

“This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis Group in Sport in Society on 11/10/2019, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/17430437.2019.1673369>.”

Promoting the social inclusion of players with intellectual disabilities: an assessment tool for sport coaches.

Roy McConkey¹, Florian Pochstein², Liz Carlin³ and Sabine Menke⁴

¹ Institute of Nursing and Health Research, Ulster University, N. Ireland.

² Faculty of Special Needs Education, University of Education Ludwigsburg, Germany

³ School of Sport, Ulster University, N. Ireland

⁴ Special Olympics Europe Eurasia

Corresponding author: Roy McConkey. r.mcconkey@ulster.ac.uk

Orchid: 0000-0002-8102-7402 Phone: +44 2890 853537

Published as: McConkey, R., Pochstein, F., Carlin, L. and Menke S. (2019) Promoting the social inclusion of players with intellectual disabilities: an assessment tool for sport coaches. *Sports in Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2019.1673369>.

Abstract

Including people with intellectual disability in sport is a challenge for coaches and particularly the inclusion of these players alongside non-disabled peers. Drawing initially on the experiences of 47 coaches recruited through Special Olympics, a self-completed assessment tool was devised that can be used to evaluate the promotion of social inclusion within sport teams and the wider community. The emerging tool was field-tested with 389 coaches in the USA and seven European countries. The resulting 13 or 20 item scale had commendable psychometric properties both in terms of internal and test-retest reliability with evidence also for its ecological and predictive validity. As well as its use as a self-assessment tool within training courses for coaches, it also opens research opportunities into the relationship between this measure of inclusion and outcomes for both the coaches and for the players.

Key-words: Intellectual disability, social inclusion, sports coach, assessment.

Introduction

World-wide, people with disabilities experience social exclusion in different aspects of their life – education, employment, housing and leisure pursuits (Officer and Posarac, 2011).

Moreover people with intellectual disabilities often remain the most marginalised internationally (Scior et al., 2016). Their social isolation persists despite international declarations expounding their rights to be included in society, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). This includes their inclusion in sport. Article 30.5a of this Convention obliges State Parties “to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels”. Yet as Kiuppis (2018) observed: “sport is an area of life in which people with disabilities arguably have less favourable experiences than their non-disabled peers and competitors” (p.5).

The barriers to the participation in physical activity and sports of people disabilities have been well documented (Bodde and Dong-Chul, 2009; Shields, Synnot and Barr, 2011). They include a lack of knowledge from non-disabled coaches and players as to how include athletes with disabilities in teams and competitions; the lack of accessible facilities and limited information about available resources and supports. Equally the lack of appreciation by health and social care professionals of the potential of sport has stymied moves towards greater inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in recreational as well as competitive sports (McConkey, 2016).

However, these barriers can be overcome albeit within parallel provision such as Paralympics or Special Olympics (Brittain, 2016). The latter is the leading proponent of engaging people with intellectual disabilities in sports (Harada et al, 2011). Now in its 51st year, it is active in 174 countries with over 5 million athletes and nearly half a million coaches involved in regular training sessions and participating in over one hundred thousand local, national as well as international competitions world-wide in 2017

(<http://annualreport.specialolympics.org/reach-report>). A growing literature has documented the impact on its participants (Tint, Thomson and Weiss, 2017).

Traditionally, Special Olympics has concentrated on segregated sports solely for persons with intellectual disabilities. In recent years though, the fastest growing aspect of their work is in Unified Sports® in which non-disabled players participate alongside players with intellectual disability both for training and in competitions (Hassan et al, 2012). The goal is not only to promote social inclusion within the teams through the development of friendships among the players with and without disability but that these experiences would spill over into greater inclusion beyond the sports field. Indeed sport has been promoted with some success as a means for promoting the social inclusion of other marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities (Bradbury, 2010; Gibbs and Block, 2017).

Critical to the success of Special Olympics is the expertise of their volunteer coaches in engaging athletes with intellectual disabilities in sports training and competitions. They have to adapt their sports and coaching skills to the particular needs of athletes with intellectual disability. Moreover the coaching role is especially crucial in the context of Unified Sports if both sets of players are to become fully included and issues around stigma and stereotyping are addressed (Black 2011; Hassan and Lynch, 2014). Although training and mentoring opportunities for coaches are provided by Special Olympics

(<https://www.specialolympics.org/get-involved/coach/coaching-resource>), their expertise has mostly come through personal experience of adapting their coaching to the needs and aspirations of the athletes and observing their participation in competitions (MacDonald et al., 2016). Arguably, coaches in both traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports have acquired unique expertise in how best to include players with intellectual disability in sports.

It was against this background that the present study was conceived. The overall aim was to capture the activities that coaches used to promote the social inclusion of players with intellectual disabilities both in sport as well as in the wider community. Although this

knowledge would be drawn from Special Olympics, it could have a wider applicability when it comes to the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in mainstream sports.

Furthermore this information could be provided in the form of a self-assessment tool that would enable coaches to reflect on the extent to which they currently promote inclusion in sport and to guide them to further actions they could undertake to make this happen. Such a tool could be embedded within training courses provided to coaches; especially for those wishing to promote Unified Sports.

Equally a tool that assessed the inclusiveness of sporting activities and clubs could be used in research and evaluation studies in that it would provide a common benchmark against which changes over time or across different contexts could be assessed. To date, nothing similar exists for sports although attempts to do so have been made for inclusive schooling (Booth, 2011).

Thus the main aim of the study was to develop a self-completed assessment tool that can be used by coaches to evaluate their promotion of social inclusion and to establish its psychometric properties that would inform its use in further research and evaluation studies. The tool should be short and simple and easily translated from English into other languages so as to maximise its suitability for use with coaches from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

A mixed methods design was adopted using qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Focus groups were initially held with 29 coaches involved with six Unified Sports teams in the USA, Germany and India. They were chosen by Special Olympics national or state coordinators as their teams were judged by them to be very successful in sustaining Unified teams. Additional group interviews were also held with 18 coaches from Finland, Poland,

Austria and Germany who were involved in traditional Special Olympics in order to scope their experiences and understanding of social inclusion.

From the qualitative analysis – details of which are available from the first author - 40 questionnaire items were developed; mainly based on the verbatim comments of coaches describing the actions and activities they undertook to promote social inclusion among their teams but checked against available literature (e.g. Grandisson, Tétreault and Freeman, 2012; Geidne and Jerlinder, 2016). In the questions, athletes are the players with intellectual disabilities and partners are their non-disabled team-mates. Table 1 contains examples of the items.

The questions were piloted with 47 coaches attending the 2017 Special Olympics Winter World Games who were mostly involved with traditional Special Olympic sports and modifications were subsequently made to items. A revised questionnaire consisting of 29 items was then field-tested with 240 coaches in Europe and the USA who were involved in both Unified Sports and traditional Special Olympics with youth and adult teams. Further statistical analysis identified a 20 item questionnaire or a shorter form 13 item questionnaire that was further tested with 109 coaches in both paper and online questionnaire formats. Overall 47 coaches were involved in the qualitative phase and 389 coaches in the questionnaire development.

Participants

For the study as a whole, 54% of the coaches were male and 46% female. Nearly half (47%) were aged 40-59 years with 37% aged 20 – 39 years; 12% aged 60 years and over, and 3% aged under 20 years. Most came from Poland (n=80), Germany n=80) and Ireland (n=71) along with coaches from the USA (n=54), Finland (n=51), Romania (n=31) Austria (n=12) and Malta (n=11) (Six did not identify their country).

In all, 68% had been involved in coaching Unified Sports with 32% in traditional Special Olympics. Nearly three-quarters (73%) coached a mix of youth (8 to 19 years) and adults although 14% of coaches worked only with youth and 13% with adults. Two-thirds had been coaching for five and more years. Just over one quarter (28%) had a relative in the team they coached. Also 28% were involved with special schools, with a further 20% from other schools and another 25% were involved with disability services. However, 28% had no involvement with schools or disability services and overall 50% were also engaged in coaching non-disabled athletes. Soccer, basketball, volleyball and swimming were among the most common sports they coached but a wide range of other sports were also named including bocce, track and field, tennis, skiing, judo and figure skating.

Procedure

A favourable ethical opinion about the study was given by the IRB Board of Special Olympics. An information sheet and consent form was given to all participants translated into their local language. Throughout it was made clear that participation was voluntary and would not affect their involvement in Special Olympics, all answers were confidential and no one would be identified in any reports.

A network of co-researchers was recruited from University personnel in Europe who had previously worked on other research and evaluation projects for Special Olympics. A two-day development workshop was held at the outset to plan the data gathering with a further workshop held towards the end of study to finalise the data analysis and conclusions. The co-researchers were fluent English speakers and undertook the translations of materials for their country as required.

The 10 focus groups consisted of an average of five coaches and lasted around 30 minutes. Our co-researchers acted as group facilitators and posed various trigger questions including: “What have you found works in having people with intellectual disability more included in

teams ... more included outside of the sports field?” What do partners do to make their teammates feel more included?”

A verbatim English translation was made of the audio-recordings by the group facilitators and a thematic content analysis was undertaken across all focus groups that identified specific items that could be included in the questionnaire. Data saturation had been achieved in that no new items or themes were identified in later groups.

A self-completion questionnaire was considered an efficient means for coaches to record their experiences. Moreover, for ease of completion by coaches, a three point rating scale was used - Yes: Sometimes: No - along with a ‘Don’t know’ option (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Paper copies of the questionnaires were personally distributed to coaches by the co-researchers, mostly at training or competition events organised by Special Olympics.

However in a later phase, the shortened version of the questionnaire was completed online by coaches using Qualtrics software who had been sent a link by the national Special Olympics personnel in Poland and Ireland. Test-retest reliability of the shorter scale was assessed by having 50 coaches complete the questionnaire for a second time after a gap of at least one day.

The co-researchers entered the data from their questionnaires into Excel spreadsheets which were then combined in a SPSS (vers 25) file for data analysis. Factor analysis was used to identify the most suitable items for a shorter scale along with checks on the questionnaire’s internal reliability and test-retest reliability. Predictive validity was assessed using t-tests to compare the scores of coaches from traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports.

Results

Item selection

As described above, the initial item set of 40 items was derived from the focus group content and following pilot testing, a 29 item questionnaire was developed and field-tested. The inter-relationships among the items in the questionnaire were explored to determine if there is a common factor (or factors) underpinning responses to the various social inclusion activities included in the questionnaire. Exploratory factor analyses (using Principal Axis Factoring and Promax rotation) were undertaken of the 29 items. For this analysis, a 'don't know' and missing responses was excluded pair-wise. The analysis yielded only one main factor which accounted for 28% of the variance. Table 1 summarises the factor loadings for the 20 items loading 0.40 or greater. The percentage of coaches responding Yes is noted for each item and this indicates the extent to which this sample of coaches undertook in the activities listed to promote inclusion.

Insert Table 1 about here

The Cronbach alpha for the 20 items was 0.855 (when don't know responses were included) and 0.875 for respondents who had no don't know responses to the 20 items.

However the option of having a shorter listing of 13 items was explored based on items with a factor loading >0.60 and omitting the item with the highest proportion of don't know responses. For the 13 items, the Cronbach Alpha was 0.818 when 'don't knows' were included and 0.839 (for respondents with no 'don't knows').

Summary scores

A summary score could be obtained across the items by counting the number of items to which coaches had responded Yes. Across the 20 items the full range of scores from 0 to 20 was found; with a mean score of 9.5 (SD 4.5) and a skewness of 0.314 indicating a skew towards higher scores. For the 13 items, the full range of scores from 0 to 13 were found with a mean score of 6.6 (SD 3.2) and a skewness of 0.158 indicating a slight skew towards higher

scores. The Pearson Product moment correlation for scores on the 20 and 13 items was $r=0.961$; $p<0.001$.

An alternative scoring method is to summate ratings across the three options with Yes responses scored 1: sometimes 2 and No scored 3. Across 20 items this would yield a minimum score of 20 which is indicative of higher inclusion and a maximum of 60 and for the 13 items the minimum and maximum scores would be 13 and 39. For the 20 items the mean score was 32.1 (SD 7.5: range 20 to 53) with skewness of 0.587. For the 13 items, the mean score was 20.3 (SD 5.2: range 13 to 37) with skewness of 0.693. The Pearson Product moment correlation for the summated scores on the 20 and 13 items was 0.972 ; $p<0.001$.

The correlation between the two possible measures – the count of items answered yes and the summated scores was $r=-0.942$ for the 20 items and $r=-0.942$ for the 13 items. (The negative correlation arises because a high score on Yes count is indicative of greater inclusion whereas it is a low score on the summated measure).

These analyses suggest that a 13 item questionnaire could suffice and that a count of the items answered Yes would provide a suitable summary score. However the 20 items might be used for self-evaluation purposes as it scopes a wider range of activities that coaches could undertake to promote inclusion.

Test-retest reliability

The 13 item questionnaire was administered on two occasions to 50 coaches from Germany and Ireland. The percentage agreements on ratings given to each item ranged from 95% to 100%. Person Product Moment Correlation between scores based on the number of items answered Yes across the two administrations was $r=0.949$; $p<0.001$. Moreover the means scores across the two administrations were not significantly different (Mean 7.7:SD 2.9 v 7.6:SD 3.1).

Predictive validity

An indication of the predictive validity of scores derived from the 13 item questionnaire was obtained by contrasting those coaches who have had an involvement with Unified Sports compared to those whose involvement has been solely with traditional Special Olympics. Based on the data obtained from the coaches who have participated in all phases of the study; Unified Sports coaches had a significantly higher score (n=285) (Mean 7.03: SD 3.27) compared to mean score of traditional coaches (n=123) (Mean=6.01:SD 2.78) ($F=9.034$; $p<0.005$; Eta Squared =0.028).

Discussion

The assessment tool that has emerged from this study has a number of strengths. It is based on the experiences of coaches who had a direct involvement and indeed success in including people with intellectual disabilities in a range of sports in seven European countries and in the United States. Translations of the tool are available in German, Polish, Finnish and Romania as well as English. This suggests the tool is ecologically valid at least for use in more affluent countries.

The self-completed tool with a three-point rating scale proved acceptable to coaches in both a paper and online format with few suggestions given as to how it could be improved; although the shorter version was preferred. Hence it could be deemed to have face validity.

The resulting 13 item scale had commendable psychometric properties both in terms of internal and test-retest reliability. Although the study focussed on the content validity of the tool, there were indications also of its predictive validity in that coaches with experience of Unified Sports scored higher on inclusion activities than coaches in traditional Special Olympics. Nonetheless the high variation of scores in both groups of coaches as indicated by the Standard Deviations meant that there was considerable overlap in the scores of the two groups as reflected in the Eta Squared statistic. The variation across coaches in both settings

is worthy of further investigation particularly in distinguishing inclusion promoted by coaches within a segregated setting with other athletes with similar disabilities – which Special Olympics has traditionally provided – as opposed to inclusion with non-disabled peers that Unified Sports aims to encourage; albeit that both forms of inclusion should be valued (Kiuppis, 2018).

The availability of a coach questionnaire on the promotion of social inclusion in sports could facilitate further research studies on this topic. The questionnaire could be used to monitor the impact of training courses for coaches on promoting inclusion in sports; for example by comparing pre and post-course ratings given by the coaches. Moreover the items included in the questionnaire would help to refine the course content particularly in the non-sporting activities that coaches might need to undertake in order to achieve greater inclusion in their sport (Sullivan et al., 2012).

The availability of this tool - or some variant of it - provides opportunities to investigate the relationship between this measure of inclusion and outcomes for both the coaches and for the players when they participate in inclusive sports. For example: do coaches practicing inclusion derive greater satisfaction from coaching: does greater inclusion result in better sporting performance for players with and without disabilities? Likewise, with a larger sample of coaches from a range of backgrounds it would be possible to identify the characteristics of coaches who are more disposed to inclusion, thereby allowing more targeted recruitment and training for coaches in the future (Stevenson, 2009). Further research could also stimulate a more integrated conceptual framework for inclusion within sports that embodies insights from disability studies, a rights perspective and sports coaching (Townsend, Smith and Cushion, 2015).

This tool however is only a start. Further usage will hopefully lead to further refinement of it. For instance, a four or five point rating scale for each item could provide a summary score that was more sensitive in detecting changes in the short term. Also the items included in the

questionnaire may need to be refreshed for use in low income countries where inclusion may require different strategies to those captured at present.

The questionnaire could be usefully complemented by also having a measure of coach attitudes and beliefs around inclusion in sports as these may underpin their motivation to make sport more inclusive. Existing scales are available, although to date this research has been focussed more on teachers' attitudes to inclusion within schools rather than sports (Tant and Watelain, 2016).

Moreover the self reported actions of coaches as summarised in the questionnaire need to be validated against the experience of players as to whether they are more included in both sports and the community. To facilitate this, a complementary study has developed a tool for use with players with and without disabilities that aims to assess their experience of inclusion (Asunta et al., 2019). A longitudinal study focussed on promoting inclusion of players with intellectual disability through sports would form a valuable basis for exploring the relationships between the changed role of coaches and the outcomes for players.

Finally the questionnaire could be adapted and revalidated for use with the inclusion of other marginalised groups in sports. The successful cross-over of coaching strategies would be especially informative.

Conclusions

The inclusion in sport of persons with intellectual disability can be a challenge. Coaches play a major role in making inclusion possible. The experiences gained by Special Olympic coaches in a variety of sports and across nine countries was used to formulate a self-assessment tool that can direct coaches to the actions that have created more inclusive sports activities; especially those involving disabled and non-disabled athletes in the same sporting activities. The items in the assessment tool mainly focus on practical strategies to build bonds among the players alongside activities which create links with the wider community.

The assessment tool had commendable psychometric properties and could be used in evaluation research, to monitor changes in the extent of inclusion as a result of interventions aimed at promoting inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream sports, for example. The tool would also enable relationships to be examined between coaches' strategies and the outcomes experienced by their players in terms of inclusion in sports and in wider society.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to our co-researchers in Europe for assistance with data gathering: notably Pauli Rintala and Piritta Asunta, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Daniela Schwarz and Elke Langbein, Technical University of Munich, Germany; Florian Pochstein, Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany; Aura Bota, National University of Physical Education and Sports, Bucharest, Romania; Maciej Wilski and Anna Nadolska, Poznan University of Physical Education, Poland and Amanda Dimech, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta.

The study was funded in part by a European Union grant to Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia.

Declaration of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

References

- Asunta, Piritta., Pauli Rintala, Florian Pochstein, Nelli Lyyra & Roy McConkey (2019) The development and initial validation of a self-report measure on social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities: A transnational study. Paper submitted for publication.
- Black, Ken. 2011. Coaching Disabled Children. In *Coaching Children in Sport*, edited by I. Stafford (Ed.). 197–212. London: Routledge.
- Bodde, Amy E., and Dong-Chul Seo. 2009. "A review of social and environmental barriers to physical activity for adults with intellectual disabilities." *Disability and Health Journal* 2 (2): 57-66.
- Booth, Tony. 2011. *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. Bristol: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.
- Bradbury, Steven. 2011. "From racial exclusions to new inclusions: Black and minority ethnic participation in football clubs in the East Midlands of England." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 46 (1): 23-44.
- Brittain, Ian. 2016. *The paralympic games explained*. London: Routledge.
- Geidne, Susanna, and Kajsa Jerlinder. 2016. "How sports clubs include children and adolescents with disabilities in their activities. A systematic search of peer-reviewed articles." *Sport Science Review* 25 (1-2): 29-52.
- Gibbs, Lisa and Karen Block. "Promoting social inclusion through sport for refugee-background youth in australia: Analysing different participation models." *Social Inclusion* 5, no. 2 (2017): 91-100.
- Grandisson, Marie, Sylvie Tétrault, and Andrew R. Freeman. 2012. "Enabling integration in sports for adolescents with intellectual disabilities." *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 25 (3): 217-230.

- Harada, Coreen M., Gary N. Siperstein, Robin C. Parker, and David Lenox. 2011. "Promoting social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities through sport: Special Olympics International, global sport initiatives and strategies." *Sport in Society* 14 (9): 1131-1148.
- Hassan, David and Ray Lynch. 2014. "Reflections on coaching athletes with disabilities. In *Sport, coaching and intellectual disability* edited by D. Hassan, S. Dowling and R. McConkey, London: Routledge.
- Hassan, David, Sandra Dowling, Roy McConkey, and Sabine Menke. 2012. "The inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in team sports: lessons from the Youth Unified Sports programme of Special Olympics." *Sport in Society* 15 (9): 1275-1290.
- Kiuppis, Florian. 2018. Inclusion in sport: Disability and participation, *Sport in Society*, 21 (1):4-21.
- McConkey, Roy (2016). Sports and intellectual disability: a clash of cultures? *Advances in Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities*, 10(5), 293-298.
- MacDonald, Dany J., Katie Beck, Karl Erickson, and Jean Côté. 2016. "Understanding sources of knowledge for coaches of athletes with intellectual disabilities." *Journal of applied research in intellectual disabilities* 29 (3): 242-249.
- Officer, Alana, and Aleksandra Posarac. 2011. "World report on disability." World Health Organ: Geneva, Switzerland.
- Scior, Katrina, Aseel Hamid, Richard Hastings, Shirli Werner, Catherine Belton, Adebisi Laniyan, Maya Patel, Nora Groce, and Maria Kett. "Consigned to the margins: a call for global action to challenge intellectual disability stigma." *The Lancet Global Health* 4, no. 5 (2016): e294-e295..
- Shields, Nora, Anneliese Jane Synnot, and Megan Barr. 2011. "Perceived barriers and facilitators to physical activity for children with disability: a systematic review." *Br J Sports Med: bjsports-2011*.
- Stevenson, Pam 2009. *The Pedagogy of Inclusive Youth Sport: Working towards Real Solutions*. In *Disability and Youth Sport* edited by Hayley Fitzgerald, 119–131. London: Routledge
- Sullivan, Philip, Kyle J. Paquette, Nicholas L. Holt, and Gordon A. Bloom. 2012. "The relation of coaching context and coach education to coaching efficacy and perceived leadership behaviors in youth sport." *The sport psychologist* 26 (1): 122-134.
- Tant, Maxime, and Eric Watelain. 2016. "Forty years later, a systematic literature review on inclusion in physical education (1975–2015): A teacher perspective." *Educational Research Review* 19: 1-17.
- Tint, Ami, Kendra Thomson, and Jonathan A. Weiss. 2017. "A systematic literature review of the physical and psychosocial correlates of Special Olympics participation among individuals with intellectual disability." *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* 61(4): 301-324.
- Townsend, Robert C., Brett Smith, and Christopher J. Cushion. 2015. "Disability sports coaching: towards a critical understanding." *Sports coaching review* 4 (2): 80-98.
- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

Table 1: Factor loadings on 20 items in the Coach Questionnaire.*The 13 items are those with loading greater than 0.600*

Items	Factor Loading	% Yes (n=288)
Coaches focus on team bonding activities outside of the training sessions: going for drink or a meal.	.752	44.4%
Coaches have linked with other sports facilities in our area and our players go there as well.	.750	45.4%
Coaches, athletes and partners go as a group to watch sports matches/competitions in our city/town.	.745	34.7%
Coaches keep in touch with athletes and partners by phone/email during the off-season	.739	52.8%
Coaches visit schools and colleges to explain Special Olympics to them and to recruit partners.	.736	26.4%
Athletes and partners invite each other to their home [^]	.735	18.8%
Athletes and partners hangout at shopping malls, go on picnics or to community events.	.706	31.9%
We recruit our partners from the community/area where the athletes live.	.694	62.2%
Coaches go to schools and services to recruit athletes.	.664	27.4%
Coaches try to get to know the partners as much as the athletes	.658	83.7%
The athletes, coaches and partners get together for eating, partying or celebrating festivals together	.656	44.4%
Coaches use the media to get publicity for the team and recognition for the athletes and partners	.650	57.3%
We hold club meetings where everybody has a chance to speak	.622	49.0%
The coaches aim to be role models for players	.620	97.2%
Coaches prepare leaflets to publicise Special Olympics among parents of athletes and also to recruit partners	.596	30.6%
Athletes and partners are invited to weddings and other family celebrations.	.595	16.0%
Coaches guide new partners on how to start conversations with athletes	.590	72.2%
Coaches pair new athletes with a popular athlete on the team	.477	48.3%
Everybody suggests ideas: athletes as well as partners and coaches	.476	55.9%
Athletes play on other sports teams outside of Special Olympics	0.438	50.7%

[^] This item was not included in the 13 highest loading items because of the high level of don't know responses from coaches.









In my Special Olympics Club	YES	Some-times	NO	Don't Know
13 We hold club meetings where everybody has a chance to speak		~		?
18 The athletes, coaches and volunteers get together for eating, partying or celebrating festivals together		~		?
20 Athletes hangout at shopping malls, go on picnics or to community events.		~		?
21 Coaches, athletes and volunteers go as a group to watch sports matches/competitions in our city/town.		~		?

Figure 1: An example of the self-completion questionnaire