

Promising Coaching Practices of Expert Dairy, Horse and Livestock Career Development Event Coaches: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe promising practices of successful dairy, horse and livestock Career Development Event coaches in Indiana. Utilizing theoretical frameworks including symbolic interactionism, social cognitive theory and cognitive apprenticeship theory, researchers interviewed expert dairy, horse and livestock Career Development Event coaches. Twenty-six promising practices and eight central tendencies were identified. Central tendency categories included expectations, effective coach, experience, goals, knowing the youth, foundational knowledge, youth development and positive environment. The coaches interviewed shared a deep sense of passion and dedication toward youth development and coaching, as well as a desire to see new coaches gain resources and experience to be successful. This study suggests that utilization of identified promising practices may facilitate greater coaching success in terms of competition placement and overall youth development.

Introduction

Career Development Events (CDEs) are competitive educational experiences established to enhance present and future practical application of youths' knowledge and skills in specific career-related domains. Dairy, horse and livestock evaluation are three of 13 CDEs held in Indiana that help youth develop knowledge, skills and experiences in order to heighten their potential proficiency in future careers (Croom et al., 2005; Nash and Sant, 2005; Radhakrishna et al., 2006; Russell et al., 2009). In Indiana, these events are offered through

collaborative efforts of Indiana 4-H Youth Development and FFA (Smith and Kirkpatrick, 1990).

The objective of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs is to provide youth with practical experiences studying and evaluating animals while developing skills that prepare them for industry professions. These evaluation events provide youth with opportunities to develop skills in cooperative learning, observation, analysis, decision making and communication. Additionally, youth have the opportunity to learn and develop sportsmanship and competitiveness skills as well as realize the embodiment of team spirit (National FFA Organization, 2006).

Coaches take on the role of preparing youth for a specific CDE. This role consists of coaching individual youth as well as the team. The role of coaching individuals includes conveying information, motivating youth, praising youth, helping youth learn from errors and providing performance feedback (Becker and Wrisberg, 2008). In terms of coaching the team, the role of the coach includes structuring and organizing the team, identifying learning resources and utilizing individuals as resources for the benefit of the entire team (Hackman and Wageman, 2005).

A quantitative measure for coach's effectiveness in regard to CDE's is through youth and team performance scores. Research suggests an effective coach is one who has an adequate combination of coaching competence, content competence, time dedication, personal motivation and ability to motivate students (Abraham et al., 2006; Becker and Wrisberg, 2008). Coaching competency is defined by Stone and Bieber (1997) as being adequately skilled in the application of best coaching practices,

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where best coaching practices are standards of coaching efficacy that are tested and generally held to be true (Leseure et al., 2004). However, Leseure et al., (2004) explains that promising coaching practices must be identified before the acceptance of best coaching practices. Promising practices are standards supported by professionals and evidence such as observations, but have not been rigorously tested. Within the context of CDE dairy, horse, and livestock coaches, no promising practices have been established.

Indiana provides no formal coach or CDE training for agriculture teachers (Talbert, B.A., personal communication) or volunteers (Brady, C., personal communication) who coach students participating in CDEs. Coaches must rely on their own experiences and expertise. Previous research has found that less experienced agriculture teachers have a low competency level in regard to preparing youth for CDEs (Layfield and Dobbins, 2002). Based on this information the question arises; what are the promising practices successful CDE dairy, horse and livestock evaluation coaches employ?

Literature Review

While numerous studies have focused on participants in CDEs (Croom and Flowers, 2001; Mounce and Terry, 2001; Nash and Sant, 2005; Talbert and Balschweid, 2006); very few have looked at coaches for these events (Jones, 2011; Rayfield et al., 2009). Rayfield et al. (2009) conducted a study over a six-year time frame to identify and determine recruitment and training practices of a panel of 155 coaches with nationally placing teams in the FFA Livestock CDE. Using the Delphi technique, researchers identified 16 recruiting and selection factors as well as 15 training procedures used by successful coaches. Recruiting and selection factors that correlated highly with student scores were 1) competitiveness of team, 2) coachability of students and 3) consistency. Training practices that correlated highly with student scores were 1) workout with college teams, 2) attendance at livestock judging camps, and 3) participation in practice contests. Researchers recommended that future research be focused on the identification of techniques used by successful coaches.

Bowling (2010) conducted a study using coaching behaviors identified by Coach John Wooden's pyramid of success (Wooden and Carty, 2012), to determine relationships between coaching behaviors and student rank in a state floriculture CDE. The study found the top five behaviors coaches utilized were reflective of motivation and included friendship, confidence, enthusiasm, team spirit and cooperation. The bottom five behaviors utilized reflected abilities of youth and included skills, industriousness, condition, poise and

initiative. Bowling (2010) concluded that coaching behaviors have different levels of use and that coaches create a personalized system of coaching behaviors comprised of similar behaviors at different levels.

Many aspects of coaching have been examined in the context of youth sports. Studies include the role of the coach (Gilbert and Trudel, 2004); coaching philosophies and teaching strategies (Kenow and Williams, 1992); life skills development (Gould et al., 2006a, 2006b; Papacharisis et al., 2005; Petitpas et al., 2005); and positive youth development (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Gould et al. (2006b) identified specific coaching strategies intended to foster life skill development in athletes. Through interviews of 10 exceptional high school football coaches, researchers developed a working model for understanding life skills coaching. The model included four elements of consideration when teaching life skills: 1) philosophical foundations, 2) specific skill development strategies, 3) coach-player relationship and 4) environmental consideration and resource utilization. Researchers recommended that future studies be conducted on coaches in varying disciplines and environments. As previously mentioned, the intent of 4-H and FFA CDEs is to facilitate life skill development in youth offering an excellent opportunity for further research on this topic.

Although multiple studies have addressed a variety of aspects regarding youth sport coaches' life skill development and coaching philosophies, there has been limited research in the context of CDE coaches. Furthermore, there are no known studies exploring promising practices of CDE coaches. This study aims to focus on and address this gap in the literature by identifying promising practices of expert CDE dairy, horse and livestock coaches in Indiana.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is an applied version of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) where continuous interactions between an individual and multiple aspects of their environment take place affecting outcomes and altering behaviors. To apply this theory influencing factors of the student and coach must be considered. Influencing factors of the student include talent, motivation, cost considerations, self-efficacy and others. Influencing factors of the coach include coaching competence, content competence, coaching principles, motivation, cost considerations, self-efficacy, as well as others. This study is examining the role of the coach in the context of CDEs and youth participants. Specifically this study will focus on the influencing factor of coaching practices.

The theoretical mainframe for the purpose of this study consists of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Snow, 2001) as guidance for Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory and the Cognitive Apprenticeship Theory of Collins et al. (1987). Symbolic interactionism is based on four broad principles: 1) interactive determination, 2) symbolization, 3) emergence and 4) human agency (Snow, 2001). Interactive determination represents an understanding that analysis of objects is not only achieved through intrinsic qualities, but also through relationships and interactions. Symbolization as a principle represents embodiment of specific feelings and actions and is often embedded in cultural and organizational contexts, as well as systems of meaning. Emergence illuminates the continuous opportunity for change in feelings and actions as a result of transforming daily schedules, practices, or perspectives. The fourth principle, human agency, highlights understanding that humans are neither passive nor robotic responders of behavior, but consider structural and cultural constraints when responding to surroundings and conditions. Utilization of symbolic interactionism in the present study establishes the foundation for understanding coaches' philosophies and epistemology as they emerge into promising practices.

Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory focuses on learning within a social context assuming learning is influenced by continuous reciprocal interactions. Bandura establishes that learning can be achieved through live, verbal, and/or symbolic observations. To practice observational learning, the modeling process should be considerate of an individual's attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Moreover, Bandura explains that learning can be reinforced intrinsically through pride, satisfaction, or a sense of accomplishment, as well as externally through environmental rewards. Bandura's social cognitive theory provides framework for this study regarding learning through reciprocal influencing interactions between coaches, youth and the youths' resulting performance.

Also providing framework for this study is the cognitive apprenticeship theory by Collins et al. (1987). The cognitive apprenticeship theory extends beyond Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizing successful learning through modeling during novice-master interactions. This theory is based on a constructivist approach where the master of a specific skill teaches that skill to an apprentice or novice while utilizing instructional techniques prompting reflection and thought. Collins et al. (1987) explains that during transfer of a skill to an apprentice, a master often overlooks inherent processes involved in carrying out the skill successfully. Cognitive apprenticeship theory

attempts to avoid this oversight by bringing light to all processes involved, allowing the apprentice to intricately learn the skill through observation, enactment, and practice. This theory establishes support for utilization of promising coaching practices to successfully transmit complex skills from coach (master) to youth (novice).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify promising practices of expert Indiana dairy, horse and livestock evaluation CDE coaches and which practices they perceive to be most important.

Materials and Methods

This study was reviewed by Purdue University's Institutional Review Board and was determined exempt as it posed very minimal to no risk to the participants. All participants provided verbal informed consent prior to participation in the study. Pseudo names were used to protect the identity of participants. Data for this study was collected using a combination of interview methods explained below. Multiple interview methods were utilized to provide comprehensive collection of data and to ensure saturation and congruency of promising practices.

Participants in this study consisted of 13 expert coaches for dairy, horse and livestock evaluation CDEs in Indiana. Coaches were identified as experts based their teams performances in state level CDE's from 2005 to 2010. Coaches must have had at least two teams placing in the top three placements in these Indiana state CDEs (dairy, horse and livestock) to qualify for the population of expert coaches. Twenty-one coaches met the criteria to be considered an expert coach for this study. The six top ranking coaches in regard to frequency of top three team placements in Indiana state dairy, horse, or livestock CED's were selected for individual phone interviews. The remaining expert coaches in the population were selected to participate in the focus group portion of the study. These participants were contacted through email and those who did not respond to email received a follow-up phone call. Participants received a confirmation email and letter containing the date, time and location of their focus group.

Individual Phone Interviews

Of the six coaches that were contacted through email communications for participation in this study, five expert coaches chose to participate in the individual phone interviews and one did not respond. These coaches were given pseudo names and included one female and four males. Table 1 contains coach demographics:

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Table 1: Coach Demographics

Pseudo Name	Years Coaching	Species Areas Coached	FFA and/or 4-H Team(s)
Anderson	27	Dairy, Horse, and Livestock	FFA
Brown	18	Dairy	4-H
Clark	23	Dairy	FFA and 4-H
Davis	15	Livestock	FFA and 4-H
Evans	8	Livestock	FFA and 4-H

In regard to being identified as an expert, three coaches earned the “expert” label from performance of livestock evaluation teams and two coaches earned the “expert” label from performance of dairy evaluation teams. Individual phone interviews were conducted using combined methods; a standardized open-ended approach was used to provide structure and consistency between interviews while the general interview guide approach allowed for flexibility and probing during questioning (Patton, 2002). The research team developed eighteen questions from relevant coaching literature (Cassidy et al., 2004; Gould et al., 2006a; Martens, 2004; McCallister et al., 2000) taking into account previous experience, coaching philosophy, coaching objectives, coaching style and advice. Questions were asked by a single researcher in the same predetermined order for all individual phone interviews. This assisted in comparing responses and reducing interviewer bias. Data was collected with audio-recordings along with interviewer journaling during and reflectively after each interview.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held at the 2011 Indiana State Fair, one focus group consisted of three participants and the other consisted of four participants. One coach was unable to attend either focus group and was interviewed individually following the same format and guidelines set forth for the other two focus groups. There were a total of eight participants between the three focus group interview sessions. Focus groups were guided by established focus group protocol and facilitated by the lead researcher with the aid of the unfolding matrix (Padilla et al., 1996). The unfolding matrix is a method of collecting data in which summary statements and quotes are written in a specific table format allowing for data to be recorded in an organized manner. Use of this method allowed for a greater degree of efficiency, organization, and saturation. The content discussed during the focus group was determined by categories and subcategories that arose from analysis of previous individual expert coach phone interviews. Focus group data was collected with audio-recordings, through completion of the unfolding matrix and lead researcher journaling during and reflectively after each focus group.

Analysis of Data

Inductive and deductive analyses of data were determined to be appropriate techniques for this study. Individual phone interview data were inductively analyzed with the desire of discovering categories, themes and/or patterns that would aid in the development of promising practices (Patton, 2002). Following phone interview data analysis, focus group data were deductively analyzed according to categories, themes and/or patterns that emerged from the inductive analysis of individual phone interviews. The purpose of this deductive analysis was to strengthen the identification and definitions of emerging promising practices. The coding procedures established by Corbin and Strauss (1990) were used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

Based on data from individual phone interviews (N=6, n=5) and focus groups (N=16, n=8) eight central tendencies were identified. Central tendencies were developed based on examination of consistency and association between promising practices identified and discussed throughout individual phone interviews and focus group interviews. Furthermore, during selective coding, a core central tendency was identified.

The eight central tendencies are outlined below in order of importance to the coaches participating in this study. Discussion of relevance to research questions, supporting literature, as well as dairy, horse and livestock CDE coaches follows. The central tendencies are:

Central Tendency 1: Expectations. The coaches have found it beneficial for guiding their programs to explicitly set expectations of themselves and for the youth; moreover, they define their expectation for success and allow that definition to embody the reputation of their program.

Central Tendency 2: Effective Coach. The coaches are dedicated and passionate which stems from being part of the youths’ development. In return, coaches are driven and motivated to succeed.

Central Tendency 3: Experience. The coaches believe it imperative for success to have prior coaching or industry experience. Experience can also be gained through mentoring and advising relationships with other coaches and industry professionals.

Central Tendency 4: Goals. The coaches believe setting team and individual goals that align with their definition of success challenge youth to strive toward their potential, which in return motivates youth.

Central Tendency 5: Support. The coaches have found it beneficial to know the personality of each youth, as well as to have the support of parents and family.

Central Tendency 6: Foundational knowledge.

The coaches believe teaching youth foundational knowledge about the particular judging event is vital and can often be enhanced through the utilization of mentoring relationships within the team.

Central Tendency 7: Positive environment. The coaches believe development of youth should occur in an environment promoting positive reinforcement and adaptability.

Central Tendency 8: Youth development. The coaches believe that youth develop their personal and life skills through participation in these CDEs; moreover, this development may enhance their abilities to successfully compete as a member of the judging team.

Central Tendency 1: Expectations

Coaches in this study have found it beneficial in guiding their programs to explicitly set expectations for themselves as well as the youth; moreover, they define their expectation for success and allow that definition to embody the reputation of their program. Coach Clark explained a coach should be expected to have adequate judging knowledge and if they are lacking in that knowledge, they should be assertive enough to ask for help. Moreover, the focus group participants agreed coaches should hold high expectations of themselves; they do not have to know everything, but should be willing to seek desired knowledge. In addition to expectations of themselves, coaches agreed youth should have expectations of being timely and exhibiting appropriate behavior. Furthermore, the coaches explained how coaches and youth should have clear expectations of success for individuals and teams. Coach Davis used performance at contests as a gauge for success, while others identified youths' potential and incremental accomplishments as expectations for success. Collectively coaches agreed that fulfillment of all expectations; coach, youth and overall success, contribute to the reputation of a program. A reflection of this concept was demonstrated in the statement, "People want to be a part of something that's successful." The coaches found that following through with personally appropriate expectations is imperative if they expect youth to do the same, along with attaining shared expectations for competitive performance success.

The following promising practices were identified by the researcher as being related to expectations: 1) coaches having expectations, 2) having expectations of the youth, 3) having expectations of success and 4) having a reputable program. Coaches having expectations was identified by coaches as a most important promising practice, as it is a catalyst for three other promising practices identified. Literature reinforces the practice

of coaches having expectations through development and utilization of a personal coaching philosophy (Cassidy et al., 2004; Martens, 2004). Gilbert et al. (2001a) emphasized the importance of carrying out the practice of communicating clear expectations to youth. Additionally, literature supports the practice of setting measurable expectations of success as it increases youths' self-esteem, enjoyment and desire to participate in a positive manner (Scanlen et al., 1993).

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should establish high and clear expectations of themselves, such as attaining adequate knowledge and being assertive in the acquisition of that knowledge. Additionally, coaches should be clear and concise in setting and communicating expectations for youth to follow, such as being on time to practices, contests and other related events. Coaches should hold high expectations for youths' behavior regarding respectfulness and courteousness to fellow teammates, coaches and other teams. In addition to those expectations, coaches should set clear expectations of success and its determinants, such as performance at contest or practice, or incremental achievements. Ultimately, the reputation of a judging program will benefit from the prolonged attainment of these expectations.

Central Tendency 2: Effective Coach

Coaches in this study are dedicated and passionate in regards to being a part of youths' development. Due to personal involvement in youth development coaches are driven and motivated to succeed. Coach Clark described dedication as being willing to spend time coaching youth. Focus group participants considered practice preparations, seeking out advice and resources and being an example for youth to be aspects of dedication. In order to maintain dedication, coaches emphasized the necessity of having a passion and interest in coaching. Coach Anderson said, "Passion is the key. You just have to want it." Moreover, the focus group participants added that passion is sometimes derived from effort someone put into you as a youth. All coaches believe they receive bountiful benefits in terms of seeing youth develop into confident young adults as a result of their dedication and passion. Coach Anderson shared that one of the greatest benefits he receives is the enjoyment of reading 'thank you' notes from past and present students. Dedication, passion and benefits are distinctive characteristics that help maintain the motivation to coach. Coach Davis explains his motivation is "watching students succeed." Along the same lines, Coach Brown is motivated by "watching kids develop" and Coach Anderson is motivated by "making a difference" in youths' lives. The focus group participants concurred, finding motivation

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in seeing youth grow and mature, building confidence and self-esteem and receiving collegiate support from judging scholarships. These coaches have found dedication and passion to be of utmost importance to facilitate attainment of benefits from coaching as well as provide motivation for coaching.

The following promising practices related to being an effective coach were identified by the coaches: 1) dedication to coaching, 2) interest and passion for coaching and/or judging, 3) benefits in terms of student success and 4) maintaining motivation to coach. Three of these four practices (1, 2 and 4) were identified as most important promising practices by coaches as they are identified as a driving force for a coaches desire to be effective. In support of these practices, Barbour (2011) identified passion and student development as common motivational factors for coaches, as well as coaches' enjoyment from observing youth gain life skills. Additional support is provided by Vallee and Bloom (2005) who identified commitment to coaching to be a key attribute of a successful coach.

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should evaluate their dedication and interest for coaching a judging team. Coaches should be willing to put in enough time to ensure youth are provided a quality experience. Additionally, coaches should identify what benefits they receive as a coach and determine if those benefits, coupled with their dedication and interest for coaching, are strong enough motivation for them to continue coaching.

Central Tendency 3: Experience

The coaches believe that for a coach to be successful, it is imperative to have prior coaching or industry experience. Experience can be gained through mentoring and advising relationships with other coaches and industry professionals. Coach Evans identified industry experience such as judging, breeding, or working with a specific species as being an attribute of a successful coach. Moreover, Coach Davis added that experiences from participating on a youth or collegiate team are useful, as well as observations of those coaches. If a coach lacks experiences, Coach Davis advised seeking out a mentor from industry or a fellow coach with more experience. Coach Evans explained that mentoring relationships allow for discussion regarding challenges and struggles coaches faces. Some challenges identified by coaches include conducting practices for all learners, accommodating busy lives and coaching large numbers of youth. Coach Clark wished young and new struggling coaches would seek mentoring relationships so they can gain the skills needed to assist their youth in becoming more competitive. The coaches from this study have

found industry and coaching experience to be vital for success and advised coaches who lack in experience to actively seek out a mentoring relationship in an effort to address challenges they may face.

The following promising practices for experience were identified by the coaches: 1) prior experience judging, coaching and/or in industry, 2) establishing mentoring relationships with other coaches or industry professionals and 3) addressing coaching challenges through mentoring relationships. Coaches identified seeking mentoring relationships with other coaches or industry professionals and addressing coaching challenges through these relationships as most important promising practices. These two promising practices address frustrations and struggles of new and young coaches, as well as concerns of more experienced coaches. McCallister et al. (2000) likewise found the need for coaches to have prior experience related to coaching and the content taught. Literature supports the practice of seeking out and utilizing mentoring relationships as they benefit both the mentored and mentor (Bloom et al., 1998; Cassidy et al., 2004; Cosgrove, 1986; Merriam, 1983).

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should have prior experience within the species industry for which they coach. Also, it is beneficial for them to have prior judging experience. If a coach lacks experience in either of these areas, he/she should actively seek a mentor to help facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and experience lacking. This mentor should be an industry professional or an experienced coach based on the needs of the coach and the availability of a mentor. A mentor can assist the coach in managing challenges he/she may face such as, accommodating various learning types, busy life styles, large youth involvement numbers and other frustrations regarding contests, practices and coaching.

Central Tendency 4: Goals

The coaches believe setting team and individual goals that align with their definition of success assist in challenging and motivating youth to strive toward their potential. One of the goals Coach Clark has every year is to have fun. Likewise, Coach Anderson believes judging should be fun, but also sets the goal of having a chance to win. The focus group participants elaborated regarding goals, explaining they serve the purpose of evaluating the team's present skills and where they ultimately want to be. Moreover, the coaches said goals should be specific, written down, committed to and evaluated. Coach Brown explained setting goals helps challenge youth as they strive for perfection. Additionally, Coach Davis found goals are motivating factors for youth because as

they achieve their goals, they gain new experiences and opportunities such as visiting new places and earning collegiate scholarships. Furthermore, Coach Brown found skill development and goal attainment contributed to youth motivation. These coaches have found setting goals to be a strategic tool for challenging and motivating youth.

The following goal related promising practices were identified by the coaches: 1) setting goals, 2) motivating youth and 3) challenging youth. Setting goals and motivating youth were identified by coaches as most important promising practices, as these promising practices help assess youths' current skill level and indicate where youth would like to be. Additionally, youth are motivated through attainment of their goals. Supporting these practices, Burton (2001) identified the practice of setting short term and long term goals as a strategy to motivate and challenge youth to do their best.

Recommendations for coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should work with youth to evaluate current skill levels and knowledge, as well as identify what youth would like to achieve over a period of time. These goals should be specific, recorded, and evaluated. Coaches can use goals as a tool to challenge youth to strive for perfection in goal attainment. Moreover, coaches can use opportunities and experiences youth have as a result of striving for their goals as a motivating factor. These motivating factors can include visiting new places, receiving scholarships, and becoming more advanced in specific skills. However, coaches may need to help youth recognize these opportunities and experiences to increase their motivational effects.

Central Tendency 5: Support

The coaches have found it beneficial to know the personality of each youth, as well as to have the support of parents and family. Coach Evans stressed the notion that it is important to know youth on an individual level, because "no two kids learn the same and no two kids are encouraged the same." Moreover, Coach Brown continually emphasized how knowing the youth on his teams allowed him to meet individuals at his/her current skill level and build from there. Additionally, Coach Clark found value in getting to know not only youth, but also their parents. He found getting to know parents as a strategy that strengthened support for the youth. Coach Evans agreed that family support is important as parents are able to encourage youth to fulfill their expectations and strive for success. The focus group participants also found parent and family support important, especially for such things as encouraging youth and supporting the team through fundraising and volunteering. Furthermore, focus group participants gave examples relating judging

events to sports events to help parents and family of youth understand the value and importance of participation. Coaches have found getting to know youth on an individual level as well as having the support of parents and family to be important factors in encouraging youth and their development.

The coaches identified the following "support" promising practices: 1) knowing youth and 2) support from parents and family. Moreover, support from parents and family was identified by coaches as a most important promising practice as it provides additional encouragement to youth from outside the judging team. In addition, Gilbert et al. (2001b) support the practice of encouraging support and involvement of parents through proactive strategies.

Recommendations for coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should make every effort to get to know youths' personalities on an individual level. Coaches should use their knowledge of youths' personalities to encourage youth and help build skills and knowledge from their current level. Additionally, coaches should meet with parents to discuss expectations of youth, ways to encourage youth, and ways parents can provide support. Moreover, when addressing parents with little or no experience with judging events, coaches can relate benefits of judging events to sport events in an effort to explain the value and importance of youth participation.

Central Tendency 6: Foundational Knowledge

Coaches in this study believe teaching youth foundational knowledge about the particular judging event is vital and can often be enhanced by utilizing mentoring relationships within the team. Coach Clark explained how he provides youth with the basic information needed to be successful; he "keeps things simple." Coach Evans also stays close to the basics because "you can't assume anything" in regard to what youth know. Coach Brown teaches the basics from parts of the animal to filling out a score card. He believes a solid understanding on the basics can facilitate development of skill sets like decision making and trusting initial judgments. Focus group participants believe teaching the basics of evaluation provides youth with transferable skills and a foundation for understanding priorities, explanations, and defending placings. Coach Anderson explained how the use of peer mentoring relationships facilitates understanding of the basics. He has found older youth often guide younger youth in this regard. Coaches have found teaching basics important for success and benefits in allowing facilitation of learning through mentoring relationships between youth.

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The following promising practices were identified by the coaches regarding foundational knowledge: 1) teaching the basics of evaluation and 2) utilizing mentoring relationships between youth. Both practices were identified by coaches as most important promising practices as they both contribute to understanding the basics of evaluation which is imperative for successful performance. Supporting the practice of utilizing mentoring relationships, literature identified mentor and mentee benefits through development and refinement of skills employed (Cassidy et al., 2004; Cosgrove, 1986; Merriam, 1983).

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should not assume youth understand the basic knowledge of evaluation. Coaches should keep lessons simple and cover foundational knowledge such as parts of the animal, priorities, explanations and components of competing. Moreover, coaches should utilize mentoring relationships between youth to facilitate the acquisition of basic knowledge. Mentoring relationships can be established naturally or by pairing younger, inexperienced youth with older or more experienced youth.

Central Tendency 7: Positive Environment

The coaches believe development of youth should occur in an environment promoting positive reinforcement and adaptability. Coach Evans explained the importance of ensuring youth have a positive environment to learn as it facilitates an atmosphere that is positive and upbeat and builds a sense of team spirit. Moreover, Coach Brown emphasized a relaxed learning atmosphere where youth are praised for their efforts and embarrassment is minimized. Additionally, Coach Clark explained the importance of praising youth, the realization mistakes are inevitable and that mistakes should be considered opportunities for learning. The coaches have found that an environment promoting a positive, upbeat, team spirit in combination with positive reinforcement, flexibility and efficiency facilitate positive growth in youth.

The following promising practices related to a positive environment were identified by coaches: 1) foster positive learning environments, 2) utilize positive reinforcement and praise, 3) promote flexibility in learning and 4) utilize efficient coaching strategies. While these were not identified as most important promising practices there is little doubt that fostering a positive learning environment and utilizing positive reinforcement are important when working with youth. Literature supports these practices as collectively they promote high levels of morale and interest, as well as encouraging positive attitudes and motivation from

youth (Burton, 2001; Gilbert et al., 2001a; Howe, 1993 in Gilbert et al., 2001a; Martens, 2004; Scanlan et al., 1993).

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should be aware of the environment in which they coach youth and promote an atmosphere which encompasses a positive, upbeat team spirit. Coaches should utilize positive reinforcement and praise youth when deserving. Additionally, coaches should avoid situations that may embarrass youth. When youth make mistakes, coaches should use it as an opportunity to teach and reassure youth that mistakes are a part of learning. In an effort to ensure a positive environment coaches should be prepared for practices and utilize strategies that promote efficiency and timeliness.

Central Tendency 8: Youth Development

Coaches in this study believe youth develop personal and life skills through participation in CDEs; in return, this development may enhance youth abilities to successfully compete as a member of the judging team. Coach Clark discovered youth could gain life-changing experiences through participation in CDEs. Coach Brown and Coach Davis concur and explained, youth begin to recognize and see improvement in themselves allowing ability to gauge personal development. Focus group participants also consider youth development to be a high priority in coaching youth as it encompasses foundational knowledge gain and life skill development. Coach Clark observed many youth develop and utilize life skills like decision making, public speaking and teamwork from participation on his teams. Coach Brown observed similar results, seeing youth develop note taking skills, communication skills and confidence. Focus group participants have found development of life skills to be the quintessence of CDEs, often utilizing youths' interest in animals to develop life skills such as criterion placing and prioritizing. Coach Brown explained how development of life skills in youth will prompt competitiveness, especially when youth are motivated. Additionally, Coach Clark has found competition encourages further development of life skills. The coaches have found youth gain benefits from participating in evaluation events through personal and life skill development which often enhance competition.

The following youth development promising practices were identified by the coaches: 1) youth receiving benefits, 2) development of youth, 3) development of life skills, and 4) competitiveness of youth. Development of youth, development of life skills and competitiveness of youth were identified by

coaches as most important promising practices as these promising practices are the embodiment of CDEs and central to all seven previous central tendencies. Martens (2004) identifies youth development as being a central objective for coaches and within that, development of life skills and the nature of competitiveness play key roles. It is noteworthy that over-emphasizing competitiveness of youth shifts the objective onto winning and away from development (Cassidy et al., 2004). Benefits youth receive from preparing for competition and competing are often intangible and are revealed through personal and life skill development (Barbour, 2011; Cosgrove, 1986; Gould et al., 2006b).

Recommendations For Coaches. Coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs should assist youth in recognizing benefits received in terms of personal and life skill development. Additionally, coaches should regard youth development as a high priority. In doing so, coaches should gauge the development of youth and re-teach concepts if necessary to foster this development. Coaches need to facilitate and be aware of life skills youth have the opportunity to develop such as decision making, public speaking, teamwork, note taking, criterion placing, prioritizing, communication and confidence. Moreover, coaches should utilize contests as an opportunity to practice and further develop life skills in youth participants.

Summary

This qualitative study was designed to identify promising practices perceived to be most valuable by expert coaches of dairy, horse and livestock CDEs in Indiana. Through inductive analysis of five individual phone interviews, 26 promising coaching practices were identified. Deductive analysis of three focus group interviews supported identification of the 26 identified promising practices and established 14 promising practices as most important to expert coaches. Among the 26 promising coaching practices, eight central tendencies were identified. These included 1) expectations, 2) effective coach, 3) experience, 4) goals, 5) support, 6) foundational knowledge, 7) positive environment and 8) youth development. Of these central tendencies, youth development was determined to be a holistic factor throughout all seven central tendencies, causing it to emerge as the core central tendency.

From this study, three overall recommendations emerged and were related to 1) coach training, 2) coaching resources and 3) future studies. First, the researcher recommends the development of structured opportunities for coach training. This need was highlighted in individual phone and focus group interviews of expert coaches who observed the need through interactions with

other coaches. A second recommendation is the need to develop and make accessible resources for new and inexperienced coaches. This need was revealed through expert coaches' concern in regard to new coaches' lack of access to, and knowledge of where to seek coaching resources. Third, the researcher recommends future studies examining the implementation of promising practices identified in this study to determine their specific value to the student.

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