Developing an empowering motivational climate: Strategies for coaches

Ashley Duguay, Ph.D.

info@teamfirstconsulting.com

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Young athletes' motivation: Two key theories

1. Achievement Goal Theory (AGT; Ames, 1992; Nicholls, 1989)

Two ways of judging one's competence are delineated in AGT:

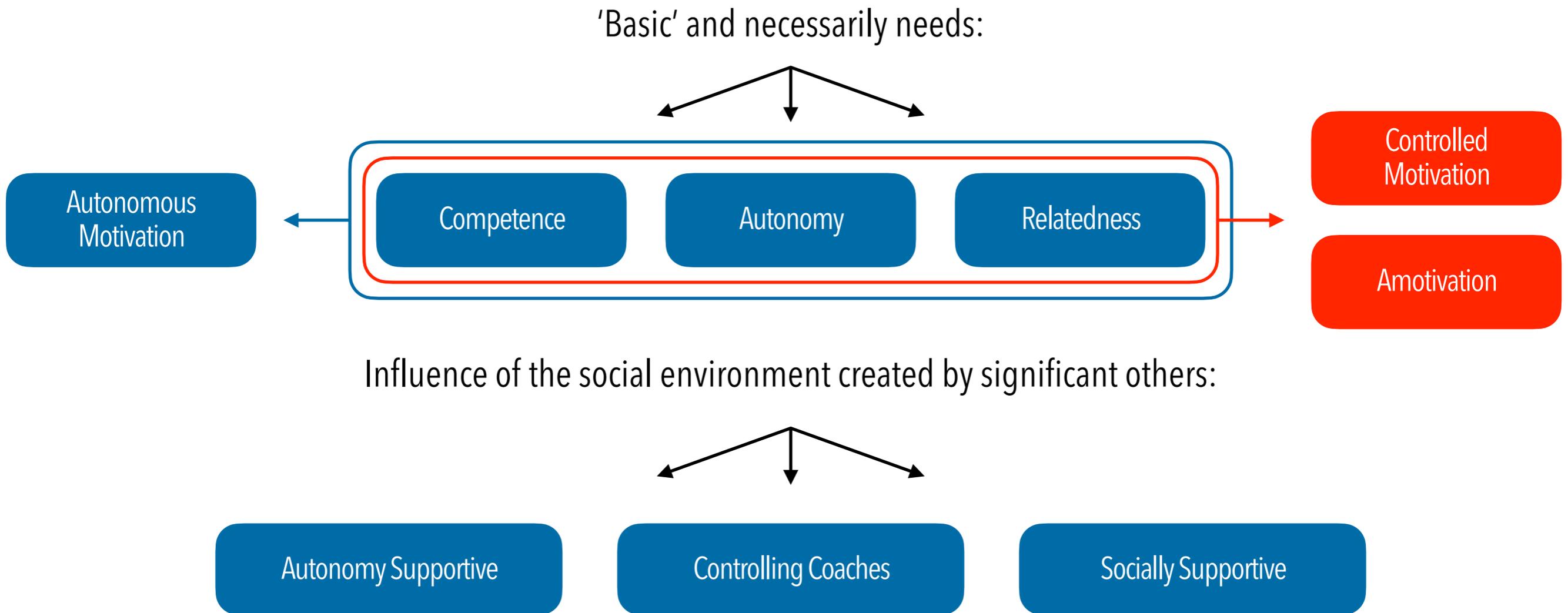| Using task-involving criteria (i.e., task goal perspective) | Using ego-involving criteria (i.e., ego goal perspective) |

Coach-created motivational climate:

| Task-involving motivational climate | Ego-involving motivational climate |

Young athletes' motivation: Two key theories

2. Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017)

'Basic' and necessarily needs:

Autonomous Motivation	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness	Controlled Motivation
				Amotivation

Influence of the social environment created by significant others:

Autonomy Supportive	Controlling Coaches	Socially Supportive

An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

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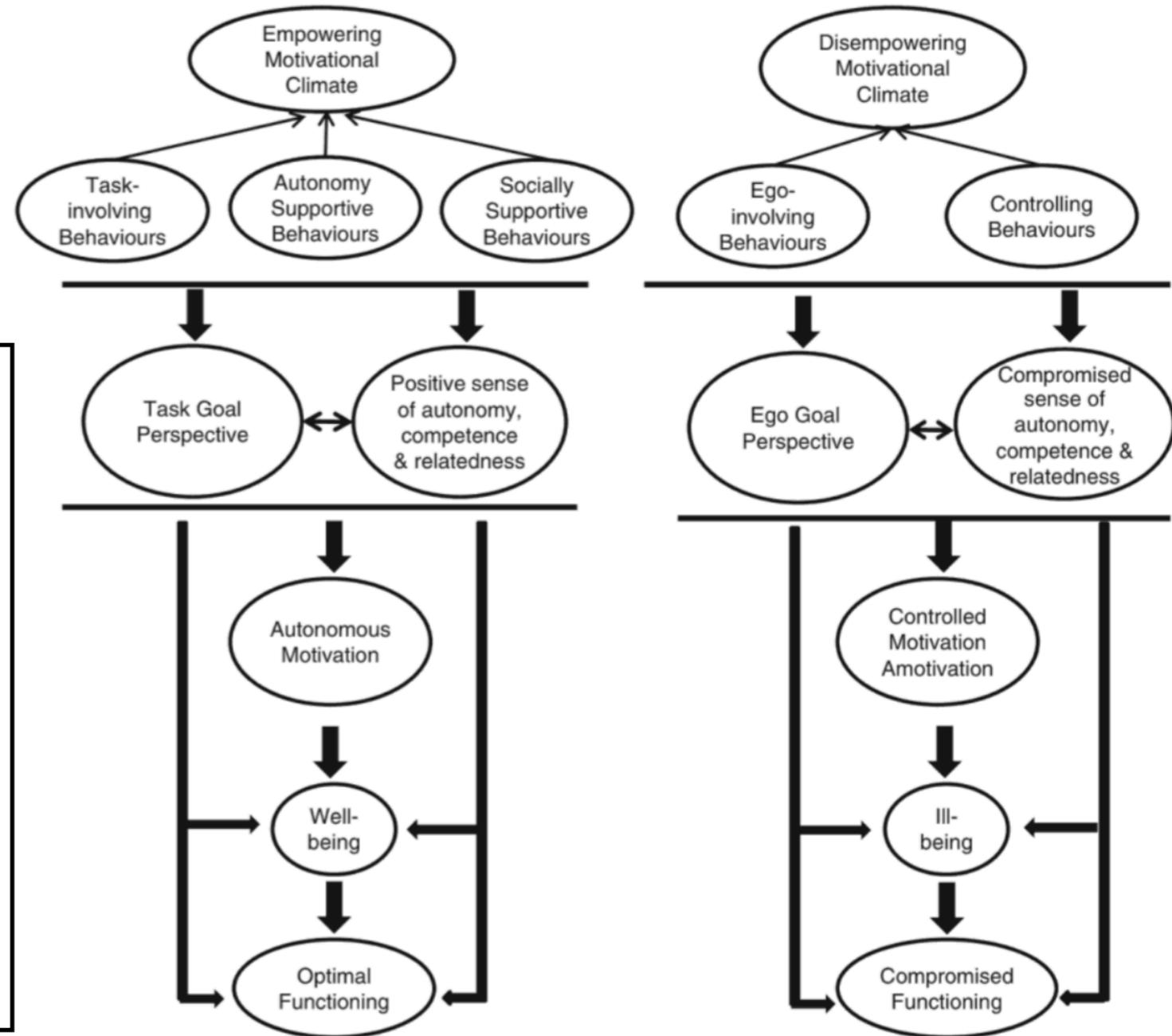
The conceptual and empirical foundations of Empowering Coaching™: Setting the stage for the PAPA project

Joan L. Duda*

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

This article describes the evolution and key features of a training programme, Empowering Coaching™, which pulls from both the achievement goal frameworks and self-determination theory and related research. This programme takes into account that there are key dimensions of the social psychological environments created by significant others (such as coaches) and central motivational processes that are pertinent to sustained and optimal engagement in activities (such as sport). Also presented is information on how and why Empowering Coaching™ was implemented within the European-wide "Promoting Adolescent Physical Activity" project (www.projectpapa.org), which aimed to provide an evidence-based intervention approach to facilitating "healthy sport experiences for healthier kids".

FIGURE 8.1 Features of empowering and disempowering motivational climates

An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

Initial validation of the coach-created Empowering and Disempowering Motivational Climate Questionnaire (EDMCQ-C)
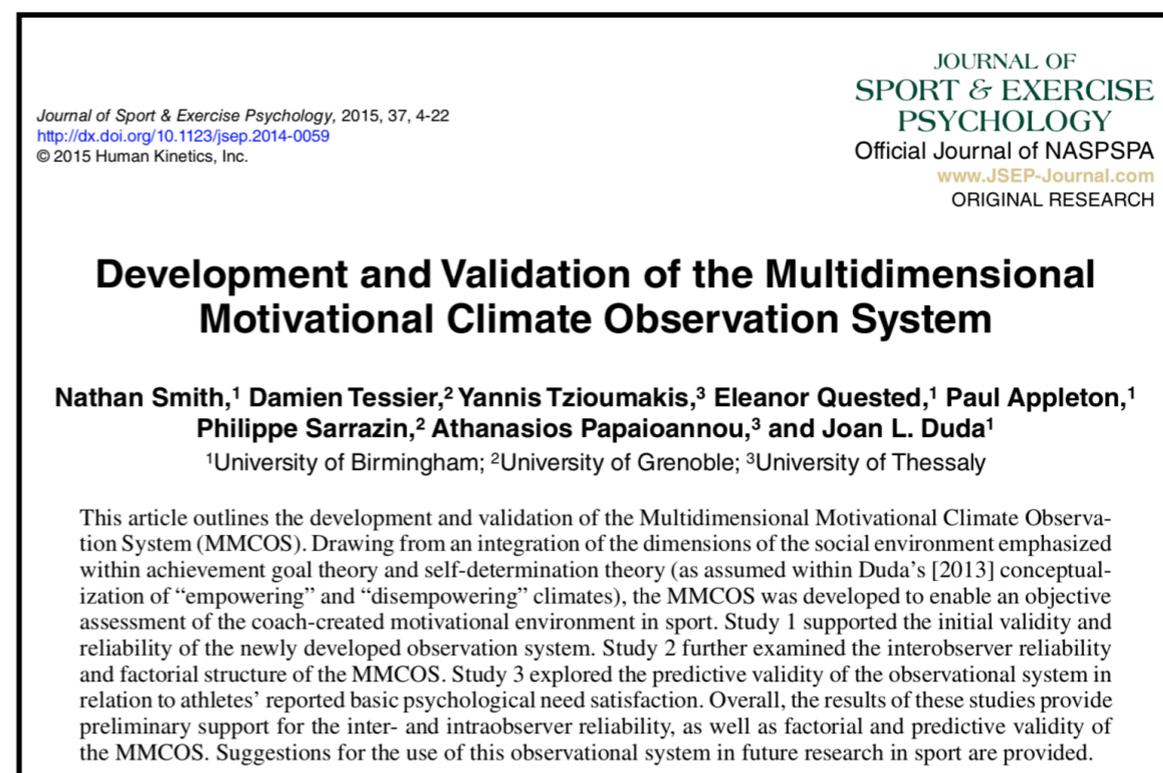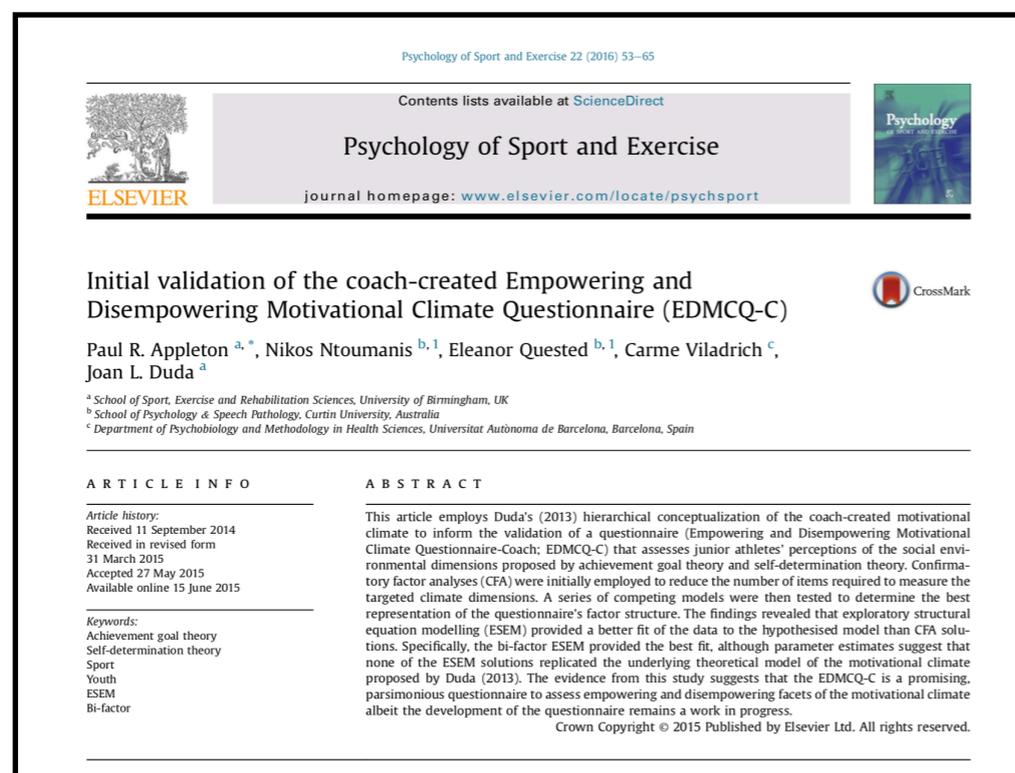
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Development and Validation of the Multidimensional Motivational Climate Observation System

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Task-involving:

My coach encouraged players to try new skills.

My coach tried to make sure players felt good when they tried their best.

My coach encouraged players to really work together as a team.

Emphasizes task-focused competence feedback.

Emphasizes/recognizes effort and/or improvement.

Uses cooperative learning.

An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

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Autonomy-supportive:

My coach gave players choices and options.

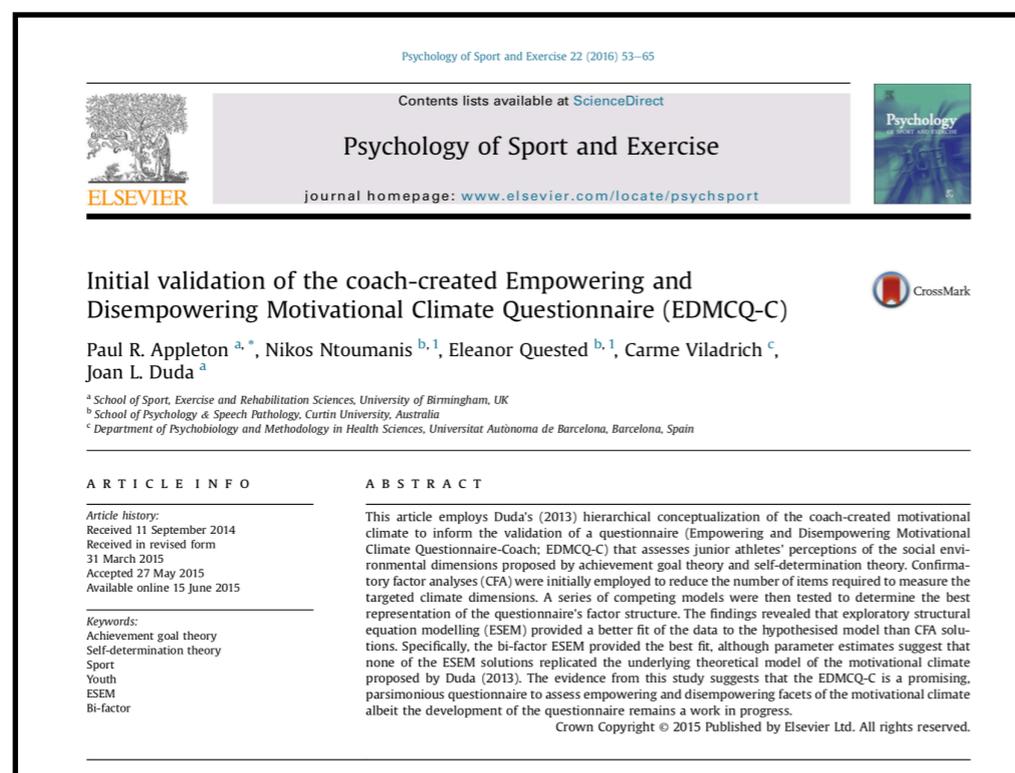My coach answered players' questions fully and carefully.

My coach thought that it is important for players to play this sport because they(the players) enjoy it.

Provides meaningful choice.
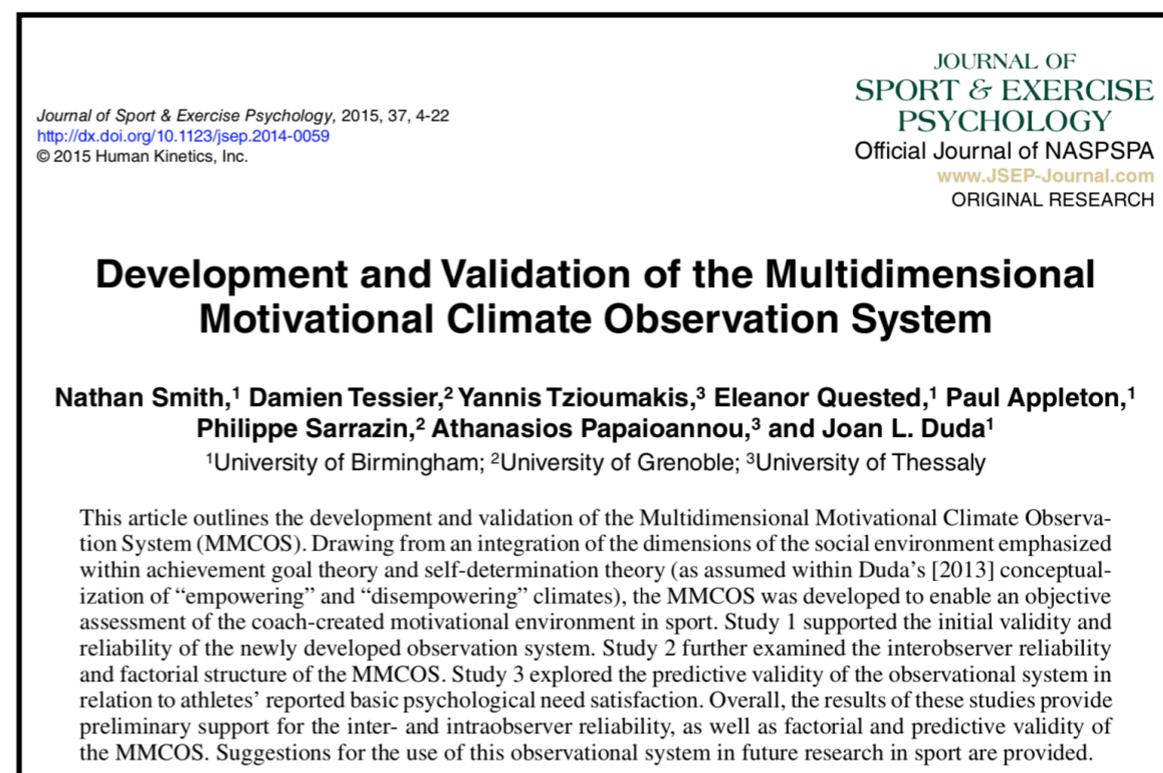
Provides rationale for tasks/requests/constraints.

Encourages initiative taking.

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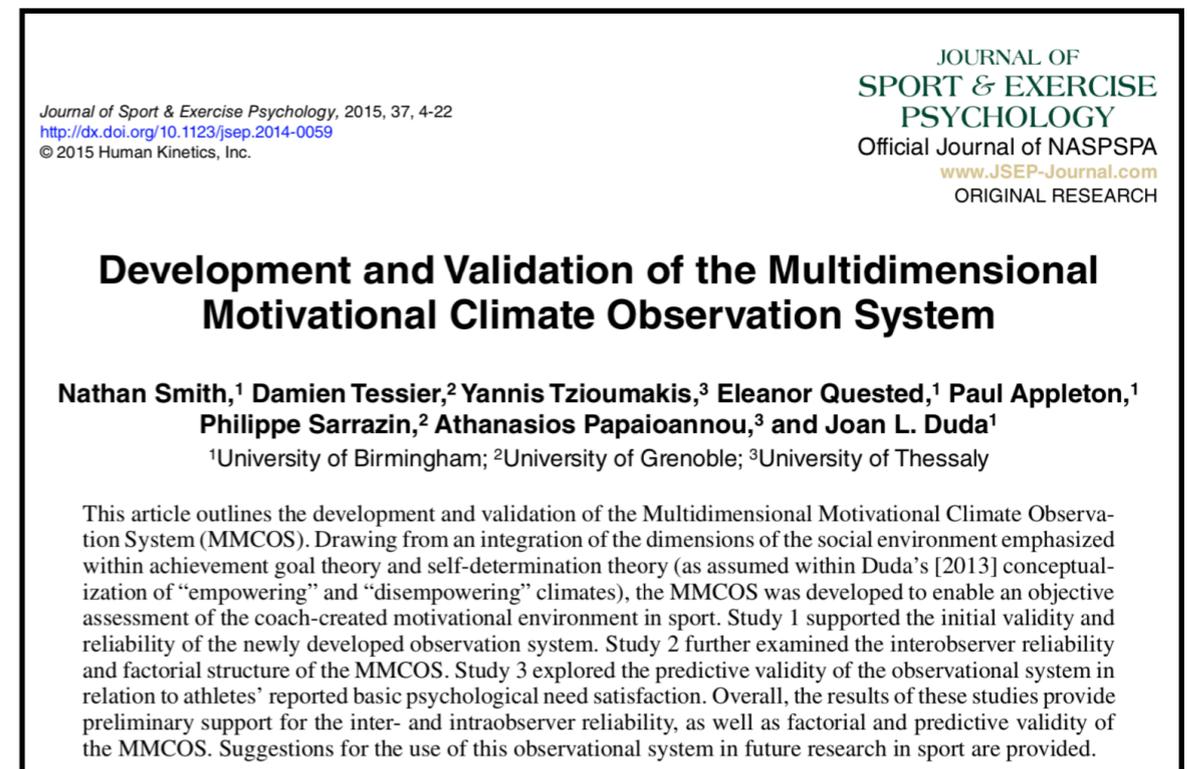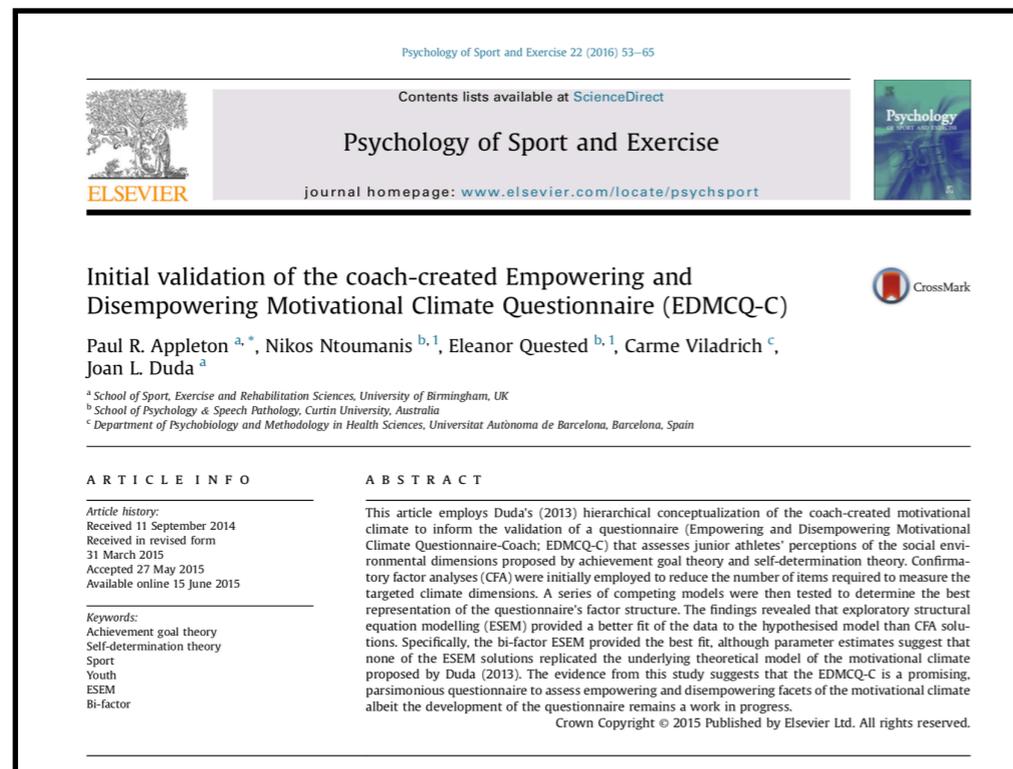
Socially-supportive:

My coach could really be counted on to care, no matter what happened.

My coach really appreciated players as people, not just as athletes.

My coach listened openly and did not judge players' personal feelings.

Relatedness supportive:

Adopts a warm communication style.

Shows care and concern for athletes.

Shows unconditional regard.

teamfirst

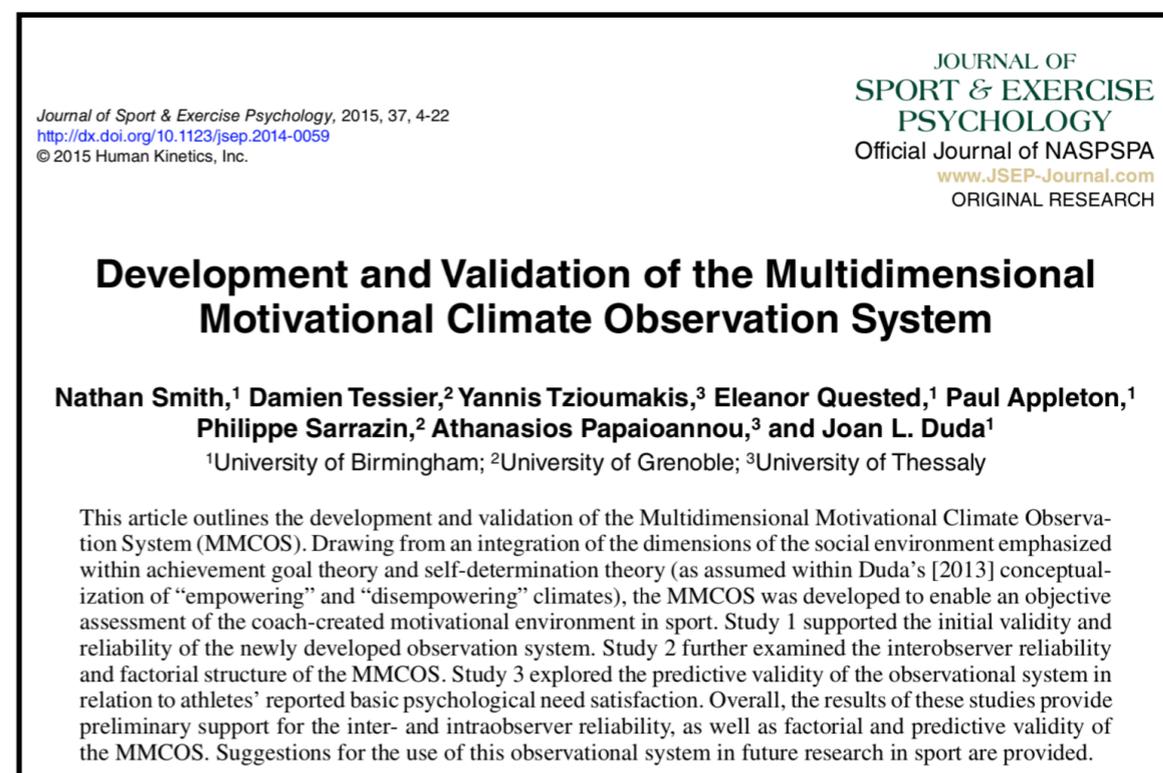## An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

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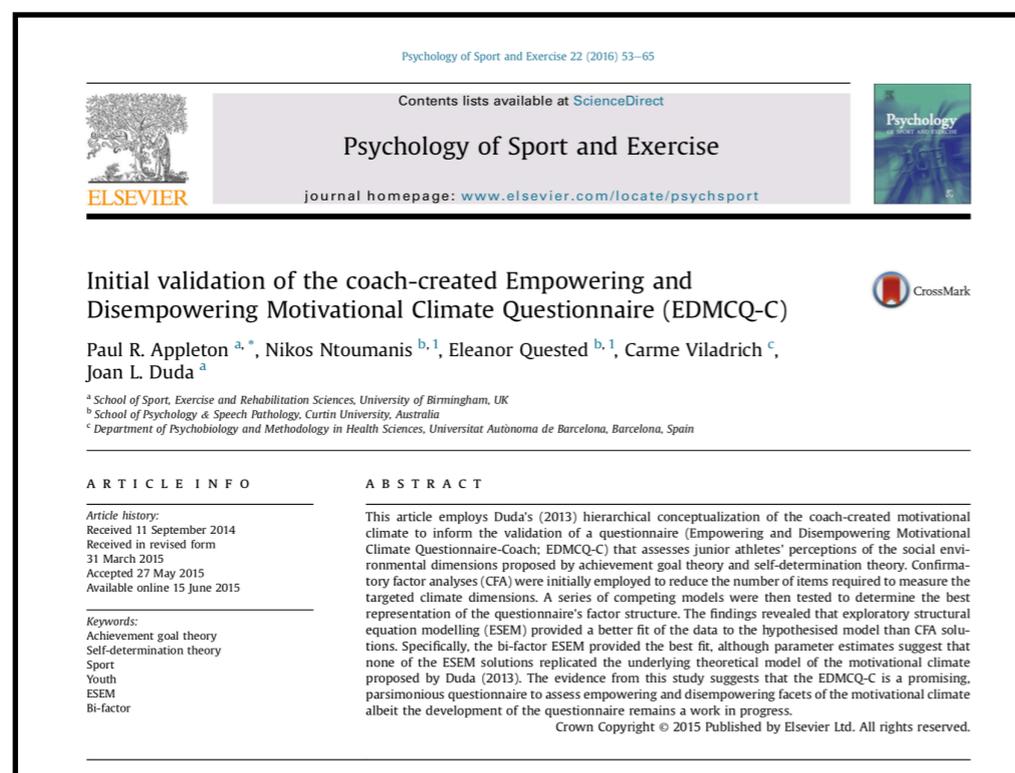
Structured:

Provides instructions and organization.

Offers expectations for learning.

Provides guidance throughout drills/activities/exercises.

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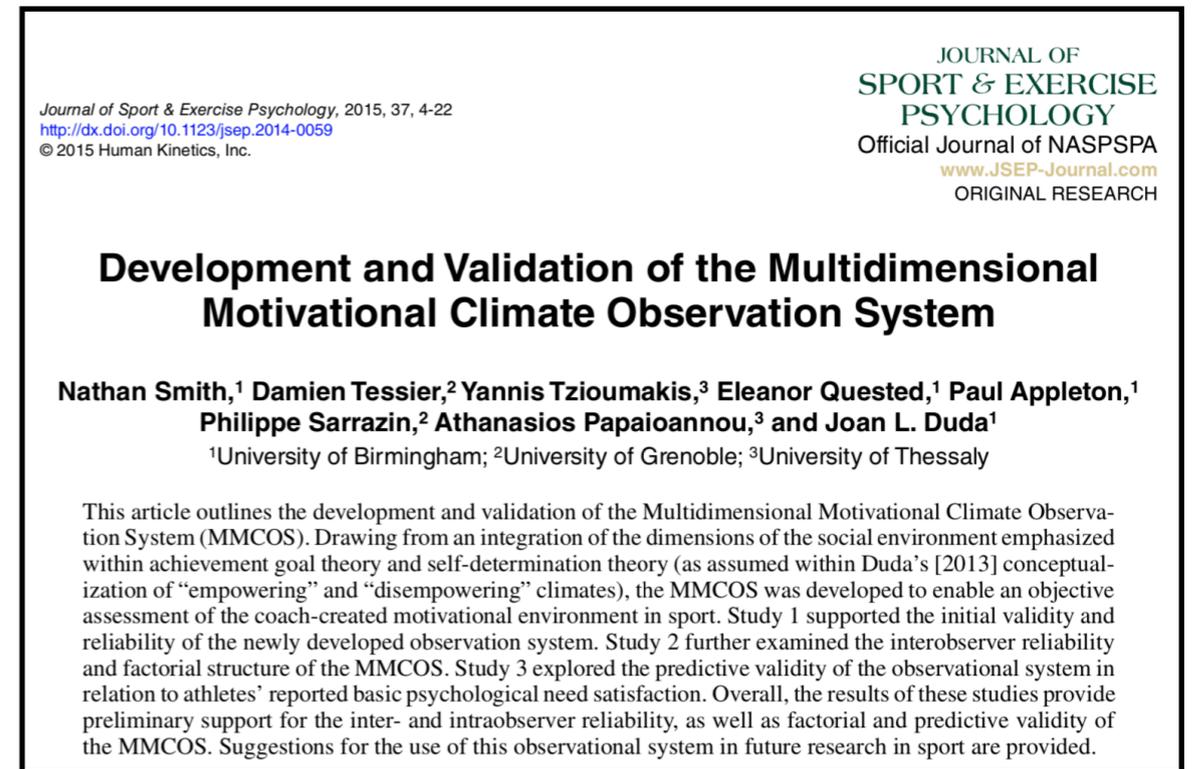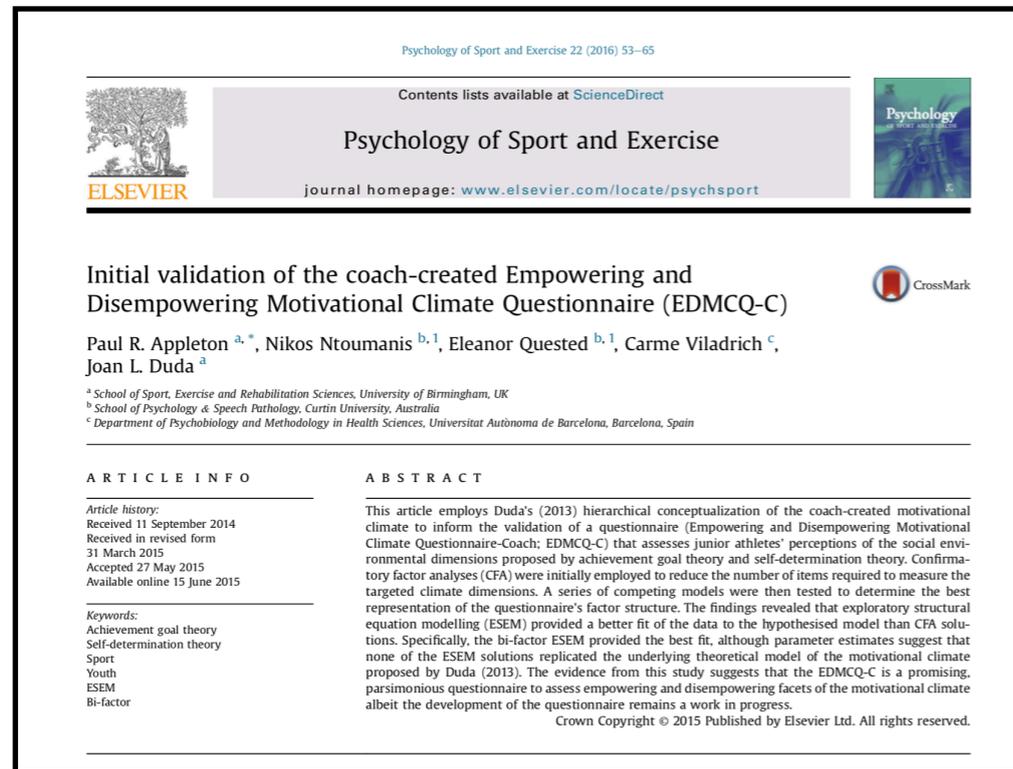

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Ego-involving:

My coach substituted players when they made a mistake.

My coach gave most attention to the best players.

My coach yelled at players for messing up.

Punishes mistakes.

Emphasizes/recognizes inferior/superior performance and ability.

Encourage inter/intrateam rivalry.

An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

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Controlling coaching:

My coach paid less attention to players if they displeased him of her.

My coach shouts at players in front of others to make them certain things.

My coach threatened to punish players to keep them in line during training.

Uses controlling language.

Relies on intimidations.

Devalues athletes' perspective.

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Relatedness Thwarting:

Excludes athletes from certain drills/activities/exercises.

Shows a lack of care and concern for athletes.

Adopts a cold communication style.

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An integrated model of empowering and disempowering motivational climates (Duda, 2013)

TABLE 8.3 Examples of empowering and disempowering coach behaviours and strategies

	Empowering Strategies	Disempowering Strategies
Autonomy	• Everyone on the team is encouraged to share ideas and make decisions within the session, and the coach considers these • Players are encouraged to focus on having fun, being healthy, enjoying the tasks and understanding the relevance and benefits of *why* they are doing such activities • Participants are provided with meaningful and attractive choices about how the training is run, and feel they have input into competition strategy	• Coach communication is 'one-way traffic', with little input from players • Only certain individuals (e.g. best players/more outgoing players) are listened to and asked for input • Rewards and reinforcements (e.g. praise, treats) are used to 'motivate' players so such rewards become the reason players engage in the task or behaviour • Coaches intimidate players if they do not do what they ask

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TABLE 8.3 Examples of empowering and disempowering coach behaviours and strategies

	Empowering Strategies	Disempowering Strategies
Belonging	• Participants are encouraged to work together. They share ideas and work towards group/team goals • All players feel that they have an important role to play in the group/team, and everyone understands they each contribute to the success of the team • Coaches take an interest in players as people by asking about their lives outside of sport (school, home etc.)	• Coaches ignore players' feelings and perspectives and coach the way they want to • Coaches demand respect from players and act cold and uncaring, especially when players underperform or there is a loss • Coaches show they care or are happy when the player or team does what they expect

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TABLE 8.3 Examples of empowering and disempowering coach behaviours and strategies

	Empowering Strategies	Disempowering Strategies
Competence	• Individual-based learning and improvement are continually discussed and emphasised after successes *and* failures • Coaches emphasise that mistakes are essential to the learning process and allow players to feel comfortable in making errors • Where possible, games and activities are designed to challenge each person at their individual level	• Coaches' feedback is primarily tied to outcomes such as winning and being better than others • Coaches make it clear (via the attention and rewards given) that they value players based on sporting ability • Coaches make comparisons between players, emphasise differences in ability, and create within-team competition for roles and positions • Coaches tend to respond in a punitive manner when players make mistakes

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Table 9.1   TARGET Structures and Strategies that Enhance Task Involvement

TARGET Structure	Strategies
Task: What athletes are asked to learn and what tasks they are given to complete (e.g., training activities, structures of practice conditions)	Provide the athlete with a variety of moderately demanding tasks that emphasize individual challenge and active involvement. Assist athletes in setting self-referenced process and performance goals. Create a developmentally appropriate training environment by individualizing the demands of the task.
Authority: Type and frequency of participation in the decision-making process (e.g., athlete involvement in decisions concerning training, setting and enforcing rules)	Encourage participation by athletes in the decision-making process. Consider the athlete's perspective. Develop opportunities for leadership. Get athletes to take responsibility for their own sport development by teaching self-management and self-monitoring skills.
Recognition: Procedures and practices used to motivate athletes and recognize their progress and achievement (e.g., reasons for recognition, distribution of rewards, opportunities for rewards)	Use private meetings between coach and athlete to focus on individual progress. Recognize individual progress, effort, and improvement. Ensure equal opportunities for rewards to all.

Table 9.1   TARGET Structures and Strategies that Enhance Task Involvement

TARGET Structure	Strategies
Grouping: How athletes are brought together or kept apart in training and competition	Use flexible and cooperative grouping arrangements. Provide multiple grouping arrangements (i.e., individual, small-group, and large-group activities). Emphasize creative solutions to training problems.
Evaluation: Standards set for athletes' learning and performance and procedures for monitoring and judging attainment of these standards	Develop evaluation criteria based on effort, improvement, persistence, and progress toward individual goals. Involve athletes in self-evaluation. Make evaluation meaningful and consistent.
Timing: Appropriateness of time demands placed on learning and performance (e.g., pace of learning and development, management of time, training schedule)	Recognize that even elite athletes do not train, learn, or develop at the same rate. Provide sufficient time before moving on to the next stage in skill development. Try to spend equal time with all athletes. Assist athletes in establishing training and competition schedules.

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Ashley Duguay, Ph.D.

info@teamfirstconsulting.com