9

Managing the Center: The Director as Coach

Michael Mattison
Boise State University

There are no secrets with the X's and O's. We all know that. I think the coaches who are successful find a way to get the best out of each individual on their team, to help them reach their potential. That's the real challenge.

—Jerry Yeagley, University of Indiana Men's Soccer

One of the more popular bits of advice for writing center tutors and consultants is to behave like a coach (Capossela; Harris; Ryan). The writer takes on the role of player, and the consultant looks to coax, prompt, and push that player to excel, all while maintaining a respectful distance from the act of writing the paper: "In sports, coaches instruct players and direct team strategy. They do not actually do the work for the team, but rather they stand on the sidelines observing how the team functions, looking at what is going well and what needs improvement" (Ryan 23). In my experience, the player–coach analogy has been a good one, easily understood by most consultants and helpful in allowing them to consider and reflect on their work in a writing center.

Yet, this helpful analogy seems to be used solely for the *consultant–writer* relationship. What of the *consultant–director* relationship? When I began my first year as writing center director at Boise State,[1] it did not occur to me that the director could also be considered a coach. But now, the connection seems obvious: A director is also on the sidelines, watching consultants perform. A director too must coax, prompt, push, and teach, aiming to allow individual consultants to work to the best of their ability. In addition, the director must handle all these

[1]Boise State's Writing Center handles approximately thirteen hundred consultations each semester, and employs around twenty consultants, mostly undergraduates. We take both appointments and walk-ins, and serve a campus of over eighteen thousand students, many of whom commute to school and are nontraditional.

individual relationships while simultaneously working with the group of consultants as a whole; the writing center staff is the team—my team. The coach analogy seems even stronger for the work of a director than it does for the work of a consultant.

Because I found such a strong connection between what I do as a director and what a baseball or basketball coach would do, I decided to read up on a few well-known coaches and consider how their thoughts might influence my work. For instance, how can John Wooden's guidelines for recruiting players inform my hiring practices? How might Mike Krzyzewski's approach to practice relate to the work done in staff meetings? How can Joe Torre's ideas on communication connect to my daily conversations with consultants?[2] In short, what can the sports world teach a writing center director about creating a successful writing center team?

Certainly, mine is not the first suggestion that coaching sports is relevant to another activity. The books that inform this chapter have been popular sellers, especially for those in business.[3] They have not, however, been used much to comment on the academic world or, as far as I know, to comment at all on writing centers. Yet, just as questions of leadership, trust, and responsibility are relevant for coaches on the playing field and managers in the boardroom, they are important for writing center directors.[4] And again, as we ask our consultants to visualize themselves in different roles, we can do the same. If we consider ourselves as coaches, then we can see ourselves and our responsibilities differently, even if we don't necessarily visualize ourselves strolling the sidelines during the Final Four or walking out to the mound in Yankee Stadium on a cool evening in October (although that is perfectly acceptable, too).

One last point before considering the connections between coaching and directing a writing center: It's not about winning and losing. Yes, sports mainly focus on who wins and who loses, and we do keep score, but none of the coaches cited here aims simply to win. As Kryzewski (shuh-SHEF'-skee) said, "I believe that any team that does its best is a winner. If we're constantly looking at a win–loss record to determine whether we are doing well, we're not looking at the right barometer" (28). He had a broader definition of success than one measured by the scoreboard. So did Wooden: "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming" (88). As writing center directors, we too strive to make our consultants successful; they strive to make writers successful. To be successful, to do your best, is the main goal.

[2]Wooden was coach of the UCLA men's basketball team from 1948 to 1975. In that time, he coached such notable players as Lew Alcinder (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar), Bill Walton, and Gail Goodrich. During his tenure, the Bruins won ten national championships (seven of them in a row), nineteen conference championships, and had four undefeated seasons. Krzyzewski is currently the coach of the Duke men's basketball team. Under his leadership, Duke has won three national championships, and made the Final Four ten times since 1981. And Torre is (at least as of this writing) the manager of the New York Yankees. During his tenure, the team has played in six World Series, winning the championship four times, and Torre has twice been named the AL Manager of the Year.

[3]A comment or two on these works. First, none was penned solely by the coach. All of them had second authors, and it is likely that that second author did most of the writing, relying on interviews with the coach to create the work. Second, none of the works is especially full of wonderful prose. The sentence structure is fairly simple and straightforward, the stories are often quick and lacking in detail, and aphorisms often substitute for an extended discussion of rather complicated ideas about human relationships and human beings in general. Yet, there are, I believe, kernels of insight in the works, and there is also an epideictic power to them. No doubt that is part of their intent—to inspire as much as to educate. Coaching, and directing a writing center, involves inspiring others. The coaches in these books speak often to that task, and their books attempt the same with their readers.

[4]Posey connected management theory with writing center work, and this chapter strengthens that connection as well.

consultants as a
ns even stronger

and what a base-
oaches and con-
John Wooden's
Krzyzewski's ap-
's ideas on com-
at can the sports
ter team?
o another activ-
or those in busi-
world or, as far as
ip, trust, and re-
boardroom, they
ants to visualize
oaches, then we
ily visualize our-
d in Yankee Sta-
o).
directing a writ-
o wins and who
nply to win. As
st is a winner. If
loing well, we're
s than one mea-
a direct result of
e capable of be-
tants successful;
e main goal.

ed such notable play-
e Bruins won ten na-
undefeated seasons.
s won three national
) the manager of the
nship four times, and

ond authors, and it is
work. Second, none
rward, the stories are
er complicated ideas
e works, and there is
te. Coaching, and di-
, and their books at-

connection as well.

RECRUITING PLAYERS AND HIRING CONSULTANTS

One of the most daunting tasks for a writing center director is to choose who will work in the center. Consulting with writers can be a challenge for even the most patient and thoughtful individuals, so how do we find those who will be up to such a challenge? Coaches face a similar dilemma, especially those at the college level. Many students have athletic talent, but how many of those will fit well with a particular team, and how many will be able to handle the demands and pressures of both school and sports?[5]

Ideally, perhaps, directors could approach hiring as Wooden usually did recruiting and let the consultants come to them: "I never wanted to talk a prospective player into coming to UCLA. It was important to me that they be truly interested in us without having any pressure put on them. I wanted them to want UCLA" (220). Of course, Wooden was coaching a PAC-10 school that managed to win ten national championships during his tenure; his team had a fairly high profile. Writing centers do not always command the same attention from students, so directors do go looking for students.

When we do search, however, we can still ask that students be "truly interested" in writing center work. We can explore their motives for applying, and we can still take some lessons from Wooden, as he did occasionally court players. He described one recruiting visit, with a player he left unnamed:

> He was an excellent prospect and a good student.... While I was chatting with his parents, his mother asked me a question. Before I could answer, the young man interrupted and said, "Mom, how can you be so ignorant? Anyone so stupid should just keep still." I was appalled, although neither parent seemed to take offense at his rudeness. Very shortly I said that we must be going, and as we left I withdrew our offer of a scholarship. This was just not the kind of young man that I wanted on our team. (222)

For Wooden, character matters. So should it with consultants. Someone can be an outstanding writer yet behave condescendingly toward other writers. Like Wooden, writing center directors should consider the way their recruits interact with others.

For instance, Rick Leahy asked other teachers to recommend students for the Boise State Writing Center and specifically asked the teachers about peer interaction: "I attempt [to recruit] writing assistants carefully, not by putting out a general call for applicants but by asking faculty to nominate students they feel are excellent writers and good at working with other students—people who strike their teachers as the 'right type'" (45). Those "types" of students excel as much at peer group work and peer feedback as they do with their own essays. As Rick's successor, I have continued this practice, asking teachers to recommend those who "offer constructive, tactful responses to their peers, seem truly interested in others' writing, and willingly listen to feedback about their own writing." Such students will probably be well suited to writing center work.

[5]Unfortunately, we have too many examples of schools and coaches who seem to consider the recruiting process one of simply selling the school to the best athletes, regardless of character (the school's or the athlete's). The situation with the football team at the University of Colorado is a prime example, as are others.

Also, I meet with all the students who are interested in working in our center.[6] One of the most telling responses, I believe, often comes to my opening question: "Why do you want to work in the Writing Center?" Although I don't want to overanalyze any single comment, I do hesitate when a student replies, "Because I'm an excellent writer." How different that response is from others: "Because I enjoyed the group work in my 101 class" or "Because I want to learn more about different types of writing" or even "Because I think it would be interesting." Emphasizing personal writing ability in this situation seems wrong, a focus on self rather than others—like a player who aims for a scoring title rather than a team championship. I also hesitate when a student says his primary goal is to be paid or to receive class/internship credits. He does not seem "truly interested" in our work so much as in the rewards.

From that initial question, I move to a mock consultation, with me as the student writer. Here I can gain even more of a sense of how a recruit will interact with others. When they go through my draft, do they find positive things to say? Do they ask me questions and listen to my responses? Do they look to collaborate with me rather than direct me? True, I should not necessarily expect a smooth consultation from any recruit—that is why we have courses and workshops—but it is quite possible to glimpse how quickly and willingly a person will adapt to our writing center's goals. I can tell, as did Wooden, whether or not I should extend an offer.[7]

In addition to considering how a recruit will interact with writers, it's also important to consider how a recruit will interact with the other consultants. Not only should there be writer–consultant collaboration, but also consultant–consultant collaboration. All the members of a writing center should feel comfortable going to someone else and asking advice, or offering support—they should be willing to pass the ball to one another, to back one another up on a play. Some directors even have their veteran consultants conduct interviews with recruits, and that seems an ideal method for strengthening the team and the players. As Krzyzewski explained, "Bonds have to form among *all* members of the team.... Every individual must have a trusting relationship with every other member of the team" (27). If consultants can have a say in who will join them, then they can begin to form those bonds with their future coworkers.

In the best cases, after I have interviewed recruits, decided if they would be a good addition to our center, and offered a position, I receive a note like this one: "I'm in for sure. I'd love to be a part of this." I want consultants to have the sense that they are a part of something, part of a team. The idea of teamwork is doubly important in a writing center, as consultants team up with writers during consultations, and are part of a team of consultants. Consultants need to have a strong sense of team spirit, as Wooden described it: "This is an eagerness to sacrifice personal glory for the welfare of the group as a whole. It's togetherness and consideration for others" (90). Good consultants need to be considerate of the writers they work with, and one another.

[6]For those students who are recommended, I send out an e-mail and invite them to come in and see me, and to bring a writing sample. When students who have not been recommended ask about the class, I conduct a quick mini-interview and determine if the student and I should move on to a more formal conversation. Also, at Boise State, in order to work at the writing center, undergraduate consultants must take English 303: Theory and Practice of Tutoring Writing. On our online registration system, the course is locked and students can only register if they have received a permission number, so all those interested in the work are routed through my office.

[7]See also Loretta Cobb and Elaine Kilgore Elledge's "Undergraduate Staffing in the Writing Center," and from their piece, Leonard Podis's "Training Peer Tutors for the Writing Lab."

If there is one
communicate
Krzyzewski an
Greg Dale disc
municator me

The founda
letes. The m
there are an
as the expec
assume that
success. (16

Writing cente
standards for
tant responsib
tool. Jeanette
ing tutors at ti
medium, addi

Torre emph
key to teamwo
municating as
with players ra
have more in
consultants a
most consulti
portunity to t
tion with each
players a char
tions, director
that the "tone

For instanc
more positive
more reserved
concern or id
Torre describe

[8]Janssen and I
they indicated, ar
ing, confidence-b

[9]At BSU, we a
from the NCTA, a
consultant signs, a
dinating with oth
one across campu

:enter.[6] One of the
'hy do you want to
ıgle comment, I do
:rent that response
use I want to learn
: interesting." Em-
:lf rather than oth-
:hip. I also hesitate
ip credits. He does

the student writer.
ers. When they go
ns and listen to my
, I should not nec-
courses and work-
n will adapt to our
xtend an offer.[7]
important to con-
should there be
ion. All the mem-
:king advice, or of-
ck one another up
nterviews with re-
d the players. As
.... Every individ-
27). If consultants
ls with their future

be a good addition
sure. I'd love to be
mething, part of a
nsultants team up
nsultants need to
:ss to sacrifice per-
sideration for oth-
ork with, and one

d see me, and to bring a
nick mini-interview and
in order to work at the
Writing. On our online
rmission number, so all

Center," and from their

COMMUNICATION

If there is one constant to the advice that all books about coaching give, it is that a coach must communicate with the players. Communication of one of the "fundamental qualities" for Krzyzewski and being a strong communicator is one of the "seven secrets" that Jeff Janssen and Greg Dale discussed in their book *The Seven Secrets of Successful Coaches*.[8] Being a strong communicator means being an effective communicator:

> The foundation of effective communication is your ability to be open and direct with your athletes. The messages you send as coach have to be clear and athletes should not have to guess if there are any hidden meanings. You should be very explicit regarding roles athletes play as well as the expectations and standards that you feel are important to the team's success. You can't assume that they know what you are thinking at any time—especially in areas that are vital to success. (166)

Writing center directors should be explicit as well, ideally writing up the expectations and standards for consultants. For instance, many writing centers have handbooks that list consultant responsibilities and center policies, and directors can consider the handbook a valuable tool. Jeanette Harris indicated that "a handbook can serve as an extension of a director, reaching tutors at times when the director is not available, communicating information in another medium, adding a new dimension to the training process" (145).[9]

Torre emphasized communication too: "Communication is the key to trust, and trust is the key to teamwork in any group endeavor, be it in sports, business, or family" (71). When communicating as a baseball manager, Torre disclosed that he relies more on individual meetings with players rather than team meetings because baseball is a fairly "autonomous sport." Players have more individual activities (i.e., pitching, batting) than in other sports. Writing center consultants are much like baseball players in this regard, having to perform as individuals in most consulting sessions, so directors can follow Torre's lead and make sure they have the opportunity to talk with all their consultants one on one: "I have to establish good communication with each team member. I therefore rely on person-to-person encounters to motivate, give players a chance to share concerns, or just shoot the breeze" (79). Through those conversations, directors, like Torre, will recognize that "every team player needs something unique" and that the "tone and style" of the message should vary based on the individual (79–80).

For instance, Torre made clear that some players might get down on themselves and need more positive feedback than others; some might require a verbal push to work harder; some more reserved players might need a daily check-in so that they have an opportunity to express a concern or idea that they wouldn't normally raise on their own. All the types of players that Torre described on his team are in the Boise State Writing Center. And, I would imagine, in

[8]Janssen and Dale distinguished between coercive and credible coaches and aim for the latter type. Credible coaches, they indicated, are distinguished by seven characteristics; such coaches are character-based, competent, committed, caring, confidence-builders, communicators, and consistent.

[9]At BSU, we are in the process of reviving and revising our handbook, which will include a copy of the Tutoring Ethics from the NCTA, as well as a set of guidelines for our consultants. We will also have a consultant contract, a pledge that each consultant signs, agreeing to maintain a professional, productive atmosphere for the center. The writing center is also coordinating with other tutoring services on campus, looking to make the application/hiring process for tutors a more standard one across campus.

most other centers, too. There is the consultant who often doubts his abilities and needs to be told "good job"; there is the consultant who needs a firm warning about arriving on time; there is the consultant who has a wonderful suggestion for improving our Web site, but who would never offer it unless explicitly asked. As the director, I need to be aware of the different personalities on my staff, and the only way to do that, as Torre reminded all managers, is to take the time: "What's involved in knowing team players? To know their abilities, you get reports from scouts and coaches, and closely observe them in practice and games. To know them as individuals, you need to look them in the eye. And you absolutely must make time for them. Sounds like a simple rule, but too many managers in too many walks of life only pay lip service to it" (18). There are, however, many ways to make time.

For instance, a director can schedule a mini-conference with each consultant at the beginning of the semester, just to check in and chat. What do their class schedules look like? What are they hoping to accomplish in the center this term? How was the summer/winter break? Schedules are usually much more open at the beginning of the term and this initial conversation can establish a good line of communication for the rest of the year; if there are few writers visiting in the first few weeks, then directors might even schedule themselves during the consultant's work hours. Then, during the semester, a director can still rely on scheduled conferences, but also should take advantage of more informal moments, as Leahy did: "I make a point to plunk down on the couch with a cup of coffee about once a day and engage in conversation with whoever's free to talk. These are good moments. It's at these relaxed times that the writing assistants express their deeper concerns and their better ideas" (47). And it's at these relaxed times that consultants give directors a better sense of themselves.[10]

In addition to making time to talk to his players, Torre revealed he must consider the timing of his talks. A word of praise can do little if it's immediately dismissed, and a critique can be lost if it's delivered at the wrong moment: "Once you've identified the kind of communication needed, you've got to determine the best time to have that talk. Your decision must be based on your gut sense of when he or she is receptive" (83). In general, Torre's point seems most relevant for moments of criticism. Yes, praise can be dismissed, but I think there are few times when it is not a good idea to offer up a compliment. When offering a critique, on the other hand, directors should carefully consider when, where, and how they do so.

ROLES

When coaches know the players well, they are better able to determine what they can, and should, ask them to do in order to most help the team. Who can best handle the press? Who pitches well against right-handed batters with runners in scoring position? Who thrives in a pressure situation? Who will represent the team well with the media? Part of coaching is placing players into the roles in which they will be most successful. John Wooden did not play Bill Walton at point guard, and Joe Torre never had Roger Clemens roaming the outfield. A writing

[10]Even finding relaxed moments can be somewhat stressful. The BSU Writing Center is open till 8 on weekday evenings, and I have felt distanced from the consultants who work the later shift. I do stop in on occasion, but those occasions feel more like a check-up than a chance for conversation. Next year I hope to stagger my schedule, starting my day later once or twice a week and then working into the evening so that I'll have the same interactions with the evening consultants as I do with those who work the day shifts.

center director
lab reports? W
about the cente
the brochure?

Asking thes
changeable pie
each of them. E
for what interes
perienced tuto
promotion and
(327). Length
and roles. Ther

At the same
away from eve
players other t
tions of guard,
portunity, and
blossom in fron
astute reader o
sonalities and
consultants.

For Krzyzewski
tions that they
spond to what
explained that
possible" (94).
need to be flexi
tation on the r
sharp, to be op

Of course,
keeping the sa
ketball coach.
group meeting
Krzyzewski em

[11]Many writing
practice. Yet, practi

[12]And there's a
their place, but the
baseball is more of
tioned that a team
time, "the players

center director should also ask questions about roles: Who has had some experience writing lab reports? Who might be most comfortable visiting a classroom and answering questions about the center? Who speaks a second language? Who has an eye for design and could revise the brochure? Who enjoys leading writing workshops?

Asking these questions helps a director keep from considering the consultants as interchangeable pieces and helps to assure that the work they do will be as rewarding as possible for each of them. Evelyn Posey offered her consultants a choice of various projects and they sign up for what interests them. She noted that often the choices are made based on experience: "Experienced tutors usually volunteer for writing and workshop projects while new tutors prefer promotion and clerical projects, possibly because these do not demand as much expertise" (327). Length of tenure in a center is certainly one consideration when matching consultants and roles. Then again, so are organizational ability, willingness to socialize, and artistic talent.

At the same time, roles should not be viewed as rigid. Krzyzewski revealed that he will "shy away from even stating that certain players have to play certain positions" (96). For Duke, players other than the point guard will bring the ball up the floor, and the standard designations of guard, forward, and center do not always apply. Consultants, too, should have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to try out as many roles as they can. A quiet consultant might blossom in front of a class; a history major might have a flair for poetry; and a poet might be an astute reader of electrical engineering reports. But again, discovering matches between personalities and responsibilities happens best when the director is knowledgeable about her consultants.

PRACTICE

For Krzyzewski, Duke basketball players must be able to respond quickly to a variety of situations that they may encounter during games. They do not run set plays so much as read and respond to whatever the other team is doing. To allow them to "adjust on the run," Krzyzewski explained that he attempts to prepare his team "for as many little things, as many nuances as possible" (94). Writing center consultants also need to be prepared for the little things; they need to be flexible enough to respond to a variety of writers and texts, to adjust to each consultation on the run. For both basketball players and writing consultants, the way to keep reflexes sharp, to be open to changing situations, is simple: practice.

Of course, many writing center directors do not have the luxury of all their consultants keeping the same schedule, and we cannot rely on a daily practice session as can a college basketball coach.[11] However, we can schedule individual or paired practice sessions rather than group meetings, and, when we do have our meetings, we can aim to use the time productively.[12] Krzyzewski emphasized that his players must not simply listen to him during practice, they

[11]Many writing centers now require a course in consulting, as does BSU. This is a set time for consultants to meet and practice. Yet, practice can and should continue beyond that introductory course, and that type of practice is the focus here.

[12]And there's also Torre's opinion that team meetings are not of great value if overused: "In my view, team meetings have their place, but they're like chili peppers—a few add zest to your dish; too many and you're asking for trouble" (98). Again, baseball is more of an individual sport than others, so the team meeting might not be relevant for all, and Torre also mentioned that a team meeting is an important event, one that forces players to pay attention. But, if meetings are held all the time, "the players won't take you or your meetings as seriously as they should" (99).

must actively use the time to learn how to respond to certain situations: "How much I speak to the players on our team is important, but they'll forget a lot of what they *hear*. It's also important to make sure they watch and observe through action and videotape. Usually, the team will remember more of what they *see*. But the most crucial aspect of our team training is what the guys actually *do* and what they *understand*" (88). Players cannot only be told what to do when they are down by one in the final seconds of a game; they have to play those seconds on the court—again and again.

Consultants can go through a similar practice regimen with mock tutorials. In a mock tutorial, the consultants are *doing*, that is, they are responding to a consulting situation. Had they only considered the situation in the abstract, had they only discussed what they might *do*, they probably would not feel as prepared. And certainly they would not feel as prepared if the director had only told them what to do in a certain situation. They need the practice. By placing consultants in the types of sessions that they might encounter, directors can better prepare their staff for working with real writers.[13]

Krzyzewski also mentioned videotape in his passage. At Boise State, we are reviving the habit of videotaping real consultations. The consultants can observe themselves interacting with writers, and can reflect on what did and did not work well.[14] As Krzyzewski said of his players, "They need to know how they *really* are, not just how they *think* they are. If they can step outside themselves and watch their performances ... then they may internalize both their shortcomings and their strengths" (91). In addition to watching their own sessions, the consultants also pair up and review each other's sessions. This pairing up of consultants strengthens the consulting practices of each, and can also strengthen the consultant–consultant relationship. Encouraging conversation between teammates is another important goal for Krzyzewski, so that teammates begin to coach one another: "Whether something's going wrong or something's going right, they need to talk to each other right away—as soon as they see something" (73). Prompting conversation about taped consultations can put consultants in the habit of talking to one another about all their sessions.

Important, too, for both Krzyzewski and Wooden, is the preparation that a coach must put in before practice. No practice is run off-the-cuff, and the two talk about having detailed, to-the-minute lists of what they wish to cover in their practices.[15] Such a regimented approach might go against the thinking that writing center meetings can, and perhaps should, be places for free-flowing conversations, where consultants raise and discuss their own questions and concerns. In fact, many of the meetings that I have attended and run have been of this type.

[13]See chapter 6 in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring* (Gillespie and Lerner) for a discussion of mock tutorials, and see also chapter 8 in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (Ryan) for a sample of possible writing consultation scenarios with different types of writers.

[14]We do not videotape any session without obtaining the consent of the writer. Our consultants utilize a permission slip that has been reviewed and accepted by our Office of Research Administration.

[15]One of the more oft-repeated, and true, stories about Wooden is how he began each season with a lesson on socks: "One of the little things I watched closely was a player's socks. No basketball player is better than his feet. If they hurt, if his shoes don't fit, or if he has blisters, he can't play the game. It is amazing how few players know how to put on a pair of socks properly. I don't want blisters, so each year I gave in minute detail a step-by-step demonstration as to precisely how I wanted them to put on their socks—every time. Believe it or not, there's an art to doing it right" (105). I can't help but chuckle at the image of a sock lesson, and think of the over-attention to detail that it displays. But then, considering how much concern a writer can show for the choice of a word, or how a good greeting from a consultant can set the tone for a session, I realize that Wooden is right. It's the details that matter, and "success usually accompanies attention to little details."

Yet, rarely have I been satisfied with such meetings. No one necessarily has a chance to think through the topics raised, and there is little opportunity for *doing* in this type of meeting. Better, I think, if I collect questions and concerns prior to a meeting and then prepare a meeting that can address them. Does this mean more work for me as director? It does in that I must prepare more for a meeting, but in the long run it does not because the consultants learn more from their meetings and are thus better able to handle various situations on their own, or with help from their teammates.

At the same time, directors can look to vary their meetings, to surprise consultants every once in a while. Krzyzewski related that he invents new drills and talks to his players at different times and in different locations. He wants his players always thinking: "Too many rules and too much predictability absolutely kill creativity" (98). Once he had them simply play volleyball in order to remember what it meant to have fun with a sport. Perhaps some writing center meetings could also take time for volleyball, or basketball, or an in-depth game of Dictionary. Practice is crucial for being a successful athlete or consultant, but so is not practicing on occasion. (Don't tell my consultants, but I've a call in to reserve the bowling alley.)

FINAL SECONDS (OR NINTH INNING)

Much as I enjoy making comparisons between the sports world and writing centers, I don't want to push the analogy too far. I don't see myself donning sweats and a whistle and then having the consultants run laps outside the building, nor do I see myself interfering in a difficult tutoring session in order to bring in a relief consultant from the bullpen. Yet, by thinking about the work I do as director in terms of being a coach, and by reading works from those who coach professionally, I am reminded to focus my energy on the human relationships that are at the core of any activity, whether in sports, business, or school. I often encourage my consultants to remember the human aspects of their work with writers, but I occasionally become lost in my administrative duties when dealing with them. The coach analogy helps me come back to the team.

And it is the teamwork aspect of the writing center that I enjoy the most. There's no other collection of individuals on our campus that does what we do, that experiences what we experience. I think Krzyzewski's description of a Duke basketball team is appropriate for us in the center: "Basically, we are a group of people living together over a short period of time in our own culture. How we grow that culture—how we develop communication, how we care for our people—means everything" (52). We have our own writing center culture at Boise State, as does every center. And, every center looks to grow, individually and collectively. Growing, developing, communicating, and caring requires teamwork. And teamwork requires a good coach.

WORKS CITED

Capossela, Toni-Lee. *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring.* Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Cobb, Loretta, and Elaine Kilgore Elledge. "Undergraduate Staffing in the Writing Center." *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration.* Ed. Gary A. Olson. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1984. 123–31.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring.* New York: Longman, 2000.

Harris, Jeanette. "The Handbook as a Supplement to a Tutor Training Program." *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration.* Ed. Gary A. Olson. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1984. 144–51.

Harris, Muriel. *Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1986.

Janssen, Jeff, and Greg Dale. *The Seven Secrets of Successful Coaches: How to Unlock and Unleash Your Team's Full Potential*. Cary, NC: Winning the Mental Game, 2002.

Krzyzewski, Mike, and Donald T. Phillips. *Leading with the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life*. New York: Warner, 2000.

Leahy, Richard. "Of Writing Centers, Centeredness, and Centrism." *The Writing Center Journal* 13 (Fall 1992): 43–52.

Podis, Leonard A. "Training Peer Tutors for the Writing Lab." *College Communication and Composition* 31 (February 1980): 70–75.

Posey, Evelyn J. "An Ongoing Tutor Training Program." *The Writing Center Journal* 6.2 (1986): 29–35. Rpt. In *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*. Ed. Robert W. Barnett and Jacob S. Blumner. 326–331.

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford, 2002.

Torre, Joe, and Henry Dreher. *Joe Torre's Ground Rules for Winners: 12 Keys to Managing Team Players, Tough Bosses, Setbacks, and Success*. New York: Hyperion, 1999.

Wooden, John, and Jack Tobin. *They Call Me Coach*. Chicago: Contemporary, 1988.

D

Soc

Muriel
substantially
fying the nee
identify and d
ing "the parti
trative struct
"for the admi
("Writing Ce
because uppe
documentati
evolve over t

Borrowing
documentati
rectors to eng
stand the co
those docum
tional contex
ments tell, ar

Incidental
cover, interpr