Goal Communication with High School Athlete

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Adequate

Analysis Structured

Background

Communication entails the conversation between two people and this conversation is between Lena Lawal and I. This is important for a coaches' performances and athlete skill development because as a coach you want to be able to communicate effectively and positivity.

Purpose

The purpose for this interview is to be able have a conversation with an athlete, using the GROW model of questioning.

Methods

The participants of this interview were Kelsi Frank and Lena Lawal . The procedure included Kelsi Frank asking questions to high school track athlete Lena Lawal, comprehending her responses to each question.

Findings

The most important findings were how using the GROW model helps a conversation flow when it is a question and answer based conversation, as well as the difference between the first interview and the second interview.

Discussion

Using the GROW model restricted the conversation, but helped the conversation stay in an orderly professional manner. The performance of the questioner was highly appreciated by the answering individual, everything flowing in logical order.

Keywords

Communication, GROW Model, track and field, performance, Professional

Goal Questioning Analysis with Lena Lawal

Communication is a process defined by Vealey, it is not what someone says but rather taking a thought and making it a meaningful message, and delivering that message to someone else. This process continues to the person receiving this message and they have to interpret it and respond to the message (Vealey, 2005). It is essential to have a powerful and professional presence in coaching so your athletes will buy into your philosophy and gain your trust. So when you communicate with your athletes it will be meaningful everytime. "Communication has emerged as one important component of coach-athlete interactions worthy of consideration in sport. It is now well documented that the overt nature (and perception) of coach-athlete communications in sport can affect various parameters influencing both development and performance. For example, athletes who experience pre-game speeches delivered by coaches prior to competition as informational (as opposed to emotionally riling) report greater self-efficacy for sport performance (Weirts, C. M., Wilson, P. M., & Mack, D. E, pg.164)." As a coach you have to earn your worth to be able to have your athletes listen and understand what you are trying to communicate to them. There are four principles of communication that coaches should follow to help their team morale and environment. The principles to communicating your message include attention, retention, practice, and motivation (Driska, 2017). The principle of attention is exactly what it means and getting the attention of your athletes while you are communicating to them by your words or actions. Dr. Driska has stated that athletes' attention span in seconds is equivalent to their age, this is crucial that your message is communicated among the athletes in a timely manner (Driska, 2017). The principle of retention is seeing if the athletes are retaining the message you just provided to them. If the athlete's attention is not on you and your message , then the retention principle will not be attainable either. A study was

completed by Cope that five youth football players were sampled during practice or drill time.

The chart provides analysis, showing that the retention from the athletes was very good because

of the responses that the players were giving. The players were asked questions, and provided in

depth answers (Cope, Partington, Cushion, Harvery, 2016). The next principle is practice.

Coaches are constantly practicing communication skills in all aspects of their sport. This is

important because it helps coaches become better at keeping their messages short, simple, and

effective. A coach that was a master at this craft and communicating was John Wooden. He was

a coach that would not beat around the bush and start at point A and go to point B. The words he

spoke were meaningful and nothing was left unsaid. Some examples of this were, "cut him off"

or "you're still reaching in" (Gallimore and Tharp, 2005). The last key principle is motivation.

Keeping athletes motivated throughout a practice can be extremely tasking, but using positive

reinforcement and communicating in an effective manner, athletes can achieve the motivations

that are necessary. These four principles are the foundations to be a successful coach and build a

successful team. This will help coaches reflect on how motivated the athletes are going to be.

Communication is essential for coaching effectively. Communication helps build

relationships with the athletes. When communicating with athletes it is important to present your

message in a professional manner. Professional in the coaching world means not yelling and

screaming your demands at the athletes to get what you want from them. This type of coaching

will have high school athletes shut down and not buy into what you are trying to build for the

team overall. I am not saying that from time to time that a firm message cannot be given to get a

point across, you just have to give a balance. Communicating with individual athletes is essential

to building trust, loyalty, and compassion. Motivational interviews will not only help you as a

coach but give your team that push to be successful. "If you kindle the fire of motivation inside

athletes, their performance should improve. This will in turn improve well-being (Rollnick et al. 2020, pg.11)." This is what I model in my coaching style. It's not just about the performance but if you improve the performance of the athlete they will improve overall as a person with a new confidence and mindset.

The purpose of this project and paper is to analyze how the GROW model was used in the conversation between Kelsi Frank and Lena Lawal, to be able to understand how this method can be used to better conversations with athletes in the future. This will help me grow as a coach and better understand my individual athletes' needs as a whole.

Methods

Participants

The participants for this project were Kelsi Frank and Lena Lawal. Lena Lawal is a high school track and field athlete at Lane Tech High School in Chicago, IL who answered the specific GROW model questions and Kelsi Frank was the questioner. Lena Lawal was asked by Kelsi Frank to participate in this questioning. Lena accepted to participate in the goal questioning sessions. Lena Lawal was selected for the goal questioning session because she is one of the athletes that compete at a high level on the girls track team. Lena has developed her own goals and acted on them in the past. Lena Lawal was one the many girls that would work well with this project to help better understand athletes' motivation.

Procedure

The first step of this project was to have time to come together and complete the conversations. These conversations were held on a Google Meet and the virtual meet was recorded through the Google Meet, so Kelsi Frank could relate back to the questions she asked afterwards. After finding a good time to do video calls with Lena Lawal twice, she answered a series of questions pertaining to the Grow Model. Six questions were asked by Kelsi Frank in the first interview and six questions in the second interview, with answers from Lena Lawal for each question. Each question was asked, and an answer followed, body language was inviting and eye contact was always kept on the athlete when she was speaking. Of the six questions that were asked, one of the questions was goal oriented, which represented the "G" of the GROW model. Three questions related to reality were asked, which represented the "R"of the GROW model. One of the questions asked are related options, which represents the "O"of the GROW model. The last questions asked are related to will, which represents the "W" of the GROW

model. The conversation lasted around ten minutes the first time, as there were longer pauses in between each question and answer. The second conversation lasted eight minutes as Lena Lawal was more comfortable and Kelsi Frank changed the wording of some of the questions due to Lena Lawal answering the questions as a team focus in the first conversation and not her individual performance. The second conversation was easy for her to answer each question after Lena had an idea what she was going to answer, the questions wording was changed a little bit to make it known that it is focused on Lena Lawal individual performance and growth and not the team growth. The second conversation flowed a lot better than the first conversation.

Data Analysis

Once the data from the conversation was collected, I listened through the recording multiple times, and wrote down each answer that was given by Lena Lawal. The data was then placed into a chart which you will see below. Each section was divided into. Time, the speaker, summary of what was spoken by the speaker, seconds spoken by the coach, and seconds spoken by the athlete. The data was easier to comprehend once it was laid out in front of me. Once the data was in the chart, it flowed in an order that was easily readable. The questions were split up evenly in the four sections of the GROW model, asking goal questions, reality questions, options questions, and will questions. All these questions will focus on Lena Lawal individual goals and actions she will do during the season to help her improve her performance in events of Long Jump and Triple Jump.

Results

Conversation 1

The first conversation was a rocky one. There were long pauses throughout the conversation. The interview lasted around ten minutes. Lena Lawal seemed uncertain and uncomfortable answering the questions. The tone of voice from Lena Lawal seemed to be confident when she made the question about the team and not about herself. When she would focus on herself with the questions could tell when she was uncertain about answering them with the tone of her voice would change and she would ask to come back to that question.Since there were time constraints with the interview, I had to use less questions since Lena had to attend another event. Also, reorganizing the questions the second time around so as to make more sense.

Time	Speaker	Summary of what was spoken	Seconds coach spoke	Seconds athlete spoke
0:00-0:20	Coach	What would you like to achieve this year? (Goal Question)	20	0
0:20-1:05	Athlete	To have more team bonding opportunities to build relationships	0	45
1:05-1:25	Coach	On an individual standpoint what would you like to achieve?	20	0
1:25-1:45	Athlete	Making it to the State meet and hitting my	0	20

		Personal record (PR) in my jumps.		
1:45-2:05	Coach	How well did you perform on that goal last year? (Reality Question)	20	0
2:05-2:35	Athlete	I PRed but didn't make it to state so that needs to improve.	0	30
2:35-2:50	Coach	What is a possible first step towards that goal for this year?(Options Question)	15	0
2:55-3:35	Athlete	Be able to know more girls on the team and build relationships.	0	20
3:35-3:55	Coach	For your individual performance, what is the first step?	20	0
3:55-4:45	Athlete	Be more accountable for my daily routine	0	50
4:45-5:05	Coach	How well did you perform on that goal last year? (Reality Question)	20	0
5:05-5:45	Athlete	Not to my fullest potential but willing to do	0	40

		better this year.		
5:45-6:30	Coach	Where do you think you stand on that skill right now? (Reality Question)	45	0
6:30-7:45	Athlete	Pretty fair to maybe be able to achieve one of my goals for this track season.	0	45
7:45-8:05	Coach	What is a fair expectation for me to hold accountability for a successful year? (Will question)	20	0
8:05-9:15	Athlete	Making sure we have time to do team bonding activities and set team goals	0	70
9:15-10:00	Coach	Sorry, Let me rephrase. What are fair expectations I can hold you accountable for to make sure you meet your goals?	45	0
10:00-10:35	Athlete	Oh, I think making sure to do daily or weekly check ins with me to see if I am hitting my max potential for the week. Setting weekly goals for me as well to hit	0	35

		that progresses to my overall goal.		
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		Total	225	355

Throughout the quantitative analysis of the results, I came across a couple items that were very interesting. The time each speaker spoke throughout the interview, number of questions that were asked, and the twenty-eighty rule for conducting an interview like this one, but this was not followed and as the questioner spoke only 130 seconds less than the athlete, Lena Lawal . As the questioner, I asked six different questions to Lena Lawal, where she then provided me with an answer. Some of the questions took longer than the others to answer, because she was answering them as goals for what the girls track team will have this year, instead of her own personal goal. Then she became unsure of how to exactly answer the question. Once again, The twenty-eighty rule was not obtained, but it was in the range of how much time both the coach and athlete should be speaking during an interview between a coach and athlete.

Throughout the qualitative results some questions that were asked received very detailed answers and some questions made Lena Lawal think about what she was going to say before answering. The goal questions that I asked Lena Lawal, she was stumped, so she did not give great detail and she had to think about the questions in detail. People that have goals in mind already usually can voice their goals off the top of their head, but Lena did not have her goal prepared to share. I could tell in the tone of her voice that she was very unsure of how to answer the questions after saying it is about you and not about the team. She just made up something on the spot. I do not think Lena Lawal has been asked those in depth questions that focused on her.

Also, being a high school athlete is another factor and understanding a complex in depth question

might be hard to think deeper and beyond the surface level.

For the second interview I will work on reorganizing my questions to make sense of the

order they come in. Also, I gave the athlete more time to answer the questions, while still hitting

in a ten minute time. I will also try to ask simple questions, using the GROW model could help

better understand the athlete's ultimate goals which will guide Lena to focus on herself.

Conversation 2 Results

The second conversation went much better than the first conversation did. There was less

pausing while answering the questions and more conversation. The interview lasted around eight

minutes. During this interview, time management was effectively used. Lena Lawal's tone of

voice throughout the interview sounded more confident and at ease this second time around.

Time	Speaker	Summary of what was spoken	Seconds coach spoke	Seconds athlete spoke
0:00-0:10	Coach	What are you looking to achieve this year? (Goal Question)	10	0
0:10-0:50	Athlete	Being able to improve my jumps in both Long and Triple Jump and going to state meet	0	40
0:50-1:00	Coach	imagine the upcoming season, what do you see happening for you and their	10	0

		achievements? (Goal Question)		
1:00-1:45		I see myself hitting my PR jump by city in both of my events and qualifying for state	0	45
1:45-2:15	Coach	How well did you perform on that goal last year? (Reality Question)	0	30
2:15-3:00	Athlete	I feel I did not have enough time to hit my goal I wanted because of Covid. I did make progress but very little in my mind.	0	45
3:00-3:10	Coach	Where do you stand on that skill right now? (Reality Question)	10	0
3:10-4:45	Athlete	My skills are on par where I want them to be. I did some workouts in the summer to help me for the upcoming season. Also, understanding what I need to do to be successful and reflection over the summer helped me	0	95

		understand what needs to happen.		
4:55-5:05	Coach	What is the first step you can take to get on the right track? (option Question)	10	0
5:05-6:30	Athlete	I will do my mobility drills and keep my mind and body healthy for the season.	0	85
6:30-6:40	Coach	What can I expect you to do differently at practice? (Will Question)	10	0
6:40-7:00	Athlete	Always be one of the girls that is at practice before everyone doing my pre workout warm ups for my body and always be one of the last girls to leave to talk to you and my jmps coaches to keep my goals and mobility on pace for the season.	0	20
7:00-7:10	Coach	What is a fair expectation for me to hold you to so you are successful throughout the season?(Will	10	0

		Question)		
7:10-8:00	Athlete	Helping me stay on task with my goals fo the season. Letting me know when I am on pace for my goals or when I am having setbacks and helping myself stay accountable.	0	50
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		Total	60	410

Throughout the quantitative analysis for the second interview, there was a notable change from the first interview. In the second interview, I only spoke for sixty seconds. Lena Lawal spoke roughly four-hundred and ten seconds . I decided to ask seven questions and the seconds I spoke went down drastically because I did not have to repeat the questions. The questions were easier for Lena to understand.I also gave Lena unlimited time to speak for each question so she can process what she needed to get across to be for this conversation.

Throughout the qualitative analysis for the second conversation, each answer I received a very confident and detailed response this time around from Lena Lawal. There was little to no pauses from Lena while she was answering the questions I gave to her. Lena seemed very confident in all types of questions with the GROW model interviewing style, she was willing to open up more as she learned more about herself and what she needed to do as an athlete to be successful for this track season. This interview, Lena was more prepared and understood what was being asked of her.

Discussion

As I reflect back to the beginning of this process and have a better understanding of the purpose. The purpose was to analyze the GROW model based on this conversation between Lena Lawal and myself. As I look back I can relate how using the GROW model is very useful for communicating and gaining insight to my athletes. Coaching "consists of observing students and offering hints, feedback, reminders, [or] new tasks, or redirecting a student's attention to a salient feature-all with the goal of making the student's performance approximate the expert performance as closely as possible (Arthur, Wagstaff, and Hardy 2017.,pg.165)." This interview is an extension of this quote and with these skills I have learned in the GROW Model, that I can help athletes move forward, which in turn helps me with my coaching career. This process has given me a better understanding of my personal understanding on my personal side and coaching side, throughout these two conversations. I realized how to make a conversation flow better and how to present the questions to an athlete in a clear and proficient way. The GROW model helped me to analyze my results and to reflect for the next time I have a conversation about goal achievement with my athletes.

Analyzing the results of the two interviews, I would say my biggest strength was having a close relationship with Lena to the point that she trusted me and my questions that I was asking. She knew that they were for the betterment of her performance and not just for my own gain. She understood that these interviews were beneficial for both of us. Also, the time I allowed my athlete to speak on. The conversation with Lena Lawal was effortless and easy. Yes, of course, the first interview there were pauses in the conversation, this is only because Lena did not fully think about the questions that I was asking of her. As the head girls track coach, I must be able to communicate with my athletes in a professional and proficient manner . When there are long

or awkward pauses in a conversation the athlete will feel uncomfortable. This might make the athlete feel self conscious and not want to open up to you as their coach, this will cause issues later on down the road.

One of my strengths during this process is reducing the amount of speaking I did from the first interview to the second interview helped with the interview process. Going from two-hundred and twenty-five seconds in the first conversation to sixty second was a huge success. This also had to do with myself not restating or rephrasing the questions like I did in the first interview with Lena. The questions in the second interview were clear and concise so they could not be misinterpreted. Also, as a coach I need to learn to be an active listener and try to understand what my athletes are asking of me. Then, I must give my answer in a quick and timely manner.

Now I can state my weakness during this conversation is not clearly giving the questions to Lena that she could understand the first time around. I like that she was thinking about the team goals, but could have been more thorough. Throughout the first conversation with Lena Lawal, she seemed particularly lost after I stated that it was about her or I rephrased the question. She then seemed to me concerned that I wanted to know about her more and her needs. I feel as though having these types of conversation more often, I would not have the confusion if it was about the team or the individual. I know some of the questions were somewhat complex for an athlete in high school knowing the overall mindset of athletes at that stage of life. But giving those challenging questions will help the athlete to think deeper than just at the surface level of goal and motivation for success.. This will also help me not to talk as much and ask questions and focus on the athletes answers, act on what their needs are, and if they are being met.

If it was not for this communication analysis project, I would have not known that when I ask my athletes questions they might be interpreting them wrong. I will not assume that all the girls are team orientated and actually do want to work on their own personal achievements on the track. I would have never learned what Lena's deep overall goals are for herself and what has been hindering her to reach those goals. I now want to use the GROW Model to help conduct individual, one on one, meetings with my athletes to help shape not just the team's goal but the goals of each individual girl on the team. The style of the GROW Model conducts itself in a way that makes the athletes think deeper and get to the root of each of the athlete's goals, setbacks, and steps to reach their goal. This communication method will help athletes get out of their comfort zone and be able to open up in a constructive manner with the coach. Then the coach will be able to provide the proper workouts, mobility , and equipment for the athlete to be successful.

Reflecting back on this analysis, the overall learning that I gained was the way I communicate with athletes in a concrete and positive manner. Of course not one size fits all types of conversation that will occur because each athlete is different. I will use the structure of the GROW Model to help guide me through the process to use accurate questions for each athlete so they are given an opportunity to speak and are able to be heard. The GROW Model will take my communication as a coach to the next level, and it will continue to build onto it. . This model lays out exactly what goes into having a deep and valuable conversation with an athlete. It helps lay out the athlete's goals that they have in their mind and be able to help them achieve them one step at a time. This will put accountability not just on the athlete but also the coach.

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