Hands up for homework: exploring inter-sessional activities in coaching

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Abstract

Purpose – The use of "homework", activities outside of the classroom or session, is widely applied in a range of disciplines including teaching, therapy and training. The argument advanced by advocates is that it provides an opportunity to consolidate knowledge learnt in the classroom and develop mastery in an applied environment. However, the use of homework has not been widely discussed or researched within business coaching, which is a form of personal development. This exploratory study aims to examine whether homework, as a coaching intervention, may enhance the clients' learning experience.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from eight early career coaches and eight coaching clients. Not all clients were related to the coaches. Each client had experienced a minimum of three coaching sessions. Interviews were recorded and analysed using thematic analysis. The study explored the use of (1) client-led, (2) coach-led and (3) collaboratively developed homework during the engagements.

Findings – The findings indicated that homework is widely used and was perceived to have mixed effects. The positioning of the homework by the coach, including the terminology used to describe the activity, and the type of work can affect the level of engagement and thus the perceived value generated.

Originality/value – This is the first study to explore the nature of "homework" in coaching. More work is needed to better inform the use of "homework" in coaching practice, including the type of work and how this is agreed with different types of clients, for example, should homework be coach, collaborative or client led?

Keywords Business coaching, Coaching homework, Behavioural experiments, Assignments, Inter-sessional activities

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

What is business coaching?

The term "coaching" has become ubiquitous over the past 20 years and is widely used and misused to describe almost all forms of learning. While there is much debate about the precise definition of coaching (Passmore and Lai, 2019), in this paper we have drawn on a process definition to differentiate coaching from other learning and development interventions.

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Passmore and Fillery Travis define coaching as "a *Socratic-based future-focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, summarises and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant*" (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 72).

Coaching's development

The coaching industry has grown significantly since the millennium and is now a $4.5bn dollar ($US) industry (ICF, 2023). However, in spite of the industry development and the growth in the number of professional coaches, industry practices remain under-researched by academics relative to the scale of this industry. Instead, most practice guidance has been developed by professional bodies. The ICF (International Coaching Federation) has set out detailed behavioural descriptors of coach behaviours, which it uses as part of its accreditation scheme (ICF, 2019; Passmore and Sinclair, 2020). Other professional bodies including the EMCC, COMENSA and Association for Coaching offer similar frameworks. A detailed review of these and other professional body artefacts reveals little reference to "homework" or the engagement by clients in activities outside of the session.

While the demand for learning and development has largely remained constant over the past decade, the nature of organisational learning has been shifting from large leadership programmes towards more personalised, micro learning which occurs within the flow of work (Bersin, 2022a). Coaching has been seen as a perfect fit for this changing agenda, and the emergence of digital coaching platforms such as EZRA and CoachHub has seen coaching now spreading further through the organisational hierarchy from exclusive use by senior leaders to middle managers and beyond (Bersin, 2022b).

"Homework" in the therapeutic context

Homework, which is an additional study undertaken outside of the "classroom", has been used as an effective and important educational intervention for centuries and has been proven to have a positive effect on learning (Bembenutty, 2011). Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011) argue that homework provides an opportunity for individuals to participate in self-regulation by empowering and motivating themselves to set their own goals, manage their time and reflect on their performance.

"Homework" has also been widely used outside the academic context, such as in therapy (Freeman, 2007), and forms an important part of some therapeutic methodologies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, where "behavioural experiments", undertaken individually by the client outside of the therapy room, are encouraged by the therapist as a mechanism to test out new behaviours and build confidence (Bennett *et al.*, 2004).

Kazantzis *et al.* (2005) propose that "homework" can be initiated in three ways: first, self-initiated, where the client applies homework to their own context outside the session using their own initiative; second, directive, where the therapist proposes the homework. Elkins (2005) forewarns that the risk with the directive approach is that it assumes the coach has gained enough insight to determine what would be effective post session. third, collaborative, whereby the process occurs during the session through a line of questioning that jointly determines what will benefit the client most outside of the session. Despite these limited references, there has to date been little wider discussion about the value or application of homework within coaching practice.

"Homework" in business coaching

A review of the coaching literature suggests there is a dearth of studies linking "homework" to business coaching. McKenna and Davis (2009) and De Haan *et al.* (2013) suggest that

coaching can learn lessons from older, more established professions such as therapy, but not make an explicit link to "homework" or "intersession activities".

Passmore (2007) refers to "inter-sessional activities" as a means to support the coaching process. He suggests the greatest value is in continuing the work of developing self-awareness through observation and reflection and applying it to the real-world behaviours rehearsed or explored in the coaching session.

Waringa *et al.* (2020) suggest that "inter-sessional activities" in coaching can include clients keeping a diary in which they reflect on their thoughts, feelings and learning from events that happened during, in between and after coaching sessions. Waringa *et al.* (2020) are one of the few to explicitly advocate that such activities can increase clients' insights and create enhanced awareness of their learning experiences.

Szymanska (2009) in a technique paper translate cognitive behavioural approaches to coaching discusses homework as an integral part of cognitive behavioural coaching (CBC). Willson (2020) makes a passing reference to "out of sessions (homework)" in his chapter on CBC, but we have not found examples of any other writers building on these ideas in other CBC texts.

Given this lack of consideration in the coaching literature, it may not be surprising that there is a lack of consensus on the terminology to be used or how coaches encourage reflection and action when clients return to their desks after a coaching session. Is the word "homework" acceptable? Should alternative terminology be used, such as "experiment", "intersession activities" or "client practice" be used? What are the learning theories that underpin coaching homework?

In this preliminary study, we aimed to explore the use of "homework" by coaches to better understand how did they describe it, how did they create the intervention and how did they see homework fitting into their wider coaching as a workplace learning intervention. The formal research question is stated in the Method section.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning theory is rooted in the work of Kolb (1984), who developed a four-stage cycle. This moves from experience to formulating a model or theory, testing this in the real world and revising that theory based on reflecting on the impact of the test behaviour. In coaching sessions, the coach works with the client to reflect on past experiences or future demands and through these reflections develops a new plan. However, the testing of this plan can only take place outside of the session. The client thus implements their plan on returning to their desk and seeking to monitor its impact, gathering further insights to take back to their next coaching session. In this way, incremental improvements are made towards the realisation of the goal.

Argyris and Schon (1978) proposed three levels of learning that enable the movement from reactionary learning to more proactive learning. These are single-, double- and triple-loop learning, as highlighted in the following. Single-loop learning (Level 1) is described as lower-level learning (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). Level 1 learning occurs when individuals detect and correct errors by making small, incremental changes or adaptations without challenging existing decisions, beliefs and assumptions. They identify what they want to achieve in terms of goals and targets, monitor and review whether they have been achieved and, if not, take the necessary corrective action and complete the loop (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Armstrong, 2012). Double-loop learning (Level 2) refers to higher-level learning. Level 2 learning happens when, through the process of detecting and correcting errors, the individual questions, challenges and modifies existing norms, behaviours, attitudes and goals. Learning takes place, and new knowledge and competencies are gained by questioning and examining the root cause of problems, which creates a new, deeper learning loop. Triple-loop learning

(Level 3) is described as learning how to learn (Prahalad and Hamel, 1994). Level 3 learning occurs when individuals master the ability to conduct single- and double-loop learning and begin to focus on meta-learning questions.

A second topic widely discussed within learning theory is the role of reflection. Sutton (2016) provide greater granularity as to the nature of self-reflection required to develop self-awareness and propose four distinct levels. Level 1 is self-reflection; Level 2 relates to insight and being able to name thoughts and feelings and understand motives and actions and Level 3 is rumination, where there is some reflection on past negative events and reflection on what can be learned from those experiences. Finally, Level 4 involves mindfulness and paying attention to what is happening moment to moment.

We would argue that these factors could potentially form part of the coaching engagement and homework that is given to the client or chosen by the client in between sessions as a continuation and reinforcement of activities that are completed in the coaching session.

What is clear from the literature is that while learning is recognised as a part of coaching, few links have been made to learning theory in the coaching literature and the wide range of learning transfer tools, such as "intersession activities", have yet to be fully explored in coaching research or exploited in coaching practice.

In this preliminary study, we aimed to address these questions, focusing on the experiences of UK coaches and clients and the role and relevance homework in their coaching assignments, as a prelude to a wider research study in this area to establish best practice. At this point in the paper, we move to using the term "inter-sessional activities", instead of "homework"; the reason will become apparent when considering the results.

In the next section of the paper, we will review the method for the study, including ethical approval, participants, analysis and the high-level themes.

Method

This exploratory study was conducted from an inter-subjectivist (involving both coach and clients), interpretivist perspective (Saunders *et al.*, 2016; Collis and Hussey, 2014). It adopted a qualitative, phenomenological methodology (Arbnor and Bjerke, 1997) to explore participants' experiences of homework in between sessions, experiential learning and learning transfer from their own subjective insights, based on the following research question: "*How do inter-sessional activities enhance clients' experiential learning and reflection in between sessions and contribute to the effective transfer of their learning in the workplace in business coaching?*"

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Henley Business School Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of the study.

Participants

The data were collected from eight coaches and eight clients who were selected via purposive sampling (Saunders, 2012). Participants were recruited through a professional coaching network. Each participant was given a pseudonym to anonymise the data. The participants' details are summarised in Table 1:

Analysis

A semi-structured interview guide was developed and used to collect data. Each interview was recorded via Zoom and subsequently transcribed using Otter software. The transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which has

Participants	Age	Gender
Coach 1	57	M
Coach 2	53	M
Coach 3	55	M
Coach 4	53	F
Coach 5	50	F
Coach 6	60	F
Coach 7	52	F
Coach 8	55	F
Client 1	50	M
Client 2	50	M
Client 3	44	F
Client 4	61	F
Client 5	61	M
Client 6	55	F
Client 7	49	F
Client 8	58	M

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 1. Participants

subsequently been developed (Neuman, 2014; Willig, 2013). A manual process was used to identify the key themes, which were then compared with the existing literature.

Themes

The researchers generated a series of themes from their analysis, which are reported in the next section. In total, seven themes were identified. These are summarised in Table 2:

Results

Theme 1: "inter-sessional work" or just work?

The data raised questions about the nature of the activities set, whether this was a doing task or whether it was a thinking or reflection task and whether the nature of the task was seen as "inter-sessional" activity or just part of work: for example, reflecting on the impact of a presentation could be viewed as just work or could be viewed as an inter-sessional task if the

Theme	Explanation
Theme 1: "Inter-sessional work" or just work?	This theme related to how the activity was seen by clients: as just a normal everyday activity or part of the coaching programme
Theme 2: To lead or to follow?	This theme related to how the inter-sessional activities were set: whether this was by the coach, by the client or collaboratively
Theme 3: What and when to set?	This theme related to whether the inter-sessional activities were do (behavioural) tasks or reflect (cognitive) tasks
Theme 4: What's in a name?	This theme related to perceptions of how the terminology influenced perceptions of the activity
Theme 5: Added value or negative effect?	This theme related to the perceived value or efficacy of inter-sessional tasks
Theme 6: Client attraction or repulsion?	This theme related to the client's emotions connected to inter-sessions activities
Theme 7: Digital or analog?	This theme related to the types of tasks and communications between sessions

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 2. Themes explained

past session had focused on enhancing the leaders presentational skills. Participants' views about the nature of intersession activities were divided. The term "intersession activities" was generally seen as the work done, or the thinking engaged, related to the session, outside of the coaching session. Samantha (client) defined it as *"something that you do in your own time based on a set of particular goals to help you move towards a goal."*

Nethan (client) admitted that he did not consider these additional activities in which he engaged between sessions as "homework": *"I would never think about the things that I set as actions as homework. When you were talking about homework … it was hard for me to compute because I just would never think of those things that I take as actions as homework. They're just things that I'm doing"*.

The coaches saw inter-session activities as being integrated with the coaching, particularly when it was set collaboratively. Cat (coach) observed that for her, inter-sessional activities were a way of *"linking what happens in the session with what happens in real life. It's really the work we do together and the work that you do on your own."*

Max (coach) identified it as *"an extra mission for your clients … in support of the change that the client wants."*

Cat (coach) too saw them as part of her coaching and described the purpose of inter-sessional activities in her coaching as *"learning about yourself … the client can then choose what they want to do after the session - think and reflect more or do."*

Theme 2: to lead or to follow?

The second theme related to who set the work. Should "inter-sessional activities" emerge collaboratively from the process, be requested by the client or be set by the coach based on their experience?

Samantha (client) felt that the issue of her coach-led (directive) inter-sessional activities created an imbalance in their relationship: *"I felt a little bit like the* 'inter-*sessional activities' created a difference in our levels. So, you know, the coach then ended up being somebody that was telling me what to do, rather than us being equal partners"*.

Sil (coach) suggested that for her, inter-sessional activities offered a proactive role for her clients: to think about and do outside the session as a follow-up. She confirmed *"I want the other person to feel confident about the work that they're doing . . ..so it's actually something that feels like a constructive thing that they are doing between sessions."*

Sid (coach) added, "*I might say, 'So what do you think might be useful from what we've just explored that you might take forward?' And we might check in with that next time, but it totally depends on the client, I think."*

Neil, Lea and Max (coaches) reported using coach-led (directive) "inter-sessional activities" more frequently than collaborative "inter-sessional activities". Lea indicated she might say, "*what if you were to consider this?" I will put out a message, "I'm going to put it in your notes just for you to think about."* Max commented that he might say to his clients, *"are you willing to do an experiment?"*

Dan (coach), reflecting on his own practice of directing or collaborating when setting "inter-sessional activities", suggested, *"I'm probably too prescriptive when it comes to it. And I think 'all would be good if you did this'. And I probably say that too much, I think. And I also think a weakness is probably I don't make as much of what's happened in between sessions … I guess it's easy if someone has kind of gone and done it, and it's also kind of easy if they've had barriers."*

Theme 3: what and when to set?

The theme of the type of work also emerged. Both coaches and clients gave examples of "inter-sessional activities" with which they had engaged. Specific examples of "inter-sessional

activities" cited by coaches were (1) decisional balance, (2) value exercise, (3) mood board, (4) exploratory conversations with contacts, (5) reflective writing and (6) writing daily using positive psychology or CBC tools.

Dan (coach) pointed out that he used the contracting process to discuss the type of "inter-sessional activities" with which the client might wish to engage. He commented, *"I generally will cover it in contracting. It might be that we agree some homework. It might be 'just to go and think about things' or it might be some activities that we want to try . . . and then we'll reflect on how it went in the session afterwards"*.

There was some discussion about time management with a session, and how if time management was poor, this could lead to the end of the session being rushed and a lack of opportunity to talk about "inter-sessional activities". Effective session planning was thus important if coaches wanted to set "inter-sessional activities".

Finally, there was some mention of the amount of "homework", a common complaint of children. In some cases, clients felt overwhelmed by the number of activities set, particularly when these were tasks to complete as opposed to reflective exercises or when the number of tasks failed to take into account other priorities the client faced over the coming period. Agreeing on one point of focus seemed to reduce this concern. As Fran (client) noted, "*the fact that it is just it's one item, and therefore you are able to focus on it . . .*"

Theme 4: what's in a name?

The terminology used to describe these activities also sparked a debate among the coaches.

Dan (coach) used the term "homework" with his clients because *"it's sort of slightly light-hearted . . ."* and commented, *Did you know, thus far, I've never had any pushback."*

Other coaches in this study reported that they do not use the term "homework" as they feared it conjures up negative images of homework that was issued by teachers at school.

Lea (coach) stated, *"Using the word 'homework' depended on people's experiences at school. I think the ones that push back are the ones who probably haven't necessarily had the best experiences of having to do homework"*.

Sid (coach) noted, *"the name puts me off. It sort of goes back to school days."*

Some of the coaches reported using other words such as *"food for thought"* (Lea), *"action plan . . . things to do"* (Dan) and *"experiment"* (Cat and Max).

Clients had a largely adverse response to terminology such as "homework". Sam (client) described her own experiences of being set homework by the coach in negative terms, with echoes of school days: it *"feels like something that school kids do?"* and expressed a preference for more neutral and collaborative language which echoed the mindset of the coaching relationship, such as "*personal reflections*". Clare (client) echoed these feelings "*I don't really like use it because I used to be a teacher. So, I kind of associate it with like, oh, you know, it's gonna be boring, pointless and, you know, just a sort of, you know, formulaic exercise or something just because of our experience of school*". However, none had a clear view on what "homework" should be called, as an alternative term.

Theme 5: added value or negative effect?

When considering the benefits of "inter-sessional activities", Max (coach) highlighted that it may provide a space to crystallise or deepen thoughts that arose during the session. He noted, *"It serves maybe a bigger purpose, which is to catalyse and encourage thinking . . . e.g. when do they actually have stress? Or when do they actually feel scared? Or when do they actually worry about whatever it is that I worry about. And that's very hard to find. And so, some of the homework can be very, very helpful to map that out."*

Max (coach) and Neil (coach) also suggested that "inter-sessional activities" were an opportunity to keep the momentum alive, *"create a bit of continuity in the coaching*

relationship" and try to link what happens in the coaching session with what happens in clients' real lives.

Daria (coach) was mindful of the potential risks associated with issuing "inter-sessional activities". She stated, "*It may hurt the relationship in a negative way by unbalancing the equality a coaching relationship should have. It might make the person feel 'I have to do that', or 'I'm going to disappoint that person'. If it becomes where the person feels like they have to do the homework, and they're doing it to please the coach, it could lead to a kind of parent-child dynamic in the relationship"*.

Sid (coach) too reflected on the downsides of setting work for clients: *"clients already have a lot on their plate and they might not have time for additional homework . . . It potentially creates stress or pressure on the client . . . and generate . . . the feeling of failure."*

In a review of the benefits, coaches highlighted how homework could make clients feel in trying out new things, testing out barriers and encouraging them to be more playful. On this note, Cat (coach) remarked, "*I've probably got better at not having expectations about what people will do, because it isn't about me and what I think success is."* She added, *"it's about them and their measure of success."*

Despite realising that "inter-sessional activities" could be of benefit, Samantha (client) pointed out that she initially felt uncomfortable about doing inter-sessional work when this was set by the coach. She reflected, *"If that wasn't the intersession activities that you wanted to do, actually it might be quite a good thing to do. So, I always think that something that doesn't feel quite right to you is often the thing that you need to look at more deeply. I didn't do my work, and I am wondering if that's just me being a bit bloody-minded about it, because it wasn't quite what I wanted to do or I don't know. So, it's reflecting on the fact that I didn't do my work. And if I had done my work, would I have been in a better position? Well, I did two new client calls . . . would that have helped me in those two calls?"*

Theme 6: client attraction or repulsion?

Coaches reported different levels of engagement of clients with "inter-sessional activities". Dan (coach) noted, *"I've had one or two almost running out the door going 'I want to go and do this'. You might get one or two say 'I'll give that a bit of thought.'"*

One factor that seemed to impact client engagement was busyness. Daria (coach) observed, *"I would've been uncomfortable asking her to do anything else because . . . it would have overloaded her in terms of trying to get that done in the timescale that we had."*

The coaches indicated that their practice had changed over time as their coaching experience developed. Lea reported, *"I now keep it short . . ..less is more . . .."*

Neil (coach) noted movement too, towards *"more humanity, less business like . . . providing more time to craft the actions at the end of the session . . . providing choice with coach-led homework . . . maximum three"*.

Sid (coach), too, had changed his practice moving towards being less collaborative and more client-led as he believed this achieved "*higher levels of engagement*".

Clients also reported feeling less engaged when home work was set as opposed developed collaborative. Dave (client) reported how this meant the engagement was more perfunctory: "*I did it literally in the 10 s before having the second coaching session. So I could tell the coach, I'd done it*".

Theme 7: digital or analogue?

While technology has revolutionised many aspects of life, in respect of "inter-sessional activities", the impact for the coaches in this sample was more limited. Email appeared to be a popular communication method between clients and coaches and was used as a follow-up to confirm the next session and to send reading materials or recommend a book.

LinkedIn and phone were also noted as being used by coaches as a means to contact and engage with clients about "inter-sessional activities".

Fabiana (client) reflected on emails and suggested it would be better to have them a few days after the session, rather than immediately, acting as a reminder. She noted, *"I'm reflecting that I felt quite overloaded with stuff to do coming out of the session. And I know when the sessions have been further apart, I have a tendency to kind of get busy in the beginning, or the day or two before the next session, and then forget about what I've been learning. So I'm just interested in whether sending some kind of reminder of something related to the coaching will be a helpful prompt for other people. Because I kind of feel it might be for me"*.

The use of video content, such as that hosted on YouTube or LinkedIn Learning, was popular, but there was concern expressed by some coaches that the advertising on some sites made recommending content appear less professional.

Discussion

While our review of the coaching literature may suggest that homework in coaching is not a regular, or even a common, feature, given how little is written about it, the evidence from this exploratory study suggests that homework is more commonly used by coaches than may be implied by its lack of coverage in the research literature. While most coaches may not receive formal instruction on what types of assignments may benefit clients or how such assignments can be put in place, coaching frameworks such as GROW (Goals, Reality, Options, Will) and CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) have implicitly within them the idea of behavioural experiments. This provides an opportunity for these concepts to be made more explicit within coach competency frameworks and coach training syllabus how these concepts can be operationalised to be best effective in a collaborative way with clients.

Secondly, the terminology remained confusing. Terms used with clients included "assignment", "experiment", "homework" and "activities". This confusion is echoed in the literature, both in coaching and in therapy, where a wide range of terms are used. What was clear is that few clients liked the term "homework". This had echoes of school and an obligation that the set work had to be performed. Greater consideration should be given to terms such as "inter-sessional activity" or "experiment", which may carry few negative connotations for coaches and clients. We have adopted the term "inter-sessional activities" for this paper when not referring to quotes from participants, when citing the work of others who used different terminology or when discussing its application in therapy.

Thirdly, the lack of experience in setting "inter-sessional activities" meant there were issues with time management. Creating space in a session towards the end allowed the coaches to craft actions, with their clients while also keeping to time. This process was commonly used, although coaches noted that "inter-sessional activities" were often more directive than other parts of the session. We would argue that coaching assessments within coach training should aim to include the creation of "inter-sessional activities" and competency frameworks developed by professional bodies should give consideration to "inter-sessional activities": how they are used and set.

The fourth theme was client personal responsibility. Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011) attest that "homework" provides the opportunity for clients to participate in self-regulation by empowering and motivating themselves to set goals, manage their time and reflect on their performance. "Inter-sessional activities" are a means to facilitate this, but coaches raised the risk of coach-led (directive) homework, which can lead to an imbalance in the coach–client relationship. McKenna and Davis (2009) and De Haan *et al.* (2013) suggest that coaching can learn lessons from older, more established professions such as therapy, for having a helping relationship. However, these professions are often more hierarchical and more directive in

their style than coaching, and thus, clients may be more willing to accept their therapists' direction than in the more egalitarian coaching relationship.

The fifth theme was the consideration of where the client was on the developmental journey, or stage of the learning cycle. For clients early in the cycle may itself have contributed to some of the negativity experienced by clients, and further exploration is needed to better understand within the coaching relationship, at which points in the learning cycle do inter-sessional activities offer the client the greatest benefit and secure strong client engagement.

Coaching is a useful tool that proactively encourages learning (Passmore and Rehman, 2012). Both clients and coaches alluded to the experiential learning cycle. There were references to detection and correction of errors, challenging norms, behaviours and goals and examining the root cause of behaviours, which can be linked to the single- and double-loop learning models. However, there was no evidence from the participants of triple-loop learning. In summary, "inter-sessional activities" appeared to play a useful role in the learning cycle, providing opportunities for application, with the subsequent session providing opportunities for reflection with the coach and the development of new insights and fresh plans.

What was also surprising was the limited use of the technologies used by the coaches in our sample. This may reflect the fact that the coaches were the sole practitioners. This may also highlight a gap in coach education, where most coach training programmes have yet to be revised to explore the similarities and differences of working in different spaces, inside, online and outside, and with little reference to how coaches need to contract, engage and leverage digital-online environments such as the use of digital technologies to enhance coaching value (Passmore and Woodward, 2023).

Conclusions

This exploratory qualitative study has highlighted how little we understand inter-sessional activities as a coaching practice, which are widely used but under researched. There remains a lack of clarity about what such activities should be called, what type of activities can or should be set, how these should be set, when these should be set and who should set them. This study provides some insights into these and provides a platform to inform more detailed research to answer these questions and provide an evidence base for this aspect of practice.

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