

*Special
Olympics*



COACH WEBINAR SERIES

2025

Presented
by:



Gallagher



**DELIVERING
THE COACH
DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES
YOU WANT**

**SO YOU CAN
PROVIDE THE BEST
TRAINING AND
COMPETITION
ENVIRONMENTS
FOR YOUR
ATHLETES**



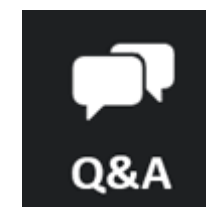
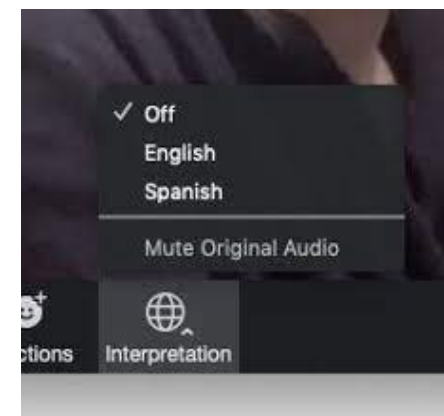
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Q&A

Please ask any questions you have in the Q&A section



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Our Host



Pablo Composto

*Sargent Shriver Global Messenger,
Athlete Leader and Fitness Captain
Special Olympics Latin America,
Special Olympics Argentina*



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HOW CAN I BECOME A BETTER COACH?



Pablo Composto
SO Argentina



Jenny Wolf
SO Germany



Bettina Callary
Cape Breton University

Date:
October 16, 2025

Time
9am EST/3pm CET



SPECIAL OLYMPICS COACH WEBINAR SERIES 2025 PRESENTED BY GALLAGHER



Jenny Wolf

Special Olympics Germany



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From Knowledge to Competence: The Learning Path for Coaches and Volunteer Staff



Picture: SOD Sarah Rauch

- ✓ Competency-Based Coach Education
- ✓ Competence Model of German Sports Federation
- ✓ Learning Path for Coaches and Volunteers
- ✓ Assistant Coaches Training
- ✓ How to Be a Better Coach?





Jenny Wolf

- Background in High Level Sports & Coaching
- Former Olympic Athlete (Long Track Speedskating) + Highest Coaches Education at DOSB (German Sports Federation) Coaches Academy Cologne
- National Coach Speedskating Development Team Germany until 2020
- Since 2021: Fulltime Head of Coaches Education & Research Program at SO Germany
- Planning and delivering coach education and training programs both within Special Olympics and in external contexts
- Developing long term coaches education curriculum for SO Coaches



Competency-Based Coach Education

- Focus on developing **real competence**, not just knowledge
- Educators act as **facilitators of learning**
- Coaches reflect on what they learn, **apply it in practice**, and grow through experience



Competence Model of German Sports Federation

Four steps of competence orientation:

1. **Realistic challenge situations** – identify competencies needed in training & competition
2. **Competence-oriented learning objectives** – define learning goals linked to these situations
3. **Learning tasks** – develop tasks aligned with learning objectives to foster skill acquisition
4. **Assessment situations** – create contexts to test and evaluate acquired competencies



Competence Model of German Sports Federation

Example:

1. **Realistic challenge situations** – address an athletes free throw technique
2. **Competence-oriented learning objectives** –
The coach can explain the technique in Easy Language.
3. **Learning tasks** – learner reflects her communication style (videos) and finds key points that need to be adjusted.
4. **Assessment situations** – learner uploads a video of a real training session and gets feedback from the coach developer





Picture: SOD Sarah Rauch

Learning Path for Coaches and Volunteer Staff

Online Learning (selfpaced and blended)

- Introduction to Special Olympics (e.g. philosophy, inclusion, barrier-free communication)
- Article 1 – Sports Rules, Safe Sport
- Sport-specific modules tailored for different disciplines

Ongoing reflection, mentoring, and peer exchange eg.:
SO Germany Sports Conference or sport specific workshops

Each step builds **competence** via **active, applied learning!**



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Assistant Coaches Training: Structure & Participants

- Open to people **with and without intellectual disability**
- Delivered in **Easy German**
- Ideal format: **tandem (coach + assistant)**
- Modular structure, aligned with DOSB standards
- 30 learning units (45 min) over 2 × 2 days
- Built-in intervals for **practice and reflection**



Assistant Coaches Training: Modules & Outcomes

Main Modules:

- Enabling athletes to lead cross-sport exercise units
- Supporting head coaches during training sessions
- Motivation, being a role model and fairness
- Prevention of interpersonal violence in sports
- Competition volunteer or assistant referee roles
- Participation in club or community life





Assistant Coaches Training: Modules & Outcomes

Expected Outcomes:

- Assist in training sessions
- Lead simple exercise units
- Serve as motivators and role models
- Support competition operations
- Engage in club life
- Develop **professional, methodical, social, self competencies**



Picture: SOD Jenny Wolf



Experiences and Outcomes

- Coaches and athletes become more **reflective, confident, motivated**
- Better **transfer of learning into practice**
- Stronger **inclusion culture** in sports environments
- Coaching becomes **athlete-centered and meaningful**





Picture: SOD Sascha Klahn

How to Be a Better Coach?

- **Reflect on your practice** – what works, what doesn't, and why
- **Listen actively** – to athletes, partners, and colleagues
- **Adapt and individualize** – meet athletes where they are
- **Encourage autonomy** – help athletes make their own decisions
- **Promote inclusion** – ensure everyone can participate meaningfully
- **Keep learning** – know the rules, seek feedback and new knowledge



Thank you!



Picture: SOD Sascha Klahn

“Better coaches (and better coach developers) create better learning environments — for everyone.”



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Becoming a Better Coach

Dr. Bettina Callary

Canada Research Chair in Sport Coaching and Adult Learning

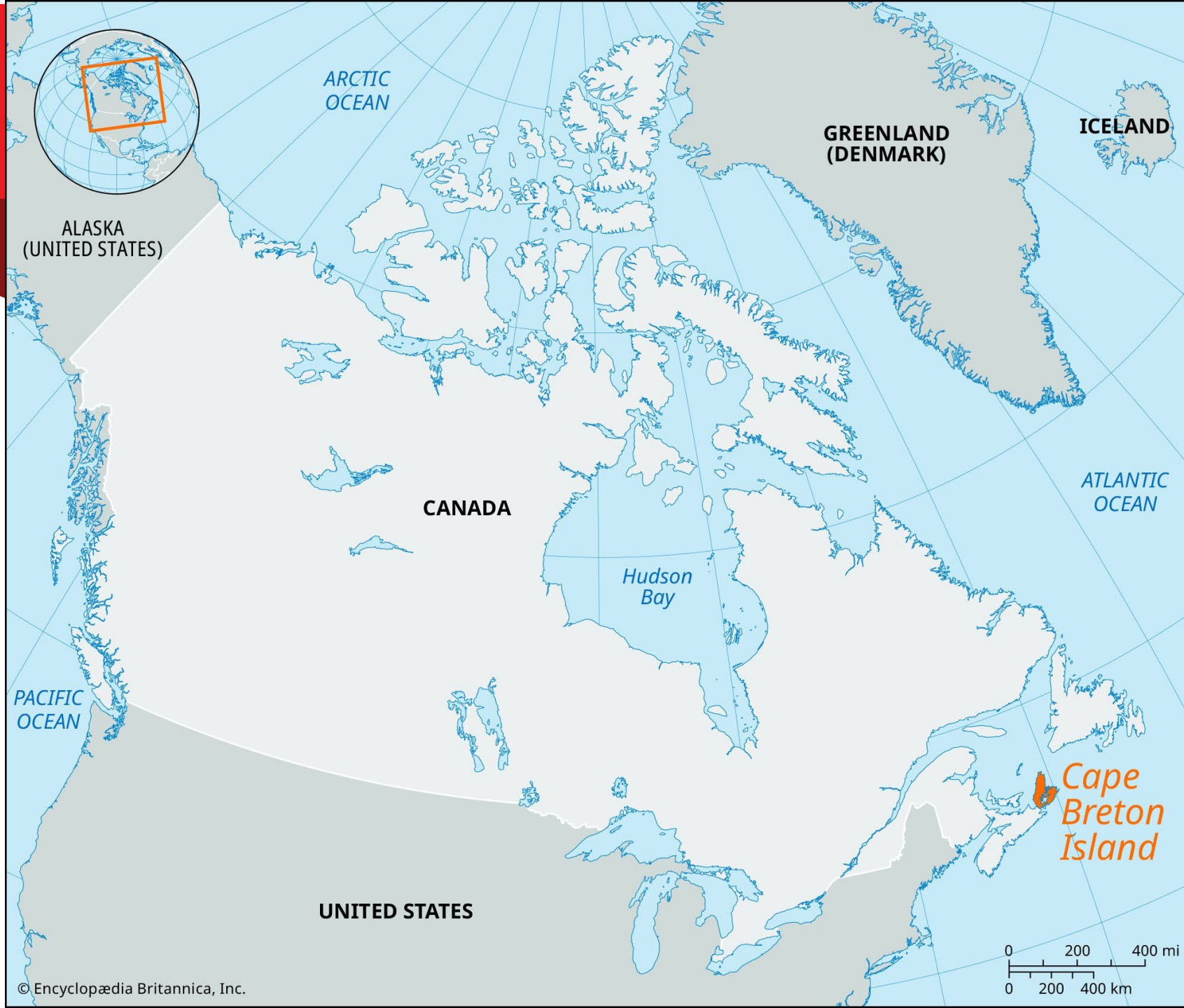
Director of the Institute in Community, Sport & Health

Professor, Cape Breton University



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How do you become a better coach?



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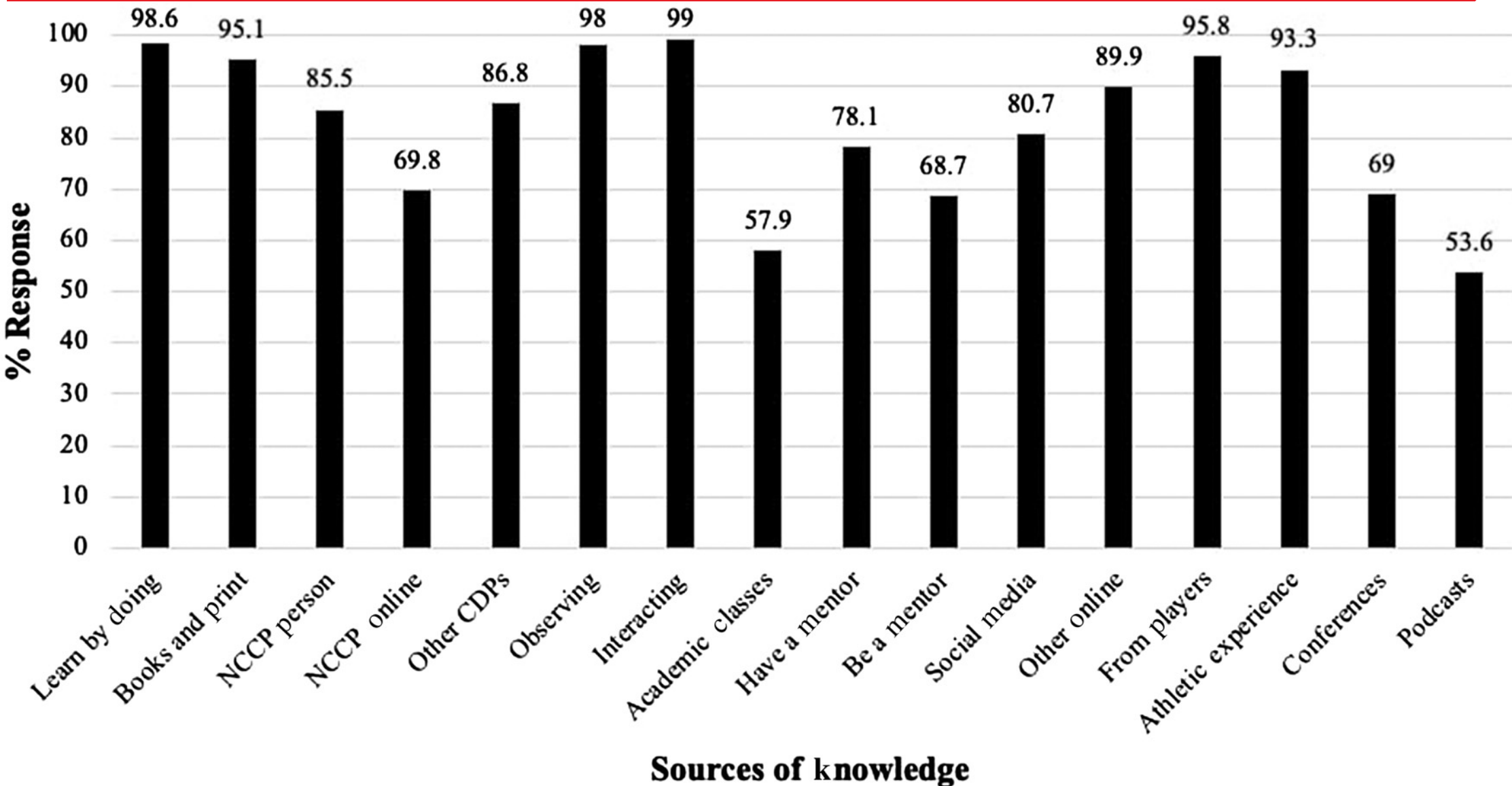


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Coaches' sources of knowledge

(Van Woezik et al., 2022)



Becoming...

Learning is a process of becoming:

A person engages in social situations throughout life that are transformed cognitively, emotively and/or practically, and integrated into the person's biography so that the person becomes more experienced (Jarvis, 2009)

- With athletes
- From other coaches (mentors and peers)
- Formal and non-formal coach education
- From family
- From reflection on experiences



(Callary et al., 2012)



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Becoming better through experiences with athletes

Key Highlights (Kortekaas et al., 2025)

Coaching SO goes beyond sport

- navigate behavioural, emotional, and communication challenges, requiring a broad and adaptive skill set.

Inclusion is rewarding, but complex

- adopt flexible, individualised approaches to accommodate a wide range of skills, behaviours, and group dynamics.

HOW?



Becoming better through experiences with other coaches

- **Mentoring/apprenticeship**
 - Dynamic relationship in which a more knowledgeable/ experienced coach provides guidance and psychosocial support to a less knowledgeable or experienced coach
 - Both mentor and mentee in SO can benefit (quick move into head coaching positions in SO)
- **Developing a Community of Practice**
 - Group of coaches with shared understanding who work closely together to accomplish something (e.g., find resolutions to common issues that deepen their knowledge and potentially change their practice)
 - How to make CoPs effective: Having dedicated time/space to meet; a facilitator/leader; determining key issues to discuss (e.g., sport safety)



Becoming better through experiences in education

There's a clear call for tailored coach education

(Kortekaas et al., 2025)

- gaps in traditional coach education, call for training that is specific to disability, essential for building confidence and competence in inclusive coaching environments.
- Special Olympics International coach education:
<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/online-coach-education>
- Country specific coach education (e.g.,
<https://coach.ca/module/nccp-coaching-athletes-disability>)



Becoming better through experiences with family

Collaboration makes all the difference

- Foster strong partnerships with parents, schools, and other professionals for continuity, trust, and good outcomes across all environments

(Kortekaas et al., 2025)

- Developmental networks for coaches (Lefebvre et al., 2021)

- Mentoring (learning) relationships can vary in relationship type, strength, and function
- Arguably extremely important consideration in SO when many coaches have family members who are athletes

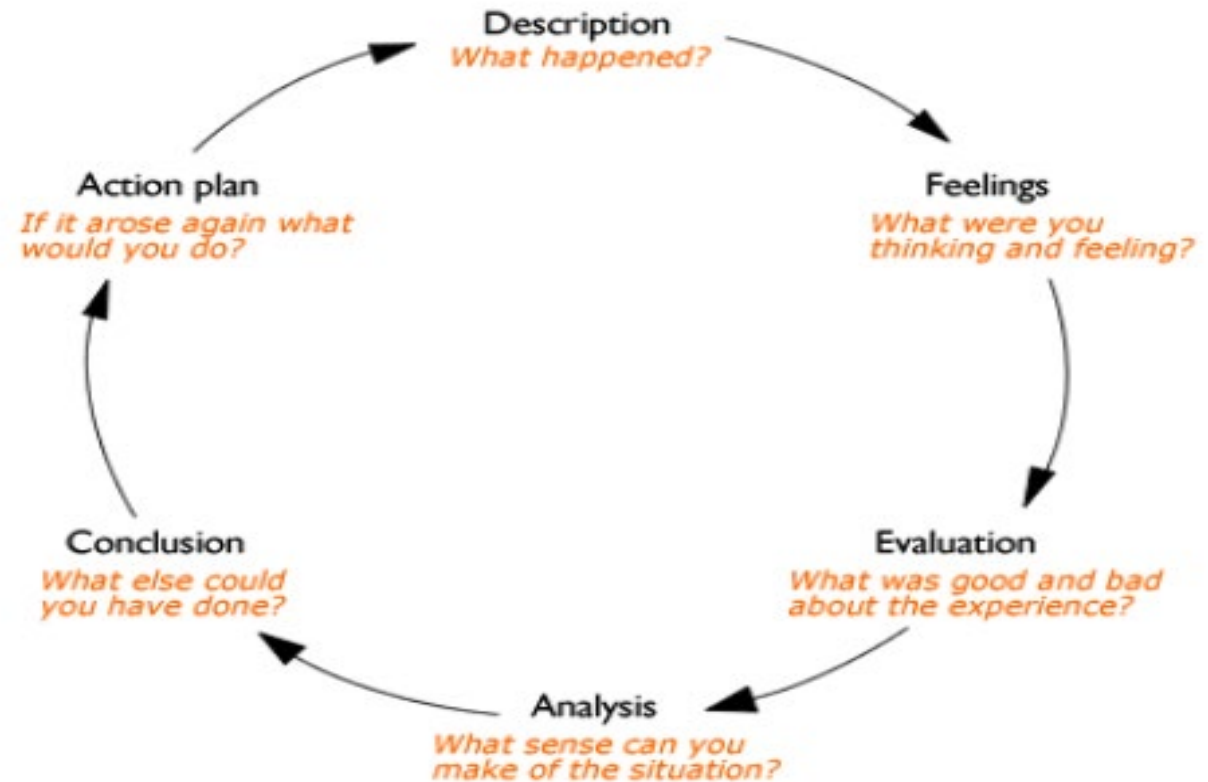


Becoming better through reflection on experiences

- A way of making sense of experience in complex situations
- Para-Coaches often need to rely on able-bodied resources for education
 - Unique physiological, behavioural, and intellectual abilities of athletes, specialised equipment, medications --- directly impact training

(Taylor, Werthner, Culver & Callary, 2014)

Reflective Cycle



Conclusion

- Becoming a better coach in Special Olympics:
 - Engaging with athletes thoughtfully
 - Having a network of coaches (mentors, community of practice)
 - Finding and taking coach education programs, courses, webinars
 - Collaborating with family members
 - Reflecting on your experiences to transform them into action plans

To integrate them into your biography (who you are)
= You become more experienced



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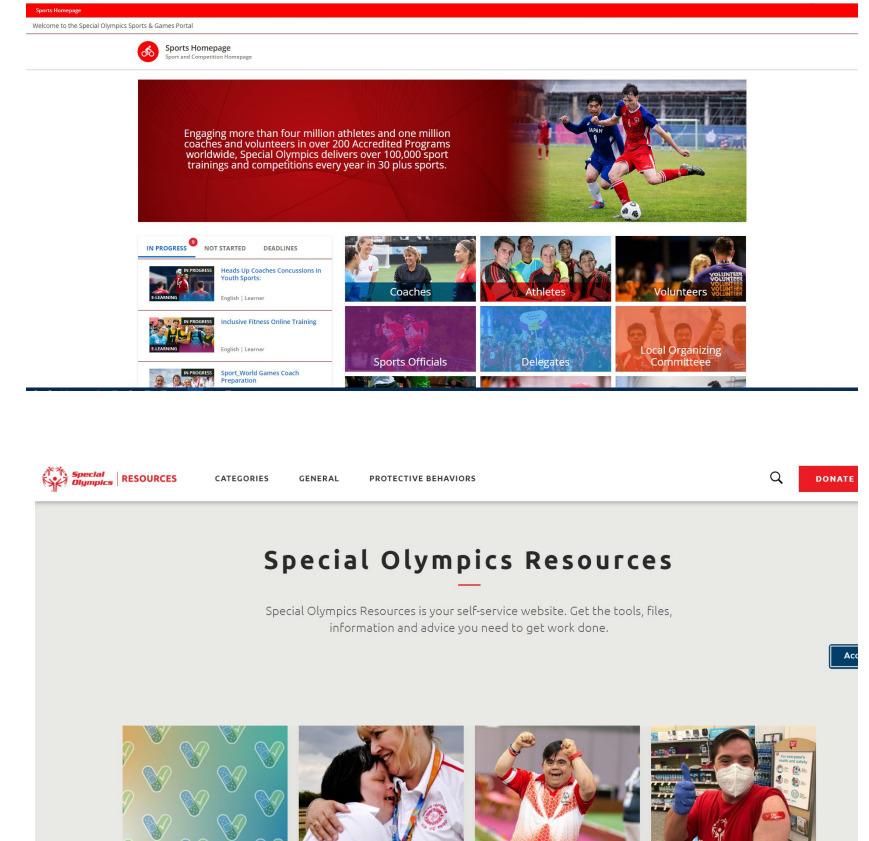
Q&A



Coaching Resources

Special Olympics offers fantastic resources for coaches to continue to learn and improve their coaching knowledge:

- **Special Olympics Online Learning Portal**
- **Special Olympics Resource Page**



Coaching Resources



"I feel good to lead my teammates in team warm-ups, get them motivated and warmed up. I like to help them feel good and give ideas for a healthy lifestyle and lead by example. I like to lead. I hope to get my teammates to improve at least one thing about their health. **My job as Fitness Captain is very important.**"

Vince Egan, Special Olympics Colorado



Sport Categorization Survey

Introduction

Special Olympics has created a new system to group sports by shared traits. This helps coaches and athletes by making training more focused, using resources more efficiently, and improving how programs are delivered.

Sports are grouped into four categories using two key factors:

- The predominant performance component of the sport
- The exercise intensity of the sport

We know every sport is unique, and sport-specific training is ideal. But when that's not possible, grouping similar sports can still offer many benefits!

Special Olympics Sport Categories

Predominant Component

1. **Stamina Sports:** Focus on long-lasting effort and endurance
2. **Strength Sports:** Require powerful, explosive movements using muscle strength and speed
3. **Skill Sports:** Center on coordination, control, and technique, with less focus on strength or endurance
4. **Mixed Sports:** Combine physical fitness and technical skill, with success depending on strategy and overall performance

Exercise Intensity

- **Low:** These sports involve light physical effort or a slower pace. They focus more on skill, accuracy, or strategy than on physical exertion.
- **Medium:** These sports require a balance of movement, strength, and coordination. They involve steady effort with some opportunities for rest or recovery.
- **High Intensity:** These sports demand a lot from the body - through speed, power, strength, or nonstop activity. They often involve sustained effort with little recovery time.





2025 Special Olympics Coach Webinar Series Presented by Gallagher



The Special Olympics Coach Webinar Series, presented by Gallagher, is back for 2025. This year's series will discuss topics chosen by you, and take a deep dive into 2 specific coaching topics.

Webinar 1 - October 14: **Coaching Standards at International Competitions**

Webinar 2 - October 16: **How can I Become a Better Coach?**

This page is your one stop shop for finding what you need from the series. Here you can register for each webinar, watch the recordings, submit your questions to our speakers and hosts, access resources like PDFs, slideshows, and videos from the presentations, and access any translated materials we have.

We hope you enjoy this year's Coach Webinar Series, presented by Gallagher!

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AT INTERNATIONAL
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OCTOBER
16**

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Thank You!

This is our final webinar of the 2025 Coach Webinar Series



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