COACHING CORPS

Brief Report on the Online Curriculum for the Coaching for Character Training and Support Program

August 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a grant from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation in 2016, Coaching Corps designed an advanced in-person training to teach coaches how to effectively address character development in a youth sports environment. This training focused on four character attributes relevant to sport—Persistence, Optimism, Self-regulation, and Empathy ("POSE")—and on a strategic approach—the *Name It, See It, Coach It, Share It* "Action Steps"—to seamlessly integrate character development into youth coaching.

In 2020, Coaching Corps adapted this in-person POSE training to an online format in order to scale up more effectively. After a soft launch in Fall 2019, Coaching Corps more formally launched the online training in Spring 2020. Between April and July 2020, nearly 100 coaches had completed the online curriculum. This brief report presents data from the knowledge assessments conducted with these online learners and compares these data to the knowledge assessments conducted with 1,900 coaches who attended in-person trainings between 2017 and 2019.

Training Curriculum

The online curriculum teaches coaches specific content in three areas:

1) four *POSE Character Attributes* and how they present in youth sports.

2) four *Coaching Strategies* to enhance athlete's capacity for the four POSE attributes.

3) four *Action Steps* as a coaching method to seamlessly incorporate character building into a sports context.

Knowledge Assessment Results

Overall, online learners' knowledge assessment scores tended to be equal to, or better than, the assessment scores among coaches who attended an in-person training session.

POSE Character Attributes

- Overall: Online learners answered, on average, 90% of the POSE attributes questions correctly, compared to in-person learners who answered an average of 82% of these items correctly.

- Online learners and in-person learners were roughly equivalent in their ability to correctly identify **optimism** (77% vs. 79%) and **self-regulation** (97% vs. 92%).

- A greater proportion of online learners, versus in-person learners, correctly identified **persistence** (92% vs. 74%) and **empathy** (92% vs. 78%).

Coaching Strategies

- Overall: On average, online learners answered 75% of the coaching strategy questions correctly and in-person learners averaged 72% correct.

- 45% of online learners (vs. 71% of in-person learners) understood that the most effective way to **coach persistence** is to help athletes shift their strategy.

- 80% of online learners (vs. 79% of in-person learners) recalled that the most effective way to **coach optimism** is to help athletes shift their thinking.

- 79% of online learners (vs. 80% of in-person learners) understood that the most effective way to **coach self-regulation** is to help athletes shift their behavior.

- 97% of online learners (vs. 91% of in-person learners) knew that the most effective way to **coach empathy** is to model it.

Action Steps

- Overall: On average, online learners answered 82% of the actions steps questions correctly, compared to in-person learners who answered an average of 66% correctly.

- 86% of online learners (vs. 75% of in-person learners) correctly identified **Name It**.

- 95% of online learners correctly identified **See It** (not asked at the in-person training).

- 74% of online learners (vs. 57% of in-person learners) correctly identified **Coach It**.

- 72% of online learners (vs. 65% of in-person learners) correctly identified **Share It**.

Summary

Coaching Corps' successfully adapted the POSE training curriculum for an online platform. Data suggest that the online curriculum effectively imparts the core concepts. Coaches who completed the course online demonstrate levels of knowledge that are generally equal to, or greater than, coaches who attended the in-person training event. By translating this curriculum to an online format, Coaching Corps has greatly increased its accessibility for coaches around the country.

INTRODUCTION

Coaching Corps' mission is to "ensure that all kids reap the benefits of playing sports with a trained, caring coach." To fulfill this mission, the organization actively recruits and develops high-quality coaches to improve the physical, social, and emotional well-being of young people and, in doing so, to help expand the power of sports-based youth development for every child. Coaching Corps maintains a focus on recruiting, training, and placing high-quality coaches into a wide range of afterschool sports-based youth development programs in order to increase capacity to serve more youth through sports, ensure excellence in coaching, and improve the impact of existing community programs. In this way, Coaching Corps works to develop, magnify, and leverage the capacity and impact of afterschool organizations (which Coaching Corps calls "partner agencies") by providing them with a trained workforce of volunteer coaches and by training partner agency staff to use sports as a youth development tool.

Coaching Corps envisions a high-quality coach for every child. High-quality coaching requires the commitment, knowledge, and attributes that enable a coach to use sport as a vehicle to impart social and emotional skills that affect character development and influence life outcomes. Coaching Corps has an established track record of in-depth and comprehensive training to maximize coaches' ability to bring this quality of interaction to their athletes.

THE COACHING FOR CHARACTER PROGRAM

With a grant from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Coaching Corps intensified its efforts by designing a training to teach coaches how to effectively and intentionally integrate character development into a youth sports environment. The training focused on four character attributes relevant to a sports context: Persistence, Optimism, Self-regulation, and Empathy (POSE). In 2016, Coaching Corps developed an in-person training curriculum for this purpose. From 2017 to 2019, Coaching Corps held 71 training events and trained more than 2,000 staff coaches from partner organizations around the country.

Using the in-person curriculum as a foundation, Coaching Corps created an online curriculum to scale the training more effectively. In Fall 2019, Coaching Corps conducted a soft launch of this

online training with 60 coaches. In April 2020, Coaching Corps more broadly launched the online POSE training. As of July 2020, approximately 100 learners had completed it.

Online Training

The online curriculum introduces coaches to methods by which they can integrate character development into their coaching practices. The curriculum seeks to teach coaches specific content in three areas:

1) the four **POSE Character Attributes** and how they present in youth sports.

   o These are *persistence*, *optimism*, *self-regulation*, and *empathy*.

2) four **Coaching Strategies** to enhance athlete's capacity for the four POSE attributes.

   o Coaching persistence involves helping athletes shift their *strategy*.

   o Coaching optimism involves helping athletes shift their *thinking*.

   o Coaching self-regulation involves helping athletes shift their *behavior*.

   o Coaching empathy is most effectively done by *modeling* empathy.

3) a series of four **Action Steps** as a coaching method to seamlessly incorporate character building into a sports context.

   o The four Action Steps—*Name It, See It, Coach It, Share It*—allow coaches to utilize this framework with athletes in the service of teaching sports skills and character development.

The online training also includes a series of interactive quizzes to assess coaches' understanding of the core concepts. For each of the three content areas listed above, coaches answered four multiple choice questions. Most of these questions were interactive, whereby the coach selects from a host of athlete avatars who demonstrate an example scenario, and the coach uses this information to answer a question. The knowledge assessment questions are shown in Table 1 on the following page.

The curriculum designers intended that learners would have to achieve a 75% success rate (at least 3 of the 4 questions answered correctly on each quiz) in order to progress to the next module of the training. If coaches did not reach this threshold, they could retake the quiz until they passed.

Table 1. Knowledge Assessment Questions for the Three Content Areas

Knowledge Questions	Response Options
POSE Attributes in Athletes	
In a race activity, Mia finishes last. As she walks to the back of the line, you overhear her say to herself, "It's OK. I know I can do better next time." Which attribute is Mia presenting?	• Persistence • **Optimism** • Self-regulation • Empathy
During soccer practice, athletes are told to dribble the ball around several obstacles before shooting a goal on the other end of the field. Darryl runs toward the goal and bounces the ball off of his foot and out of bounds. On his next turn, he decides to just focus on dribbling, even if he has to go slower. Which attribute is Darryl presenting?	• **Persistence** • Optimism • Self-regulation • Empathy
At the end of a tied game, a player from the opposing team shoots the ball just before the whistle blows and misses. Victor walks over to the player and pats him on the back and says, "Good try." Which attribute is Victor presenting?	• Persistence • Optimism • Self-regulation • **Empathy**
When the referee stops the game to address Marta's aggressive behavior, Marta listens to the referee and then tries to calm herself down when the game restarts. Which attribute is Marta presenting?	• Persistence • Optimism • **Self-regulation** • Empathy
POSE Coaching Strategies	
Coaching persistence involves helping athletes shift their _____.	• Behavior • Communication • Thinking • **Strategy** • Focus
Coaching optimism involves helping athletes shift their _____.	• Behavior • Communication • **Thinking** • Strategy • Focus
Coaching self-regulation involves helping athletes shift their _____.	• **Behavior** • Communication • Thinking • Strategy • Focus
What is the most effective way to teach empathy?	• Explain it very clearly • Discipline athletes who are mean to their teammates • Let your athletes see you cry • **Model it**
Table continues on the following page.	

Knowledge Questions *(cont'd)*	Response Options
Action Steps	
The coach sets up cones and a basket for an activity then turns to the athletes and states the overall purpose and goal of the activity. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	• **Name It** • See It • Coach It • Share It
At the end of practice, the coach praises Marcus for overcoming the challenges he experienced and asks him to discuss what specific tools he used to do so. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	• Name It • See It • Coach It • **Share It**
During an activity in which Dominique is struggling, the coach asks Dominique which parts of her strategy are working and helps her identify some other tactics to try. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	• Name It • See It • **Coach It** • Share It
Throughout practice, the coach observes the athletes to identify where they are struggling and where they are experiencing success. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	• Name It • **See It** • Coach It • Share It

Note. Correct responses are shown in **bold** font.

THIS REPORT

This report briefly presents the knowledge assessment data collected from the nearly 100 coaches who had completed the online POSE training through July 2020. When possible, the knowledge assessment results among online learners are compared with the results among coaches who attended an in-person training in previous years.

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RESULTS

Between March and July 2020, 94[1] individuals completed the online training and at least some of the knowledge assessment questions. The online training design originally involved a requirement for learners to take the quiz at the end of each section and answer at least 75% of the questions (3 out of 4 questions) correctly before moving on to the next section. (If they did not reach the required threshold, they could retake the quiz until passing it.) However, current data suggest that this requirement was not instituted during this initial launch period and that learners were able to progress through the curriculum without completing each quiz. As a result, of the 94 individuals who completed the online training, not all of them completed each quiz. In particular, 90 learners completed the POSE Attributes quiz, 94 completed the Coaching Strategies quiz, and 81 completed the Action Steps quiz. Table 2 shows these counts.

Learners were able to take each quiz more than once, and a total of 18 learners did so. Information about the repeated quiz attempts is shown in the next section. The remainder of the analyses in this report is based on each learner's first attempt at each quiz.

Table 2. Number of Coaches that Completed the Knowledge Assessment Questions

	# of Coaches	% of Total
Completed any knowledge questions	**94**	**100%**
Completed POSE Attributes questions	90	96%
Completed Coaching Strategies questions	94	100%
Completed Action Steps questions	81	86%

Note: Percentage is out of those responding to the question.

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

Coaches' understanding of the core content was assessed with three quizzes. Each quiz included four multiple choice questions. The content areas were:

1. *POSE Attributes* – how the four character attributes present in youth in a sports context and how to recognize them;
2. *Coaching Strategies[2]* – specific tactics to effectively coach and enhance each of the four POSE attributes in youth;
3. *Action Steps* – the four-step framework that coaches can use to incorporate character building into sports coaching.

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[1] In addition, 11 Coaching Corps employees completed the training and associated questions, but due to their pre-existing knowledge of the curriculum content, their data were not included in the analysis for this report.
[2] In previous evaluation reports, these were termed the four "key learnings" of the curriculum.

Percentage of Correct Responses Among Online Learners and In-Person Learners

Figure A shows the average scores (i.e., average percentage of items answered correctly) among coaches by content area. These scores are shown for the 94 coaches who completed the online training (scores on first quiz attempt) and for the nearly 1,900 coaches who completed the in-person training (training exit survey scores).[3] The online training sample is small compared to the in-person training sample, thus it is expected that the online training scores will fluctuate more than the in-person sample as more data are added to the analysis over time.

Overall, online learners' knowledge assessment scores were equal to, or better than, scores among coaches who were trained in-person.

POSE Attributes. Online learners answered, on average, 90% of the POSE attributes questions correctly, compared to in-person learners who answered an average of 82% correctly.

Coaching Strategies. On average, online learners answered 75% of the coaching strategy questions correctly and in-person learners averaged 72% correct.

Action Steps. On average, online learners answered 82% of the actions steps questions correctly, compared to in-person learners who answered an average of 66% correctly.

Figure A. Average Percentage Correct for Online Learner and In-Person Learners

Note: Figure percentages are based on all available data including 94 online survey responses and 1,872 in-person training exit survey responses.

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[3] There were slight differences between the surveys. The online survey included four POSE Attribute items, four Coaching Strategies items, and four Action Steps items. The in-person training exit survey included five POSE Attribute items, four Coaching Strategies (Key Learnings) items, and three Action Steps items.

Number of Correct Reponses Among Online Learners

For the POSE Attributes quiz, two thirds of online learners (67%) correctly answered all four questions on their first attempt. Another quarter (26%) answered three questions correctly. Altogether, 93% "passed" this quiz by reaching the 75% threshold. Importantly, all learners got at least two questions correct.

For Coaching Strategies, 73% of learners "passed" this quiz on the first attempt. About one third (35%) of learners answered all four questions correctly and another third (38%) answered three questions correctly. However, one quarter (26%) of coaches did not reach the 75% threshold – this was the highest "no-pass" rate across the three quizzes. These data suggest that this content area may require additional instruction for learners to adequately grasp.

For the Action Steps, 84% of learners "passed" this quiz. Half (51%) answered all four questions correctly and another third (33%) answered three correctly. Sixteen percent of learners did not meet the threshold of 75% correct.

Figure B. Percentage of Online Learners Answering Questions Correctly
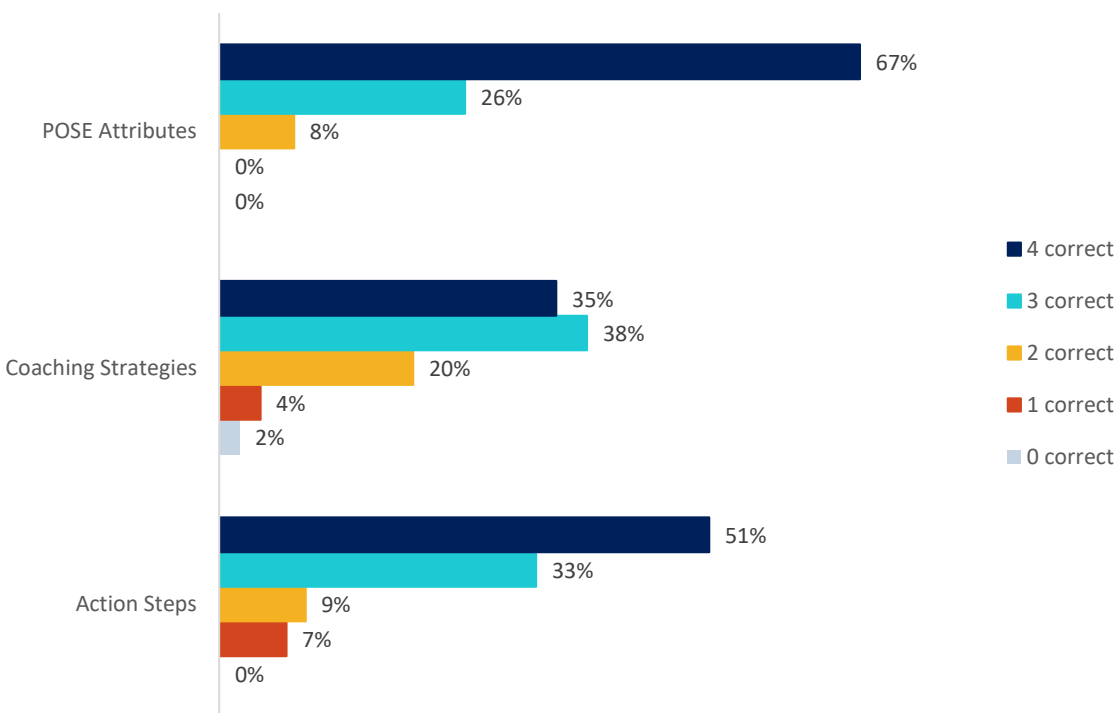
Online learners with multiple quizzes. Eighteen online learners retook at least one quiz, yielding a total of 32 re-takes. Re-takes happened for all content areas. There were 10 re-takes for the POSE Attributes quiz, 12 re-takes for the Coaching Strategies quiz, and 10 re-takes for the Action Steps quiz.[4] A few coaches took quizzes multiple times. Although learners were expected to retake a quiz if they scored less than 75% correct, some learners opted to re-take a quiz even if their initial score was 75% or greater.

As shown in Table 3, learners who re-took a quiz almost always achieved 75% correct on their last attempt. Just one individual out of 28 scored 50% or less on their last try (this was on the Action Steps quiz). This suggests that, for many learners, re-taking the quiz may have been a helpful tool to clarify understanding of the content.

Table 3. Number of Online Learners with 75% Correct on First and Last Quiz Attempt

	% Correct on First Quiz		% Correct on Last Quiz	
	75% or more "PASS"	50% or less	75% or more "PASS"	50% or less
POSE Attributes	4	3	7	0
Coaching Strategies	5	6	11	0
Action Steps	5	5	9	1

Note. Table is based on the 18 online learners who took a quiz more than once. Some learners took a quiz multiple (up to four) times.

As mentioned earlier, it appears that the 75% correct threshold for course advancement was not uniformly instituted during this initial curriculum launch period. A total of 19[5] online learners were able to continue the training despite scoring 50% or less (two or fewer questions correct) on the Coaching Strategies quiz. This mean that, according to the original training guidelines, 19 additional re-takes should have happened for this section.

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[4] The 10 re-takes for POSE Attributes occurred among 7 individuals. The 12 re-takes for Coaching Strategies occurred across 11 individuals. The 10 re-takes for the Action Steps occurred across 10 individuals.

[5] 25 online learners scored two or less correct on the Coaching Strategies section on their first attempt and 6 of those learners re-took the section earning a passing grade on the re-take. The remaining 19 learners advanced on with the training without logging a re-take.

NPC RESEARCH

INCORRECT ANSWER ANALYSIS

Identifying the pattern of incorrect responses—how often which wrong answers were chosen—can often be informative by highlighting areas where learners experience confusion. Incorrect answer analyses were conducted for each of the knowledge question groups.

POSE Attributes

Table 4 shows the percentage of coaches that correctly identified each POSE attribute during their online training (first quiz attempt) and after the in-person training (training exit scores). Overall, online learners performed very well, with 90% or more of coaches correctly answering the questions for persistence, self-regulation, and empathy. Some coaches exhibited confusion regarding optimism: 77% answered this item correctly, and others (17%) confused it with persistence. Success rates were similar for online learners and in-person learners for optimism (77% vs. 79%) and self-regulation (97% vs. 92%). Whereas a greater proportion of online learners, versus in-person learners, answered items correctly for persistence (92% vs. 74%) and empathy (92% vs. 78%).

Table 4. Endorsed Responses for the POSE Attributes

Question	Answer Options	Online Training	In-person Training[a]
In a race activity, Mia finishes last. As she walks to the back of the line, you overhear her say to herself, "It's OK. I can do better next time."	Persistence	17%	8%
	Optimism	**77%**	**79%**
	Self-regulation	1%	7%
	Empathy	4%	6%
	Don't Know	*n/a*	1%
During soccer practice, athletes are told to dribble the ball around several obstacles before shooting a goal on the other end of the field. Darryl runs toward the goal and bounces the ball off of his foot and out of bounds. On his next turn, he decides to just focus on dribbling, even if he has to go slower.	**Persistence**	**92%**	**74%**
	Optimism	0%	5%
	Self-regulation	8%	20%
	Empathy	0%	0%
	Don't Know	*n/a*	1%
At the end of a tie game, a player from the opposing team shoots the ball just before the whistle blows and misses. Victor walks over to the player and pats him on the back and says, "Good try."	Persistence	0%	2%
	Optimism	6%	16%
	Self-regulation	2%	4%
	Empathy	**92%**	**78%**
	Don't Know	*n/a*	1%
When the referee stops the game to address Marta's aggressive behavior, Marta listens to the referee and then tries to calm herself down when the game restarts.	Persistence	1%	2%
	Optimism	0%	3%
	Self-regulation	**97%**	**92%**
	Empathy	2%	3%
	Don't Know	*n/a*	1%

Note: Online training sample size = 90; In-person training = 1,853 responses. Correct answers are in bold.
[a] Responses on the Training Exit Survey. Online questions did not include a "don't know" response option.

Coaching Strategies

Knowledge of most of the POSE coaching strategies was similar among online and in-person learners, as seen in Table 5. Among online learners, 80% recalled that the most effective way to coach optimism is to help athletes shift their thinking; 79% understood that the most effective way to coach self-regulation is to help athletes shift their behavior; and 97% knew that the most effective way to coach empathy is to model it. This compared to 79%, 80%, and 91%, respectively, among coaches who attended an in-person training event.

In contrast, online learners demonstrated confusion regarding the coaching strategy for persistence. Less than half (45%) of online learners understood that the most effective way to coach persistence is to help athletes shift their strategy, compared to 71% of in-person learners.

Table 5. Endorsed Responses for the Coaching Strategies Questions

Question	Answer Options	Online Training	In-person Training[a]
Coaching persistence involves helping athletes shift their…	Behavior	14%	8%
	Communication	4%	2%
	Thinking	22%	9%
	Strategy	**45%**	**71%**
	Focus	14%	10%
Coaching optimism involves helping athletes shift their…	Behavior	6%	8%
	Communication	3%	4%
	Thinking	**80%**	**79%**
	Strategy	4%	5%
	Focus	6%	4%
Coaching self-regulation involves helping athletes shift their…	**Behavior**	**79%**	**80%**
	Communication	1%	2%
	Thinking	1%	6%
	Strategy	2%	6%
	Focus	17%	6%
What is the most effective way to teach empathy?	Explain it very clearly	2%	7%
	Discipline athletes who are mean to their teammates	1%	1%
	Let your athletes see you cry	0%	1%
	Model it	**97%**	**91%**

Note: Online training sample size = 94; In-person training from 798 to 812 responses.
[a] Responses on the Training Exit Survey. Correct answers are in bold.

Action Steps

Table 6 shows the percentages of coaches who endorsed each answer option for the questions pertaining to the Action Steps. Overall, online learners tended to perform better than in-person learners. The *Name It* step was correctly identified by 86% of online learners, versus 75% of in-person learners. The *See It* step was correctly identified by 95% of the online learners (not asked at the in-person training). The *Coach It* step was correctly identified by 74% of the online learners, versus 57% of in-person learners. The *Share It* step was correctly identified by 72% of the online learners, versus 65% of in-person learners.

Among all learners, regardless of training type, the *Coach It* and *Share It* steps remain the most often mis-identified, and both are often confused for the *See It* step.

Table 6. Endorsed Responses for Action Steps

Question	Answer Options	Online Training	In-person Training[a]
The coach sets up cones and a basket for an activity then turns to the athletes and states the overall purpose and goal of the activity.	**Name it**	**86%**	**75%**
	See it	3%	6%
	Coach it	5%	14%
	Share it	6%	5%
	Don't know	*n/a*	0%
During an activity in which Dominique is struggling, the coach asks Dominique which parts of her strategy are working and helps her identify some other tactics to try.	Name it	0%	6%
	See it	20%	16%
	Coach it	9%	13%
	Share it	**72%**	**65%**
	Don't know	*n/a*	0%
At the end of practice, the coach praises Marcus for overcoming the challenges he experienced and asks him to discuss what specific tools he used to do so. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	Name it	1%	7%
	See it	20%	23%
	Coach it	**74%**	**57%**
	Share it	5%	12%
	Don't know	*n/a*	1%
During an activity in which Dominique is struggling, the coach asks Dominique which parts of her strategy are working and helps her identify some other tactics to try. Which Action Step is the coach demonstrating?	Name it	0%	*n/a*
	See it	**95%**	*n/a*
	Coach it	0%	*n/a*
	Share it	5%	*n/a*
	Don't know	*n/a*	*n/a*

Note: Online training sample size = 81; In-person training = 1,853 responses. Correct answers are in bold.
[a] Responses on the Training Exit Survey. Online questions did not include a "don't know" response option, and the In-person survey did not include a question about the "See It" step.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Coaching Corps adapted its in-person POSE training to an online format in order to scale up more effectively. Both the online and in-person trainings involved assessments of coaches' understanding of core curriculum content. Comparing the knowledge scores among the 94 coaches who completed the online training with the scores among the roughly 1,900 coaches who attended an in-person training revealed that the online training effectively conveys the curriculum content.

Overall, online learners' knowledge assessment scores tended to be equal to, or better than, their in-person trained counterparts. These data indicate that Coaching Corps translation of the content to an online format was effective.

POSE Attributes. Online learners appeared to grasp this information well, as 93% of them answered 75% or more of the POSE Attribute quiz questions correctly, indicating a high level of uptake for this content. Online learners were more likely than in-person learners to correctly identify persistence and empathy, suggesting that the online training may better define these attributes. Understanding of optimism and self-regulation was similar between the groups. Among online learners, the most noticeable point of confusion pertained to identifying optimism, which was most often confused with persistence.

➢ *Recommendation: Clarify the online curriculum content regarding the distinction between optimism and persistence.*

Coaching Strategies. This content area appeared to be the most challenging for online learners. While 73% of them answered three or more of the Coaching Strategies questions correctly, 26% did not. This was the highest "no-pass" rate across the three content areas. Even still, online learners' understanding of the content was similar to that of in-person learners for all items except for persistence. Just 45% of online learners understood that coaching persistence involves helping athletes shift their strategy, which was notably lower than the 71% of in-person learners who recalled this tactic correctly. Data suggested that online learners' confusion was generalized, as coaches' incorrect answers did not reflect a specific pattern.

➢ *Recommendation: Clarify the online curriculum content regarding the coaching strategy for persistence.*

Action Steps. Online learners appeared to understand this content well, as 84% of them answered 75% or more correctly on the quiz. Online learners notably outperformed in-person learners on these quiz questions. The primary points of confusion among online learners were similar to those among in-person learners. Specifically, coaches tended to confuse *See It* with both *Coach It* and *Share It*.

> ➢ *Recommendation: Clarify the online curriculum content regarding the See It step of the framework. Further define how it is different from Coach It and Share It.*

Format of Training. The original design for the online training involved a requirement for learners to complete a quiz at the end of each module and answer at least 3 of the 4 questions (75%) correctly before moving to the next module. During this initial launch period, it does not appear that this threshold for course advancement was uniformly instituted. It is not clear if this requirement was purposefully disabled by Coaching Corps staff or inadvertently dysfunctional due to a technological error. It is worth noting that the quizzes, and the ability to retake them, appeared to help clarify understanding of the content. Learners who took a quiz more than once increased their scores and ultimately nearly all of them achieved 75% correct.

> ➢ *Recommendation: Implement the requirement of 75% correct of all quizzes for online course advancement and ensure that learners can re-take quizzes as many times as necessary to achieve that threshold.*

Conclusion. Coaching Corps continues to contribute to positive youth coaching by offering advanced training and resources materials regarding the integration of character development into a youth sports context. Building on their successful in-person training events, Coaching Corps has adapted this content for dissemination via an online training. Offering this training virtually will increase the accessibility of this information for coaches around the country.