ... But I think that I am very young as a coach, therefore I have taken so much, boys, girls, beach, indoors ...  
But how I did become a coach ... I have played for the whole lifetime, then I studied physical education at the university and then taught at the university about 10 years. But I think that this high education does not give so much to being a coach, it is more my own sports experience that has influenced me more ... that contradicts to my work that I teach here, but I think that is the truth.
- **The coaching philosophy, your principles that you don't give up** – I am very strict with discipline. ... When somebody comes late to the practice you have to address that/ make an issue out of it, so that kid does not want to do that again and that she would get that it is important. Also I think that when there is a male coach for girls, that is already disciplining.

In case I don't like something, I tell them that quite frankly, maybe they criticize me in the locker room, but they will learn this way ... and I think that in this age they already understand that if they don't give their maximum, the result will be worse ... And we talk about that regularly, like once a week and more often at the autumn when the school starts and they are less concentrated You have to try hard, push yourself during the practices. If you don't work hard at the practices, how it should come at the competitions? And looking from the life side ... it would be nice if they could grow up to be healthy persons, not physically, but mentally healthy. I know that there is quite a lot of "mental terrorism" in Estonian youth sports. Kids quit sports because the coaches bully them. I have at least tried to ... We have discussed that a lot with my wife that we do not do this mistake that has been done to some.

So far the drop-out is pretty low, and kids want to come along to our practices from elsewhere, that is nice. I do not know if it is our favour or have we been lucky with the kids, but those things work for now.

- **Your own self-reflection as a coach** – (obviously smiling at the question) I don't know how it is in Finland, but here I have about seven jobs ... in case I'd start analysing myself .... I have a small kid, another one on the way ... it is not just possible .... You are so tired by the end of the day ...

What makes me think as a coach is when we lose the game. Then it takes some sleepless nights that ... how the other coach who has the same kids, same material, how he has achieved that ... but I consider that as a progressive force ... If I would be pleased when I lose, then there is no point either.

- And (researcher notices):

Discusses with his wife with whom they have been coaching together this team  
Trying out different areas, like boys, girls, beach, indoors

- **Other relevant aspects**

- I do not explain the goals of the practice or the flow; I think they are too young for that; I think they do not gain anything from that if they know ... the older the kids, more important it is to them
- Yesterday's practice was generally physically developing ... I came directly from Lähete (a geographical place in Estonia ☺) and there is not much time for preparation. The goal for yesterday's practice was that as I saw at the competition that their defence is a bit weak and I tried to help with that. Defensive practices need a lot of mental work, maybe the timing was not so good, on Tuesday evening at half past six ... but you have to do those practices at some point.
- (how do you grow them into mentally healthy persons?)
  - We don't humiliate them as people; I can give you examples from the other coaches who do that
  - Other example is that when the girls grow up, she is 20, we come across in the street, that she talks how is she, rather than tries to escape from the coach to the other side of the street, that is also a case here in Tartu.
  - You try to be human with everybody, try to talk calmly to everybody

- I think that the team sports are the most healthy form of sports, the small team is like a small life, you learn here to communicate, take others into account, you learn life skills through process ... that you cannot tell about individual sports, there they are just them and the world ...
- (have you discussed with athletes about your coaching style?) they don't really give feedback this way, maybe it will come later (in age) ... but now, when you ask in front of everybody, then you don't get any answer ... we have got shy comments that we are too pushing sometimes and then we have tried to pull ourselves back, but it is a matter of mutual trust. In case she will really start playing better, then ... but when she'll play as bad as before, then she is not right
- I think that every kid criticizes her coach, it is part of the practice process and it is part of the excitement as well ...
- The role of the lecturer at the university has not influenced my coaching ... the students come here (*the interview is at the university*) voluntarily to get the information, then at the volleyball practice the kids must be there and I need something from them. When somebody breaks the rules/discipline and I send her off the practice, then it is up to me to make her come back to the practice. The only way how the lecturing has influenced me as a coach is that I revise the materials and remind some things to myself.

#### Researcher's reflection

- I was almost disappointed that no life skills were visibly taught and practice was very instructional and directive with lots of technical information, feedback was given just in the second half of the training and it was all instructional. As this coach was not one of the 5 stand-out coaches profile, I realised that I need to work hard to get at least one of the 5 stand-out coaches to be the participant.
- During the interview some interesting things pointed out and I was not so disappointed any more 😊 self-reflection of the coach; that he values discipline and politeness
- Also a bit surprised how little he valued the athletes' self-awareness. That also showed in his practice that he did not give any options, did not support any autonomy ... and also during the interview he called them "kids" while I would approach them more as "youth".
- As it was just one time we met and coach had some distracting personal life events, it was obvious that the interview did not go so well and I would have had some detailed questions for the second time ...
- Also I felt some time pressure as he said he has just half an hour, so it subconsciously directed my questions and caused stress

## Coach Z, football

**23, male**

**Experience as a coach:** 2 years

**Geographical area:** Tallinn

**Athletes:** kids aged 4-5 years

**Other roles:** volunteer in the sports club (organising youth projects)

**Data collected:**

- Screening questionnaire filled on December 21, 2013
- Practice 1 observed (45min) and interview 1 (27min) – January 14, 2014
- Practice 2 observed (45min) followed by brief comments – January 16, 2014

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
<b>Strategies teaching life skills</b>		
Very often gives clear instructions in practices (Instructions are not confusing athletes)		
Very often supports athletes’ self-analysis (Encouraging to keep a journal)		<p>When somebody hurts/hit another, I first let them apologise. And then I send them off the court, so he thinks there in the corner and I go up to him and ask, why are you here, can you behave this way ... in most cases they remember and know why are they there (repeats 2x in the interview) ... verbalising is important</p> <p>And with this one guy who understands less, it was very difficult at first, but now when I send him out of the game, he really stays in the corner and he really</p>

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
		gets it .. and he is not so aggressive any more .. so it has really helped.
Very often offers volunteering opportunities (Helping in tasks that are not directly related to attaining sports skills)	Coach asks to pick up the equipment after the exercise	
Very often plans tasks that support life skills development (Coming up with tasks that improve communication skills)		
Very often does activities to get to know athletes better (Planning discussions on specific themes and encouraging athletes to share)		
Often provides opportunities to display life skills (Giving chances for cooperation, team-building)		
Sometimes takes time to explain the transferability of life skills (Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce)		
Sometimes encourages peer evaluation and learning from others (Providing opportunities to give feedback to each other)		
Sometimes promotes positive development (Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings)		
Never supports academic development of the athletes (Stressing the		

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
importance of studying at school) – <i>not applicable as the kids do not go to school</i>		
<b>Life skills taught</b>		
Very often teaches communication (How to express ideas, feelings, thoughts to someone else)	Makes athletes to apologise to each other by hugging	Has not paid conscious attention that they would communicate to each other.  “Also I ask them feedback, so that they are open to express themselves, not just being quiet.”
Very often teaches self-understanding (How to analyse one’s behaviour)		
Very often teaches self-discipline (how to correct one’s behaviour)	Corrects athletes’ behaviour	Sometimes I ask in the beginning of the practice what will happen if they do not listen to the coach; so that they’d know ...
Often teaches teamwork (how to work in the team to achieve the common goal)		
Often teaches self-control (how to react in stressful situations)	Corrects athlete’s behaviour	There is this one guy who does not really get it ... So I have been explaining him that if the ball is taken from you, you do not need to hit him ... so, that he needs to control himself.
Sometimes teaches coping with failure (How to overcome the sadness of losing)		
Sometimes teaches coping with success (How to react when winning)		
Sometimes teaches leadership (how to take responsibility)		

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview
Sometimes teaches goal-setting (How to set appropriate goals for training sessions)		
Never teaches time management (how to plan a schedule)		

**From the screening questionnaire that did not reflect during the practice or the interview**

Maybe I should not use the following in the findings, but just as the mean to screen the coaches who use life skills.

Statement from the questionnaire	My comments
Very often takes time to explain the transferability of life skills (Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce)	
Often gives clear instructions in practices (Instructions are not confusing athletes)	
Promotes positive development (Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings)	
Often provides opportunities to display life skills (Giving chances for cooperation, team-building)	
Often teaches self-control (how to react in stressful situations)	
Often teaches coping with failure (How to overcome the sadness of losing)	
Sometimes teaches leadership (how to take responsibility)	
Often teaches time management (how to plan a schedule)	

**From the observations – strategies that did support positive youth development but were not in the questionnaire**

This shows that coach is teaching life skills unintentionally, doesn't it?

Comment from the observation protocol	Strategy for teaching life skills / positive youth development (my comments/hypotheses)
Asking for feedback seems to be a constant strategy. After every exercise: "Let's gather together. How was the game?" Or questions like "Did you like the game?", "How did you succeed?"	Supporting athletes' autonomy, built rapport, foster communication skills (expressing ones opinion & emotions)



Every practice starts with routine where they revise the rules: “Let’s gather together. Are we going to listen to coach’s instructions? Can we hurt each other?”	Teaching responsibility & respect, fair play, dealing with authority
In the nest-game (they have to run from one nest to another) asks also from the athletes where do they want to go	Gives choices, self-reflection (where do I fit best?)
Are we going to make a water break or shall we play on?	
„Can you push your friend?“ – „I did not push him“ – „OK“	
Giving individual instructional feedback – “Try to pull the ball” ... “Good”	
Sitting in the corner as a way of punishment	

**From the interview**

- **The coaching style** – The practice has to be very inclusive, it is important that everybody would participate, I try to pay attention to everybody and have a positive attitude towards them. Also one of the goals is to have fun for everybody ... I try to create as positive and safe environment as possible. Everybody has to feel that they are involved and I try to prevent that they would hit each other. When somebody hurts/hits another, I pay immediate attention to it and let them apologise to each other.
- **Atmosphere at practices** – It is social, important for them to get along with each other, but I have consciously not paid attention to that ... Psychological atmosphere is also important ... I encourage them.
- **Balance between winning, fun and development** – we do not go to the competitions ... but my principle is here that the winning is not most important. I compile these games also in a way that ... you will shoot somebody out in the game, and somebody has to stand in the corner while others are playing ... winning is not important, but it is important that everybody can participate ... and I do not stress that winning is important, unlike some other youth coaches ... that is not good ... so fun is really important
- **Educational background** – First I wanted to become an elite football athlete myself, but I went to practice very late ... when I went to the training by age of 17, the quality was not so good ... and the coach smoked next to me and the overall picture did not seem good. So I thought that when I do not have possibilities then I want to become a coach myself and create these opportunities to others. So, when I participated in practices myself, I got how the coach ... and what is happening in football. And then I participated in the grassroots-level coach training organised by the National Football Association. I received the first-level licence for that. Then I saw an open call for coaches, so I was a volunteer in a club for two months and I got my main methodology from there. Maybe half a year later my present-day club looked for a coach and then how I started, first from kindergarten and then Sunday group and 5-years-old. Now I have been active for two years, I was in the army for a while, but this break was good, I felt I did not have so much experience and I did not get it so well ... so now I can manage better  
My teaching of life skills is influenced by this education from the Association, they made you ask those questions ... but mainly I got this approach from the club where I volunteered.

- **The coaching philosophy, your principles that you don't give up** – important to have a positive environment; when I went to practices myself, there was much of swearing and bad attitude ... it won't create a good environment, so I try myself now that there would be a positive environment and nobody would feel that ... that somebody is hurt or gets hit or something I also I ask athletes questions, I try to make them think, think along ... and also I ask them feedback, so that they are open to express themselves, not just being quiet.
- **Your own self-reflection as a coach** – I could do more self-reflection. But I do sometimes, once when I have solved some situation well, for example, when the guy did not participate and now he participates better, so I think what did I do last time that worked, which method did I use. And also with the drills I think that it should be appropriate level of difficulty. And how to change the games, so that it would not be the same all the time ... something like that
- **Additional notes of interest**
  - **Language** – It is a challenging situation as there are three working languages. It is difficult to make them apologise, one is Estonian, the other English, how would they get it .... In most cases they do. It is getting easier now, but now there will be also a Russian guy who was not present today. But it was difficult in the beginning. I know just some words in Russian, it was difficult at first in English as well.
  - **Education in working with children** – actually I have not received education in that, just those 2 months when I volunteered in this club. I worked together with another coach there, how to get a good contact. This was not trained at the Association's training and there is a difference if you coach 3-years or 13-years old guys.
  - **He has made his graduation paper in health promotion on education of football coaches** – I knew already then that I wanted to become a football coach, but I did not work in the field, so I made this paper ...
  - **Future perspective for football clubs** – I want to create such a football club where .... Now they organise just practices, but I want to combine it with youth work, so that football club can be as a youth organisation, organising different non-formal trainings on goal-setting or self-development or ...
  - **I have not drawn transferability of the life skills;** I teach them in the practice but do not explain how you can transfer (also comments that in the questionnaire)

#### Researcher's reflection

- I have never been to practice for 5-yrs and am astonished. And also astonished by the fact that coach really supported positive youth development.
- During the interview I accidently talked too much, also gave probably too many ideas and feedback.
- We had the same approach in youth work that connected. Contact was good, interviewee talked freely.
- Coaching style was a difficult term for him (coaching philosophy I explained already myself)
- I am happy that most of the interview can be used as an example or supportive information for observations and questionnaire – lots of convergent information!

## Case Study - Coach C

**Background information:** 51, male      **Experience as a coach:** over 11 years

**Geographical area:** Viimsi

**Sport:** handball    **Athletes:** boys, 9-10 years, has coached them for 3-5 years

**Other roles:** physical educator, sports club manager

**Data collected:**

- Screening questionnaire filled on October 11, 2013
- Practice observed (1h) – February 6, 2014
- Interview (20min) – February 6, 2014

**Consistent data about strategies teaching life skills**

Below are the statements from the screening questionnaire that are supported by the data from either observations or the interview. Also the relevance/importance and intentionality of the strategy is rated (to my mind).

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview		
<b>Strategies teaching life skills</b>				
Very often supports academic development of the athletes (Stressing the importance of studying at school)				
Very often gives clear instructions in practices (Instructions are not confusing athletes)				
Very often takes time to explain the transferability of life skills (Explaining how learning to work with teammates is important, because the skill is also valuable in the workforce)				
Very often plans tasks that support life skills development (Coming up with tasks that improve communication skills)				
Very often encourages peer evaluation and learning from others (Providing opportunities to give feedback to each other)				
Very often promotes positive development (Stressing the importance of various skills gained via sports that are useful in other settings)				
Very often provides opportunities to display life skills (Giving chances for cooperation, team-building)				

APPENDIX 4 – CASE STUDY DATABASE

From the screening questionnaire	Strategies noticed from the observations	Strategies mentioned during the interview		
Often supports athletes’ self-analysis (Encouraging to keep a journal)				
Often does activities to get to know athletes better (Planning				
Often offers volunteering opportunities (Helping in tasks that are not directly related to attaining sports skills)				
discussions on specific themes and encouraging athletes to share)				
<b>Life skills taught</b>				
Very often teaches communication (How to express ideas, feelings, thoughts to someone else)				
Very often teaches coping with failure (How to overcome the sadness of losing)				
Very often teaches self-discipline (how to correct one’s behaviour)				
Very often teaches leadership (how to take responsibility)				
Very often teaches time management (how to plan a schedule)				
Often teaches self-understanding (How to analyse one’s behaviour)				
Often teaches teamwork (how to work in the team to achieve the common goal)				
Often teaches coping with success (How to react when winning)				
Often teaches self-control (how to react in stressful situations)				
Often teaches goal-setting				

**From the observations – strategies that did support positive youth development but were not in the questionnaire**

This shows that coach is teaching life skills unintentionally, doesn’t it?

Comment from the observation protocol	Strategy for teaching life skills / positive youth development (my comments/hypotheses)
Before practice starts, coach is having a discussion with the guys, why they were thrown out of the class. (I was not invited!)	Using teachable moment!

Guys make their own suggestions what to do as drills, such as “let’s play football for the beginning”	
Pays immediate attention when somebody behaves undisciplined way	
Many playful moments, seems very spontaneous and creative coach	
Offers possibilities for individual practicing, there’s some instructing amongst the athletes themselves	
Athlete gives a positive feedback to the coach, „It is a good idea!“ :D	
In the end there is a short fitness training part where there is also possibility to talk to each other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coach reminds the forthcoming competition</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	It seems consistent amongst all coaches – they have created the space where they can talk to athletes (except coach K; others are using drinking breaks or beginnings or endings as the way to teach life skills and support positive youth development)

**From the interview**

- **The coaching style** – peaceful, not too aggressive;
- **Atmosphere at practices** - One goal of the practices is that the guys would be in a good mood and that they’d want to come again. It is important that they would consider that pleasant experience.
- **Balance between winning, fun and development** – for this age the winning is not so important as in adults’ team
- **Educational background** – I’ve had many coaches and there is to be learnt from each one of them; I have plenty of education in all the fields; many things you know already, but then it will be reminded to you during the education; and you have to educate yourself continuously; more you learn more you’ll get how stupid you are
- **The coaching philosophy, your principles that you don’t give up** – my principle is that everybody would understand what I want and would be educational  
 Individual mastery is the bases for everything, individual approach is important. And you do not want to kill anybody’s specific trait; the ones who have some specialty they’ll become big in the world
- **Your own self-reflection as a coach** – I think that every coach does self-reflection when they lose (laughing). When you win, then you do not reflect really ...
- **Additional notes relevant:**
  - Usually I am in the dressing-room with them; because just there they start bullying each other; I consider that as one of the roles of the coach to provide safety for everybody

- Team sports is a model for a life; you have to take others into account ... do not do things to the others that you do not want it to be done to you ... I cannot imagine somebody to mess around or do here whatever they feel like ... it is just as in life
- The role of the coach is a very powerful role. Many guys see me more than they see their own father, I am together with them for three days.
- It is nice when the guys will come with their own ideas, when they propose what they would like to do. It is the best when they can suggest things (drills) for me. But it should be also clear that I will make the final decision.
- More life skills can be taught at the training camps, there you can build one-to-one contact, can get to know them better, will see, what kind of person is he;
- (Teaching politeness). Also at the competitions we say when you enter the room, you take off your hat we eat properly with fork and knife and ...
- (Teaching healthy eating habits) also that we do not eat fries all the time .. of course sometimes it is ok, but not all the time, this healthy living-style and that the drink for the practice is water

#### **Researcher's reflection**

- His practice was very fun – he seemed like developing the practice together with the guys; but there was not clear life skills teaching but I'd rather say that there was focus on general positive youth development, but not on concrete life skills.
- Interview was too short and actually I could not get everything out of him. When I asked some specific questions, he always replied from the technical viewpoint. And I was surprised that his coaching style seemed so supportive, but he could not really verbalise life skills teaching ...
- I tried to meet with him for the second time, but probably I won't be successful in that...

## OUTLINING TABLE OF THE THEMES OF ALL CASES

		Coach				Total
		Matt	Mark	Luke	John	
Coaching strategies coaches use while teaching life skills	supporting academic development	x				1
	supporting athletes' self-analysis	x		x		2
	offers volunteering possibilities	x		x		2
	encourages peer evaluation and learning from others	x				1
	contributes to get to know athletes	x			x	2
	creates positive friendly atmosphere	x		x		2
	fostering social support	x		x		2
	Stressing the importance of healthy lifestyle	x				1
	fostering hard-work atmosphere	x	x			2
	using punishment as a way to correct behaviour	x		x		2
	using teachable moments	x			x	2
	has created space for discussions	x		x	x	3
	corrects immediately athletes' behaviour		x	x	x	3
	supports autonomy		x	x	x	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>		
Coach education and background	self-reflection, mostly after the competitions when they lose	x	x	x	x	4
	learned from different coaches	x			x	2
	effect of the university education	x				1
	qualification as PE-teacher	x	x		x	3
	reflecting, analysing with others	x	x			2
	influence of the other role	x	x			2
	his own experience as an athlete		x	x		2
	open to development possibilities as a coach		x		x	2
	being athlete has helped much more than university degree in being a coach		x			1
	bad experience as an athlete			x		1
	coach licence			x		1
	volunteer experience			x		1
appropriate education for teaching this ge group			x	x	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>		
Coaching philosophy and its development	making athletes think for themselves	x	x	x	x	4
	creating positive and playful atmosphere	x	x	x	x	4
	Belief that there should more focus on fun rather than winning	x		x	x	3
	defining his role as a coach	x			x	2
	change in philosophy	x				1
	values discipline	x	x			2
	athletes' opinion is appreciated	x		x	x	3
	Winning is more important than development		x			1
	Humanistic approach, respect towards athletes		x			1
	Practice has to be interesting, exciting for athletes		x			1
	Belief that you have to push athletes		x			1
	Supports positive youth development		x			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		

		Coach				Total
		Matt	Mark	Luke	John	
Life skills taught	Giving feedback	x		X		2
	Communication	x	x	x		3
	goal-setting	x				1
	hard work ethic	x				1
	polite behaviour	x			X	2
	Teamwork	x				1
	coping with success and failure	x				1
	self-discipline, self-control	x		x		2
	self-analysis	x				1
	healthy living-style	x				1
	healthy eating habits	x			X	2
	Discipline			x		1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	
Anything else related	level of difficulty of drills at practices	x	x	x		3
	future perspective for supporting positive youth development			x		1
	Athletes show their own initiative				X	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
Intentionality in teaching life skills	<i>using teachable moments</i>	x			X	2
	<i>using techniques to create positive atmosphere</i>	x				1
	seeing team sports as a model for life		x		X	2
	aware not transferring the life skills	x		x		2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	



## APPENDIX 6 – PARTICIPANT VERIFICATION FORM

The process of the verification was done via e-mail.

### AGREEMENT

I agree that this case study reflects the overall beliefs and perceptions and that I held at the time the study was conducted, from the questionnaire filled in on (date), interviews on (date) and observations of the practices on (date), even though my beliefs and perceptions may have changed since then. The presentation of findings in this case study is accurate.

### NÕUSOLEK

Kinnitan, et juhtumikirjeldus põhineb informatsioonil, mis saadi ... täidetud küsimustikust, ... tehtud intervjuust ja ... läbiviidud vaatlustest. Olen nõus, et juhtumikirjeldus kajastab minu veendumusi ja põhimõtteid sel ajahetkel, kui uurimus läbi viidi, isegi kui mu arvamus on tänaseks muutunud.

### DISAGREEMENT

I do not agree that this case study reflects the overall beliefs and perceptions that I held at the time the study was conducted, from the questionnaire filled in on (date), interviews on (date) and observations of the practices on (date). The presentation of findings in this case study is not accurate.

### MITTENÕUSTUMINE

Esitatud juhtumikirjeldus ei tugine informatsioonil, mis saadi ... täidetud küsimustikust, ... tehtud intervjuust ja ... läbiviidud vaatlusest. Minu arvates ei kajasta juhtumikirjeldus minu veendumusi ega põhimõtteid sel ajahetkel, kui uurimus läbi viidi.



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**Teen oma Jyväskylä ülikooli õpingute raames magistritööd, mille eesmärgiks on** uurida Eesti treenerite kasutatavaid strateegiaid eluoskuste õpetamisel. Teid on välja valitud varasemalt läbiviidud küsimustiku põhjal. Uurimustöö hõlmab vaatlust ja intervjuud.

**Vaatluse jooksul** jälgitakse läbiviidavaid treeninguid põhitähelepanuga treeneri käitumisel. Treeningute läbiviimisele ei anta hinnangut ega muus vormis tagasisidet. Soovitav on käituda treeningu jooksul nii loomulikult kui võimalik.

**Intervjuu** toimub pärast vaatlust ja kestab umbes 40 minutit. Vastake intervjuu küsimustele nii avatult kui võimalik, puudutades kõiki olulisi asjaolusid.

Kui tunnete mõne küsimuse puhul ebamugavust ja ei soovi sellele vastata, andke sellest teada ja liigume edasi järgmise küsimuse juurde.

Kogu uurimusest saadavat informatsiooni hoitakse konfidentsiaalsena, sellele ligipääs on vaid uuringu läbiviijal ja magistritöö juhendajal. Projekti lõppedes info arhiveeritakse ja kustutatakse 10 aasta möödudes.

**I am a master degree student at Jyväskylä University carrying out my master thesis that aims** to describe and acknowledge the coaching strategies Estonian coaches use in teaching life skills. You have been pre-selected based on your results from the screening questionnaire. Methodology of the master thesis consists of the observation and interview.

**During the observation** focus is on the behavior of the coach. Trainings are not evaluated or given any feedback. It is suggested to behave as naturally as possible.

**Observation is followed by the interview** that is designed to be about 40 minutes. Please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you feel you cannot answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, feel free to indicate this and we will move on to the next question.

**All the information will be kept confidential**, and the data will be stored in a secure office with restricted access. Only the researchers and faculty supervisor mentioned above will have access to this information. Upon completion of this project, all data will be filed and archived, and destroyed after ten years.

**Osaleja nõusolek:**

Olen teadlik, et mu osalemine vaatluses ja intervjuul on vabatahtlik. Võin uuringus osalemisest selgitust andmata igal ajal loobuda. Saan aru uuringu eesmärkidest.

Tean, et saadavat informatsiooni kasutatakse magistritöö koostamisel ja ka magistritöö seminaride ettekannetes. Mul on õigus esitada informatsiooni üle vaadata, kommenteerida ja ka kustutada. Kogutud informatsioon on konfidentsiaalne ja anonüümne austades minu identiteeti, kui ma ei ole allpool toonud välja vastupidist.

**Vaatlus ja intervjuu (*observation and interview*): 6. veebruar 2014**

**Olen nõus, et uuringu käigus saadud informatsiooni võib kasutada:**

- Valminud magistritöös
- Seminari ettekannetes

**Annan nõusoleku kasutada üht alljärgnevast:**

- Ainult mu eesime
- Mu täisime
- Ainult koodi "Treener K"

**Soovin saada koopiat:**

- Valminud magistritööst
- MP3-failist
- Ümberkirjutatud intervjuust

**Teised tingimused:**

- Audiofail hävitatakse
- Muud: \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Agreement:**

I am aware that my participation in this observation and interview is voluntary. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation. I understand the intent and purpose of this research.

I am aware the data will be used for a research paper and a class presentation. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the paper's submission and class presentation. The data gathered in this study are confidential and anonymous with respect to my personal identity unless I indicate otherwise.

I grant permission for the use of this information for a:

- paper
- class presentation

I grant permission to use one of the following:

- My first name only
- My full name
- Just a pseudonym "Coach Z"

I will be given a copy of the:

- paper
- MP3-file
- transcribed interview

Other requests:

- destruction of MP3-file,
- others: \_\_\_\_\_

Olen lugenud ülaltoodud vormi ja saanud aru, et võin uuringust igal ajal loobuda, annan nõusoleku osaleda uurimuses.

*I have read the above form, and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time, and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in the study.*

Koht ja kuupäev: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Uuringus osaleja allkiri  
*Participant's signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Uuringu läbiviija allkiri  
*Researcher's signature*