

Understanding Coach Learning in Disability Sport: A Bourdieusian Analysis

By

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My entire scientific enterprise is indeed based on the belief that the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality.

Bourdieu (1998, p. 2)

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to answer longstanding calls to explore the learning and development of coaches in disability sport (DePauw, 1986; Reid & Prupas, 1998). We know very little about coaches in disability sport and although there exists a growing body of work that has explored coach learning, there is an absence of in-depth sociological research on disability coaching and coach education. In order to address this gap in the literature, this research sought to examine the nature of coach learning through analyses of coach education and coaching practice. Drawing upon a critical sociological framework, the research was conducted on the premise that understanding social practice can generate critical insights into the nature of coach learning. The research begins to answer some of the criticisms levelled at previous research by operationalising the sociological framework of Pierre Bourdieu in conjunction with disability studies, to analyse data generated through a two-year case study evaluation of an impairment-specific mode of coach education, and ethnographic data generated from eighteen-months of fieldwork in a specific disability coaching context. Altogether, data were collected through in-depth observations, interviews, focus groups and qualitative surveys to generate data that had both breadth, gathering data from large numbers of participants, and depth, by understanding in detail a particular coaching culture (Polkinghorne, 2005). The findings reveal how knowledge about disability was often marginalised in coach education, with engagement in the field functioning as principle source of knowledge about coaching in disability sport. As a result, disability-specific coach education contributed marginally to coach learning and functioned as a platform for the transmission of medical model discourses about disability, in terms of the pedagogy adopted and its effects on coaches' knowledge. In the ethnographic study, analyses revealed how disability was assimilated into a high-performance coaching logic that structured coaches' learning according to high-performance ideals. The process of 'learning' was revealed to follow the logic of reproduction as alluded to by Bourdieu (1977, 1990a), and reinforced in social practice through the continual (re)adjustment of class habitus to structural conditions. The mechanisms underlying this process revealed learning to have a symbolic nature, mediated by power, resulting in the uncritical reproduction of ideology related to coaching disabled people. Thus, the research extends an understanding of coach learning, taking into consideration social structure and agency, as a basis for further critical inquiry into coaching in disability sport.

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Dedication

To mum – for everything. You are my determination in every page. This is for you and dad.

Publications arising from this thesis

Journal Articles:

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Book Chapters:

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Chapter One

Introduction

“To change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced”.

Bourdieu (1989, p. 22)

1.1 Introduction

An ever-expanding and influential body of literature has contributed to a sociological understanding of the coaching process. This scholarship has resulted in the proliferation of papers (e.g. Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Potrac & Jones, 2009, *inter alia*), books (e.g. Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009) and edited collections (e.g. Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011) exploring the social nature of sports coaching. Together, this scholarship, drawing on a multitude of sociological perspectives and theories has highlighted the complex, relational and power-ridden nature of coaching practice, and rejected a dominant ontology of coaching underpinned by positivism (cf. Cushion, 2007), a view characterised by a “functional undeviating coaching framework” (Jones & Thomas, 2015, p. 66). Indeed, it can be argued that sociology has established itself as a perspective through which coaching can be conceptualised (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

The use of sociology has, therefore, delineated coaching as a socially constructed practice that is embedded within, and reflective of, a broader culturally-structured context (Jones, Edwards & Viotto Filho, 2014). In turn, recognition of the social complexity of coaching has necessitated exploration of the process of coach development, inclusive of coach learning and coach education (Piggott, 2015), to understand how coach education prepares coaches for the messy reality of practice. On engaging with the literature, the implications for coach learning are clear – practical coaching experience serves as the principle knowledge source for coaches (Jones, Morgan & Harris, 2012; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003), formal coach education has a negligible impact on the process of coaches’ learning (Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones; Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017) and coaching knowledge is a function of the distribution of power within the coaching field (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Townsend & Cushion, 2015; Denison, Mills & Konoval, 2015). Taken together, the literature demonstrates a trend of continuity rather than change with regard to the process of coach learning, inclusive of coach education, development and knowledge (cf. Brown, 2005).

This thesis is primarily about coach learning in disability sport¹. Therefore, the focus throughout is on coaching and coach education in disability sport contexts. Although the

¹ Disability sport is a broad term used to describe sports that accommodate people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). It is sometimes referred to as ‘Parasport’ in research.

importance of the coaching context in directing the process of coach learning is increasingly being recognised (e.g. Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2017), research in coach learning has tended to focus on specific coaching populations and conceptualised the coaching context as a ‘variable’ (Winchester, Culver & Camiré, 2013; McMaster, Culver & Werthner, 2012; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004; Lemyre, Trudel, & Durand-Bush, 2007; Rynne & Mallett, 2012; MacDonald, Beck, Erickson & Côté, 2015) reflective of an embedded psychologism that is reductive in its focus. Rather, research in coaching has tended to overlook the permeability of coaching to broader social issues and how these issues can be actualised through the micro-practices of coaching (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). As a well-defined and specific context, disability sport provides a context to challenge and extend our understanding of coach learning. Thirty years ago, DePauw (1986) argued that a research priority within disability sport was to understand the learning and development of coaches. Disappointingly, coaching in disability sport remains under-researched despite interest in Paralympic and disability sport continuing to grow.

Addressing the complexity of disability sport requires the use of social theory. Bourdieu was one of the first sociological thinkers to address seriously sport as a social issue (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu (1984) positioned sport as a field of social significance, and one that refracts issues of class, power and the representation of body practices. Through his concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *capital*, Bourdieu offers a theoretical language to deconstruct the interrelationship between two structuring structures, those of sport and disability, and understand how they are actualised within coaching practice. While the work of Bourdieu has gained traction in coaching research, having been used to explore professional youth football contexts (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014), coach education (Lewis, Roberts & Andrews, 2015; Townsend & Cushion, 2015) and coach learning (Hassanin & Light, 2014), its use has not been extended to understanding the mechanisms involved in the production of coaching knowledge in disability sport. As Shilling (2004) argued, Bourdieu’s work has at its very centre a “concern with the body as a bearer of symbolic value” (p. 111), and so by connecting a sociological analysis of coach learning to disability discourses, there is an opportunity to offer a “language for challenge, and modes of thought, other than those articulated for us by dominant others” (Ball, 1995, p. 266).

There is, however, a small, but growing, body of literature on coach learning in disability sport. Research in disability coaching has adopted ‘constructivist’ assumptions (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Duarte & Culver, 2014; Taylor, Werthner & Culver, 2014; Taylor,

Werthner, Culver & Callary, 2015), and attempted to describe coach learning (Cregan, Bloom & Reid, 2007; Douglas *et al.*, 2016; Douglas & Hardin, 2014) under a broader ‘acquisition’ metaphor (Sfard, 1998). Further research has described the roles of coaches in disability sport (e.g. Tawse, Bloom, Sabiston & Reid, 2012; DePauw & Gavron, 1991). While this body of research illustrates the constraints and challenges associated with coaching in disability sport, it can be argued that the research lacks the “application of the sociological imagination” (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 1999, p. 210). The inter-connections between disability and cultural contexts (Molloy & Vasil, 2002) such as sport are unexplored, meaning that the representations and constructions of disability by coaches are overlooked. The lack of consideration of disability is an important theoretical ‘gap’, as Smith and Bundon (2016) argue, having a grasp on how disability is explained and understood is vital for individuals working with disabled people² in any context as practice is fundamentally shaped by our working understanding of disability (DePauw, 2000).

Turning attention to disability coaching is a complex but worthwhile task, as it has been suggested that disability sport provides a context that can influence the social understanding of disability significantly (DePauw, 1986; Purdue & Howe, 2012). The disruptive potential of sport is generated from the visibility of disabled people (DePauw, 1997), and the perceived tension between cultural perceptions of disability and the practices of sport, of which coaching is a central and defining part (DePauw, 1997; Silva & Howe, 2012). Indeed, if coaching is to be delineated as both situation and context-dependent, then more research is required to challenge and extend our understanding of coach learning. The lens of ‘disability’ provides such an opportunity.

1.2 Models of Disability

Disability sport can be characterised as a field of struggles (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) in so far as the field is defined by its relation to sport and the symbolic value of disabled bodies within the field (Shilling, 2005). Therefore, in understanding how coaches learn in the disability context, it is worthwhile to highlight briefly the discursive principles that organise fields and structure schemes of perception, thought and action (Bourdieu, 1990a; Shilling, 2005) – simply, to highlight the cultural resources and frameworks that coaches draw upon -

² Throughout the research I will use the phrase “disabled people”, which reflects my alignment with a social relational model of disability. This terminology accentuates the social, cultural and individual barriers that people with impairments face through engagement in social life, constituting a form of oppression and disablism (Thomas, 1999).

consciously or unconsciously - in their practice. Indeed, while coaching is enacted in the social world, it is shaped by and is an active reproducer of society (Bourdieu, 1990a), and thus it is important to relate the experiences of individuals to the social conditions that produced them (Bourdieu, 1990a; Shilling, 2005).

Theoretical models of disability capture and explain how disability is understood within society (Townsend, Smith & Cushion, 2016). Typically, the medical-social model binary has structured much debate within critical disability studies (cf. Goodley, 2011; Thomas, 2007). The medical model has historically been dominant in understanding disability and positioning research (Smith & Perrier, 2014). The central focus of the medical model frames impairment as the *cause* of disability (Swain, French & Cameron, 2003). As I have argued elsewhere (see Townsend *et al.*, 2016), research in disability sport is often framed implicitly by medical model assumptions, where impairment is placed as the cause of disability within sport and as a result coaching positioned as an interventionist practice (e.g. Banack, Sabiston, & Bloom, 2011; Falcão, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2015; Martin, 1999; Hanrahan, 1998; Vargas, Flores, & Beyer, 2012).

In contrast, social model discourses reconstruct disability as *entirely* socially constructed (Thomas, 2014). The social model turns a critical gaze towards society and is based on the premise that disability is the product of collective structural barriers that create exclusions and restrictions for people with impairments (Thomas, 2014). While research has highlighted barriers unique to coaching in disability sport, such as limited financial support, fewer coaching and support staff, and a lack of coach education and training resources and equipment that can function as causes of exclusion in coaching (Taylor *et al.*, 2014; Bush & Silk, 2012; Smith & Sparkes, 2012), these barriers have not been considered in the production of coaching discourses about disability (Townsend *et al.*, 2016).

Thomas (1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2007) sought to rework the social model toward a more *relational* perspective that understands disability as a product of social relationships (Smith & Bundon, 2016; Smith & Perrier, 2014). This model focuses on the various social mechanisms by which people with impairments can be disabled within sporting contexts. The focus of the social relational model therefore is on the social construction of disability in different contexts and its use helps to analyse the production of knowledge about disability. Using a social relational model in coaching is useful as it highlights the unique construction of knowledge between coaches, athletes and the contexts in which they are situated. The model enables

researchers to analyse the understandings of disability at individual, social and cultural levels (Martin, 2013) of coaching and coach education. The interplay of agency and structure in the production of disability is of crucial interest (Townsend *et al.*, 2016).

Finally, the human rights model of disability recognises the right of disabled people to participate in sport (Hassan, McConkey, & Dowling, 2014). This model highlighted the need to provide policies and practices that support the involvement of disabled people in sport. Such measures include appropriate training and education for coaches to create more inclusive coaching environments. However, coaches receive little to no education or support in the disability sport context (McMaster *et al.*, 2012). With this in mind, the training and education of coaches is a crucial issue in disability sport (Martin & Whalen, 2013), and there is a “dire need” of empirical research on disability-specific coach education and training programmes (Reid & Prupas, 1998, p. 192).

The use of the models of disability is not intended to provide a definitive theorisation of disability, but rather to help place disability into its micro-context (Thomas, 2007). In the disability sport context, more critical research is required to understand how coaches learn, in particular recognising the dialectic relationship between structure and agency (Edwards & Imrie, 2003). That said, the medical model provides an understanding of the impact of impairment; that is, an agentic view. The social model provides a broader structural critique of the construction of disability; while the social relational model provides a highly subjective, internalised understanding of disability in relation to the social world, and highlights embedded cultural discourses about disability. These models are ‘good to think with’, and especially in conjunction with the work of Bourdieu, help to make sense of the relationships between the disabled body, self and society, and for making sense of how these are played out in social arenas such as disability sport (cf. Brown, 2005). In particular, Bourdieu’s work can be understood as a philosophy of the *relational* (Bourdieu, 1998), which aligns with the central tenets of the social relational model, especially his attempt at addressing the issue of agency and structure, and “articulating the relations of production between the individual, their body and society” (Brown, 2005, p. 4; Thomas, 1999). Such a theoretical position enables a more nuanced understanding of the social genesis of coaching knowledge.

While these models are important for coaching to engage with and help researchers to widen the disciplinary boundaries of the field in order to contribute to a rich sociological conversation about coaching (Thomas, 2007), most of the established work in disability

coaching tends to distance itself from discussions about impairment (e.g. Cregan *et al.*, 2007; Tawse *et al.*, 2012; McMaster *et al.*, 2012). Only recently has work engaged with models of disability (e.g. Wareham, Burkett, Innes & Lovell, 2017) and in so doing highlighted the permeability of the coaching context to issues of disability. Yet, with regard to coach learning in disability sport, many of the same issues from the broader literature predominate, in that while coaches ‘learn’ through engagement in coaching practice, informal interaction with peers, and self-directed research in a self-referential and uncritical manner, exactly ‘what’ is being learned is missed. Arguably due to the reliance on ‘snapshot’ methodologies, characterised by ‘drive-by interviews’ and observations (Smith & Sparkes, 2016) the existing research takes the coach as a singular unit of analysis and as a result captures only a partial aspect of the coaches’ learning process (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Taylor *et al.*, 2015) by separating coaching from the social and cultural context in which it unfolds. This means that the consideration of disability, its effects, connotations and influences on learning is missed and is a significant gap in the research.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to conduct a sociological analysis of coach learning within disability sport. In this sense, rather than following a model of deduction or simplistic induction, the purpose of the study was informed by and built on an emerging discourse of coach learning and the limited literature in disability sport coaching. Thus, the research was emergent in nature, initially adopting a summative mode of inquiry (Ritchie, 2003) informed by substantive issues in the broader coaching and coach education literature, to understand the impact of disability coach education on coach learning. As the research progressed, it became clear that with an overarching focus on learning I required a deeper understanding of social practice from which to draw conclusions about the nature of learning in disability coaching. That is, rather than a summative focus, I took a generative stance (Ritchie, 2003) that required a theoretical framework that extended and developed our understanding of coach learning within disability sport. Hence, decisions about theory were concerned with the potential to develop new conceptions or understandings about coach learning while remaining open to generative issues. Therefore, drawing on the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the research attempts to address the following question.

- What is the nature of coach learning in disability coaching and coach education?

While broad in scope, the decision was made to frame the research in this way due to the limited analysis that previous research has paid to coach learning in existing literature, or inadequate analyses that took for granted the character and feature of ‘learning’. From this, the following sub-questions arose:

- In what ways does a formal impairment-specific mode of disability coach education impact on coaches’ knowledge?
- How do coaches construct and express knowledge about coaching disabled athletes?

These two sub-questions function as heuristic devices, in that they provide clear questions around which to generate suitable methods and theories to answer the research question. Furthermore, the use of these two sub-questions enabled me to create a dualist view from which to answer the research question – that is – a view from the field context and from the context of disability coach education.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, chapter two describes and critiques some of the key ideas that have informed and continue to inform my thinking in relation to coaching. Following a critical review of the literature, chapter three outlines the methodology and methods employed in order to generate data for the research. Chapter four introduces Bourdieu’s theory of practice, providing a rationale for its use in the research. Subsequently, this theory is applied to the empirical chapters generated from research in disability coach education (chapter five) and from ethnographic work in high-performance disability sport (chapters six and seven). Chapter eight brings together the discussion in relation to coach learning. Chapter nine concludes the thesis, providing implications for coaching research and coach development, and outlining the contributions of this research to knowledge. Reflexivity was considered a central component of sociological inquiry (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and so throughout I offer a level of reflexivity with regard to the process of the research and the data analysis and draw this together in a final reflexive commentary in the conclusion.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

“No doubt agents do have an active apprehension of the world. No doubt they do construct their vision of the world. But this construction is carried out under structural constraints”.

Bourdieu (1989, p. 18)

2.1 Introduction

This literature review serves a number of purposes in introducing, describing and critiquing many of the important ideas that informed, and continue to inform, my thinking in relation to disability sports coaching. In line with the purpose of the study, and reflective of the emergent nature of the research, I consider the nature and scope of existing knowledge, taking a critical look at the research that explores the process of coach development in the broader coaching literature, and then the modest body of work on coaching in disability sport. In so doing, I attempt to carve a space for exploring and understanding coach learning and development in disability sport from a sociological perspective; a theme I will continue to revisit throughout the thesis. Throughout the review, I appreciate the growing work in coaching that attempts to understand the social complexity of coaching through the use of critical sociological theory.

2.2. Coach Learning

Coaches are placed, at least rhetorically, as central figures in the psycho-social and physical development of athletes (Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald, & Côté, 2008; Rynne & Mallett, 2012). The apparent centrality of learning to the professionalisation of coaching is evident in the proliferation of research over the last decade that has explored how coaches learn (Gilbert, Côté & Mallett, 2006). Rynne and Mallett (2014) suggested that coaches are “learners by necessity”, which is in part due to their having to negotiate a coaching process that is characterised by interactions between coaches and athletes within the wider social context (Jones & Thomas, 2015; Cushion & Jones, 2014; Jones, 2007; Saury & Durand, 1998). Research has now established coaching as a complex, “context-dependent practice” (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, p.76). It is clear that the ongoing process of learning to coach is no different.

The recognition that coaching is comprised of perhaps more than a “functional undeviating coaching framework” (Jones & Thomas, 2015, p. 66) was first proposed by Saury and Durand (1998). These authors sought to understand coach learning as the application of knowledge against the demands or constraints of a situation (Saury & Durand, 1998). Drawing on participant observation, substantiated by asking coaches to verbalise their actions, episodic memory elicitation and semi-structured interviews with five professional sailing coaches, the authors argued that coaches devised various operating modes, including the use and application of knowledge in a manner akin to ‘structured adaptation’ to the constraints of the context. The findings of Saury and Durand (1998) led to a research focus that examined the social complexities of coaching and its impact on coaching knowledge. Over the last decade this

“complex-aware” rhetoric (Jones, Edwards & Filho, 2014, p. 201) has become established in coaching, and as a result the prevalence of qualitative methodologies has increased. This suggests that an epistemological ‘shift’ has taken place in the field towards a deeper appreciation of the complexity of coaching from a more critical sociological and pedagogical perspective (e.g. Jones, 2007; Cushion *et al.*, 2003) and away from the positivist reductionist conceptions that dominated early research.

However, in the literature that directly addresses coaches’ knowledge and learning, there has been a dominant concern to describe, define and categorise coach learning (Piggott, 2015) according to degrees of formality or mediation. A common distinction is made between formal, nonformal and informal learning, and was originally utilised by Nelson *et al.* (2006) drawing on the work of Coombs and Ahmed (1974). These authors attempted to explore the knowledge bases of coaches as a precursor to enhancing the efficacy of coach education, by critically reviewing some of the extant literature in coach learning and development against the framework of professional learning. Formal learning, originally defined by Coombs and Ahmed (1974), refers to an “institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system” (p. 8). Applied to coaching, formal learning is often used to describe national governing body coach education awards and certificates. Nonformal learning is described as “any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide select types of learning to particular subgroups in the population” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8; Nelson *et al.*, 2006). In coaching, this can refer to training workshops and CPD events, conferences, seminars and clinics designed to deliver specific areas of interest to a subpopulation (i.e. disability awareness training). Finally, and most identifiable within the coaching literature, is informal learning. This is identified as “the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). An example of research into coach learning can be found in the work of Wright, Trudel and Culver (2007). The authors used semi-structured interviews with 35 volunteer youth ice-hockey coaches from five minor hockey associations in Canada. Coaches were asked to elicit how they learned to coach and highlighted a number of formal and informal sources of coaching knowledge. Here, learning occurred in a wide variety of contexts and situations outside of educational structures, and in coaching is commonly recognised as learning through practical experience as an athlete or a coach, self-directed use of resources (i.e. books, journals, websites), reflective practice, or learning in interaction with other coaches.

Nelson and colleagues offered this conceptual distinction as a remedy for what they identified as a fundamental confusion in addressing learning within the coaching literature, namely the lack of a clear conceptual base upon which to scaffold coach education programmes (cf. Nelson *et al.*, 2006). Further conceptual boundaries in the field include the distinction between learning and education (e.g. Nelson *et al.*, 2006; Cushion *et al.*, 2010); education and development (e.g. Côté, 2006) and, finally, in classifying coaches' learning situations; mediated and unmediated learning (e.g. Werthner & Trudel, 2006). This latter framework was applied to a case study of an elite Canadian coach in order to present the complex process of developing 'expert' knowledge. Drawing on the work of Moon (2004), the authors suggested that

[t]he coach's cognitive structure is at the centre of this figure and will change and adapt under the influences of three types of learning situations. In mediated learning situations, such as formalized coaching courses, another person directs the learning. In unmediated learning situations, there is no instructor and the learner takes the initiative and is responsible for choosing what to learn. Finally, there are the internal learning situations, where there is a reconsideration of existing ideas in the coach's cognitive structure.

(Werthner & Trudel, 2006, p. 199).

Werthner and Trudel (2009) attempted to broaden our understanding of the "variations or idiosyncrasies that seem to prevail in the coaches' learning paths within different coaching contexts" (p. 436). To do so, the authors extended their previous work and interviewed fifteen Canadian Olympic coaches, arguing that coaches sought out learning sources according to their individual needs, highlighting to some degree the value of looking in more detail at specific situations and the learning processes involved in coach development (Werthner & Trudel, 2006).

Another perspective that has gained traction in the field is to identify coaches' perceived sources of knowledge within certain contexts. For instance, Erickson *et al.* (2008) conducted 'quantitative interviews' with forty-four coaches. These authors suggested that experience of coaching, interacting with coaching peers and engagement with formal coach education were the most common sources of coaching knowledge. Furthermore, Erickson *et al.* suggested that 'learning by doing', interaction with coaching peers, and formal coach education were the top actual sources of coaching knowledge. Broadly, these retrospective self-report studies have indicated that coaches develop through a complex blend of different opportunities (Werthner & Trudel, 2009). As Piggott (2015) noted, discussions of this nature are "necessary and

valuable in establishing a shared understanding” (p.284) of learning and contribute to discussions of how to better prepare coaches for the complexity of practice through formal educational pathways (Piggott, 2015). Arguably, these studies have contributed to the abandonment of a view of coach development as a linear pathway from novice to expert towards an approach that recognizes the specificity of the different coaching contexts (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). However, combining an often deductive, single-case (e.g. Werthner & Trudel, 2006), descriptive (Werthner & Trudel, 2009) or self-report study (Erickson *et al.*, 2008; Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007) fails to complete the picture of learning. Researchers perhaps are too eager to draw clear, identifiable and pragmatic outcomes upon which coach development can be scaffolded, but these insights leave much to be understood about the nature of learning itself.

At an epistemological level, the suggestion from these conceptualisations is that ‘learning’ is a bounded, unproblematic and transferable process that ‘happens’ within a particular context. The social mechanisms that structure coaches’ learning and development are overlooked and identifying coaches’ learning sources in this way tells us very little about how and why these particular situations are utilised. These attempts to organise a largely fragmented field are further complicated when terms within coach learning are often used interchangeably and uncritically (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). For instance, terms like coach development, coach learning, coach education, continuing professional development (CPD), training, certification and accreditation are often applied inconsistently across research into coaching. This lack of conceptual clarity highlights the dearth of theoretical consistency in addressing the undeniably complex process of learning. By attempting to organise and delineate coaches’ learning into easily packaged conceptual frameworks, the nature of learning is assumed to be a cognitive process and the mechanism *for* learning is perhaps missed (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Delineating ‘learning’ according to categories of formality or identifying coaches’ learning ‘sources’ tends to isolate knowledge from the context in which it is produced and overlooks the micro-practices that shape ‘how’ to coach. Such work reflects a cognitivist approach to understanding learning (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), which arguably, has missed the cultural and historical permeability of ‘context’ and the prevailing coaching ideology that shapes coaches’ work and knowledge (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

In coaching, a small body of work has approached learning from a sociological perspective. For example, Cushion and Jones (2006) in their ethnography of youth soccer found that the coaching context was structured by a “gendered, authoritarian and hierarchical

discourse” (Cushion & Jones, 2006) that was expressed through coaches’ behaviour and functioned as a mode of symbolic domination of athletes. Such oppressive practices were intimated to be a result of a “self-perpetuating habitus” (Piggott, 2011 p. 539). This mode of learning via reproduction and transmission was echoed by Cushion and Jones (2012) and suggests that coaching follows a powerful model of cultural reproduction, as alluded to by Bourdieu (1990a)³. Importantly, the turn to sociology has highlighted that taking the coach, or coach education as a singular unit of analysis is inadequate in understanding the nature of learning and coaching knowledge. This perspective highlights that knowledge and learning function in the intersection of people, culture and structure and is mediated by relations of power (Cushion *et al.*, 2003).

The influence of history and culture on coach learning was further explored by Hassanin and Light (2014), who emphasised the importance of an overriding and entrenched sporting culture in the construction of coaching dispositions. The authors utilised a grounded theory methodology and investigated the impact of different cultures on three coaches’ beliefs about coaching. The attempt to frame coach learning culturally was supported by the use of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as a sensitising concept in the formation of substantive theory. Importantly, as the authors stressed, not only is the field structuring of practice, but practice exists in a dialectical relationship with the field (Bourdieu, 1990a). The authors further suggest that coach learning is related to the culturally-available and historical discourses that coaches can draw upon to inform their practice (Hassanin & Light, 2014).

As Jones and Thomas (2015) described, coaching is “a terrain possessing a particular past which allows a certain present” (p. 66). Bourdieu’s conceptual battery of habitus, field and capital enable a view of coaching as a shifting social activity whereby arbitrary cultures are legitimated and reproduced through coaching practice and coach education (Cushion, 2011b; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Indeed, the ways in which coaches learn and are able to influence their learning processes depend on their prior positions, experiences and dispositions (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). For example, Christensen (2009), in her sociological exploration of talent identification, showed that football coaches’ practice rested on experience-based, incorporated “practical sense” and “classificatory schemes” (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1998). The data, drawn from sociological analysis of eight in-depth interviews with soccer coaches working in talent development, showed how coaches’ learning was linked to the socially constructed dispositions

³ Please see chapter four for a full overview of Bourdieu’s theoretical tools.

towards coaching practice. These dispositions – and their acquisition - were directly related to the logic of the particular fields of practice in which coaches were situated (Christensen, 2009). These studies suggest the complex way in which agency and structure can influence the pre-conscious construction of habitus, and in turn provide unique insight into coach learning.

This section has reviewed some of the dominant ways of conceptualising learning within the coaching literature. The intimation from the studies reviewed is that in coaching research, knowledge is assumed to be objective, foundational and neutral and learning is simply a process of ‘acquisition’ (Sfard, 1998; Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Thus, framing coach learning in the ways described above reflects a technical ‘interest’ (Lyle & Cushion, 2017) that is reductive in its focus, with only a limited number of studies examining coach learning from a Bourdieusian perspective. The next section examines the literature on coach education.

2.2.1 Coach Education

In recent years, perhaps linked directly to the breadth of coaching contexts, there has been a significant increase in the provision of formal coach education and the associated importance attached to them (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). However, the existing empirical work on coach education paints a somewhat “sobering picture” (Nelson *et al.*, 2012, p. 2), with coach education shown to have limited impact on coaching knowledge and practice (Jones *et al.*, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2014). Many criticisms have centred on coach education structures that are standardised, instrumental and often developed in isolation from the “messy reality” of practice (Cushion *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2012), with coaches often ‘filtering’ knowledge from coach education according to “what works” in their own particular contexts (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, p. 75). Often, despite the recognition within the literature that learning how to coach is a highly individualised, socially situated and culturally (re)constructed process (Jones *et al.*, 2012; Townsend & Cushion, 2015), within coach education how coaches learn is assumed to be an instrumental acquisition of knowledge, occurring at an individual level and transferred in an unproblematic fashion into practice (Williams, Alder & Bush, 2016). A major critique of coach education is that it often follows an additive approach that grafts new ‘gold standard’ (Abraham & Collins, 1998) skills and knowledge onto an existing knowledge base (Cushion, 2013). What is left, therefore, are a number of coaches who become “certified”, but remain inflexible and unprepared to manage the social, cultural and political complexities of coaching (Cushion, 2013), nor does coach education tackle coaches’ implicit beliefs about coaching or learning. It is unsurprising that how to best educate coaches remains an ongoing

concern (Williams *et al.*, 2016), and it may be argued that the problems with coach education at the fundamental level are not pedagogical but are trapped in the ways in which coaching reproduces itself (Townsend & Cushion, 2015).

The most frequently cited message is that formal coach education – the “rigid, out-dated and largely irrelevant” type of learning (Piggott, 2015, p. 285) – has very little impact on coach development (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009; Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie, 2006; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Roberts 2010; Nash & Sproule, 2011; Nelson *et al.*, 2012) and studies into coach education have routinely criticised conceptions on the grounds of not having any significant impact on practice (e.g. Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Piggott 2015). There are a range of reasons for the differential impact of coach education on practitioners. First, it has been argued that there is an epistemological ‘gap’ between knowledge and skills proposed in isolation within educational structures, and the complex reality of the coaching process. Jones and Wallace (2005) in advancing orchestration as a conceptual tool to understand coaching argued that professional development programmes (i.e. coach education awards), are ‘fine in theory’ but divorced from reality (Saury & Durand, 1998; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, scholars argue that coach education often takes the form of ‘training’ courses due to the “flawed assumptions, held by NGBs, about the nature of both coaches and coaching” (Piggott, 2011, p.538; Nelson *et al.*, 2006). It is assumed, for example, that coaches are ‘empty vessels’ waiting to be filled with technical, tactical and bio-scientific information (Piggott, 2011; Cushion *et al.*, 2003), which at its core attempts to reduce the coaching process to a series of controllable, measurable and interconnected variables. A further assumption is that this ‘additive’ approach to coach education (Cushion & Partington, 2014) builds towards coaching ‘expertise’ in a linear fashion. The argument is that formalised coach education structures fail to appreciate the situatedness of coaching (De Martin-Silva *et al.*, 2015, p. 670), instead offering various forms of decontextualized, instrumental and systematic knowledge (Nelson *et al.*, 2006). Here, coaches are expected to take new concepts, knowledge and skills in isolation and apply them in practice, to varying degrees of success, in order to pass the course. This results in many coaches offering an outward appearance of acceptance whilst internally resisting the imposition of a singular and irrelevant body of knowledge (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). Underpinning this resistance to an established body of knowledge, often developed in isolation, is the commonly cited ideological position that coaches ‘learn from doing’ (e.g. Cushion *et al.*, 2003).

There is a substantial body of research directed towards understanding different modes of coach education. This research is often characterised by reporting coaches' preferences for engaging in coach education structures (e.g. Falcão, Bloom & Gilbert, 2012; Leduc, Culver & Werthner, 2012; McCullick, Belcher & Schempp, 2005). For example, Leduc *et al.* (2012) focused on the perceived impact of two coach education modules on coaches' practice. Data were collected through non-participant observations and interviews with eleven coaches and analysed deductively in relation to the work of Jarvis (2006) and Moon (2004). Unsurprisingly, the impact of the course varied according to the individual learner and their biography, but the research failed to highlight the mechanisms through which this happened. Such a descriptive view of 'learning' is limited as it does not focus attention on key cultural, social and individual structures and how these mediate learning impact (Griffiths, Armour & Cushion, 2016; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). More recent attempts to develop coach learning have recognised the powerful socialisation process that coaches are a part of, through their coaching 'apprenticeship' (Cushion *et al.*, 2003) as well as accounting for coaches' agentic construction of knowledge. For instance, Stodter and Cushion (2014, 2016, 2017) used a case-study of youth soccer coach education in the United Kingdom, and with a mixed-methods approach developed a grounded model of coach learning that "provides a vital link between coach education, learning and coaching practice" (p. 64). A model of coach learning was presented that recognised how coaches adopted, adapted and rejected course content according to their diverse experiences, which led to a differential impact of coach education on learning, and therefore practice. Furthermore, the findings suggest that coaches actively constructed and experimented with knowledge for use in socially situated coaching practice, through double-loop individual and contextual level filters, and 'reflective conversations' (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2016, 2017).

This work - the first to actually evidence 'learning' to some degree - was further developed by Stodter and Cushion (2017) to propose a learning theory specific to coaching that can "explain how practitioners dynamically interact with learning environments" (p. 321). The authors explained how – at an individual level - coaches approached and understood learning experiences "through the lens of their existing beliefs, knowledge and coaching practice; in other words, their biography" which acted as a continuous influence on their perspective (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jarvis 2006; Leduc *et al.*, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017, p. 6) and was influential in the degree to which practice was changed. Furthermore, the context was argued to be a powerful influence on the coaches' practices, in that it can "enable or inhibit the learning

process” (p. 13). These individual and contextual layers were scaffolded by a continuous process of reflection that was the basis for a ‘judgement’ of ‘what works’ (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). This research demonstrated the interplay between micro-level individual factors and macro-level constraints that structured coach learning and provided some pragmatic insights into the impact of coach education on coaches’ learning outcomes with some explanation of the mechanisms for why and how learning happens. Moreover, a specific example of research addressing coach education within an “entrenched sporting and coaching culture” is the work of Galvan, Fyall and Culpan (2012, p. 124). The authors interviewed six cricket coaches to gather their perceptions of an educationally-informed high-performance coach education programme that combined elements of traditional models of coach education (e.g. sport specific technical and tactical content) with pedagogical knowledge. In this study, participants were constrained by a particular model of coaching as a result of socialisation within a particular subculture – characterised by privileging of technical content knowledge and technocratic assumptions about coaching that were entrenched and historically legitimised (Galvan *et al.*, 2012). In this sense, ‘new’ knowledge in coach education acted in constant tension with the coaching culture that demarcated the boundaries of legitimate coaching knowledge (Galvan *et al.*, 2012; Cushion *et al.*, 2003). This runs in direct contrast to a body of research that has (so far) failed to satisfactorily explain the impact (or lack thereof) of coach education on learning within specific coaching cultures.

On the other hand, a more instrumental or prescriptive view regarding content, delivery and structure of programmes is evident in the literature. For instance, Nelson *et al.* (2012) analysed ninety coaches’ preferences for continuing coach education. It was suggested that coach education plays a valuable and yet under-realised role in the development of coaches and coaching. The problems identified in this study were, in many ways, pedagogical in that coaches evidenced preferences for usable, personally relevant content delivered through pedagogical approaches that encourage learners to actively participate in the course. Further considerations for enhancing coach education included the use of learning resources, the availability of mentoring, and pragmatic concerns relating to cost, venue, and the evidencing of continuing professional development were also discussed.

It is evident, then, that if coaching is, as Jones (2006, p. 97) identified, “complex and dependent upon many factors”, then the training of coaches should not be - as Cushion *et al.* (2003, p. 220) described it as - procedural. Naturally, coaching scholars may feel compelled to make recommendations for enhancing the provision of coach education perhaps in order to

account for the inherent socio-pedagogical complexity of coaching and to recognise the role of experience in coaching (Piggott, 2015). A number of pedagogical solutions have been offered at a conceptual or ‘pilot’ level to cure the ills of a coach education paradigm underpinned by behaviourism, characterised by a ‘paint-by-numbers’ approach and a ‘one-size-fits-all pedagogy’ (Jones & Wallace 2005; Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Nelson & Cushion 2006; Piggott, 2015). These have included various ‘constructivist’ approaches that have included attempts to situate learning through communities of practice (e.g. Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Culver & Trudel, 2006; Nelson & Cushion 2006; Lemyre, Trudel, and Durand-Bush 2007; Erickson *et al.*, 2008; Cassidy & Kidman 2010; Roberts, 2011; Piggott, 2015; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014) narrative approaches (e.g. Douglas & Carless, 2008), online blogs (e.g. Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017; Stoszkowski, Collins & Olssen, 2017), ethnodrama (Morgan, Jones, Gilbourne & Llewellyn, 2013), video diaries (Jones *et al.*, 2015) and problem-based learning (e.g. Jones & Turner, 2009; Driska & Gould, 2014).

This body of work echoes that of coaching scholars such as Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) and Jones and Turner (2006) in recognising the need to educate coaches holistically by viewing coaching not as multi-disciplinary, comprising unconnected strands of differing content, but as interdisciplinary, where such knowledge meets, interconnects and dissects. This concern has given rise to a number of methods to be incorporated, perhaps prematurely, into coach education. As Cushion (2013) argued, although such pedagogical approaches are routinely conceptualized as ‘constructivist’ in their assumptions, and though compelling, a lack of conceptual clarity creates difficulty in understanding what ‘constructivism’ means, thus practitioners (i.e. coach educators) struggle to bridge a self-imposed theory-practice gap. A further issue with these approaches to coach education is that they are positional in nature or based on abstract realities which are not reflective of the political nature of coaching (Stodter & Cushion, 2014) and as such await empirical testing. Research addressing these issues is important if the field is ever to progress to a position of providing ‘evidence in support of’ ways of enhancing the delivery of coach education, rather than simply making ‘arguments for’ preferred pedagogies (Lyle, 2007). While flawed, coach education can be a valued source of knowledge development for coaches (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014), and can be influential in transforming practice if an optimal framework for learning can be developed and tested empirically.

Some scholars are critical of the ‘evidence’ on which much coach education research rests, stating that cross-sectional descriptions of coaches’ opinions on courses, or self-reports

of their practice and what they believe they learnt are insufficient as a basis for research (Stodter & Cushion, 2014). In fact, there is generally a lack of evidence regarding ‘what works’ in coach education, and this creates what De Martin-Silva *et al.* (2014, p. 670) described as a “polarisation of opinions” between a pragmatic, ‘what works’ approach from coach education providers, and scholars who routinely criticise such approaches. The evidence then regarding what works for coaches in coach education is still contested. But, as Piggott (2015) argues, a simple dismissal of coach education by scholars and practitioners is unnecessary. We still have much to learn about the social complexity of coach education structures at individual, social and cultural levels to provide a more theoretically informed and robust scaffold on which to build coach learning programmes. One such avenue is the integration of social theory into research, recognising that the educational development of coaches is “socially, culturally and historically” (re)constructed (Jones *et al.*, 2012, p. 310; Townsend & Cushion, 2015).

Though still in its infancy, one example of research that attempted to operationalise social theory in understanding coach education is that of Chesterfield *et al.* (2010). These authors drew on the work of Goffman (1959) to explore how coaches accepted, adapted and/or rejected the knowledge and practices presented to them on formal coach education programmes. In so doing, these authors argued that social theory highlights the “subjective and interactive nature of coach education through revealing its complex and messy realities” (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010, p. 300; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Drawing on interview data generated with six UK soccer coaches to explore their experiences of formal coach education, the authors found that coaches conformed to the expectations of their coach educators during assessments, adopting an external appearance of acceptance (Cushion *et al.*, 2003) despite expressing feelings of disillusionment with course content for being either too simple or too abstract (Piggott, 2015).

The focus within the research was at a micro-sociological level, and whilst valuable in adding to the sociology of sports coaching, it struggles to articulate the nexus between macro- and micro-interaction that produces practice - a criticism Goffman himself acknowledged (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004). Here, the authors overlooked the influence of macro-sociological concerns of power, class and social structure on learning. In one of the few critical sociological investigations of coach education in the UK, and in contrast to Chesterfield *et al.* (2010), Piggott (2011) utilised the (neo)Foucauldian concepts of power-knowledge couplets and governmentality to explore the mechanisms through which coaching knowledge is governed, secured and reproduced. The research drew on interview data generated with twelve

participants across a range of national governing body courses and was underpinned by a critical rationalist approach. The data generated provided a sharp critique of a number of coach education courses, with many classed as “useless” (Piggott, 2011, p. 545) in that they adopted a rigid, dogmatic and “formulaic” pedagogical approach which had to be “accepted without discussion” (p.546) by learners in a process of indoctrination (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Importantly, Piggott noted that coach education tended to be characterised by “rationalities” (p. 547), or practices of governance by the coach educators that would secure certain “correct” ways of thinking about, and practising coaching. As such this work represented a macro-sociological approach to understanding the production of coaching knowledge, whilst articulating the practices at a micro-level that, in turn, produced practice. It is clear then, that coach education comprises individual, ideological, institutional and cultural constraints that provide an environment for the manifestation, reproduction and transmission of power (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2004; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008). Importantly, power relations can be a mechanism for the legitimisation and reproduction of coaching knowledge, discourse and inequality. This is an important consideration, which necessitates an analytical approach that highlights the ways in which knowledge can be viewed as a product of a complex web of power relations within a social field.

For example, Lewis *et al.* (2015) examined how female coaches faced inequality within coach education in football. Using the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with ten female football coaches to explore their experiences of coach education in football. Though drawing primarily on self-reported data, the analysis showed how coach education, which as a sub-field of football coaching, had an entrenched masculine hegemony. The analysis highlighted how, within the structures of coach education, masculine discourse and subversive cultural practices enacted through overtly sexist behaviour and degrading comments towards women worked to reproduce inequality (Lewis *et al.*, 2015), thus marginalising the participants. The data reinforced how one’s position within the cultural field determined access to knowledge and resources about coaching.

In their qualitative examination of elite coach education in cricket, Townsend and Cushion (2015) explored coaches’ experiences of the level four coach education programme. Utilising interviews with twelve ‘elite’ cricket coaches, the authors operationalised a Bourdieusian framework (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a) to describe how the interplay of habitus and capital functioned to (re)produce legitimate coaching knowledge, with the more symbolic capital ascribed to the coach (through high level playing experience), the influencing weight

their beliefs and knowledge about coaching held. Though limited by its reliance on one-off interview data, the research highlighted the tensions and conflict between an accepted model of coach education with a singular and prescribed body of knowledge and an arbitrary sporting culture, with individuals placed hierarchically within it (Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Indeed, habitus was suggested as the mediating concept in reproducing coaching knowledge; importantly the cricket coaching culture in which the coaches were situated was a powerful generative site of a distinctive, embodied habitus that had the power to shape coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2015).

In assessing the research in coach education, a number of areas for critical questioning are evident. First, there is a lack of in-depth, observational and socially sensitive work on coach education in its various modalities and how it can function as a vehicle to reproduce inequality from wider cultural fields. Second, the degree to which learning, and knowledge are considered in critical detail is often superficial and overly reliant on the coach as a unit of analysis. Third, and in direct relation to the object of this research, there is a noticeable absence of research on coach education in disability sport. This is an important oversight, as it has been argued that the lack of research in disability sport means that there is a lack of informed coach development resources for coaches to access (Cregan *et al.*, 2007). Formal coach education, then, currently plays only a “minor role in the wider process of coach development” (Piggott, 2011, p. 538) and it is clear that there is an ongoing challenge to theorise and implement the optimal environment for developing coaching knowledge. With this in mind, in the next section my attention turns to the literature that has addressed coaching in disability sport, and importantly to the literature that seeks to describe coach learning in relation to the issues outlined above.

2.2.2 Coaching in disability sport

The complexity of disability coaching can be readily observed in the literature. A cursory glance at the existing research in coaching disabled athletes, for example, points to coaches managing a multitude of pragmatic and contextual constraints that place demands on the skills, knowledge and practices of coaches beyond that which is expected in mainstream sporting contexts (Burkett, 2013). For instance, limited financial support, fewer coaching and support staff, a lack of coaching and training resources and equipment, and a smaller talent pool all impact upon the role of the coach in disability sport (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, coaches may need to communicate with athletes’ families, support workers and caregivers, and reflect upon the accessibility of facilities and transportation (Cregan *et al.*, 2007). This is yet to be

explored in critical detail in terms of coaches' learning and knowledge. A deeper look at the existing literature, however, reveals some important insights into coach learning in disability sport and the assumptions that influence particular ways of thinking about coaching. As McMaster *et al.* (2012) described, disability coaching is embedded within cultural contexts involving the relationship between the coach, athlete and the environment. However, the recognition that the intersection of these factors is of 'unique significance' (McMaster *et al.*, 2012, p. 238) in developing coach and athlete learning in disability sport is not new to the field of coaching (cf. Cushion *et al.*, 2003). It is important therefore to understand how coaches construct their knowledge and skills in disability sport in more contextual and sophisticated ways (MacDonald *et al.*, 2015). Indeed, identifying that both coaches and athletes contribute to the coaching process, with the coach possessing sport specific and coaching 'expertise', and the athlete possessing embodied knowledge on disability – the 'inner world' of disability (Thomas, 1999) - creates a view of knowledge as socially constructed and culturally situated (Cregan *et al.*, 2007). Though often overlooked in the literature, the effects of an athlete's impairment are clearly considered in the knowledge and practices of coaches. As Tawse *et al.* (2011) stated, coaches must learn to negotiate the "many unique challenges" (p. 208) each athlete both faces and poses. These considerations range from specialised equipment and prosthetics, to competition classifications, medications, illness and a host of psycho-social issues that can arise as a result of experiencing 'disability'.

To understand disability sport coaching, research has - like the literature in the broader field - focused on describing sources of coach learning (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015; Douglas *et al.*, 2016; Douglas & Hardin, 2014); explored the link between practice and coaching knowledge (e.g. Cregan *et al.*, 2007); outlined the complex role of the coach in disability sport (Tawse *et al.*, 2012); and adopted 'constructivist' perspectives in understanding coach learning (Taylor *et al.*, 2014, 2015; Duarte & Culver, 2014). Early studies into disability coaching focused specifically on the roles of coaches. For instance, DePauw and Gavron (1991) attempted to identify the characteristics of 155 coaches from six national sport organizations serving individuals with disabilities. The authors utilised a survey methodology to examine factors such as the reasons for becoming a coach, the type of sports coached and frequency of coaching, level of competition coached, certifications held, gender, age, education, and extent of coaches' training (DePauw & Gavron, 1991). Although such an approach, arguably, misses the idiographic nature of the coaching process, the findings indicated that some coaches found themselves in disability sport in serendipitous ways; for instance, as a former athlete in

disability sport, or as a volunteer due to a family member's involvement. Importantly, these authors identified at a philosophical level the need for discussions around coaches and their assumptions about coaching in this context, arguing that the distinction between coaching the 'sport' and coaching the 'disability' lies at the centre of future research and in understanding in critical detail the coaches' role.

The role of the coach in wheelchair rugby was further examined by Tawse *et al.* (2012). Drawing on interview data generated with four wheelchair rugby coaches, and analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis, the primary focus of this work was to explore the experiences of coaches and how they felt they influenced athlete development. The insights gained from this study point to coaches working with a number of constraints, including, notably, a lack of Parasport⁴ coaching resources, and specifically, coaching resources for wheelchair rugby. The coaches stated the importance of their relationship with their athletes, as well as the importance of focusing on what the individual *can do* rather than their 'disability'. The findings also noted the importance of an integrated support team (e.g. medical professionals, psychologists, nutritionists) to help meet the wide range of athletes' needs on a high-performance wheelchair rugby team (Taylor *et al.*, 2014, p. 128). In addition, Tawse *et al.* (2012) highlighted the multitude of responsibilities on top of their typical coaching duties that coaches had. The authors noted that "these additional responsibilities set the coaches apart from coaches of able-bodied athletes" (p. 17) yet is predicated on the assumption of elite contexts where coaches 'know' their athletes.

Cregan *et al.* (2007) explored the career development of six Canadian para-swim coaches who coached athletes at the national level (Cregan *et al.*, 2007). Drawing on semi-structured interviews, the research sought to map coaches' career evolution alongside their knowledge development. The authors argued that, regardless of an athlete's 'disability', coaching knowledge is ubiquitous in that coaches must provide appropriate feedback, set realistic goals and develop skill progressions (Tawse *et al.*, 2012), with knowledge about disability conceptualised through a functionalist lens. Their findings indicated there was a lack of para-swimming coaching seminars or applied clinics, which meant the coaches often turned to informal learning opportunities such as discussions with their athletes, learning directly from

⁴ "Parasport" is often used interchangeably with "disability sport", thus referring to sport for disabled people – the context for this research. It is separate from Paralympic sport, which is governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), and is a term primarily used in North American sporting contexts (cf. Taylor *et al.*, 2014).

daily training sessions and from interacting with other coaches, mentors, or other collaborators (Taylor *et al.*, 2014, p. 128). In addition, due to the ‘informal’ nature of coach learning, coaches were left to draw on a multidisciplinary network of ‘experts’ and other coaches working in Parasport (Cregan *et al.*, 2007).

As a consequence of the overarching concern to categorise, describe and delineate learning in the broader coaching field, when addressing disability coaching there is a risk of reproducing the same research only in a ‘different’ context. For instance, McMaster *et al.* (2012) explored the learning processes of five Parasport coaches from the sports of adapted water skiing, para-swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, and wheelchair tennis. Here the authors, in recognising the lack of research in disability sport, drew explicitly on coach development research in able-bodied sport to characterise learning according to modes of formality (cf. Nelson *et al.*, 2006). This study illustrated, through a two-phase observation and interview procedure with each coach, that in terms of learning opportunities, disability sport coaching is characterised by a lack of formal coach education opportunities, nonformal coaching clinics, and financial support. Furthermore, all five coaches relied heavily on nonformal and informal learning situations to address perceived epistemological ‘gaps’ in their coaching practice (McMaster *et al.*, 2012). Importantly, adopting this framework positions the emphasis of learning to the person in whom change is expected to occur or has occurred, and learning is therefore described as a process by which “behavioural change, knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired” (Nelson *et al.*, 2006, p. 248).

This overt focus on describing knowledge in foundational terms, and based on deductive reasoning, according to interconnected modes of learning (Stodter & Cushion, 2014) is further illustrated by MacDonald *et al.* (2015) in their exploration of coaches’ sources of knowledge when working with athletes with an intellectual disability. Data were generated through interviews that focused explicitly on ‘actual’ and ‘ideal’ sources of knowledge, with forty-five coaches who were involved in Special Olympics⁵ Canada. Consistent with over a decade of coaching research, findings pointed to coaches’ actual sources of coaching knowledge being acquired through experience of coaching, yet coaches would prefer structured and situated learning opportunities (i.e. communities of practice) to develop their knowledge and skills applied to disability coaching. Coaches also described their peers as actual sources

⁵ Special Olympics is an international organisation for people with intellectual disabilities, providing local, national and international sports training and competitions and is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

of knowledge, with the findings also suggesting that mentors were ideally suited to develop coaches in this context.

Similarly, utilising semi-structured interviews to elicit coaches' life histories, and observational methods, Douglas *et al.* (2016) explored how 'expertise' was acquired and developed by coaches in wheelchair and standing basketball. In this study, knowledge was 'acquired' through interaction with players and coaches, and integrated life experiences that formed deeply-held dispositions toward coaching. While also exploring knowledge 'acquisition', Douglas and Hardin (2014) identified sources of knowledge drawn upon by a successful collegiate wheelchair basketball coach. Unsurprisingly, these were identified as coaching clinics, other wheelchair basketball coaches, past playing and coaching experience, and player feedback.

The studies addressed above (i.e. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015; Douglas *et al.*, 2016; Douglas & Hardin, 2014) provide much needed insight into coaches' perceived learning in disability sport, and to some extent highlight the informal and unstructured nature of much coach learning in disability sport. These studies are valuable in providing a deeper understanding of coaches' perceived learning in context and can highlight "useful models and theories" (Stodter & Cushion, 2016). However, the data has, arguably, failed to advance our understanding of learning in critical detail as it has simply repeated many of the same messages from the broader coaching literature. Whilst useful in describing sources of knowledge for coaches in disability sport, the problem with this conceptualisation of learning is that coaches' perceptions of knowledge construction, the temporal nature of learning, and sense of self as they alter over time as a consequence of their learning experiences, are generally overlooked in favour of a more functional view (De Martin-Silva *et al.*, 2015; Watts & Cushion, 2016). The appreciation of coaching knowledge as socially constructed is missing; the relational, socio-historical and reflexive nature of coaching is left undisturbed and the affordances and constraints of the context (inclusive of its relations within) are not sufficiently analysed as a pre-condition of knowledge. Indeed, coaching practice "is not merely situated as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.35), it is an integral part of generative social practice, and therefore knowledge (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

Further forays into disability coach learning include Duarte and Culver (2014) and Taylor *et al.* (2014). Taking a more nuanced perspective on the impact of context on

knowledge, these studies were framed by a lifelong learning perspective, developed from the work of Peter Jarvis (2006, 2009). According to Jarvis (2006), an individual's biography will determine if an experience is meaningful or not. As Mallett *et al.* (2009) suggested the value of a lifelong learning perspective is that it emphasises the agency of the coach at the heart of the learning process and their ability to determine the 'sequence' of learning (p. 331). Thus, Taylor *et al.* (2014) utilised a qualitative case study methodology to explore one 'expert' coach's unique learning experiences. Leaning on three in-depth interviews and observational methods to create a descriptive and contextual picture of the work and experiences of the coach, these authors sought to 'map out' the coach's experiences of the Parasport context, in relation to his perceptions of how he learned. Similarly, Duarte and Culver (2014) utilised a life-story methodology to explore the process of becoming a developmental adaptive sailing coach. Both studies identified the powerful mediating impact of a coaches' biography in structuring learning, as well as the importance of reflection on their experiences, thoughts and actions. Indeed, discrete learning praxes such as reflection (Stodter & Cushion, 2014) are widely advocated in the literature as a key practice in the development of expertise (Taylor *et al.*, 2015; Cushion, 2016). In this case, Taylor *et al.* (2015) explored the use and application of reflection to coaching practice, towards the promotion of critical thinking in Parasport coaches (Cushion, 2016) through a collective case study methodology of four full-time Parasport coaches. In so doing, Taylor *et al.* (2014) drew on the work of Moon (2004) to conceptually 'map' the link between learning and reflection. In this instance, reflection was positioned firstly in terms of a 'change' in knowing, through the practice and process of reflection upon action. At a descriptive level, this research provides much needed insight into the impact of reflection within a specific context to facilitate learning.

The studies that adopt a 'constructivist' view on the organisation of coach learning in the disability literature are valuable and progressive in that the impact of context is widely recognised (e.g. Taylor *et al.*, 2014, 2015; Duarte & Culver, 2014). But, the assumptions that underpin this view should also be acknowledged. Under a constructivist perspective in these studies, learning was assumed to be a "'construction' or re-organization of knowledge structures" (Cushion, 2016, p. 3). A further assumption is that "knowledge is neutral and foundational rather than socially and culturally constructed and thus non-foundational" (Cushion, 2016, p. 3). The study showed that whilst Taylor *et al.* (2015) acknowledge the impact of context, learning and knowing were assumed to be sequential, rational, and observable and the learning process a "logical chain of propositions" that were developed into

a system of knowledge (Jones *et al.*, 2014, p. 3) within an existing cognitive structure. The coaches described how they would reflect on ‘generic’ coach education content to apply to their context and reflect with para-athletes and other practitioners in disability sport. Interestingly, the findings showed that the coaches had attended some disability-specific training events, and that these contributed to an ideological ‘lens of adaptability’ that framed the reflective process.

In this section of the review, it is clear from a number of studies that the informal, and multidisciplinary nature of coach learning, coupled with the impact of athletes’ impairments on practice, creates a complex terrain for developing coaching knowledge. From these few studies, it appears that learning to coach in Paraspport is an area that needs further exploration (Taylor *et al.*, 2014), and yet many of the same messages are being repeated from the coach learning literature. The overarching concern has been to conceptualise learning as a process of ‘acquisition’ that can be theoretically split according to modes of formality. In the disability coaching literature experience is seen as unproblematic, a given and the source of authentic knowledge; and that there is a ‘true self’ which exists independently of the social context (Cushion & Partington, 2014). There is no consideration of learning within the wider practical context, with no studies offering a sustained look at coaching practice as the generative site of coaching knowledge. The research, instead, positions knowledge as a neutral and foundational concept to be assimilated and transferred into practice (Cushion, 2016) towards ‘expert’ status. The connections between coach learning and coach education in disability sport are left unaddressed, and the studies fail to examine the situated nature of coaching practice and how it structures coaches’ knowledge. Nonetheless, these studies have highlighted the privileging of experience in structuring coach learning, due to the lack of coach education and development provision in disability sport. What is lacking in the extant literature is the critical detail of the mechanisms through which coaches construct knowledge, while the broader socio-cultural context is often overlooked.

Furthermore, within the literature on disability coaching, knowledge is often objectified as a material ‘thing’ to be acquired through certain situations, and learning is often positioned as entirely cognitive, with coaches fully agentic in the learning process and the broader socio-cultural field ignored (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). This approach to understanding coach learning is reflected in the choices of methodology utilised to examine learning. The work tends to rest on ‘snapshot’ methodologies that capture only a partial aspect of the coaches’ learning process and assume a realist position on understanding “truth” and knowledge. Therefore, the impact

of wider structures on coach learning is unaccounted for, and the studies are underpinned by hollow ‘constructivist’ rhetoric, whereby the individual is foregrounded as the unit of analysis, occupying a dualist ontology and epistemology (i.e. coach and context are linked, yet separate), and it is in this intersection that knowledge is ‘constructed’. Learning is positioned as a conceptual reorganisation of the coaches’ knowledge at a cognitive level (Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Schuh & Barab, 2007). Indeed, as Cushion (2016) further argued, despite “espoused notions of ‘constructivism’” (p. 3), the dominant assumptions that underpin much research into disability coaching is that of psychologism, underpinned by positivist assumptions, and is therefore closer to “cognitive constructivism”, which incorporates a fundamentally different philosophical position. While often considered a ‘social’ approach to coaching research the “social character of learning in many ‘constructivist’ approaches mostly consist in a small ‘aura’ of socialness that provides input for the process of internalisation” (Lyle and Cushion, 2017, p. 199).

As Stodter and Cushion (2017) asserted, treating different ‘categories’ of learning situations as standalone concepts, whereby learning is broken down into discrete and recognisable episodes means that research is unable to explain coach learning or development in critical, holistic and nuanced ways. A specific example of this type of research in disability sport is a study by Fairhurst, Bloom and Harvey (2017), who interviewed six Paralympic coaches in order to discern what formal and informal sources of ‘learning’ they had experienced and how a formalised mentoring programme might meet such ‘learning needs’. The analysis revealed that much the same as previous research, the ‘acquisition’ of knowledge was through prolonged engagement with athletes in context, and the authors proposed mentoring as a means of making up for the lack of disability-specific coach education. Importantly, identifying learning sources does not explain the mechanism for learning, i.e. why certain modes of learning are more powerful and pervasive in coaching, nor does it locate learning socially, historically and culturally. This is a limited view that leaves the “articulation between coaches’ experiences, conceptual understanding, pedagogical practices and the wider cultural and political realities of coaching” unexplored (Lyle & Cushion, 2017, p. 184). Moreover, the overreliance on interview data to provide a nuanced view of the nature of learning is limited in its assumption that learning is a conscious process of assimilation across critical moments of experience. To date, no critical fieldwork methodologies have been adopted with the goal of understanding practice and learning as a relational, generative, structured and structuring process.

Consequently, much of the work in coaching distances itself from the social context in which coaching unfolds, in favour of a more practical and linear approach to understanding coaching. Learning is often positioned as a process of acquisition or transmission of knowledge to be applied in context (Sfard, 1998), that happens within pre-defined ‘moments’ (McMaster *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015), and experience is described as the condition *of* learning. This is, arguably, due to a line of research that has focused on categorising learning according to degrees of formality, or an overreliance on ‘lifelong learning’ whereby the agency of the coach is recognised as an integral part of knowledge construction. Rather, in this study I argue that the limits imposed on individual experiences that position people in fields of practice should be critically examined as a pre-condition *for* and *of* learning.

2.2.3 Disability Coach Education

Taken together, this research has provided a vital first step in addressing an area that has been neglected for over a decade (cf. DePauw & Gavron, 2005) and has made an important contribution to the field. The work has provided much needed insight into coaching in the disability context, but one area that has been overlooked so far is disability coach education, despite research suggesting that there are context-specific factors to coaching disabled athletes that require disability-specific learning opportunities for coaches (Fairhurst *et al.*, 2017). However, such opportunities are rare (Cregan *et al.*, 2007; Fairhurst *et al.*, 2017) which is perhaps unsurprising, as Thomas and Guett (2014, p. 390) argued that disability sport follows “a highly fragmented structure, with a wide variety of specialist and non-specialist bodies all competing for attention and funds” as they seek to shape the nature of sports coaching provision for disabled people. Despite calls for integration and mainstreaming of disability sport structures, often disability sport is, at best, loosely integrated into the sport development activities of national governing bodies of sport and local authorities (Thomas & Smith 2009; Thomas & Guett, 2014). The consequence of this is that the organisation and delivery of many coach development programmes are left to charitable bodies, voluntary organisations or coaching agencies (i.e. Sports Coach UK, English Federation for Disability Sport), a situation reflected in chapter five. This situation creates what Bush and Silk (2012) described as a “compartmentalised” (p.475) approach whereby coach education is categorised and separated into instrumental CPD episodes assuming that to coach disabled athletes one must have specialist knowledge in order to do so effectively (Bush & Silk, 2012). These can follow a number of different formats, and can be typified by impairment-specific workshops, modular “inclusion training” as part of further and higher education coach education programmes,

disability sport specific coach education certifications, or ‘add-on’ CPD opportunities for coaches provided by mainstream governing body qualifications (e.g. The Football Association, Sports Coach UK⁶).

This marginalisation of disability within coach education is underpinned by a medical model of disability (cf. Townsend *et al.*, 2016) that segregates coaching knowledge from issues of disability. For instance, as I have argued elsewhere (see Townsend *et al.*, 2016 for a full discussion), disability coach education is routinely characterised by discontinuous training episodes designed to deliver impairment-specific knowledge and contains little follow-up support or longitudinal data to evidence meaningful application to coaching practice (Cregan *et al.*, 2007; DePauw & Gavron, 2005). For example, McMaster *et al.* (2012) noted in the context of their study that coaches faced a lack of structured, disability-specific coach education opportunities. MacDonald *et al.* (2015) argued that while coach education is seen as a necessary feature of coach development, the coaches in their study felt it was less than suited to the specifics of coaching disabled athletes. Within the current format, then, it may be assumed that while coaches become ‘certified’, they’re not sufficiently ‘educated’ to manage the many unique challenges that disability poses (Bush *et al.*, 2013; Hammond, Young & Konjarski, 2014; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015; Tawse *et al.*, 2012).

Despite the lack of empirical evidence, it is possible to make three assumptions about disability coach education based on the existing research: 1) coaches rarely have access to continuing professional development opportunities specific to disability (McMaster *et al.*, 2012); 2) the process of coach learning is structured by a powerful socialisation process; 3) disability coach education generally takes the form of non-formal, short-term training courses that are delivered as “reactions to the limitations or failures of formal (coach) education” (Mallett *et al.*, 2009, p. 328) and tend to have few, if any pre-requisites for attendance and completion. Disability-specific coach education, then, occupies a marginalised status within the broader coach education and coaching field, and as such coaches lack the necessary cultural and practical resources, in some instances, to work with disabled people, as coaching knowledge rests on an overreliance on uncritical and experiential sources and an assumed transfer of knowledge between contexts. So, whilst coaches value formal coach education opportunities to share knowledge, discuss practice and experiences (Cregan *et al.*, 2007; Tawse

⁶ Examples of these can be found in The FA “Coaching Disabled Footballers” course, and Sports Coach UK’s “How to Coach Disabled People in Sport” workshops.

et al., 2012) the opportunities to do so are few, as disability coach education follows a segregated model that marginalises knowledge about disability and impairment.

Furthermore, as Duarte and Culver (2014) identified, coaches in disability sport have a number of barriers to overcome in the pursuit of knowledge. Both Cregan *et al.* (2007) and Tawse *et al.* (2011) noted that coach education opportunities for coaches in disability sport are few, despite coaches valuing opportunities for sharing knowledge with peers and developing communities of practice (McMaster *et al.*, 2012). MacDonald *et al.* (2015) found that coaches in disability sport value structured coaching courses, learning from mentors and peers, in addition to their own self-directed learning, issues which are mirrored in the wider coaching literature. However, it has been identified that there are fewer resources (i.e. books, workshops) for coaches to access in disability sport (DePauw & Gavron, 2005; McMaster *et al.*, 2012) and indeed there is a lack of research to support coach development. Coaches in disability sport are thus left to draw on sources of knowledge developed in isolation from their contexts to apply to their coaching practice (MacDonald *et al.*, 2015). The findings of these early forays into disability coaching are somewhat troubling and are consistent with findings from the broader coaching literature, in that unsurprisingly coaching knowledge and practices – broadly - are derived overwhelmingly from informal and non-formal sources (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Côté, 2006; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007). This means that there are critical questions regarding the nature of coach learning in disability sport to be answered, particularly on the degree to which coach education influences the field of disability coaching. It is here that this work aims to build on and expand our understandings of coach learning in disability sport.

2.3 Theorising ways forward

In analysing and interpreting the literature on coach learning and coach education, it is apparent that existing theoretical approaches to learning are partially inadequate as a means of understanding it in its full complexity (Hodkinson, Biesta & James, 2007). The coach learning research is characterised broadly by a dualism between social and individual views of learning (cf. Hodkinson, Biesta & James, 2008), which suggests an ongoing - if not explicit - debate about significantly different ways of understanding learning. Clearly, the learning process is unique to the individual and the context(s) in which they work, and therefore these experiences can be conceptualised as multi-layered and interconnected modes of learning, and not as discrete learning episodes that build towards greater expertise (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

Coaches do not simply occupy an external and separate context where they learn – they are *part of* the situation where they learn, and their learning is part of the practices of that situation (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008). From the literature, there is a tendency to either focus on the learning situation and its participatory practices or to see individual learning as occupying a context, rather than as part of it (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008). This is reflective of what both Stodter and Cushion (2014) and Cushion (2016) argue is a dominant trend to assume learning to be an individual cognitive process (e.g. Werthner & Trudel, 2009), and as such the influence of interpersonal and wider social structures is often neglected.

This trend is much the same in the disability coaching literature. For the most part, research in disability coach learning has been approached through psychological and medical discourse (e.g. Banack, Sabiston & Bloom, 2011), with ‘disability’ given little attention and addressed simply as a sub-population (e.g. MacDonald *et al.*, 2015) or another context to be explored (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, there is a tendency to force disability into the background of coaching, substantiated by the assumption that that to coach in disability sport is simply the application of able-bodied and mainstream coaching principles against an environment with more ‘constraints’ than usual (e.g. Tawse *et al.*, 2012). A specific example can be found in the work of Dieffenbach and Statler (2012), who provided a commentary on existing literature from coaching and sport psychology, and identified the ways in which disabled athletes are subsumed into high-performance sport, thus “professionals seeking to work with and support athletes with disabilities are advised to use an elite athlete paradigm as a foundation” (p. 115). Coaching knowledge then is often framed in medical model terms, which reinforces dominant ableist ideals (Swain *et al.*, 2003).

Consequently, research continues to apply a narrow “coach-centric” and cognitivist (Blackett, Evans, & Piggott, 2015, p. 3) view on the construction of coaching knowledge, where learning is portrayed as an objective assimilation and accumulation of knowledge and skills (Cushion, 2011a, p. 167). This view downplays the broader sociocultural context including disability, while overplaying the autonomous agency of the learner as an individual at the heart of a learning process (Blackett *et al.*, 2015; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). This is perhaps understandable when recognising that the coach occupies a position of centrality, power and influence within a sporting context (Cushion, 2011a), but this perspective overlooks the wider social, cultural and historical structures that influence learning.

Within the wider vocational learning literature there is recognition of the pervading influences of social structures on learning (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008). Based on an earlier, large-scale, longitudinal, mixed-methods study examining work-based learning (cf. Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007) the authors proposed a ‘cultural’ view of learning to replace a dualist view of learning as either individual or social (recognisable within the coaching literature discussed above). Hodkinson and colleagues suggested that we need to understand learning as part of an on-going process where the past life history of the individual and situation strongly influence learning. Next, they argued that we need to understand the ways in which that learning is also influenced by wider social, economic and political factors, which lie outside as well as inside the person and the learning situation. Few would deny the significance of macro issues such as social class, gender, ethnicity and disability, yet such broader perspectives are not always fully incorporated into existing learning theories and this is true of much coaching literature (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). Indeed, in a recent review, Townsend *et al.* (2016) reviewed the coaching literature against a critical disability studies perspective. The authors noted that much of the disability coaching research is characterised by a dominant yet implicit medical model of disability, with coaching practice characterised by instrumentalism and coach learning by behaviourism. The authors suggested that research in disability sport should be underpinned by a strong activist (human rights) ideology, and that coaching research should attempt to highlight subjective experiences of coaching in disability sport and map these experiences against broader social structures and individual dispositions.

One study that has attempted to highlight the social and individual conditions that shape coaching in disability sport is Wareham *et al.* (2017). These authors conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve coaches of elite athletes from sports including swimming, athletics, cycling, canoeing, triathlon, equestrian sport and wheelchair basketball. This was an attempt to understand coaches’ preconceptions and realities of working with athletes with a disability. Importantly, and contrary to much empirical work in disability coaching, the authors drew on a social relational model of disability to explain the coaches’ experiences (Smith & Perrier, 2014). In so doing, they highlighted the impact of impairment combined with social barriers such as stigma and systemic inequalities that impacted on the role and, importantly, the knowledge of coaches (Wareham *et al.*, 2017). Importantly, this work highlights the direct impact that cultural messages and meanings about disability have on the learning processes of coaches.

One important barrier identified in the coaching literature is the lack of knowledge of disability for coaches (see p. 29). This is arguably due to the lack of disability-specific training and education for coaches. Currently, in the disability coaching literature, the evidence on which to base coach development seems weak at best, with recommendations for coach education often an apparent afterthought. Indeed, the evidence relating to how coaches learn and develop their complex practices is exploratory, descriptive, often incomplete, and largely absent from critical debates not only around the nature of learning and knowledge (i.e. epistemology), but also the nature of disability and how this structures practice in coaching (i.e. ontology). These assumptions are central to debates around learning (Cushion, 2016). Indeed, imposing frameworks upon coaches' learning processes tends to ignore the connected and interlocking nature of modes of learning, and categorising learning as a 'lifelong' process (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008), whilst addressing the importance of individual experience and cognition, focusses overly on the coach as a unit of analysis, rather than understanding critically the structural and contextual constraints that influence particular ways of thinking about coaching.

Whatever the setting within which learning takes place, it is necessary to understand that learning from both the perspective of the individual learner, and that of the learning situation. From both these perspectives, we need to understand learning at any one time as part of a lengthy on-going process, where the past life history of the individual and the past history of the situation strongly influence that current learning. Next, we need to understand the ways in which that learning is also influenced by wider social, economic and political factors, which lie outside as well as inside the person and the learning situation. Above all, we need to be able to understand the interrelationships between these issues. In our view, there is valuable and significant existing theoretical work that addresses many of these issues separately, but nothing that effectively integrates them all.

(Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008, p. 28).

The above quote from Hodkinson *et al.* (2008) characterises much of the research not only in disability sport contexts, but in the broader coach learning field. Such positions run contrary to a dialectic understanding of how agency (e.g. coaches and their beliefs, experience and decisions) and structure (e.g. cultural norms, social pressures and contextual constraints) function in the intersection of people, culture and context, to constitute action, knowledge and practice. The research can be categorised according to two contrasting metaphors; first, learning as acquisition and, second, learning as participation (Sfard, 1998). This represents an interesting dualism, as whilst some cognitivist researchers acknowledge the wider significance of the context (e.g. Abraham & Collins, 2011) and many situated learning thinkers

acknowledge that individuals are significant (e.g. Jones & Thomas, 2015), few have yet managed to focus equally on both.

What is required is a theoretical perspective that will readily accommodate a complexity-aware view of learning and yet is grounded in empirical objects. As Cushion (2011) argued, sociological theory and research have much to contribute to the understanding of coach education and coach learning. This attention is yet to be extended to coaching in disability sport. The current situation then, outlines a research landscape that is insufficiently developed to inform coach education and the conceptual development of coaching. The discursive space of disability coaching and coach education remains “silent and unexplored” (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p. 276) despite the substantial body of empirical research in coaching that outlines the social, political and hierarchical nature of coaching and coach education.

2.4 Conclusion

Taken together, the *nature of learning*, the mechanisms for knowledge construction and the mode of production of social practice in disability coaching are left unexplored. It is argued that the “wider context, coaches’ existing knowledge, beliefs and practice, and the way various learning experiences fit together, need to be taken into account when investigating coaches’ learning” (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, p. 64). Few studies have moved beyond self-report interview or survey data to understand learning in the disability sport context through the use of critical ethnographic fieldwork, and in-depth observational studies of coach education are noticeably absent. Research could benefit from in-situ, case-study approaches that incorporate ethnography and participant observation to complement the use of interviews, and in doing so generate new knowledge and understanding relating to the influence of the social environment on participants’ experiences. Finally, there has been a distinct lack of research that has used social theory to critically examine coach learning; one that attempts to understand the link between coach education and coaching practice within a particular social context. This study seeks to address the limitations in existing literature, and as such chapters three and four describe the methodological and theoretical approaches used in the current study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

“The core of my work lies in the method and a way of thinking. To be more precise, my method is a manner of asking questions rather than just ideas. This, I think is a critical point”.

Bourdieu (1985, quoted in Mahar, 1990)

3.1 Introduction

All research is underpinned, often implicitly, by a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba, 1990). These beliefs shape how we formulate the problems and questions at the start of the research process, and in turn influence how we seek to answer the questions posed (Creswell, 2013). In breaking with the dominant ‘realist’ tale that characterises research in coaching and in order to offer a socially sensitive understanding (Jones *et al.*, 2015) of coaching in disability sport, throughout I offer a reflexive commentary of my position in this research. Realist tales are characterised first and foremost by an absence of the narrator from the text (King, 2016), creating a form of “studied neutrality” (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 47). The notion of a value-free and neutral researcher has long been debated (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003). For me, this was neither achievable nor desirable. I began this work as a relatively inexperienced coach, and my desire to conduct research in disability sport comes from my own struggle as a coach to, in Bourdieu’s (1990a) words, develop a ‘feel-for-the-game’ (p. 66).

Bourdieu often used this metaphor for articulating how one ‘knows’ how to behave in a certain situation, role or encounter. A feel-for-the-game expresses how we as individuals ‘fit’ into the social conditions around us (Bourdieu, 1990a). As a coach, my experience of working with disabled athletes in a sustained, formal and professional capacity was limited. My journey through coach education in cricket had been indifferent, and often perfunctory with no real impact on how I operated as a coach. Throughout my postgraduate training I became increasingly interested in the ‘academic’ side of coaching, and the more I was encouraged to challenge common-sense notions – that of coaching knowledge, of the way coaches are educated and the complexity of the coaching context - the more I felt that coaching was not as instrumental as the training we received portrayed it as. This mode of disciplinary socialisation (Caelli *et al.*, 2003) encouraged and emphasised critical, qualitative methodologies.

When considering my research topic, I reflected on my experiences of coaching in disability sport. Below is an extract from a coaching blog I wrote in June 2012:

The highlight, however, has come from coaching. I was charged with delivering a disability cricket session on the night of an England football match. One young man turned up. This 13-year-old boy: half of his senses were useless, as were half of his motor functions, and he had the use of a motorised wheelchair. Delivering a cricket session with one child is difficult regardless of ability, and this proved to be one of the most challenging sessions I have done. This young man was a delight to coach. He tried so hard. Loved batting, and actually gave it a good smack towards ‘cow corner’. I actually invented a game which involved target batting and bowling (I call it Whack-

It-Ball, terrible name I know) and got the child's father involved. To see him getting competitive, bowling at his Dad, and celebrating when he scored a half-century gave me more satisfaction than I have ever gained through a personal achievement. The aim when coaching disabled children is to provide an environment where they are not perceived as disabled, more "differently abled". It is such a hard thing to do; you are constantly humbled and inspired.

Working with this player had a profound impact on me; I began to question *why* I felt often unprepared, nervous and anxious when asked to coach a disability session. Indeed, 'disability' had always unsettled me and my beliefs about what 'good' coaching is and looks like. I suffered from an ontological 'shock', whereby my beliefs about the nature of coaching were disturbed (Cushion, 2011b). Though I didn't realise at the time, I was beginning to understand the contextual and complex nature of a socially constructed coaching process. The situation that I found myself in placed different demands on my skills and my knowledge. It unsettled me, and to my shame I realised that I had, in the past, actively avoided opportunities to work with disabled people in sport. This was – in part - symptomatic of the socio-cultural circumstances of coach education that had failed to equip me with the skills, knowledge and confidence to work with athletes with complex needs. Over time, and through this research, I have built experience of working with athletes with complex needs; players with autism, assorted physical and learning disabilities and other complex needs that can present, and when combined with the constraints of the 'performance' pathway that I work in, it is still something that I do not find easy. Looking back on this blog now, through trained and critical eyes, it is clear that I understood at least at a simplistic level the social construction of 'disability'. As I crudely reflected nearly six years ago, it seemed to me that sport has some disruptive potential as a platform to challenge inequality and that coaches played a crucial part in creating an enabling space for disabled people.

When I started the research process, I began to question how I had learned to coach disabled people and reflected that as a coach I had never had any formalised, sustained or critical education in coaching in disability sport. It was clear to me that how we as coaches learn is grounded materially in practice – in interaction with an ever-changing social context and unfolding through the social relations *within* that context. I had simply been 'dropped in' at the deep end. In this sense, the current research is anchored in my dissatisfaction with the lack of resources to support coach education and development in disability sport. I feel that there must be a better way to help coaches work in disability sport. My belief that sport can be a platform to enable rather than disable, necessitated a more in-depth and critical look at those working at the sharp end of disability sport, and the growing body of research that addresses

coaching in this space. What immediately struck me from a cursory glance at the literature was the tendency to force disability into the background of coaching, and that to coach in disability sport was simply the application of able-bodied and mainstream coaching principles against an environment with more ‘constraints’ than usual (see chapter two, section 2.2.2). This was substantiated by a number of axioms that I continually hear in my coaching practice, whereby I’m encouraged to coach the ‘athlete’, not the ‘disability’. There are serious limitations to this approach. First, to look past an athlete’s impairment - a material or psychological ‘difference’ - seemed not to make sense to me. The impairment(s) that an athlete presents has a *direct* and important influence on the role and function of the coach - that much was clear to me even as a neophyte coach – and to ignore or disregard this aspect of a person’s identity felt wrong. But then to eschew this ableist focus felt like it was against the ‘rules’ of the game in a Bourdieusian sense, and to challenge this way of thinking was to risk alienating myself from other coaches and the athletes. Second, such a normalising view fails to acknowledge the possibility of coaching knowledge being socially constructed as it assumes a transfer of generic coaching principles across contexts. I felt much the same as Jones and Thomas (2015) in that to ignore such social logic decontextualizes research to such a degree that it was of little use to practitioners in disability sport. Indeed, in engaging with literature in critical disability studies, debate rages over the place of ‘impairment’ in research (see, for instance, Oliver 1990, 1996; Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Hughes & Paterson, 1997; Shakespeare & Watson, 1997; Thomas, 1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2007). It seemed that in coaching, conversations about ‘impairment’ were conspicuously absent. What was required was a much more “complex-aware” view (Jones *et al.*, 2014, p. 201) that stresses the ambiguous, unstable and context-dependent nature of coaching, and therefore coach learning.

Next, it was clear that although coach learning was beginning to be examined in the literature, it was without a consideration of the wider contextual issues that structure coaches’ learning processes. Learning was presumed at least in the literature to be neutral, easily classified, and free from ideology. Finally, the implications of the research for the development of coaches were missing, and coach education in disability sport was left unexplored. Despite the acceptance in the broader coaching literature that coaching is subject to social pressures and constraints (see chapter two), and that coach learning is a unique process that is interdependent on the context in which the coach is situated, sociological analysis in disability sport coaching is under-developed (Jones *et al.*, 2011). By operationalising a critical sociological framework in this work, attention then shifts to questions of method. The dilemma

was thus; how could I examine the nature of learning in disability sport that attempted to unite both practice as a generative site of learning and education as a vehicle for transforming practice. Therefore, this chapter considers the methodology and methods used throughout the research process. It is important to state that my methodology is infused with a sociological perspective influenced by the work of Bourdieu. First, I discuss the paradigmatic assumptions that guided, and continue to influence, my thinking throughout the research process. Second, I explain the research design and the different stages of the research process, including the specific methods of data collection and analysis for the two case studies presented. I outline how I conducted a two-and-a-half-year case study of a disability coach education and training programme, followed by a case-study of coaching practice conducted during a period of ethnographic fieldwork with a high-performance learning disability cricket squad. In each separate methodological case, I outline the specific use of methods, their application to the research questions, and the logic of analysis to maintain clarity.

3.2 Paradigmatic Considerations

Disability sport coaching, and coaching more broadly, is a contested field. Research in disability sport coaching is an emerging one, located in different disciplinary pockets and yet – reflective of wider discourses in disability sport research – dominated implicitly by reductive medical model discourses (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). In contrast, this research represents an attempt to broaden the methodological and theoretical approaches to understanding coaching in disability sport. My own position, and the assumptions I bring to research and practice are therefore an important starting point in initiating dialogue with others from very different perspectives. As Bourdieu (1984, p. 469) suggested:

Knowledge of the social world has to take into account a practical knowledge of this world which pre-exists it...those who suppose they are producing a materialist theory of knowledge when they make knowledge a passive recording and abandon the ‘active aspect’ of knowledge...forget that all knowledge, and in particular knowledge of the social world, is an act of construction implementing schemes of thought and expression.

The assumptions that guide researchers and the questions they ask are generally centred around three concerns. These are the interrelated concepts of ontology (the nature of the social world) epistemology (the relationship between the inquirer and the known) and methodology (how we come to know about the world) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Behind these terms stands the researcher, culturally situated, approaching the world with a particular set of ontological, epistemological and methodological preferences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The assumptions

or beliefs that guide research can be termed a paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and are implicit, taken-for-granted and influential in guiding the researcher to ask particular questions. In this sense, a paradigm captures the process by which researchers become socialised into certain ways of thinking about and doing research.

In opposition to a dominance of reductive ‘constructivist’ assumptions within coaching (see chapter two, section 2.2), this research is underpinned by social constructionism (Burr, 1995). Sitting broadly in the interpretive paradigm, the focus of social constructionism is, essentially, the ‘social’. Social constructionism is a form of interpretivist thought concerned with meaning making; it is the act of the construction of meaning through consciousness engaging with its object, rather than imposing meaning on objects (Crotty, 2003). Furthermore, constructionism is the view that “all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality...is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interactions between human beings and their world” (Crotty, 2003, p.42). That meaning is culturally mediated and essentially of social origin, located historically within context. Ontologically, social constructionism adopts a relativist position, whereby, in the words of Sparkes and Smith (2014), it positions *social* reality as “humanly constructed and shaped in ways that make it fluid and multifaceted. Multiple, subjective realities exist in the form of mental constructions” (p. 11). As a result, this research focuses on *constructed* rather than *found* worlds (Lather, 2004).

Furthermore, from a social constructionist perspective, I take a view of knowledge as non-foundational and concerned with the construction of meaning through culture and context. Epistemologically, social constructionism takes the view that “knowledge in some area is the product of our social practices and institutions, or of the interactions and negotiations between relevant social groups” (Gasper, 1999, p. 855). Social constructionism maintains that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together (Young & Collin, 2004). From this perspective, there can be no objective, rational knowledge, it is instead a product of ideology, interest or power (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Indeed, Burr (1995) argued that it is through shared practice that knowledge is constructed, sustained and relational; as such knowledge is inseparable from human action. Thus, understanding is subjective, situationally and culturally variable, and importantly, ideologically conscious (Marvasti, 2004). At an epistemological level, social constructionism asserts that knowledge is “historically and culturally specific; that language constitutes rather than reflects reality and is both a pre-condition for thought and a form of social action; that the focus of enquiry should be on interaction, processes, and social practices” (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 376).

As Marvasti (2004) observed, social constructionists are concerned with how human interaction helps to construct social reality. The ‘social’ in social constructionism is concerned with the genesis of meaning making. Social constructionists believe that as human beings “we do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it” (Schwandt, 2000, p.197). Constructionism is a complex branch of philosophy, and this confusion is often compounded when considering the number of similar terms employed within coaching research (see chapter two, section 2.2). Terms like ‘(social) constructivism’ are, arguably, used interchangeably with social constructionism when applied to both understanding coach learning (i.e. as a set of epistemological assumptions), or as an underpinning paradigm for guiding research, or as an implicit framework for scaffolding coaching practice (Cushion, 2013). What separates social constructionism from constructivism and its various forms (radical/cognitive/social) – at the level of epistemology - is an overt focus on the social and historical nature of meaning, knowledge and action. As I have highlighted in chapter two, much of the research on coach learning in disability sport is informed by a constructivist discourse, that tends to view ‘culture’ as patterns of human behaviour, habits, customs and traditions (Crotty, 2003), and encompasses a set of assumptions about epistemology that focuses on the construction of knowledge within an individual mind (Crotty, 2003). This, as Crotty (2003) argued, is misleading; rather, social practice should be viewed as the source, rather than the result of, human thought and behaviour, and to use constructionism to focus on the generation (and transmission) of collective, and individual, meaning. As Young and Collin (2004) argued, this is not because constructivism and social constructionism cannot be distinguished from one another. There is a clear distinction:

The former focuses on meaning making and the constructing of the social and psychological worlds through individual, cognitive processes while the latter emphasizes that the social and psychological worlds are made real (constructed) through social processes and interaction.

(Young & Collin, 2004, p. 375).

Another assumption that underpins constructionism is the taken-for-granted nature of existing knowledge and how it reflects one ideological position opposed to another (Marvasti, 2004). Constructionism therefore concentrates analyses on the social practices that contribute to the distribution, production and legitimation of coaching knowledge. Thus, coaching knowledge can be viewed through a constructionist lens as non-foundational, nor neutral, but shaped in the interplay of people and context through the internalisation of cultural messages (Crotty, 2003). These assumptions are rarely of practical consequence for positivists, who view the

social world as “comprised of a set of facts that simply need to be uncovered and described in objective and neutral terms” (Marvasti, 2004, p. 6) – a common yet implicit feature within the disability coaching research.

Applied to the act of research, epistemological constructionism entails an interdependent relationship between the researcher and the knowledge produced through social inquiry, and as such knowledge is constructed, not found (Crotty, 2003). Thus, as Burr (1995) highlighted, social constructionists are “ever suspicious” (p.2) of their assumptions and tend to scrutinise the way the world appears to be. In this sense, social constructionism provides a platform upon which sociological inquiry in coaching can be conducted. Constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards the taken-for-granted ways of understanding the social world (Burr, 1995). It invites us to be critical of ourselves as situated in a constructed and relational world, and stands in direct opposition to empiricist, positivist ways of seeing the world (Burr, 1995). For example, from a constructionist perspective, the classifications and divisions through which we see the world are socially constructed. Sport is comprised of such taken-for-granted, self-evident yet constructed divisions; ability- (dis)ability; Olympics-Paralympics; inclusion, adapted physical activity, and mainstream sport, whilst coaching is a further divided practice (theory-practice). Social constructionism asks us to question seriously whether these categories are simply manifestations of power relations within the field (Burr, 1995). Social constructionism is particularly important when understanding disability as it locates our understanding of disability historically and culturally (Burr, 1995). Therefore, as Lyle and Cushion (2017) suggest, a constructionist focus on coaching practice “shifts attention away from individual coaches or athletes to their interaction with the location in which coaching, and learning takes place” (p. 20).

Alongside social constructionism as an interpretive framework, this research shares some concerns with the key principles of critical theory (cf. Creswell, 2013). There are compelling reasons to enhance a social constructionist approach with critical theory, in particular, theories that conceptualise relationships of power. Social constructionism does share some concerns with that of critical theory in that they both recognise the shared nature of reality and of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). However, a crucial difference between the two is that critical theorists argue that social practice (i.e. ontology and epistemology) is fundamentally mediated by power relations and that these are both social in nature and historically constituted (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). Critical theory is characterised by an interpretive approach combined with a pronounced interest in disputing social realities (Alvesson &

Skoldberg, 2009). Thus, issues of power, domination, and oppression are central to critical theory, and in highlighting who has power, who does not, and why (Kincheloe *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, critical theory enhances social constructionist inquiry by not only focusing at a descriptive level on how constructions of society are made, but on why people construct things in the way that they do, or indeed how constructions function as patterns of social reality (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Research within a critical tradition generally accepts, according to Kincheloe *et al.* (2011), a set of basic assumptions. These can include:

- Theory is a form of social or cultural criticism;
- All thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted;
- “Facts” can never be isolated from some form of ideology;
- Certain groups are privileged over others; the oppression that characterizes this is reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable.

Simply, critical theory is informed by a social constructionist paradigm, but not all social constructionist inquiry is critical. As Smith and Caddick (2012) suggest, it might be better to speak of ‘ideologically orientated inquiry’ that according to Schwandt (1997), aims to integrate theory and practice in such a way that ‘individuals and groups become aware of the contradictions and distortions in their belief systems and social practices and are then inspired to change those beliefs and practices’ (p. 24). Critical social science is not merely descriptive; it is also practical (Schwandt, 1997). It rejects the possibility of a disinterested social scientist and “is orientated toward social and individual transformation” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 24). A core idea is that knowledge is structured by existing sets of social relations (Smith & Caddick, 2012).

The aim of a critical methodology is to provide knowledge which highlights and deconstructs the prevailing social structures (Smith & Caddick, 2012) as they are, in one way or another, oppressive structures. At the heart of critical theory then lies an activist ideology that promotes social change. There is a direct attempt to empower oppressed individuals (Kincheloe *et al.*, 2011). In investigating coach learning, then, a constructionist approach that is framed by critical theory can present important insights regarding the production of coaching discourse, highlighting what ‘counts’ as knowledge in disability coaching and how certain ways of thinking about coaching become socially accepted and reproduced. It is descriptive,

critical and deconstructive. Within these perspectives, it is practice that is the generative site of learning, within a mediating and historically contingent culture. Underpinned by these philosophical perspectives, this work presents an opportunity to expand the understanding of experience and learning as intertwined, and to further examine the broader socio-cultural context that shapes coaches' understandings.

3.3 Qualitative Research

The purpose of social inquiry can be broad and wide ranging, from exploration, description, understanding, to explanation and evaluation (Creswell, 2013). At the foundation of social science research is the fascination with understanding, interpreting and representing human experience (Marvasti, 2004). To do so is an act of re-examining the social world with the goal of understanding the construction of human experience. Qualitative research is therefore a key method in engaging in social inquiry, and in addressing the questions of this research. By engaging with sociological thought in the study of coach learning, we are foregrounding human thought and action whilst analysing the social mechanisms that structure practice, and therefore learning. It is to this end that I turn to qualitative research as an explanatory method. The adoption of qualitative research offers a number of advantages in relation to the purpose of this research. First, the purpose of this research was to understand the nature of learning in disability sport. Qualitative research provided an opportunity to explore individual experiences of coaching in detail, to build up a complex and nuanced understanding of learning. Moreover, it enabled me to answer the qualitatively oriented research questions. The first research question required a *descriptive* answer to understand in *what ways* disability coach education impacted on the knowledge of coaches in relation to working with disabled athletes. The second question demands the close exploration and scrutiny of coaching in order to explain *how* coaches construct and express knowledge about coaching disabled athletes. Thus, use of a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to explore these questions in critical detail.

Qualitative research is difficult to describe, as it means different things to different researchers, and the ways that scholars think about and articulate qualitative research are ever-changing (Creswell, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define it as:

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices...turn the world into a series of representations. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3).

Qualitative research can not only describe the methods and design of research but represent the way in which researchers are socialised into thinking about uncovering meaning and interpretation (Smith & Caddick, 2012). Thus, as Sparkes and Smith (2014) described, at a practical level qualitative research can be understood as “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (p.14). At a theoretical level, qualitative researchers seek to scrutinise a world of “meanings, interpretations, feelings, talk, and interaction” (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997 p. 13). They are interested in the multiple meanings that people attach to their subjective experiences and seek to identify, describe and interpret the social structures, spaces and processes that shape these meanings (Smith & Caddick, 2012, p. 61). In the context of this research qualitative inquiry enables a close scrutiny of coaching in disability sport that an in-depth focus on coach learning requires and embraces the reflexive relationship between social theory and methods. Thus, while the area under exploration may be given some prior consideration, it does not delimit the search for meaning and new insight. Furthermore, qualitative research puts positionality at the heart of methodology (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Particularly in coaching, positions are complex and situated (Jones & Thomas, 2015; Jones *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, we may see through politicised and critical eyes, as well as through the theoretical lenses of the training we went through and the theories we read (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

Qualitative research was adopted as it was most suited to addressing the overarching aims of the research. By drawing on qualitative methods I was able to – for instance - draw detailed understandings of disability coach education from both an individual level – through participant surveys and interviews – and from a structural level through participant observations. Furthermore, I was able to immerse myself within a disability sport coaching context for an extended period of time to reveal the instruments of knowledge that coaches utilise in the field of disability sport. For example, my involvement as a coach within the case study of high performance disability sport allowed me to gain an ‘emic’ perspective (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) - that is, from the ‘inside out’. This perspective helped to produce a detailed and rich account of a particular coaching culture in terms of its internal elements.

3.4 Method

Following ethical approval from Loughborough University Research Ethics committee, two qualitative research traditions were adopted in which a combination of methods were used. So, in order to represent fully the research process that I undertook, I describe critically the methods

I used to answer the research questions and bring these data collection methods together for critical consideration. Just as qualitative research offers a particular view of the social world, so too do different approaches and methods for collecting qualitative data (Ritchie, 2003). Qualitative research study design is often a complex, non-linear process which emphasises the need for flexibility (Ritchie, 2003). It is a continuing process which calls for constant review of decisions and approaches (Ritchie, 2003) but should show coherence between the research questions and the methods used. As noted, this research was driven by the need to understand the nature of coach learning. The dynamic and changing nature of the study, combined with the complexity of the phenomenon under study, required an emergent approach where more than one episode of data collection and more than one case-study was required as a means of comparison and explication across macro and micro-levels of coaching. In the following sections, I will describe the procedure for each study, highlighting what was done, as Bourdieu (1996) argued that in the research act it is “indispensable to try to make explicit the intentions and procedural principles that we put into practice” (p.18) in order to make clear for the reader the way in which the text was constructed. Within both case studies a number of data collection techniques were used. Simply the choices of methods were guided by the suitability for answering the research question in a manner that captured and represented complexity and experiences fully.

3.4.1 Interviews

Throughout the research interviews were used as a tool to generate participants’ perceptions of working in the disability coaching context. Interviews are commonly used as a tool to understand experience and meaning in qualitative research (Sparkes & Smith, 2014), and are valuable as a means of co-constructing knowledge with participants in context. The interviews were semi-structured in nature and explored a wide range of subjects. Questions for the interviews were developed from a thorough reading of the extant literature on disability sport and commonly focused on the participants’ backgrounds in coaching, their learning and development, their current practices in their contexts and a subsequent inquiry into their beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and experiences centred on the broad theme of coach learning. More specific questions were generated according to the research questions in order to understand, for instance, how the coach’s understanding of disability had altered through involvement in performance disability sport, or through attending an impairment-specific coach education programme. Interviews were useful when attempting to uncover participants’ ‘logic of practice’ (Bourdieu, 1990a) to attend to both the social and psychological conditions of the

individual including his or her social trajectory (in coaching) and the types and amounts of capital he or she possessed (Power, 2004). Methodologically, this requires attending to the details of the research participants' individual circumstances and background in order to understand in their "distinctive necessity" the participants' worldview (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 24).

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for a flexible approach to data collection, whereby I was able to probe for more information where necessary, or to alter the sequence of questions according to the situation. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. For the ethnographic study, interviews lasted on average ninety minutes. Interviewing is one of the most "common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.645); those who choose interviews in qualitative research do so because it provides us with a means for exploring the experiences of our research subjects, whilst "granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality" (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 133). Importantly, as with much of the research process, interviews and how we give meaning to the resultant data is largely hostage to our ontological and epistemological standpoint.

There are some problems with interviews that require recognition. Importantly they are not problems with the *method* per se, but how they are used, and the claims made on the back of them. First, it is important not to slip into a realist or post-positivist tradition when using interviews and assume that this method provides a 'window' into people's worlds. This is neither helpful nor an aim of constructionist, qualitative inquiry as it aligns with cognitivist and individualist pre-suppositions that assumes language is referential and representative of the individual's psychology (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Rather, language constitutes social reality within social and cultural conditions.

Second, it is common to delete the active role of the interviewer in research reports, creating a text that is out of context and asocial (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This can neglect the constructed nature of the research relationship - the relationship between two people situated in their own, often quite different, positions in social space (Bourdieu, 1996) and of an interpretive understanding of the social conditions that produce these 'truths'. The situated nature of my research meant that to delete myself from the conversation was to ignore the interactional, power-driven and constructionist nature of interviewing. From a social constructionist perspective, it is important to understand the practice of interviewing as a social

activity whereby knowledge about phenomena and people is constructed in a dialogical process that is mediated by power.

Third, the use of interviews can be compromised when the interactive nature of them is missed (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Interviews are a means therefore to understand multiple, localised, contextual truths, and ‘facts’ are viewed not as a reflection of reality ‘out there’ but as “empirically based constructions that are always socially mediated and interpreted” (Power, 2004, p. 859). There is a need, then, for a reflexive awareness of the constructed nature of the research relationship and to adopt an analytical stance accordingly.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

In addition to interviews, focus groups are a useful method to explore perceptions from participants and to develop an understanding of commonalities and differences in perspectives within a field (Purdy, 2014). Within the ethnographic study, two focus groups supplemented the interview data. These consisted of a focus group with the parents of the players within the squad that consisted of 12 participants and lasted for 111 minutes. Next, a player focus group consisted of four athletes and lasted for 74 minutes. During these focus groups my role was that of a facilitator in guiding the discussion and encouraging a variety of viewpoints. As Richie (2003) suggests, focus groups provide an opportunity to explore “how people think and talk about a topic, how their ideas are shaped, generated or moderated through conversation with others” (p. 37). The interactive nature of focus groups was a principal reason for their use in this study, allowing participants to hear from others and providing an opportunity for the reflection and refinement which can “deepen respondents’ insights into their own circumstances, attitudes or behaviour” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 37). They also provided an opportunity for direct and explicit discussion of difference as it emerged in the group, and allowed my voice, my position and my role with the team to be included alongside the voices of disabled athletes to stimulate and elicit rich and naturalistic data that were relevant to the research questions.

In these focus groups, it was important to maintain a level of reflexivity and sensitivity to the participants. With the players, all the participants had the necessary verbal ability to contribute in complex social interaction and had the necessary pragmatic language skills (Beail & Williams, 2014). In using this method, I attempted a form of ‘inclusive’ research whereby I viewed the players and parents as more than just subjects or respondents (Bigby, Frawley & Ramcharam, 2014) and therefore adopted a collaborative approach that aligned with social

constructionism (Bigby *et al.*, 2014). In so doing, I approached participants that had an intellectual disability who have lived experience of coaching; I shared with them the aims of my project and constructed a joint purpose by which their insights were valuable in adding new knowledge towards social change in coach development (cf. Bigby *et al.*, 2014). In conducting the parent focus group, managing the large number of participants was challenging - particularly in terms of keeping discussions focused on topics related to the research question. Participants were contacted via email to ascertain their interest in participating in a focus group during a ninety-minute window in a weekend training camp. After no responses, I assumed that no participants would arrive. At the time of the intended focus group, all the parents present at the camp slowly filed into the classroom, resulting in a significantly larger than average sample size. These issues are not uncommon in focus group research (Purdy, 2014), and are an example of the 'messy' nature of qualitative research practice (cf. Smith & Caddick, 2012).

3.4.3 Qualitative Surveys

The use of qualitative surveys, referred to later as 'reflectionnaires', was essentially pragmatic. First and foremost, the use of this method allowed for the generation of insights from a large number of participants within a specific case. Therefore, the 'reflectionnaires' were built into the evaluative process. Qualitative surveys are limited in that they can be open to impressionistic answers or a lack of detail; they do not allow for the probing of responses (Creswell, 2013). As Polkinghorne (2005) observed, as experience and learning is not directly observable, data about it depends on the participant's ability to reflectively discern aspects of their experience and communicate it. Furthermore, limitations can be attributed to poor instrument design or use. Indeed, participants can find questions misleading or unclear; they may provide information thought to be desirable in context; or questions can assume a naive realist position and an accurate recall of events (Fife-Schaw, 2006).

Therefore, the questions used were deliberately open-ended to encourage detail from participants (see appendix E) and the process of research functioned as a means of clarifying and 'tweaking' questions to ensure clarity and 'validation' (see section, 3.5.1). However, while the limitations of surveys cannot be completely negated, the benefits of gathering data from a large number of participants for the purpose of understanding coach learning in disability sport and gathering perceptions across different demographics of participants and contexts were judged to be useful. As Polkinghorne (2005) observed, the use of self-report data, though limited, is necessary and valuable when used not as 'reflection of experience' but rather as a

construction whereby participants draw upon discourses and sets of language that are culturally mediated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Indeed, the use of qualitative surveys in coach learning is an established method (cf. Nelson *et al.*, 2012; Gould *et al.*, 1990).

3.4.4 Participant Observations

Participant observation formed the backbone of both studies. For the ethnographic study, I conducted participant observation within a prolonged period of fieldwork lasting over eighteen months. In this time, I worked as an assistant coach with the team. The aim was to “get behind the curtain, to move beyond assimilated experience, to expose the way ideology constrains the desire for self-direction” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p.297). I was a full participant in the setting working in a formal coaching role with the players and the management team of the LD squad. It was clear then that to occupy a dual role of coach, using my own skills, knowledge and capital to occupy a position in the disability coaching field, and also that of the researcher, would be beneficial in generating in-depth knowledge about disability coaching. Within ethnographic inquiry, participant observation is the most common form of data generation, and for me this process included the taking of extensive field notes about specific events, encounters and conversations, as well as the collection of audio data through the wearing of a microphone.

The case study of coach education followed the extended delivery of the course over a two-year period. This resulted in extensive field notes and over thirty-two hours’ worth of audio data captured. The *in-situ* observation of courses over the two-year period highlighted the contextual role of the local settings and the recursive flows of events in order to build a contextualised ‘big picture’ of this mode of coach education. The use of observations enabled me to capture interactions as they happened, whilst embedded within the context – whether that be in coaching or coach education. This approach was valuable in that it helped to identify the mechanisms that produced social practice and knowledge, whilst at the same time acknowledging the position of the researcher within the field of practice.

Participant observations can be conceptualised as a form of subjective sociology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and is generally used from an interpretive perspective to provide ‘thick description’ (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). In this research, my central concern was with coaching knowledge, and therefore power. Therefore, in both studies my observations were not neutral – instead I approached the field by looking specifically for operations of power, reproduction and examples of challenges to existing power structures (Thorpe & Olive,

2016). The importance of reflexivity cannot be overlooked, especially when approaching research from a Bourdieusian perspective that focuses and narrows attention to social structures and individual practices. However, this was not necessarily a limitation as the application of theory enabled me to gain critical distance, structure my evidence and ask different questions in these settings (cf. Thorpe & Olive, 2016). As Bourdieu (2000, p. 281) remarked:

Participant observation, as I understand it, designates the conduct of an ethnologist who immerses her- or himself in a foreign social universe so as to observe an activity, a ritual, or a ceremony while, ideally, taking part in it. The inherent difficulty of such a posture has often been noted, which presupposes a kind of doubling of consciousness that is arduous to sustain. How can one be both subject and object, the one who acts and the one who, as it were, watches himself acting?

As I suggested above, observations are never neutral. Therefore, reflexivity is central to conducting quality observational work. In reflexivity, the researcher is an integral part of the data generating process – that is, my experience and presence plays a role in influencing the interactions, relationships and observations that I was able to access (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). Reflexivity means to turn the observational scrutiny onto ourselves. Throughout the research I sought to include my voice, my thoughts and my experiences in the field notes wherever possible, as a form of intertextual reflexivity (Pillow, 2003). The various perspectives and subjectivities that researchers bring to the field should be seen not as a limitation, but when accompanied by rigorous reflexive analyses as crucial in opening up new discussions and furthering an understanding of coaching cultures (cf. Thorpe & Olive, 2016).

3.5 Case Study of Disability Coach Education

The first research question examines in what ways a formal coach education and training programme impacted on coaches' knowledge and practice. I required a methodology that would provide a descriptive answer to allow me to combine an analysis of coach learning within coach education structures with a sociological approach. I required a specific case. A case study typically has the following features: 1) small; 2) contextual detail; 3) everyday settings; 4) bounded; 5) working research questions; 6) multiple data sources; and 7) extendibility (Hodge & Sharp, 2017). Therefore, for this study I followed the evolution and delivery of a mode of disability coach education and training from 2014 until 2016 and used a combination of interviews, surveys and observational methods as outlined in section 3.5.

Developed by a leading charity in the United Kingdom for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the course under study aimed to improve the sporting experiences

of people with ASD by delivering a series of workshops to coaches, sport and physical activity professionals. In so doing, the initiative aimed to increase the confidence and skills of participants in the hope that creating inclusive sporting environments would improve the levels of participation of people with ASD, and subsequently their self-esteem and well-being. While set out as coach education, the course attracted participants from a variety of professional roles, including, but not limited to sports coaches, physical education teachers (both mainstream and special educational needs), teaching and learning assistants, coach education tutors, and physical activity instructors across a range of sports and contexts. Thus, the course can be viewed as a continuing professional development (CPD) programme that was a ‘one-off’ training episode. The course was taught using group discussion, didactic methods, and practical exercises, and was entirely separate from any National Governing Body or other coaching framework. Due to its precise focus on ASD, the course can be further conceptualised as an ‘impairment-specific’ mode of disability coach education CPD.

In order to understand the situated and complex nature of coach education, a case study research design was utilised. Case study research consists of an in-depth inquiry into a specific and complex phenomenon set within its real-world context (Yin, 2013). A ‘case’ refers to a specific and *bounded* unit of analysis that is characterised by both a practical and historical unity – or subject of study – *and* an analytical or theoretical frame, referred to as the object of study (Hodge & Sharp, 2016). Applied to this research, the object of study is the phenomenon of disability coach education, and the subject of study is the practices *within* it. Case study research comprises an in-depth understanding of – through multiple perspectives – the complexity and uniqueness of a particular programme in a ‘real life’ context (Hodge & Sharp, 2016). Case studies aim to capture the complexity of a case including its changing and temporal nature (Yin, 2013), and attend fully to the contextual conditions within which case are situated. An important part of this is generating an understanding of how people interact with the case (Yin, 2013). Case studies should be understood as both the process of inquiry and the product of inquiry (Hodge & Sharp, 2017). To this end, this chapter attends to the process of *doing* a case study, whereas chapter 6 presents the findings in the form *of* a case study.

Case study should not be seen as a method in and of itself; rather it is a design frame that can incorporate a number of methods (Hodge & Sharp, 2016). In order to generate data for the case study of coach education in disability sport, a four-phase evaluation design was originally utilised. The data generated throughout form the case study of coach education presented in this research. Data collection rested on three primary modes of instrumentation.

Case studies typically draw on multiple sources of evidence to cover the complexity of the case and its context (Yin, 2013; Hodge & Sharp, 2017). These can include conducting and documenting direct observations of the events and actions as they actually occur in context as a critical part of a case study's data collection (Yin, 2013). In so doing, the research attempted to explain the impact of the programme on participants, to investigate why the programme was working, or indeed failing, and offer some evidence-based ways forward to develop the course. For evaluations, Yin (2013) argues that the ability to address the complexity and contextual conditions that are inherent within broad and complex initiative, for example, understanding the impact of a coach education programme over a two-year period, establishes case study methods as a viable research design in addressing coach learning. In the context of this research, an explanatory case study was used, whereby the aim was to document and interpret a set of outcomes and practices and attempt to explicate these according to a set of explanatory mechanisms (Yin, 2013).

3.5.1 Procedure

The research design and data collection were scaffolded by a level model approach to evaluating CPD (cf. Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). The framework for the model is constructed around the following set of variables and their interactions (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). The strength of a level model approach, and why it was adopted, is that it takes into consideration both individual dispositions towards learning, and the wider socio-cultural context (various antecedent and moderating factors) that impacts on the intended outcomes of professional development and education. As a result, a multi-method approach was required to address the variables within the level-model, as a single method of evaluating coach education is not appropriate for making recommendations (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). The specific methods are outlined below in relation to the corresponding variables.

- *Interventions*: the programme design and associated activities.

I followed the extended delivery of the course over a two-year period, as a participant observer on ten interventions (including two-day, one-day and half-day [3hr] introductory formats). This resulted in extensive field notes and over thirty-two hours' worth of audio data captured. Participant observations are advantageous in programme evaluation for several reasons. First it allows the close scrutiny of participants throughout the course. Second, acting as a participant on the course can contribute to a more 'natural' environment, building rapport with participants and contributing in participant-tutor interactions (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). In addition, two

interviews were conducted with the course tutor, one at the start of the research process and again during the final phase of the research. This approach ensured that the data, concepts and theory generated aligned with the research questions. These interviews were semi-structured in that they started with a detailed interview guide, gradually became co-constructed conversations (Smith & Sparkes, 2016), and ended with another shift toward specific questions about my emerging theory. The participants took part in either face-to-face or online (via Skype or email) interviews regarding their experience and perception of the course and elicited some insight into the context in which they operated. Face-to-face interviews lasted on average 66 minutes, with two interviews conducted via email. These time-lapsed interviews were conducted when access to participants was limited and allowed the participants to reply in their own time (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

- *Antecedents*: the factors associated with individual participants' engagement with the programme, and that preceded their reactions to the course.

Qualitative survey 'reflectionnaires'⁷ (n=278) were built into the course pre- and post-delivery. The pre-course survey functioned as a means of understanding the participants' motivations for and expectations of attending the course. These were essential in gauging coaches' existing knowledge and contextual influences (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999).

- *Moderating factors*: variables or conditions from the wider coaching context.

Ten coaches participated in follow-up case study interviews to enable detailed exploration and understanding of the moderating factors associated with the impact of the course within a particular context (cf. Richie, Lewis & Elam, 2003; Leduc *et al.*, 2012). The purpose was to identify coaches who worked in a sustained and professional capacity with people with ASD in a sporting context to understand what may enable or constrain the use of knowledge gained on course.

- *Intermediate outcomes*: perceived changes in participant learning and behaviour.

The post-course qualitative survey (n= 278) functioned as a means of gathering participants' perceptions of changes in their knowledge. Specifically, participants were asked how their understanding of ASD had developed as a result of attendance, and relatedly how their

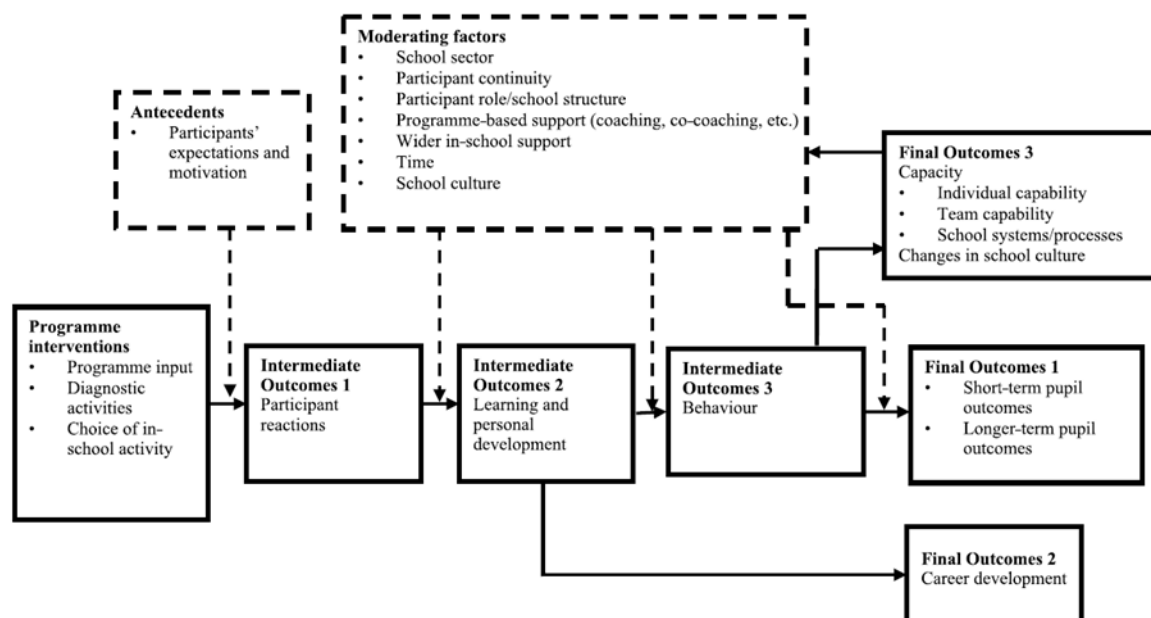
⁷The qualitative reflections were drawn from the level-model evaluation in order to help coaches reflect on their time on the course and stimulate critical thinking about the knowledge and skills they developed. See appendix E.

understanding of coaching had changed. Validation of the survey was a continuous process of practical reflexivity, where data and interpretations were compared, and the survey refined to generate rich, insightful and useful data relevant to the research questions (cf. Smith & McGannon, 2017). Importantly, the claims made on the back of these surveys are not ontologically realist; consistent with my constructionist position, these were used to provide insight into the constructed discourses and beliefs systems that participants drew upon to make sense of their ‘learning’ on course, recognising the impossibility of theory-free knowledge (Smith & McGannon, 2017).

- *Final outcomes*: the wider intended effects of the course on participants.

The combination of these methods over a longitudinal research design allowed not only for a descriptive understanding of the process of course, but also for a detailed understanding of the impact of the course on participants (that is, the final outcomes of the course) (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). This multi-method approach enabled a greater depth and breadth of data to be obtained than one method alone could provide.

Figure 1. Framework for professional development evaluation (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011).



Coldwell and Simkins (2011) stressed that these variables are dynamic and interact in complex ways when discussing professional learning. Importantly, antecedent and moderating factors help to explain why outcomes differ between participants and their contexts. The strength of a

level model approach, and why it was adopted, is that it takes into consideration the conditions which can potentially influence learning, within and beyond the specific case. Though the evaluation model that scaffolded the inquiry from the outset were developed from an “essentially pragmatic” standpoint (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011, p.150), utilising this complex-aware model in the research design created a layered and non-linear methodological frame that lends itself to social constructionist inquiry.

The model emphasises the importance of both individual dispositions towards learning, and the wider socio-cultural context (various antecedent and moderating factors) that impacts on the intended outcomes of professional development and education. In terms of coach education in disability sport, the model recognises the influence of the context in which the participants operate; their professional roles, organisational support and personal experiences in the field. As alluded to previously, coaches in disability sport manage a number of constraints that undoubtedly impact on the development of coaching knowledge, and indeed coaches face many barriers to accessing coach education in the first place. However, the model fails to recognise the power relations that constitute the implementation of a professional body of knowledge and fails to capture reasons why a programme may be resistant to change. Nor does the model provide a mechanism whereby the intervention itself is evaluated or adjusted according to the individual conditions that impact on participants’ learning.

Considering ontology and epistemology in relation to the level model of evaluation is important to provide a secure theoretical basis for understanding. While the model was used to guide data collection, it was not used to provide detail of the theories or mechanism that explain why particular outcomes occurred in particular contexts (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). The model, according to Coldwell and Simkins (2011) is underpinned by ontological relativism, within which “knowledge of the social world can only be constructed from the perspectives of individuals within it” (which may legitimately differ) (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011, p. 152) which sits within the social constructionist tradition. Thus, the connection of a social constructionist epistemology to the level model allowed for analysis of the mechanisms through which learning occurred within social structures and specific contexts (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011), by focusing enquiry on interactions, processes, and social practices within coach education. From this position, programme purposes may be contested and translated in different ways within different groups and understanding the subjectivity of these processes (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011) can contribute to a thorough understanding on which to base further educational programmes. Such a combined approach viewed learner, context and

learning as inter-related, and the experience of coach education CPD as constructed and embedded within practice (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011).

3.5.2 Participants and Sampling

While set out as coach education, the course attracted participants from a variety of professional roles, including, but not limited to sports coaches, physical education teachers (both mainstream and special educational needs), teaching and learning assistants, coach education tutors, and physical activity instructors across a range of sports and contexts. Coaches were theoretically sampled (Patton, 1990) to identify participants on course who worked in a sustained and professional capacity with people with ASD in a sporting context. Theoretical sampling is a particular kind of purposive sampling in which the researcher samples research subjects on the basis of their potential contribution to the development and testing of theoretical constructs (Richie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). The process was iterative in that the case studies were selected upon analysis of the initial qualitative surveys and identified in order to refine the categories and theories of analysis (Richie *et al.*, 2003). This process continued until I reached an informed decision about how the data generated and theory connected to answer the research questions (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As a result, ten follow-up case study interviews were conducted to enable detailed exploration and understanding of the perceived impact of the course on practitioner knowledge and practice in a particular context (cf. Richie *et al.*, 2003; Leduc *et al.*, 2012). In addition, the course tutor was interviewed twice.

3.5.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative process of continuous meaning-making and progressive focusing (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). The raw data from observational, interview and fieldwork data were analysed to generate themes that represented the structure, process and delivery of the programme and the participants' perceptions of the impact on their knowledge. For example, first-order themes such as 'Participant Expectations and Motivations', 'Participant Reactions', 'Participant Learning' and 'Aims, Content and Structure' reflected the most basic level of description (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). The data were reduced according to themes relating to participants' perceived changes in knowledge and the course pedagogy. Next, the integration of theory was used in a deductive manner, resulting in the generation of themes relating to 'Marginalising Disability', 'Cultural Capital, Confidence and Coaching Strategies', and 'Ideology of Inclusion'. Importantly, though maintaining degrees of

abstraction the process was always grounded in the data and used to inform the analytical process.

3.5.4 Ethical Considerations

In line with the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee ethical approval was obtained from all coaches, tutors and course candidates involved in the research. Each participant was provided with an information sheet relevant to the particular method of data collection - for instance, on-course participants were referred to an information sheet that was 'built in' to the participant 'reflectionnaires'. This included details of the purpose of the study, assurances of confidentiality and the option of withdrawal at any stage. All participants then signed an informed consent form before taking part.

3.6 Ethnographic Case Study: High Performance Disability Sport Coaching

In order to address how coaches constructed and expressed knowledge about coaching disabled athletes within a specific empirical context, thus answering the second research sub-question, I required a methodology that enabled an in-depth and critical answer. To do so I undertook ethnographic fieldwork in a high-performance disability sport, in which a series of interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used. Each tradition has different consequences for the research process; inclusive of the questions they answer, the approach to data collection and the standards of validation and evaluation they are held to (Creswell, 2013). Upon immersing myself in the literature on disability coaching, I was left with two critical conclusions that influenced the research process. First, I felt that - following Hodkinson, Biesta and James (2007) - central to understanding 'learning' is the way in which we grasp the relationship between *how* people learn, and the contexts or setting *in which* they learn. However, as I have described in chapter two, we understand very little of the disability coaching context and its impact on the construction of coaching knowledge. This meant that in order to fully understand learning in disability sport we had to look beyond reductive 'constructivist' conceptions of disability coaching. Adopting a social constructionist perspective attempts to situate learning as a process embedded in practice, with knowledge constructed within a social and cultural context (cf. Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007). Second, the permeability of the coaching context to broad social and cultural issues, though acknowledged at the level of rhetoric, these issues were never explained in any critical detail in the existing research. 'Disability' and its complexity was often subsumed within a broad, generic coach development research agenda and treated simply as another context to be explored. I felt the

dialectic between the two – that is disability, and the coaching context – and their impact on the individual dispositions of coaches warranted further investigation.

This required a method and methodology that allowed such rich insight to be generated. I needed a method that would help to paint ‘the whole picture’ of learning, one that was not blurred by the privileging of coaches’ agency in the learning process nor restricted by a view from the ‘outside looking in’ (Jones, 2009). Therefore, it seemed intuitively appealing to seek out coaches who work with disabled athletes regularly; in a formal, professional and sustained capacity to understand what it is coaches *do* in practice, and *how* they continue to develop this practical knowledge complete with its inherent complexity. Furthermore, I considered my own position as a coach in disability sport. My relative inexperience in the field, combined with my academic grounding, I felt, would combine to generate a view that was both critical and questioning. Simply, I had not been fully seduced by my object (Wacquant, 2003).

3.6.1 Ethnography

An ethnographic epistemology generally holds that theoretical knowledge about practice is best generated by direct contact with those under study over time (Atkinson, 2016). The focus of this research was the national learning disability cricket squad. From October 2015, I worked with the squad as a support coach throughout monthly, winter training camps held over two days at a private facility in the west of England, and through the competitive season across eight fixtures in 2016 and an international tri-series in 2017. In this time, I was granted full access as a member of the management group and worked closely with both the staff and the players. Specifically, the case study gave me access to a rich and interesting sample, and one that as of yet was unexplored. Whilst research has addressed coaching disabled athletes this work has tended to focus on high-performance contexts in para-sports with athletes with physical impairments, only one study has addressed coaching athletes with learning disabilities (see MacDonald *et al.*, 2015), with no research examining coaching practice as a generative site of learning.

This case study was conducted in the belief that studies on ‘in-situ’ coaching practice can present a contextual picture of coaching, which provides opportunities to inform coach education in disability sport. Simply, there remains much to be learned about coaching practice in disability sport (Townsend *et al.*, 2016; Tawse *et al.*, 2012) alongside the contribution of the practical coaching context and its interactions in shaping the coaching process and the development of coaches’ knowledge. Producing nuanced and critical insight into disability

coaching practice is important because the practical context is where the coaching process exists, and therefore can be viewed as a generative site for knowledge that may enhance opportunities for coach education and development.

Ethnographic work is not strictly a method, but a combination of inquiry, research design and fieldwork in which the researcher describes and interprets the *shared and learned patterns* of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013; Tedlock, 2000). To utilise ethnographic methods within sociological inquiry is to involve the study of theories, systematic methods of investigation, the analysis and interpretation of data, and the integration of the theoretical and the empirical (Atkinson, 2016). As a process, ethnography typically involves extended observations of a culture-sharing group, most often through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the culture and interviews the participants (Creswell, 2013). The word ‘ethnography’ literally means to write about people or cultures (Marvasti, 2004). In so doing, I occupied a complex position in that I was simultaneously a part of the object of study, both participating *and* observing. I essentially committed to my involvement in the subject of study. This immersive approach lends itself to developing deeper understandings of individuals’ experiences and beliefs in the environment (Lyle, 2002). As Tedlock puts it, “ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context” (2000, p. 455). This means that, for ethnographers, the research findings cannot be separated from the specific context in which they were generated.

3.6.2 Procedure

Within the literature, it is accepted that coaches learn through practice, due to the limitations of formal coach education (cf. McMaster *et al.*, 2012), and coaches in disability sport value the opportunity to share experiences with their peers (Tawse *et al.*, 2011). However, no research has attempted to explain the development of coaching knowledge in any sociological detail, by - as Bourdieu (2004) suggested - moving closer to the site of social practice and production in disability sport. The utility of this approach rests on the apprehension of coaching as a complex social phenomenon, and the attempt to place “specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context” (Cushion, 2014, p. 172).

Ideas like those of habitus, practice, and so on, were intended, among other things, to point out that there is a practical knowledge that has its own logic, which cannot be reduced to that of theoretical knowledge; that in a sense, agents know the social world better than the theoreticians.

In ethnographic enquiry from a Bourdieusian perspective, it is important to frame the social world under study. To do so requires descriptive work from the ‘outside’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) combined with an understanding of the ‘social phenomenological view’ (p. 8) that examines the taken-for-granted assumptions, experiences and meanings within fields (Kitchin & Howe, 2014). Despite initial sociological investigations into disability cricket from a broadly political perspective (e.g. Kitchin & Howe, 2014); *coaching practice* in this space remains largely undisturbed. The players were classed as having a ‘moderate’ learning disability and were aged from 16-27. An intellectual disability is – from a medical model perspective - characterised by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (Buntinx & Schalock, 2010). In order to be profiled⁸ to play international disability cricket, the players had to provide evidence of a learning disability onset pre-18 years of age. This was usually evidenced in the form of a statement of special educational needs. Furthermore, the players had to present with an IQ of 75 or less and undergo an ‘adaptive behaviour assessment’ by an educational psychologist in which they should show significant limitations in social functioning. This ‘classification’ system ensured that impairment was present and that it functioned as a limitation on sporting performance. Of the fifteen athletes involved in the study, seven had co-occurring autism spectrum disorders. In addition, many of the players presented further complex needs such as mental health issues (e.g. depression and anxiety), obsessive compulsive disorders, and other non-associated conditions. Throughout the period of research, as well as the athletes, I had access to a number of coaching and support staff, together constituting the management staff of the learning disability squad. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the participants.

Management Staff:

- **Brian:** Brian was the programme director (PD). At the time of writing he had been involved in disability cricket for ten years and had overseen the growth and evolution of the programme.

Coaching Staff:

⁸ The profiling of players to play international learning disability cricket was governed by criteria proposed by The International Association of Sport for para-athletes with an intellectual disability (INAS).

- **David:** David was the head coach of the team. At 37 years of age, he was a former primary school teacher, and a UKCC level four ‘master’ cricket coach. David worked in coach development for an Olympic sport NGB. David was responsible for the planning and direction of the squad and the staff.
- **Steve:** Steve was 28 years old and officially the assistant coach of the team; however, his role was described by David as more of a “technical lead coach”. Typically, Steve led the day-to-day running of training camps. A UKCC level three ‘performance’ cricket coach since 2015, Steve had played ‘first-class’⁹ cricket and felt that he was “quite young as far as coaches go” having been coaching for 11 years.

Support Staff

- **Bert:** Bert’s role changed during the research process. First and foremost, he was the team manager, responsible for organisational and administrative duties for the team and the coaching staff. However, during the period of fieldwork a financial commitment from the governing body meant that Bert was able to take on a part-time role as Personal Development and Welfare Officer (PDW) for disability cricket alongside his role as manager. Bert was also the manager of a care home for adults with severe and profound learning disabilities and was a UKCC level two qualified cricket coach who worked for his local county board.
- **Oscar:** At the start of the research process, Oscar was the strength and conditioning coach for the team and had worked with them for four years. Educated to degree level and formally accredited, Oscar provided S&C support to a number of impairment groups across the NGB before moving on to become a 1-1 S&C coach in professional tennis. He had over five years’ experience of coaching. Oscar was replaced by Theo in September 2016.
- **Theo:** Theo was educated to degree level and formally accredited by the agency for strength and conditioning in the UK. He held two strength and conditioning coaching roles with squads in the disability cricket pathway and had been coaching for four years.

⁹ First-class county cricket is a form of distinction and is a mark of the highest domestic standard played. First-class cricket is played professionally by 18 counties across England and Wales, competing in three summer competitions; County Championship, T20 and one-day cricket. Some university centres of excellence have also been granted first-class status. Non-first-class cricket comprises all non-professional cricket, including Minor Counties, county academies and county age groups.

- **“Buzz”:** Buzz was the team physiotherapist and self-proclaimed “medical man”. A former university lecturer, Buzz held a number of positions across professional and recreational sport, as well as providing physiotherapy support to two of the impairment groups within the NGB.
- **Gill:** Gill was the team nutritionist. She held a PhD in physiology and was a lecturer at a UK university. Gill was responsible for the lifestyle and performance nutrition management of the team.

The players involved in the study were not full-time professional athletes. Many of them held down full or part-time jobs, were in education at varying levels from secondary school to undergraduate level and had families of their own. Their commitment to the squad was fulfilled not only through attendance at training and fixtures, but by regular updates on social media with the coaching staff, and a commitment to physical preparation (‘prehab’), ‘sensible’ nutritional choices and involvement in mainstream club cricket. As David explained:

First and foremost, the LD cricketing population is quite a small one at present so what we have found in the past is that we have quite often been driven by availability of players. Also, we have been driven by players’ ability to sustain their involvement with the squad, the expectations that come with being part of this squad. (Interview).

Parental involvement in the squad was limited and yet they were ever-present throughout the research. Players would arrive at training and games with their families, and a number of parents commonly stayed throughout training weekends observing the practice sessions. By engaging with these actors (that is, management, coaching and support staff, players and parents), I entered into a set of social positions that were bound by a relation of homology (Bourdieu, 1998) to the practice of coaching in disability sport. They represented a set of co-existing and distinct positions that were exterior to one another but were defined in relation to each other (Bourdieu, 1998).

In order to gain better insight into coaching practice in disability sport, I felt that I had to become, to a certain extent, an active part of the coaching staff. To borrow the words of Cushion (2001), just “hanging around” would be impractical and potentially uncomfortable for the players who, due to the nature of their impairment, perhaps felt anxious at change and the introduction of “new” people. Simply, this approach would not be good enough in eliciting naturalistic data from coaches, players, support staff and parents. Thus, as Bourdieu (1977)

argued, it suffices to situate oneself *within* “real activity as such” (p. 96), i.e. in practical relation to the world of inquiry:

One cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality.

(Bourdieu, 1993, p. 271).

My own background with the team through previous voluntary work, and my role within the disability cricket development pathway, meant that access to the squad was relatively straightforward. The players, for the most part, were familiar with me, and knew me as a ‘good player’ (and therefore naturally a ‘good’ coach¹⁰). The head coach in particular expressed an interest in my research topic. Indeed, the acceptance of my presence was seemingly positive, with the head coach suggesting my role would be beneficial in creating an informal learning community amongst the coaching and support staff. Whilst this was tempered somewhat by the assistant coach’s apparent anti-intellectual agenda, Steve’s affection for me enabled my swift integration into the team environment. Full participant immersion meant wearing the same kit as the staff, speaking in the same way (discourse, ‘banter’ and ‘shop talk’ specific to cricket), being added to the management WhatsApp group, and pursuing activities that would naturalise my presence among the staff and players (such as involving myself in management briefings, or evening gym and swim sessions). These practices helped me to declare affinity between myself and the participants and to distance myself from constraining identities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This immersion enabled the representation of the routine, everyday action of the participants, the hierarchies involved and the interpretation of meaning (Cushion, 2014).

Throughout the fieldwork process I kept detailed field notes of the day-to-day workings of the training camps and competitive fixtures. These included, but were not limited to, the interactions between players and staff at various points, such as evening meals and time spent in hotel bars, spas and the gym, as well as the dedicated practice, or in the changing room during a competitive fixture. My scribbling of notes and constant asking of questions soon became an accepted part of the environment:

Bert had spotted me writing notes during one of the management meetings about players – “look he’s writing notes already”.

¹⁰ The players knew me as a highly successful ‘premier league’ player – the highest level of non-professional cricket in the country. For a further explication of the assumed relationship between high levels of playing competence and coaching expertise in cricket, see Townsend & Cushion (2015).

Steve rolled his eyes: “what can you write about that?”

David laughed: “his memoirs”.

(Field notes).

All field notes were dated and included contextual information such as location, those present, physical setting, type of social interactions and who composed them, and activities (Atkinson, 2016). It was common for the coaching and support staff to give their opinions on players and discuss confidential information in my presence, along with openly discussing their beliefs and experiences, despite knowing that I was actively conducting research on the topic. Whilst my presence was never wholly ‘natural’ nor the fact that I was a researcher forgotten, it was not an intrusion into a closed culture, with the coaches and in particular David valuing my input in the hope that together we could develop an informal learning community among the staff.

My friendship with Steve, the assistant coach, helped me to cultivate what Patton (1990) described as a ‘key informant’. We would often travel to training camps together, forming a close relationship and engaging in many ‘off-the-record’ conversations. I would actively spend time with Steve, driving with him to training from the hotel, spending evenings with him in the bar, and travelling with him to games. Here, Steve, despite his scorn of academia (“all academics are just full of spiel Rob - overcomplicating simple things”- field notes), and prolonged ‘banter’ toward my research, was a source of information about what I, as the observer, was unable to gather regarding management group activity to which I did not have direct access. I therefore sought to keep Steve ‘on-side’, sometimes (often) withholding my personal opinions that would directly challenge him and agreeing with him on things I wouldn’t necessarily agree with privately. Though I believe we became, and continue to remain, friends, this was at times arduous and straining personally. Indeed, for researchers who have experienced similar environments before and/or are familiar with the setting, the suspension of preconceptions is often difficult (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). But, in fieldwork, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argued, sometimes it necessary to tolerate situations, actions, or practices of which one disapproves. My position in the ‘field’ however, was not sufficiently stable that I felt I could challenge Steve, and for the purpose of obtaining authentic and naturalistic data, discretion was as much a social accomplishment as frankness (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Similarly, though it was never an issue, the fact that I was a researcher was never forgotten completely:

During one particular morning of training, at the outset of a fielding practice where the players were making their way sluggishly to the fielding ‘stations’ spread around the hall, Steve shouted for the players to gather around him and addressed them angrily.

“Lads, LD or not, when I say, ‘off you go’, what do you do?”

There was a painful pause. One of the players eventually piped up “off we go?”

“Fucking right! Put that in your fucking thesis, Townsend!”

(Field notes).

Players would often express an interest in my research, and a keenness to be interviewed. At first, the players’ reaction to my wearing a microphone was wary; though it soon became a natural part of the environment, and even a cause for humour, as exemplified in the following passage:

M had been staring at me during the team briefing. I had noticed, and though I tried to encourage him to continue listening to David his eyes kept flicking down to my collar, and mouthing silently to me “the fuck’s that?” He grabbed me as the players dispersed into the warm up routine and pointed at my collar: “Oi! Is that thing on?”, as he nodded towards my microphone, tucked on the inside of my top. I smiled,

“Yep, everything you say mate. I’ve got to listen back to it, no swearing though, okay?”

M beamed a smile: “ah” He leaned close and growled, “you’re a cunt!” before running off towards the rest of the boys ‘whooping’ with glee.

(Field notes).

From a critical perspective, the function of the ethnographer is to take the accounts of participants, to describe them, and to deconstruct them in order to understand how they were produced and the presuppositions on which they are based (cf. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), here the ethnographer’s role comes close to ideology critique. In the context of this research, interviewing participants was a continuous process and these ‘naturally occurring’ oral accounts were useful source both of direct information about the setting, situation or problem, and of evidence about the perspectives, concerns, and discursive practices of the people who produced them (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It is a distinctive feature of social research that the ‘objects’ studied are in fact ‘subjects’, in the sense that they have consciousness and are agentic in the construction of knowledge (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In this research – primarily concerning the sociology of coaching knowledge – interviews were an important tool to collect and analyse the intellectual and discursive resources on which coaches drew (Hammersley &

Atkinson, 2007). Interviews were useful in gathering evidence about peoples' perspectives, and - on analysis - evidence about the larger subcultures and cultures to which they belonged, where what was of interest were the forms of discourse¹¹ through which accounts were constituted (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Therefore, for the purposes of understanding coach learning, coaching practice, and the discursive construction of the coaching environment, I conducted two interviews with David, the head coach. One was conducted at the start of the research process after a weekend of non-participant observation and served the purpose of familiarising myself with the environment and with David. The second was at the end of the formal research period and served as a reflection on the time in-between our conversations. I used this interview to question David on issues, incidents and practices I had seen, and probed further into his goals for the squad, how he believed the environment had changed, and questioned his learning in greater detail. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with Steve, Bert, Oscar and Theo throughout the 2016 competitive season and winter training camps. Though Buzz and Gill contributed to the construction and maintenance of the coaching environment, their data was represented in the field notes and audio data captured, as their involvement with the players was not sustained enough to represent coaching practice. In addition, during the research process I interviewed the programme director (Brian) to gain an idea of the management of the disability cricket pathway and how coaching contributed to the logic of the field.

Typically, the aim of participant selection is to achieve a representative sample, and in this case, I was encouraged to look for those who contributed to the construction of coaching discourse. Though Bert was not an active coach with the players, in his roles as team manager and personal development and welfare he spent a lot of time feeding back information to the other management staff about the players, generally regarding details about their particular impairments; details about home and work lives; and other relevant administrative or logistical issues to further inform practice. To supplement these data, I conducted two focus groups; one with a cross-section of the players, and one with a cross-section of the athletes' parents¹². Throughout the winter training camps, a number of the parents of the athletes were present,

¹¹ Discourse does not just refer to that which is said. Bourdieu (1977) understood discourse as a way of implying a "universe of reference" (p. 18) – that is a way of expressing the "learned reconstruction" (p. 18) of the social world.

¹² Parents were often present during the training weekend, as many were responsible for the transport of the players to the training facilities and to the hotel. The management staff attempted to maintain a close relationship with the parents, and so the parents were able to contribute important information about the setting, coaches and the players.

observing the coaching practices, interacting with the staff in formal (e.g. parental updates) and non-formal settings. Therefore, I commandeered one of the formal parental updates during one training camp to conduct a focus group to understand the coaching environment from their perspective. Finally, a cross-section of players was sampled to take part in a second focus group. The methodological framework thus was emergent, as I sought to build a picture of the coaching environment. Indeed, it has been suggested that generating insights from other figures that are involved in high-performance coaching environments can provide a more comprehensive understanding of coaches' learning practices (Fairhurst *et al.*, 2017). In this way, through the use of multiple methods alongside participant observation and fieldwork, perspectives on the coaching context were generated from individuals that contributed to the logic of the field under examination, providing an emergent structural and individual picture of the case study.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

Ethnographic analyses typically form the basis of classic inductive logic and initiate a process of inquiry that is dedicated to a tentative working understanding of practice (Atkinson, 2016). However, in critical ethnography the integration of theory creates a less 'clean' logic of analysis in ethnographic work, and if applied uncritically can constrain the generation of meaningful data (Atkinson, 2016). In this research, the purpose of the analysis was to build a system of organising categories from the unstructured data that represented the coaching context, working practices and knowledge of the coaches under study, and of coach education. This inductive process enabled categories, themes and narrative to be built from the 'bottom up', by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of meaning (Creswell, 2013). As Creswell (2013) describes, the inductive process involved working back and forth between the analysis and the dataset until a comprehensive set of themes was established.

Similar to the analytical process in the first study, the integration of theory was used to make sense of the data, and so involved movement back and forth between ideas and data. In critical ethnographic work, theory is used in an iterative and complex manner against empirical material. As Timmermans and Tavory (2012) argued, as a social researcher we are constantly engaged in meta-theoretical concerns about the relation between data and theory and can never separate our own presuppositions when constructing categories of analysis. The deductive process involved building themes that were checked against the theoretical position adopted in a process of description and abstraction. In this case study, data analysis was akin to progressive

focusing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), whereby initial field observations served to build an initial ‘picture’ of the case. From this, a gradual shift was evident from data collection to analysis, analysis to description, to writing up and the integration of theory. Thus, by recognising the reflexive character of data analysis as an interactive and iterative process in ethnographic work (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012) I engaged in a process of abduction:

We adopt abductive logic when we engage in imaginative thinking about intriguing findings and then return to the field to check our conjectures.

(Charmaz, 2009, pp. 137–38)

Abductive analysis constitutes a qualitative data analysis approach aimed at applying empirical data against a background of critical sociological thought through a rigorous methodological process (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The essential purpose was to construct theory about coaching in disability sport through empirical investigation, whilst avoiding what Wacquant described as the “epistemological fairy-tale” (2002, p. 1481), whereby theory is constructed in a neutral and value free process *a priori* the researcher. Simply, abduction is the inferential creative process by which researchers can produce social scientific accounts of social life by drawing on the concepts, meanings and practices that social actors engage in (Blaikie, 2007). Importantly this was an *interpretive* position whereby I did not claim a realist ontological position. In the case of this ethnographic work, I sought to uncover social knowledge, symbolic meanings and intentions that orient social action in coaching; my focus was on the taken-for-granted beliefs and practices within the social world (Blaikie, 2007). Abduction requires an interrogation by the researcher of the ‘concepts’ and ‘theories’ that participants use to structure their world, which can be then understood in relation to social theory (Blaikie, 2007). Although empirical data is understood in relation to pre-existing theory, this is not a restrictive process; rather it is also a generative process. In this sense, theory and theories are sensitising concepts that inform research but do not determine the scope of the findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Dialectically, the focus on the empirical, socially emergent nature of knowledge ensured that the abstraction of ideas that may “flow” from the analysis were firmly grounded in the data (Layder, 1994). In this case, abduction should be understood as a continuous process that was shaped by the methods and solutions that the researcher had to hand (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), which in a Bourdieusian sense requires the researcher to reflexively understand the preconditions for inquiry, including their own “socially located and positional knowledge” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 172). Indeed, I was a part of the ‘world’ being studied, which inevitably leads to the generation of “partial, historically situated insights” (Timmermans &

Tavory, 2012, p. 172). Abduction is therefore contingent on the researcher's cultivated position.

3.6.4 Ethical Considerations

Negotiating access for the ethnographic study involved ethical considerations, for example to do with whose permission ought to be asked, as well as whose needed to be obtained to grant initial access (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The nature of the population under scrutiny within the ethnographic study - that of 'disabled' cricketers – meant that institutional ethical approval proved to be the most challenging barrier to accessing the players and coaches. Much to-ing and fro-ing between researcher and ethics board meant that from project conception to full approval took nearly eleven months. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) delineate two dimensions of ethics. The first is procedural ethics, the kind mandated by Institutional Review Board (IRB) committees to ensure procedures adequately deal with informed consent, confidentiality, and rights to privacy, deception, and protecting human subjects from harm (Ellis, 2007). Institutional ethical approval is often grounded on the premise that research is being done on strangers with whom we have no prior relationships and plan no future interaction (Ellis, 2007). Considering the nature of the players' impairments, this was an understandable concern. But, that is often not the case in ethnography (Ellis, 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and certainly not in this instance. The players were familiar with me through previous voluntary work, and my role within the disability cricket development pathway. Furthermore, my role with the squad was valued to the point that following my initial involvement as a participant I was 'kept on' as a member of staff indefinitely by senior management within the NGB. Thus, as qualitative researchers, we encounter ethical situations that do not fit strictly under the procedures specified by institutional ethics boards. Combined with the complex nature of ethnographic work, where fully informed consent is often neither possible nor desirable in ethnographic (or, for that matter, other) research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) this was uncharted territory. Many assumptions were made on the behalf of the players and their cognitive ability to provide 'informed' consent despite the focus of the research being on the staff predominantly. Therefore, in order to educate the participants as to the nature of my research I held separate workshops with the coaching and management staff, the players, and the parents of the players to explain the

content and purpose of the study, and the implications should they agree to take part¹³ (cf. Arscott, Dagnan & Kroese, 1997).

The second - and related - dimension is ethics in practice, or situational ethics (Ellis, 2007), the kind that deal with the unpredictable, often subtle, yet ethically important moments that come up in the field. For example, what if someone discloses something harmful, asks for help, or voices discomfort? This was not an uncommon occurrence within the ethnographic work, with issues arising about players' sexualities, their (sometimes volatile) home lives or concerns about lifestyles. Considering the levels of support the players received from the national governing body (e.g. the presence of a fully trained social worker in the role of team manager and personal development and welfare), plus the highly qualified and professional nature of the staff, this seemed intuitively to be unproblematic. However, to offset concerns, the purpose of my research was made as clear as possible to all participants – coaches, players, and the parents of the players - both as regards its purpose and what it will involve for them, including possible consequences stemming from the publication of findings (cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This meant an explicit understanding that the personal issues of players and staff would not be revealed in the writing of the ethnography. Furthermore, at a practical level, though not explicitly for the purpose of ethics, the staff would meet of an evening with the team manager to share issues and work out practical solutions and strategies to work with the players. A further dimension of ethics relates to the reflexive nature of the research, where, as both a researcher and an actor within the field, my concern to be an ethical practitioner influenced my reflexive stance; resulting in some tensions during the research process. Examples of these will be explored throughout chapters five, six and seven, and finally, in chapter nine as a means of highlighting the “self-as-instrument” in the research (Tracy, 2010).

In line with the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee clearance granted for this study, ethical approval was obtained from all coaches, athletes and parents involved in the research. Each participant was provided with an information sheet relevant to the particular method of data collection, including details of the purpose of the study, assurances of confidentiality and the option of withdrawal at any stage. All participants then signed an informed consent form before taking part in data collection.

3.7 Judging Qualitative Inquiry

¹³ It should be noted that there is a lack of empirical research on the ethics of coaching in disability sport.

Criteria for determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research were introduced by Guba and Lincoln in the 1980s when they replaced terminology for achieving rigor, reliability, validity, and generalizability with dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability (Burke, 2016). The assumption behind this shift was that qualitative should not be held to the same standards as quantitative research but should display parallel markers of quality (Burke, 2016). The foundational position assumed here has been widely criticised in recent debates around the nature of qualitative research (e.g. Burke, 2016; Smith & Caddick, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Smith & McGannon, 2017). Briefly, it has been suggested that to evaluate research that generally adopts a relativist ontological position – one that represents reality as multiple and subjective – against a set of fixed and universal criteria is, at best, contradictory. Furthermore, the adoption of the criteria mentioned above does not, in fact, ensure a measure of quality research (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Tracy (2010) suggested that to ensure quality research, scholars should adopt criteria such as: worthy of investigation, rich in rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical, and meaningful coherence. Once again however, the adoption of universal criteria in research that rejects such assumptions at their basic philosophical level is problematic (Smith & McGannon, 2017). A more suitable position in ensuring quality research is the adoption of a relativist approach. This is – as Sparkes and Smith (2014) are at pains to point out – not a claim that ‘anything goes’ in qualitative research and certainly not when attempting to contribute to the field of sport coaching (Jones & Thomas, 2015) whereby scholars construct coaching realities in closed disciplinary pockets. Relativist approaches align with constructionist and critical research where the evaluative criteria engaged with should be tailored to the goals and objectives of the study (Burke, 2016). The point here is that the criteria against which methods are held, as *well* as the methods themselves, should be subject to critical scrutiny. Following Smith and Caddick (2012) I applied the following alternative criteria to consider. First, I attempted to make a *substantive contribution*. Next, I aimed to produce research that displayed *width*. *Coherence* was also a major concern in that I wanted to provide a ‘complete’ and meaningful picture at both an internal level (i.e. the construction of the text) and externally in relation to existing research. Finally, I sought to maintain a level of *credibility* and *sincerity*. Together these criteria were guided by a sense of *phronesis*, that is, practical sense gained through immersion in the field (Smith & Caddick, 2012).

3.8 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has detailed the emergent methodological process I used to undertake this research. This included two separate - but connected - research designs that enabled an in-depth and critical examination of the nature of coach learning in coaching practice and coach education, within two particular case studies. Situated within a critical, social constructionist position, the research period of two years involved an eighteen-month ethnographic study in disability coaching, and an extended study of an impairment-specific mode of coach education. A number of data collection methods were used, including participant observations, semi-structured interviews, qualitative surveys and focus groups to understand the formation and use of coaches' knowledge. The next chapter introduces the theoretical position that I used to frame my inquiry, following which I detail the findings from the research.

Chapter Four

Analysis & Discussion

“Theory without empirical research is empty, empirical research without theory is blind”

Bourdieu (1988, pp. 774–775).

4.1 Introduction

The following section introduces the theoretical framework that I used to structure and explain the research. Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1991) argued that the use of theory should not be an autonomous practice; its purpose is to provide the means of a break with preconceptions and also to provide the means to a solution of contradictions resulting from research. In order to understand the nature of learning in disability coaching, I draw on the work of Bourdieu. The value of Bourdieu's work applied to coaching is twofold. First, it is a philosophy of the *relational* in that it affords primacy to relations between people. It attempts to show "realities" as constructed through objective relations (Bourdieu, 1998). Indeed, a relational approach provides a more complete understanding of the two-way relationship between objective structures and individual dispositions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, 1998) which can be applied to analysis of the coaching context and of coaches. Second, it is a philosophy of *action* that captures the "potentialities inscribed in the body of agents and in the structure of the situations where they act" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. vii), or more specifically in the relations between them. This philosophy is condensed into a clear set of higher order concepts – *habitus*, *field*, *capital* which together explain how cultural settings function according to their own internal logic, and how people – largely unconsciously – become competent social actors within these cultural settings.

Bourdieu offers these conceptual tools to deconstruct the social in a way that reveals the interaction between structure, agency and the logic of different practices, (Grenfell, 2007). His theory of practice allows for an understanding of behaviour that bridges the divide between approaches that focus solely on either structural forces, or personal agency. In other words, Bourdieu's concepts can help to articulate how coaches' everyday actions and social practices are simultaneously structured by social forces and institutions, whilst also operating according to a (relative) freedom or autonomy. Furthermore, a Bourdieusian exploration of learning seeks to understand the social conditions of the *production* of knowledge, and the practices that constitute and legitimate ways of thinking about practice (Bourdieu, 1977). In so doing we, as researchers *and* coaches, can understand in more detail why people think and act in different ways and attempt to offer a more nuanced and critical insight into coach learning in disability sport.

My adoption of Bourdieu's work when addressing learning lies in my rejection of the presuppositions of research that commonly assumes a realist position on understanding 'truth'

and knowledge (see chapter two, section 2.2.2). Bourdieu's work aligns with social constructionist thought in its concern for power as a mediating factor in the production of the knowledge, located within broad social and historical structures. Furthermore, Bourdieu's critical sociology provides a framework for critiquing inherited categories and accepted ways of thinking (Wacquant, 2008), a central tenet of social constructionism. Grenfell (2010) observed that a function of Bourdieu's theory of practice is to be critical; that is to examine ideas and practices in terms of the ideology that underpins them, but also offer the possibility of liberation from them. Bourdieu's very language "consequently offers a means of breaking with the 'every day' empirical assumptions of the world" (Grenfell, 2010, p. 96). This is central to Bourdieu's work, the necessity to interrogate categories of thought;

the need to 'beware of words' for the way they (mis)represent the world; the preoccupation to look at the true generating processes of social systems and not to accept them in their own terms; and the idea that there must be another place to stand with regard to social phenomena, which can offer a clearer view of what exists and how.

(Grenfell, 2010, p. 88).

Next, Bourdieu is critical of established patterns of power (Wacquant, 2008) and his theory functions as a tool to explain the arbitrary processes by which the social order perpetuates and legitimates itself. Bourdieu's work can be understood as 'critical' sociology in three ways (May, 2001). Though his scientific method concentrated on people and their 'everyday' experience, the analytical focus was on the social conditions that structure human behaviour and the interrelation between the two (May, 2001). Bourdieu insisted that researchers must demonstrate and practice a reflexive sociology in order to deconstruct the conditions of knowledge production. To employ reflexivity, for Bourdieu, is to supplant "the illusion of absolute knowledge" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 250), whereby the researcher turns the same tools of analysis of the object onto themselves. These two elements combine to expose the mechanisms, ideologies and practices of social institutions. A common thread in critical sociological approaches to enquiry is a concern with power and to reveal mechanisms of domination (Giulianotti, 2005; Piggott, 2011). And although theoretical approaches can differ, the focus of critical sociologists is to expose the 'naturalness' or 'taken-for-granted' character of how things are done; it is about "revealing domination" (Piggott, 2011, p. 551). As Bourdieu wrote:

The transformative action [of symbolic violence] is all the more powerful because it is for the most part exerted invisibly and insidiously through insensible familiarisation

with a symbolically structured physical world and early, prolonged experience of interactions informed by the structures of domination.

(Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 37-38).

The purpose of using Bourdieu in this study then was to expose the ‘everyday’ practices of coaching in disability sport, to expose the subtle modes of oppression, resistance, empowerment and domination that are exercised within fields such as coaching. Through the critical examination of the structural and individual conditions that coaches, and athletes negotiate, it was hoped to reveal symbols of meaning and ideology that contributed to coaches’ learning.

4.2 A Theory of (Coaching) Practice

In this next section I describe in greater detail Bourdieu’s theory of practice and attempt to contextualise it in light of this research. The infusion of social theory into coaching research represents an attempt to interrogate and lift our understandings of disability sport coaching (Jones, 2011) and to provide more nuanced and critical insight into coach learning research. From the outset, Bourdieu’s work is “good to think with” (Jenkins, 2002, p.11). In particular his core concepts of *habitus*, *field*, *capital* and *practice*, though buried beneath difficult technical idiom and a variety of empirical objects of study (including knowledge and culture, and institutions and practices such as education, sport and academia) offer a conceptual framework which grasps the complexity of learning *in practice and* presents learning as an embodied set of practices that structure, and are structured by, the contexts in which people operate (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014).

Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides a framework that moves away from “the vacuous discourse of grand theorising” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 233) to an empirically derived language of analysis (Lamb, Firbank & Aldous, 2016) that refuses to split object and subject; mind and body; agency and structure (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This anti-dualist social ontology provides a theory that collapses oppositions throughout social science (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 1), and reflects the richness and complexity of human action (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Drawing on a strong social constructionist epistemology, Bourdieu argued for viewing the social world as a social construct, within which there is a ‘taken-for-grantedness’ in empirical experience (Grenfell, 2007). In this epistemology, the social world is socially produced through a “collective work of construction of social reality” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 239) that, applied to coaching, highlights the arbitrary, ideological and

taken-for-granted character of coaching knowledge. Applied to this study, what Bourdieu offered were the conceptual tools to deconstruct disability coaching and coach learning in a way that reveals the interaction between structure, agency and the logic of different practices, through his sociological concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *capital* (Grenfell, 2007). These concepts are outlined below but, for clarification purposes, while each concept is described separately it should be noted that this framework is dialectic in that none can function without respect to the others.

4.2.1 Field

Bourdieu's concept of field is a 'powerful heuristic' for understanding and differentiating the social spaces which make up society (Smith, 2012, p. 254). Fields are social spaces that are defined as a "network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.97). It is the state of relations between actors that defines the structure of the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, social space consists of a multitude of overlapping fields, due to the delimited nature of their boundaries (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Indeed, the limits of a field are found where the effects of the field cease, hence, agents are situated across multiple fields, each with specific "cultural conditions which produce social norms and expectancies, or normalising practices" (Blackett *et al.*, 2015, p. 7).

Some fields can be large, for instance the media, education or sport, while others can be smaller microcosms that exist within fields. For example, within the field of sport is the sub-field of disability sport, within which coaching can be defined not only as a field (or social formation) (Cushion, 2011b) but as a social practice within the wider field. Fields are dynamic and in a constant state of flux in relation to not only the intrinsic struggles within them, but to external socio-political-historical forces (Grenfell, 2007). Importantly a field is also a space of conflict and competition, with differently displaced social actors striving to achieve their objectives (Bourdieu, 1990a). Each field has an intrinsic logic of practice; its reason to be that is defined by the totality of social relations (Grenfell, 2007). The ruling principles of the field can be seen as forms of orthodoxy, or legitimate ways of doing things. Fields enter a doxic or taken-for-granted mode when these principles are accepted by members of the field and unquestioned, adhering to the "rules-of-the-game" (Grenfell, 2007, p. 55). The utility of field as an analytical device applied to coaching is incisive; a key function of a field is the way it provides a source of socialisation for its members. In coaching, fields act on individuals to form collective dispositions to think and act in a certain way (Cushion *et al.*, 2003) that are

recognised as the way things are ‘done’ (see chapter two, section 2.2). Through the use of field, we can begin to understand how dominant social rules and logic within a coaching field can shape coaching practices in its associated settings. Fields, and their specific configurations, are therefore crucial in shaping learning for coaches.

4.2.2 Habitus

The positions occupied by the social agent within a field produce a specific habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). The concept of habitus refers to a system of lasting, durable dispositions that, through the integration of past experiences, functions in the present as a “matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83). Dispositions are a key concept in Bourdieu's work and can be conceived as a practical sense of the game. They form a partly rational but partly intuitive understanding of fields and of the social order and so form a practical sense (Bourdieu, 1998) that guides all manner of actions, tastes, perspectives and so on. The process by which dispositions are produced and instilled by the social environment within the social agent occurs through a process of habituation; the repeated and accepted performance of cognitive, affective and bodily schemata. As Bourdieu (1990a, p. 126) noted:

“to speak of habitus is to assert that the individual, and even the personal, the subjective, is social, collective. Habitus is a socialised subjectivity...neither the individual...nor groups as concrete sets of individuals sharing a similar location in social space, but in relation between two realisations of historical action, in bodies and things”.

Applied to coaching, understanding habitus helps to highlight the production of “individual and collective practices” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 54). This is because the dispositions instilled by habitus are pre-conscious and so not readily accessible through conscious reflection and modification – they are everything that “goes without saying” (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 52), and as it were, we have ‘forgotten’ that we have ‘learned’ them. Analysing coach learning through the use of habitus suggests that coaching practice is developed as much by experience as by teaching, and competent practices are produced on a routine basis, in the “process of which objective meaning is reproduced” (May, 2001, p. 127). Coaching therefore is a form of socialised subjectivity (Jones & Thomas, 2015) that not only produces, in this instance, coaching practice but a way of perceiving and appreciating practices (Townsend & Cushion, 2015).

The conditions associated with a particular existence (i.e. field) produces habitus; principles which generate and organise practices, cognitive structures which pre-consciously

motivate action and discourse (Bourdieu, 1990). Simply, in this context, habitus is formed through regular coaching experiences (that is, being a coach, and being coached) which generate perceptions about, for instance, ‘how to’ coach, which then serve to reinforce and embed these existing coaching beliefs (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Habitus thus represents a ‘feel for the game’ (May, 2001). A coach’s habitus is the ‘universalising mediation’ which not only causes one’s practices without explicit reason or intent but is constituted in practice (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79, 1990a). Though unconscious, habitus is responsible for the production of attitudes, perceptions, tastes, discourse and practices (Bourdieu, 1977). This internalisation of social structure occurs at the level of the subconscious, and becomes ‘second nature’, often in a manner which reinforces the very structures that constituted habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1984). These dispositions to act are frequently described as durable in that once acquired they are relatively enduring, but also transposable in that they are also malleable to a degree and may develop and shift as one encounters a number of different structural and individual conditions. As Bourdieu argued, habitus is an “*open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133, italics in original). Thus, agents are, in practice, subjects of acts of construction of the social world; but are simultaneously a part of the “social genesis of the principles of construction” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.470). Importantly, habitus also filters and structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, meaning that incorporation of new experiences (e.g., an unfamiliar coaching environment or a coach education course) into one’s habitus is always constrained by past experiences (e.g., socialisation and enculturation in a previous environment). Applied to coaching we can understand learning to coach through the logic of socialisation; “a universe of ready-made feelings and experiences” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.476) that are the underlying bases for practice (Cushion, 2011b).

For Bourdieu, habitus operates as a mechanism for learning that can only be operationalised within practice. Bourdieu’s work insists that “objects of knowledge are constructed, and...the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 52). This means that expressions of habitus can be found in the way we move, speak, and indeed coach. The cognitive structures that social agents implement in practice, their *practical knowledge*, are internalised and embodied social structures (Bourdieu, 1984). Indeed, the practical knowledge of the social world is presupposed

by schemes of classification; historical schemes of perception which are the “product of the objective division into classes” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 470). As Bourdieu argued, habitus are both differentiated and differentiating principles of division; it is a way of perceiving and appreciating practice and implies not only a “sense of one’s place” but also a “sense of the other’s place” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.131). Habitus are classificatory schemes, principles of classification of division and vision (Bourdieu, 1998) that make distinctions; for instance, what ‘expert’ coaching is, which athletes are ‘talented’, or how to best structure practice to enhance athlete performance. Importantly, the position one occupies in the field mean that the distinctions made are not identical, not all coaches believe the same things or are predisposed to certain values. These schemes function below the level of consciousness and discourse and make possible the production of a common-sense world (Bourdieu, 1984).

Furthermore, for Bourdieu, the body itself is the site of incorporated history. Over time, habitus becomes embodied, where repeated exposure to the dominant practices of the field produces and reproduces embodied knowledge and capabilities (Brown, 2005; Cushion & Jones, 2006). Thus, the body as a mnemonic device becomes a site of cultural imprinting. This process of the embodiment of the habitus is referred to as *hexis* (Bourdieu, 1977):

Bodily *hexis* is political mythology realised, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking.

(Bourdieu, 1977)

Bourdieu expands this understanding of *hexis* to a practical way of experiencing and expressing one’s own sense of social value; *hexis* is maintained through the inscribing of social conditions into one’s own body (Bourdieu, 1984) and classifying others according to these same schemes. It is in this theoretical space that we can begin to understand coaches’ assumptions about the disabled athlete, whereby coaches impose differential value on bodies within the sporting field that have very ‘real’ effects in the formation of coaching practices (see chapter seven, section 7.2.1). Taste, as an expression of habitus, is an acquired disposition to ‘differentiate’ and ‘appreciate’, or in other words to create and articulate differences by a process of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). The classifying schemes of habitus owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function “below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 468). For Bourdieu, habitus provides an understanding of how people respond to different situations, events and interactions with other people (Edwards & Imrie, 2003). In this sense, habitus guarantees the “correctness” of practices, and ensures they remain consistent over time (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Indeed, Bourdieu explained that dispositions constitutive of habitus tend to perpetuate itself through the activation of similarly structured practices (1990a). Habitus then is a principle of continuity, through the expression, acquisition and internalisation of dominant forms of capital (Dumais, 2002).

4.2.3 Capital

Bourdieu described the social world as a ‘space’ which is constructed out of a set of properties that are active at any one time (May, 2001). For Bourdieu, the social world is represented as a multidimensional space which is constructed on a basis of differentiation of power between social agents (Bourdieu, 1986). The mediating properties in any space are the various forms of power or capital which may act in isolation or in relation with each other (May, 2001) and determine the position of the social agents in a social hierarchy (Cushion, 2011b). Power is an active property and as such is constantly (re)distributed relative to the agents’ positions within that space (Bourdieu, 1986). A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) as it is only through the particular conditions of a field that a species of capital has meaning and efficacy. Capital is accumulated labour, both in its material and its embodied forms; it is a force ‘inscribed in objective or subjective structures’ and its (mis)recognition is the underlying principle of the irregularities of the social world (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). Capital presents itself in three fundamental species (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992); cultural, economic and social, and importantly, can be both material and non-material (May, 2001), allowing for a dialectic understanding of subjective and objective features of social life. A fourth descriptor can be used when describing physical capital.

Cultural capital exists in three sub-states; embodied, objectified and institutionalised, and refers mainly to the products of education. Embodied cultural capital refers to ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242), can be objectified in the form of desirable material possessions, and institutionalised in the form of academic qualifications (Cushion, 2011b). Bourdieu (1986, p. 286) defined social capital as the aggregation of “actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of institutionalised relationships”. Essentially social capital refers to the networks and relationships one can draw upon to mobilise and advance one’s position. An extension of Bourdieu’s field theory is the concept of physical capital. According to Shilling (2004), physical capital refers to the development of bodies in ways recognised as possessing value in a social field. In coaching, this can be applied to the production of athletic bodies, and the recognition of physical capital

as involving the translation of bodily participation in sport into other resources, namely economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, and is important to the reproduction of social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1973, 1986; Shilling, 2004).

A fourth descriptor can be used to understand the efficacy of capital within a field; symbolic. Symbolic capital refers to the ways in which the different species of capital are misrecognised as having value and represents the power to confer meaning on social reality (May, 2001). As Bourdieu described, symbolic capital is the “form that one or another of these species takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that recognise its specific logic” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Thus, agents are distributed in social space according to the overall volume of capital they possess, the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital (Bourdieu, 1989). Importantly, fields and practices can be defined in terms of the configuration of their capital (Grenfell, 2007). Applied to coaching, for example, social capital can be exercised from the position in the coaching field, cultural capital attributed to the qualifications and experience of the coach, while symbolic capital may come from prestige or renown as a player (Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Combined, these forms of capital can be used to describe and analyse the social configurations in coaching and highlight what is valued in a particular field, thus allowing critical commentary on fields and their predisposition toward reproduction.

4.3 Summary

Bourdieu’s conceptual tools are a means of understanding coaching practice in a way that articulates the relationship between the broader structures of sport and their interaction within a socially and historically situated individual coach. Essentially, Bourdieu sought to understand and uncover the social basis of the systems of classification which structure perception of the social world. His focus therefore was on power, social change and the symbolic structures that create and maintain social and hierarchical structures within fields. His explicit focus, however, was on the empirical and therefore applied to coaching allows a view of the historically and contextually shaped nature of coaching as grounded in practice (Cushion, 2011b, p.41).

Furthermore, in considering coach learning, the process of learning can be positioned in the dialectical relationship between practice, agency and structure. Furthermore, Bourdieu creates a view of power as socially created, relational and symbolic, and behaviour and learning can be mapped onto wider historical structures and practices. Bourdieu’s seminal concepts of habitus, field and capital enable a view of coaching as a reproductive social activity, whereby

cultures are legitimated through the imposition of systems of meaning that solidify ideological and discursive structures of inequality. Simultaneously, these tools highlight and challenge the social conditions under which hierarchies are formed. Furthermore, in this space, learning is inseparable from practice, with the field of practice viewed as a generative site of meaning (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007).

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the key ideas behind Bourdieu's critical sociology and linked these in terms of their value to the field of coaching and understanding coach learning. Chapter five introduces data generated from a case-study evaluation of an impairment-specific mode of coach education. It highlights some of the issues and problems with coach education and learning in the disability context from a broad perspective. To further illustrate the complexity of coach learning in disability sport *in situ*, chapter six presents data generated through ethnographic fieldwork with a disability cricket squad, outlining the structure of the disability coaching field, with a view to outlining its intrinsic logic of practice that guided and shaped coach learning. Chapter seven takes coaching practice as the object of analysis and discusses the ways that coaches in the disability cricket context formed and expressed understandings of the athletes that they coached. In so doing, I accept that the social world is not easily represented, and particularly so the complex nature of coaching. Ultimately, as Jones (2011) suggested, whatever is said (or written) is a reduction of all that could be said (or written). It should be understood therefore that my constructed account is one of a number of ways of describing what 'happened' with a view to critical analysis. At the same time, I have endeavoured to produce an account that aligns with the focus and purpose of the research, that is, to understand the nature of coach learning in disability sport. For clarity therefore, the chapters addressing the research questions are discussed separately, but it is my hope that these should be understood not as separate, but in relation to each other in that the practices described all influence, and are influenced by, each other.

Chapter Five

A Critical Analysis of an Impairment-Specific Mode of Disability Coach Education

“All pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”.

Bourdieu & Passeron (1977, p. 5)

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to understand in what ways an impairment-specific mode of disability coach education impacted on coaches' knowledge about disability. Moreover, this represents an attempt to develop critical dialogue about the nature and effectiveness of disability coach education. As identified in chapter two (see section 2.2.3) while there is a growing discourse of coach learning in disability sport, there is no research that has examined disability coach education. The focus of this particular coach education course was on coaching people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Indeed, while coaches play a significant role in planning, delivering and shaping high quality sporting experiences for people with ASD (Rosso, 2016), a common barrier to disabled peoples' participation in sport and physical activity is a lack of knowledgeable, qualified and 'inclusive' coaches (Wareham *et al.*, 2017; Martin & Whalen, 2014). The subsequent analysis attempts to not only to provide insight into disability coach education, but to examine how disability was framed within the course, thus generating insights into coach learning. To do so, I used the social relational model of disability (cf. Thomas, 1999; see chapter one, section 1.2) to highlight the social construction of disability in different contexts and relationships, and in so doing examine the production of knowledge about disability within coach education. Combining this analysis with the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu engaged with social structure and agency and questioned the different cultural frameworks that coaches draw upon in the formulation of coaching knowledge. Together, the chapter considers *in what ways* a formal disability coach education and training programme impacted on coach learning.

5.2 Discussion

In this discussion, I analyse the discourses of disability that were implicit within the course and examine the subsequent pedagogical conditions, in terms of their expression and translation in coaching knowledge. Throughout, I offer a commentary on the data using the lens of Pierre Bourdieu to deconstruct issues relating to coach learning.

5.2.1 Marginalising Disability

It has been suggested in the literature that understanding an athlete's impairment is central to ensuring coaching success in disability sport (Wareham *et al.*, 2017; Tawse *et al.*, 2012). Indeed, as identified in chapter two, a cursory glance at the literature on disability coaching highlights the impact that impairment has on the skills, knowledge and practices of coaches.

These can include, but are not limited to, a limited ‘talent pool’ of athletes, classificatory competition demands, and demands on coaches’ communicative skills and knowledge of disability. Understanding disability is therefore a central consideration for coaches in disability sport. Autism is a lifelong, complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the way that people perceive and understand the world around them. ASD are characterised by what is commonly known as a triad of impairments (Rosso, 2016) in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013), ‘deficits’ in social-emotional reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviours and skills in understanding, developing and maintaining relationships (APA, 2013). A common barrier that coaches identified prior to attending the course was the lack of attention given specifically to ASD within their previous coaching education, for instance:

I have worked with a number of autistic players over the years but have had no formal training in this area. (Coach – survey data).

As identified in chapter two (see section 2.2.3), disability-specific coach education opportunities are rare (Cregan *et al.*, 2007; Fairhurst *et al.*, 2017), with coach ‘education’ tending to take the form of isolated, one-off seminars and workshops that may focus on either impairment-specific information or broader adaptations or modifications coaches can make to existing practice structures to promote inclusion (see chapter, six, section 6.2.1). For instance, when interviewed, one coach reflected on her previous coach education:

See now you’ve got me started. I’ve always thought that British Gymnastics approach coaching people with disabilities in the wrong way because what we do is we’ve got this very structured pathway for UKCC coaching which is great, and then alongside that you’ve got the opportunity to take a disability add-on module. There’s only one and that is supposed to cover everything you do in disability! And like I said earlier the thing that frightens people the most they do this one/two-day disability coaching module and that is supposed to prepare you! So, what I feel is start incorporating disability coaching knowledge into the mainstream coaching levels.

RT: so, a two-day training course doesn’t reflect the demands of what you do here?

No, it doesn’t, absolutely one hundred percent it’s not enough. I don’t think you could ever make it enough with a separate course, but if you integrate it, it makes coaches aware that people with a disability exist, and the needs of people with disabilities. Some of those people might actually want to go and coach people with disabilities, but if it’s a separate module that you can choose to go on or not, most probably would be ‘or not’. (Coach - interview).

The data is illustrative of the ‘fragmented’ state of coach education related to coaching disabled people, and the ‘compartmentalised’ nature of coaching knowledge related to disability (cf. Bush & Silk, 2012). Indeed, in commenting on the need for impairment-specific coach education as a supplementary workshop for mainstream coach education, the tutor suggested that the position of disability within the coaching field was often marginalised, creating a ‘gap in the market’ to be filled:

We started to realise that there’s a lot of coach education out there, there’s a lot of impairment-specific coach education out there, but little or no coverage of autism. So, it was something that we kind of saw an opening in the market in terms of this can help the people that we support. I think because it is a hidden disability. There’s obviously impairment-specific courses out there but there’s rarely anything to do with autism. It’s usually thrown under (the) learning disability umbrella. (Tutor - interview).

As Mallett *et al.* (2009) commented, the proliferation of ‘nonformal’ coach education opportunities which characterise disability-specific coach education may be due to the ineffectiveness of a broad coach education system that at best may integrate some modification or adaptive theory into its modular content, but for the most part overlooks issues of disability. In this case-study, specifically relating to ASD, coaches were largely untrained in the features of working with people with ASD. The lack of systematic integration of disability into coach education is a longstanding difficulty (Wareham *et al.*, 2017) and coaches in this case had difficulties accessing specialised support and knowledge of ‘effective’ practices to coach people with ASD (Rosso, 2016):

I still feel there’s a bit of a myth. I think that bit of training is needed. The great barrier that is misinformed perception of working with disabled people is still a massive hurdle to get over so we’re still battling with that massive misconception that is you know around reluctance around working with disabled players which we’re really chipping away at but it still does exist. (Coach - interview).

Marginalising ‘disability’ within coach education has important implications for professional development. Bourdieu argued that the function of education is in the distribution of capital (Bourdieu, 1973). Capital is accumulated labour – in its material or embodied forms that allows social agents to produce social practice (Bourdieu, 1986). There are different species of capital, each with its own efficacy. The concept of cultural capital - as discussed earlier (see chapter four, section 4.2.3) - can be understood in reference to the social distribution of ‘legitimate’ modes of knowledge (Atkinson, 2011) and social competencies that allow one to function within a given field. Bourdieu also suggested that the structure of the distribution of different types of capital is a reflection of the structure of the social world – that is, a set of

constraints within a field that shapes the production and distribution of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, in a social field where educational systems are not common, such as coaching in disability sport, the appropriation and accumulation of cultural capital (knowledge) is inhibited (Bourdieu, 1977). For example, a number of participants suggested how they operated without any formal ongoing support (McMaster *et al.*, 2012) and had to learn primarily through negotiating ‘on the job’ constraints:

A lot of it has been learning on the job, just do it yeah you just do it. A lot of it is the same, judging your players, getting to know the people quickly and getting an idea of what people can do, you’ve just gotta adapt things haven’t you. (Coach - interview).

My experience is full of errors. I’ve had to learn the hard way through it. (Coach- field notes).

Too many coaches are thrown in at the deep end and asked to survive the next experience unscathed. (Coach - survey data).

I have worked with a number of people with autism; however, no training. I have only learnt stuff through coaching. (My knowledge is) still basic - only know what I have had experience of in work and through personal experience. (Coach - survey data).

These data illustrate how coaches often were left to work at the ‘edge of chaos’ (Bowes & Jones, 2006), with no formal support or education in disability sport (see chapter six, section 6.2.1). This means that experience in the field was most commonly responsible for the construction of the vision and division of social space, in which coaches’ schemes of perception and action are gradually shaped in the field (Brown, 2005). For example, the situation coaches reported was that they were for the most part ‘dropped in at the deep end’ of disability sport and left to develop their knowledge and understanding in context, as the following data illustrate:

I think if I had done the course at the beginning of my coaching career then it would have been very useful as I was very much swimming in the deep end and didn’t know the characteristics about individuals with autism that I have learnt now. (Coach – interview).

I didn’t know what to expect - my first day, and I’d been teaching for probably nearly ten years at that point. I set up a really simple course for them to do - which I thought was really simple - and there was twelve of them. They came and sat down with helpers and stuff, introduced myself and told them what we were gonna do. I literally took thirty seconds, turned to say look this is what I’ve set up, turned back and they’d all run off and I was like what on earth am I going to do? It lasted a good six months going into a lesson being really nervous about what’s gonna happen. Even now I’ve been doing it probably three years it’s still quite challenging, you just don’t know what you’re gonna get. (Coach - field notes).

As these data suggest, the lack of informed training and educational resources or support for coaches in the disability sport context acted as powerful structural barriers not only for coaches, but for people with ASD in accessing sporting opportunities. The paucity of resources available through traditional coaching education providers (e.g. national governing bodies) suggests that the coaches were operating without any extended, formalised and critical education in working with disabled people (Townsend *et al.*, 2016; Rosso, 2016; McMaster *et al.*, 2012) and therefore lacked the necessary knowledge. Therefore, in order to address this lack of knowledge, the organisation offered a number of different formats of the course; a one-day format, an extended two-day format, half-day formats, or three-hour ‘awareness building’ sessions:

The reason for the project was that there seems to be lower levels of people with autism participating in sport for reasons such heightened anxiety, sensory sensitivities, lack of awareness from the coaches. Something like seven hundred and fifty-seven parents talked with us and said that they’re having difficulties getting their youngster or young adult into sport. They knew they wanted to participate and they couldn’t because there was a lack of knowledge with coaches. (Tutor – interview).

For Bourdieu, fields function as a site of ‘supply and demand’ (Brown, 2005) where the field highlights what is necessary and valued to become competent actors. Coach education is a good example of a de-limited field of production that “exists to feed and perpetuate the supply and demand cycle for valued cultural goods” (Brown, 2005, p. 11) in coaching. These goods are ‘embodied’ and function as knowledge and skills related to coaching. As a result, the course was a de-limited field of cultural production, that acted to redistribute the structure of capital (Bourdieu, 1973), and therefore knowledge, about coaching to large numbers of coaches, in order to influence the logic of the wider field. As these data suggest, the lack of informed training and educational resources or support for coaches in the disability sport context acted as a powerful form of structural disability (cf. Thomas, 2004a; Goodley, 2011) for people with ASD:

We were seeing that people with autism want to participate in sport and there’s reasons why that’s quite difficult for them to do so, so it was something that as an autism charity that’s our speciality that we could try and help out with. There was a lack of knowledge with coaches. (Tutor – interview).

The lack of previous training and education meant that coaches and physical activity practitioners arrived at the course “saturated with categories of thinking” (Grenfell, 2014, p. 83) that were formulated through unstructured experiences in the field that functioned to shape their responses to the course. In terms of coach learning, the following data highlight how the

field acted as a cultural resource that shaped certain orientations and dispositions acquired through social practice. In the case of ASD, data showed how coaches had constructed cultural and social barriers between coaches and people with ASD as their dominant frame of reference (Bourdieu, 1990b), and their lack of knowledge, awareness and confidence to coach people with ASD manifested in a ‘fear of the unknown’:

I was daunted when I first took it on (started coaching autistic players) and thought, “How exactly do I do it?” It was just literally the unknown because I didn’t know quite what to expect. I felt that I was lacking in the expertise. (Coach - interview).

Tell you what; the first sessions are always like the nervous ones aren’t they? You just don’t know, you go in, you don’t know what you’re doing. (Coach - interview).

I remember feeling like a little bit scared when I [first started]. I wasn’t sure and that was quite profound...there’s so much going on. Sometimes you feel you’re making it up on the spot and half the time you are. I don’t know, still feel under pressure sometimes. (Coach - interview).

My view is that many coaches shy away from coaching opportunities with autistic athletes due to a shortfall in understanding of and empathy towards such athletes. Helping coaches to understand and manage perceived difficult behaviour could have a significant impact on coaches’ willingness to interact with autistic athletes. Much to my disappointment I still retain some stereotypical opinions towards autistic athletes and these views were challenged during the course. (Coach – survey data).

These socially constituted meanings about autism were embedded in practice (Thomas, 2004b), and these examples are suggestive of the contemporary structure of the disability sport field, the position of coach education within it and what kinds of habitus exposure to such practices might condition (Brown, 2005). Autism is commonly described as a “devastating neurodevelopmental disorder” (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2012, p. 58) and understandings of autism are often housed in medical terms. Such medical discourses, when combined with a lack of professional development and support – manifested in a ‘fear of the unknown’ for coaches. The following interview data is illustrative:

I was more or less surrounded by people with disabilities, and I was completely out of my depth. I didn’t know what I was doing! I didn’t know how to speak to these people, I didn’t know how to look at them, I didn’t know if I should look at them, I didn’t know anything it was really, really frightening...really frightening. The point is, you don’t know what you’re doing and you’re let loose on people who can be challenging, that’s how you feel, that’s how I felt. (Coach - interview).

Indeed, data showed how for participants, generating a personal awareness of the characteristics of autism was an important motivating factor for attendance:

I'd never studied the autistic spectrum. From experience whilst I had a good overall picture, it (the course) was just colouring it in if you like, it was just making it that bit clearer to me and helping me to understand more about the condition and about individuals that I worked with. (Coach – survey data).

To this end, the course presented common tendencies, case studies and “myths and facts” about ASD as an awareness-raising practice. Coaches were encouraged to consider the actual needs of the individual impairment effects, whilst considering inclusivity and the removal of social barriers (Reindal, 2008). The tutor recognised how coaches’ lack of knowledge acted as a barrier that was imposed on top of the effects of impairment (Thomas, 2004a):

I think a massive barrier is coaches’ own perception, because I mean when I started coaching I was thrown into a disability club, and I hadn’t been given any background to the players, so that’s where I can see some coaches might go in and have that fear that something is gonna go wrong because I don’t know enough. Another thing might be that they don’t know enough about the condition. I think it’s important to know the key areas of difference – so, the communication, the social interaction, the social communication and the flexibility for imagination. I’d say the sensory side of things is very important because I think that can actually have quite a big impact in terms of engagement and participation in different settings. And that’s probably one of the common areas where coaches will say ‘playing up’ or ‘challenging behaviour’ if they don’t know the impacts certain sensory differences can have. (Tutor – interview).

Indeed, as a result of the common lack of knowledge and understanding of ASD, coaches acquired and expressed negative dispositions toward disability (cf. Bourdieu, 1984; Cushion, 2011b), that were manifest in feelings of nervousness, apprehension and a lack of knowledge about ASD, and therefore ‘how’ to coach people with ASD:

Around autism there’s this massive grey area that no-one really understands. I don't think you can always be 100% prepared for everything that you’re going to face. (Coach - interview).

Analysis of these data highlights the particular influence of negative cultural discourses about disability, specifically how coaches expressed feelings of nervousness, apprehension and a lack of knowledge about ‘how’ to work with people with ASD which can be conceptualised as a form of psycho-emotional oppression (Thomas, 2004a). The following field notes show a specific example of coaches’ negative dispositions toward disability during group discussions on the course:

The tutor has set a task whereby participants were given the word “autism” and asked to discuss their understandings of it. Groups were given five minutes to discuss before feeding back to the tutor who collated themes on a whiteboard at the front of the classroom. One coach outlines their group discussion:

Participant: We didn't necessarily discuss what autism was we discussed how scary and challenging it can be if you're not prepared.

Tutor: I'm glad you said that. One of the main reasons for us developing this - autism and sport is something I'm passionate about personally anyway but one of the things that we find is that there's a massive fear factor. Through no fault of their own it's just that they don't have an understanding or an awareness of how it presents. You can still coach, if you're a coach you're a coach.

(Field notes).

The structure of the course varied, with the organisation offering a one-day format, an extended two-day format, half-day formats, or three-hour 'awareness building' sessions, with no follow-up support or support networks. This training programme was a one-off seminar and was taught using group discussion, didactic methods, and practical exercises. There were no specific selection criteria for entrance; courses were run as 'open access' that proceeded if enough participants booked on via a central website. Alternatively, 'in-house' and bespoke taught packages were offered to organisations, as well as separate e-learning modules as a means of raising awareness of autism. Commonly, across all formats of the course, ASD was discussed in detail. Theory covered the history, aetiology and pathology of the disorder, motor control effects associated with ASD, 'myths and facts' of ASD, and personal and social effects of ASD that can be restrictive in sporting contexts. The general delivery of each course involved tutor-led theoretical work, practical coaching, group work, information sharing and 'reflective' workbook tasks, with the time allocated for the course dictating the depth and breadth of information delivered:

I'd like to think that coaches start looking at themselves rather than looking at it (coaching) from a medical point of view, and I do think although there is a lot of medical content in there (the course) because we go into what autism is but I'd like to think coaches are gonna come out of it more from the social side of it thinking right maybe we need to change our practice or maybe we need to change the way that we deliver our sessions. One key message, like the main key message is that there's nothing to fear when you're when you're working with different groups - to make your sport inclusive is to make it inclusive for everyone, not just for people with autism. (Tutor – interview).

In this sense, while the course attempted to introduce social model discourses into coaching, the influence of the field was such that the course was inclined towards reproducing knowledge that "satisfy the logic of practice; that is, without addressing these deep-seated social issues, despite rhetoric to the contrary" (Cushion, 2011b, p. 50). As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued, the idea of a 'culturally free' pedagogic action, "exempt from arbitrariness in both the content and the manner of its imposition, presupposes a misrecognition of the objective truth

of pedagogic action in which there is still expressed the objective truth of a violence whose specificity lies in the fact that it generates the illusion that it is not violence”. Simply, discourses about disability were implicit in the content and delivery of the course, as the following field note data (illustrative of the typical tutor – participant interactions) demonstrate:

Tutor: To gain an increased understanding we’re gonna look at some key areas of differences, or common differences experienced by people along the spectrum and we’re gonna look at how they impact on participation. The next thing I’m going to do I’m just gonna give you the word ‘autism’ – what comes to mind when you hear the word ‘autism’?

Potential differences in communication.

Sensory processing is quite a big one for some of them.

Tutor: Yep, we’ll take that into the practical as well.

Coping with change is a big one.

Just inflexibility of thought.

Tutor: so, struggling with potentially understanding teammates or understanding reasons that something is happening, we’ll look at that in a lot more detail in terms of some strategies and what potential difficulties our participants are having.

They don’t like change, and everything has got to be structured, and if it’s not and things are changed then, if you change a session then the mood will change within the group, so you set out what you’re gonna do – the structure is this, if you change that structure it throws them completely.

Another word I’d throw in is irrational. Sometimes their reaction to that change to some kind of stimulus that you put into the session can be completely irrational to your mind.

Tutor: when we throw the word ‘autism’ out, we tend to get a lot of negatives, about difficult behaviour, challenging behaviour.

(Field notes).

These data illustrate the complexity of deconstructing participants’ understandings of disability within sporting environments, but as the data above shows, participants exhibited strong medical model assumptions that positioned ASD as the main barrier to participation in sport through previous experiences in the field. Here, it can be argued that the field of disability sport acted as a specific site for the acquisition and reproduction of messages about disability. Specifically, in the context of ASD and coach education, participants had entrenched and implicit medical model discourses. This can be attributed to an overarching coach education system that marginalised disability within mainstream coach education structures, thus perpetuating a medical model of disability that in turn shaped not only the dispositions of

coaches toward disability, but underpinned the way the course was delivered, the pedagogy adopted, and the effects in terms of coach learning. This was not always the case, however, with some coaches clearly positioning their lack of knowledge, understanding and skills as a cause of disablism, highlighting the role of habitus and its differential capacity to appropriate cultural messages (Bourdieu, 1990a):

Basically, I've got a lad on my team who has autism and I didn't have an understanding of it at all. He's a cracking footballer but basically it was my coaching that was - the meltdowns were down to me. This is just to keep me learning, I'm never gonna be an expert but it's a massive learning curve. Hopefully this can add to it. (Coach - field notes).

I think some people don't realise it is a wide spectrum of it you know severe to mild and I think like you said they just think oh autism they kick off that's it. (Coach - interview).

I think you've got to take the fear factor that fact that it's different and it's just how to adapt things and just to be aware that they're not being awkward they do think slightly differently. I think that's the key with autism for me they just think in a different way to the way that we do and it's not abnormal it's just different to what we do. (Coach - interview).

5.2.2 Cultural Capital, Confidence and Coaching Strategies

The previous section has discussed how disability was marginalised in coaching and coach education. This situation was reflective of a medical model of disability, and the effects of the entrenched medical model meant that coaches lacked the skills, knowledge and confidence (what we might term as capital) to work with people with ASD. Therefore, the course attempted to redistribute the structure of capital within the field to contribute to the (re)construction of coaching reality, at the fundamental level of perception (cf. Bourdieu, 1977):

We're here to give the autism expertise. We want to increase the competence and confidence of sports coaches because obviously there's barriers there for participants, but there's a lot of barriers for coaches as well, so we want to give them the confidence to go out and deliver, and kind of take that stigma away that coaching someone with a disability or coaching someone with autism has got lots more problems or difficulties than it necessarily has. (Tutor – interview).

Where mainstream coach education fails to expose and deconstruct the dilemmas that practitioners in disability sport face, coaches without any specific training can understandably feel compromised, unprepared and inadequate to engage in coaching in disability contexts (cf. Robinson, 2017). For many coaches, they lacked the cultural attributes that enabled the inclusion of dominated groups into social practice:

Participant: I think people are afraid of things they don't know, and I think when coaches do come to this I don't think they'll be any better at coaching but they will have the confidence – they will feel better about having a go.

Tutor: In some cases, the barriers might be for the coaches rather than for the participants. One barrier to participation is that coaches aren't willing to give it a go which is the one thing that training sessions like this is hoping to improve.

(Field notes).

Reay (2004b) argued that it is important to recognise the qualitative dimensions of cultural capital that can emphasise the “affective aspects of inequality” (p. 75) such as levels of confidence of coaches. While it is easy to recognise the more straightforward aspects of cultural capital like educational qualifications (Reay, 2004b) the importance of the more subjective aspects of cultural capital should be recognised. This can include the confidence of coaches to provide support for people with ASD, or the ‘expertise’ coaches feel they have within the disability coaching field (cf. Reay, 2004b):

We're not teaching people to coach their sport; we're just trying to give them that autism understanding. I'm there to tell them how to, potentially, adapt. We want people to come to the course and go away saying 'yes, I do feel more confident, all my understanding has increased' (sic) because we talk a lot about people having an awareness (of autism), but that's not really enough. We need to take it to an understanding of how it impacts in sport and physical activity (in order) to have a positive impact on the people participating. (Tutor- interview).

This process of developing embodied competencies is a strong illustration of the practical logic that drives the disablist supply/demand cycle in coaching (cf. Brown, 2005; Thomas, 1999) as the focus on ‘confidence’ served to strengthen divisive constructions between bodies. Also, the development of ‘confidence’ had a practical function; defining skills, knowledge and competencies in relation to a specific empirical context (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Therefore, the course sought to develop the confidence of coaches in relation to coaching people with ASD through the dissemination of impairment-specific knowledge, and the acquisition of ASD-specific practices commonly referred to as ‘strategies’. In order to increase participants’ confidence, they had to identify and determine the most ‘effective’ instructional practices for athletes with ASD and to intervene in the most ‘effective’ ways so that athletes can achieve as close to ‘normal’ as possible. In so doing, the course focused on identifying characteristics of disability and promoting ‘best practices’ for intervention (cf. Rice, 2006). The following field notes illustrate:

After a sustained period discussing the ‘theory’ of autism, coaches were given practical tasks to accomplish in small groups within the sports hall adjacent to the classroom.

Tutor: As I've said we're gonna look at some of the strategies and as we go into the practical this afternoon we'll start to do a little bit of scenario-based learning in a bit of a safe environment we can start to implement some of these strategies.

During this time, the tutor set the task then allowed the groups to discuss and plan their session, offering advice and feedback when necessary. One example of the task set was that coaches were asked to plan coaching drills and games according to different intervention frameworks such as SPELL and STEP, against different scenarios where 'autistic behaviours' were presented as disruptive to a coaching session. The participants had access to a number of 'autism-specific' coaching equipment as well as generic sports kit (balls, cones, bibs etc.) The groups would then come together and deliver their set-tasks to the rest of the cohort for roughly fifteen minutes. One coach would generally lead while the others took up 'operational' positions to ensure the smooth running of the sessions. The groups would then finish and come together to generate peer-feedback from the participants and tutor.

(Field notes).

The implications of an instituted coaching pedagogy underpinned by medical model discourses were that coaches were constructed as 'technicians' (Rice, 2006). For instance, by centralising impairment knowledge and attempting to improve coaches' confidence on the course, coaches were asked to develop and implement coaching 'strategies' that were aimed at making sessions more 'inclusive' for people with ASD:

Throughout the day we'll touch on some of the strategies and in the practical, that's when we'll have a bit of time to put them into practice. (Tutor - field notes).

Such a focus was useful in helping coaches consider critically their coaching environment (cf. Kean *et al.*, 2017), and helped coaches to secure their positions within their respective coaching fields through the distribution of knowledge, and therefore the reproduction of power relations. In this regard, engaging in coach education perpetuated the 'supply-and-demand' cycle of valued cultural goods (Cushion, 2011b). These goods referred to embodied perceived competencies (Bourdieu, 1989) that contributed to a practical logic of coaching, as on each course coaches were exposed to a number of different types of 'inclusive' coaching 'strategies' that were used to enhance the experience of people with ASD through individualised support (Buntinx & Schalock, 2010). These included a number of autism-specific practices and codified forms of knowledge, such as the use of social stories, PECS¹⁴ and visual timetables to help structure coaching sessions, specialised equipment (e.g. noise-cancelling earphones or

¹⁴ Picture Exchange Communication System. PECS is an alternative communication intervention package for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and related developmental disabilities.

sensory toys) to use or the implementation of 'safe spaces' when athletes displayed behaviours of concern. This pragmatic focus reflected a clear need for participants to develop practical coaching understandings in relation to ASD, all of which were endowed with pedagogic authority by misrecognition (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977):

I expected I would have more knowledge about autism, strategies that I could use in my coaching sessions, knowledge I could give to other coaches. (Coach – survey data).

(To) provide examples of how to adapt activities to include people with autism. (Coach – survey data).

(To) get some new ideas off people from different settings, open my mind to my current practice and delivery of sessions. (Coach – survey data).

These data suggest a 'need for information' in the participants (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), a need, moreover, created to satisfy the pre-existing social conditions of its production (e.g. the coaching field). The value of such 'knowledge-for-action' perspectives was useful in delineating 'what works' and what does not, thereby legitimating prescriptions for 'effective' instruction (Rice, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005). But, the analysis suggests that by offering 'strategies' to coaches, coaching knowledge was characterised by an interventionist focus, that is, person-fixing not context-changing (cf. Goodley, 2011), or critically reflective. Indeed, such a pedagogy despite rhetoric to the contrary attempted to offer a battery of universal coaching 'solutions' against pre-determined problems coaches might find in practice:

It's developing people as informed learners who can select and apply rather than learn and apply in that sort of way. But as I say, I always talk about this toolbox and I always give the stupid example of you wouldn't use a hammer to fix a tap, because what good would that do? You have to select which bit works at what time for what area. (Coach – interview).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) described pedagogic action as a mechanism through which arbitrary cultures are reproduced. Power relations are the basis not only of pedagogic action, but also of the "misrecognition of the truth" which amounts to "recognition of the legitimacy of pedagogic action and, as such, is the condition for the exercise of pedagogic action" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 15). By engaging in the pedagogic exercises, the coaches on the course contributed to a form of symbolic violence where they recognised the pedagogic authority of the course and the tutor, and simply 'accepted' it:

One of the beautiful things about autism is that it's so different, but it's also frustrating it makes my job hard because when I come here and there are questions there's no one-size-fits-all there's not one thing I'm gonna say that's gonna make that easier or that is

gonna solve that problem. Hopefully one of the things you're gonna get out of today especially in the practical when we go to do some of the scenario-based learning is some strategies and maybe even some reasons why these behaviours are presenting. (Tutor - field notes).

Jones and Wallace (2005) in particular have been critical of this method of 'educating' coaches, suggesting that the concern of coach educators within training models to inform and improve practice

"has militated against them seeking to understand the phenomenon of coaching in depth as a precursor to practical prescription. Rather, the thrust of investigation has been more immediately to identify good practice and prescribe how to attain it at the expense of a thorough grasp of the practice itself. Oversimplification of the phenomenon and over-precision of prescriptions is the unfortunate price paid" (p. 123).

By providing a coherent set of rationalities and techniques to inform practice (Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Piggott, 2015), coaches were taught to recognise generalised 'problems' under a lexicon of inclusion. The effect of this was that many coaches expressed generalising and homogenising understandings of ASD that constituted a 'false' coaching consciousness. Below are some extracts from participant surveys:

Yes, I feel comfortable now if I encounter an autistic person; I have been shown different strategies that I can use. (Coach – survey data).

To make me more able to cope with those who have autism- to give them the best, to enable them to succeed- but remain nervous- want to do the right thing for the person. (Coach – survey data).

(I have) more knowledge on what an autistic child or adult is thinking or how they feel. How an autistic person feels and when they say something then that is exactly how they are feeling. (Coach - survey data).

When talking to a person with autism I have to make sure I don't make any eye contact with them even when speaking to them. (Coach - survey data).

Autistic individuals hate noise; some don't like change and take instructions literally. (Coach - survey data).

Here, practitioners accepted the 'model' of coaching against a 'problematic' athlete with little discussion or resistance (Piggott, 2011) as it was seen as both useful and enabling. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued that a function of the power relationships at the basis of pedagogic action is that agents can reach a state they are "unable to realize the basis of that relationship although their practices, even when contradicted by the rationalizations of discourse or the certainties of experience" (p. 14). That is, their practices are changed in relation to the pedagogic discourses available. This is concerning, as the data is illustrative of the way that

coaches produced homogenising, medical model discourses about disability, as a result of pedagogic discourses which emphasised disability-specific, prescriptive and categorical approaches to coaching (DePauw, 1997) within falsely-routinised coaching scenarios (see section 5.2.3). Specifically, coaches formed abstract, generalised and reductive (Bowes & Jones, 2006) conclusions about people with ASD who were placed as a ‘problem’ around which to construct practice. Indeed, data from participant reflections and field note data routinely described how coaches felt they could now “deal with” ASD through the adoption and use of different coaching ‘strategies’:

(The course) gave me a better insight into how to coach and deal with autistic people. (I have a) better understanding of techniques to manage various behavioural issues. (Coach - survey data).

Yes, I have learnt new games, coaching techniques and how to use a variety of equipment I had not seen before. (I have learned) the coaching strategies that are used when dealing with individuals within groups. (Coach - survey data).

I have gained more knowledge on the different types of autism and have a better understanding of how to deal with it. (Coach - survey data).

(The course helped me) gain a wider knowledge of autism, to learn how to cope with an autistic child. (Coach – survey data).

These data indicate that through the replication of certain strategies and through the sharing of practical experiences, participants expressed a sense of confidence and efficacy in working with people with ASD in sporting contexts as they accrued cultural capital in terms of autism ‘awareness’ and expanding their coaching ‘repertoire’:

I was never too aware of signs of autism. Now I have a better understanding. There are different ways to deal with autism depending on the person and this will help them to learn easier. Knowing what to look for helps massively. (Coach - survey data).

They reinforced a lot of what I was doing was good, but things like I didn’t realise until I went on the course that things like the rocking were a comfort trigger and that various triggers can set people off. Things like having a pair of ear protectors on hand for those that don’t like loud noises. I would say the key things that I’ve learned are structure because autistic players like structure. (Coach - survey data).

The analysis highlights that coach education can become a space where “disablist social relationships operate” (Thomas, 2004b, p. 34) to structure coach learning, through an approach that was akin to ‘indoctrination’ (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). This mode of training was routinely criticised in the mainstream coach education literature over ten years ago by Nelson *et al.* (2006), who argued that coaching awards offering “predetermined strategies to overcome a catalogue of perceived coaching dilemmas” are underpinned by a technocratic, rational

approach to learning that packages professional knowledge as a ‘tool box’ (p. 249). Furthermore, this form of knowledge tends to follow a model of reproduction, whereby experiences, dilemmas and coaching ‘strategies’ are shared and passed down between learners (Nelson *et al.*, 2006), when in reality the development of knowledge is perhaps a more complex process (see Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2017). Furthermore, the complexity of the learning process within coach education was further exacerbated when considering the contradiction presented in the data – that is, the course promoted the very thing it explicitly aimed to prevent by structuring the distribution of ‘legitimate’ knowledge about disability that shaped and controlled the process of coaching (cf. Cushion, 2011b):

The one thing to stress about autism is that it’s a spectrum condition and everyone’s individual so just because you’ve learnt one strategy there’s no one-size-fits-all it doesn’t mean you’re gonna go out there and be a brilliant coach of people with autism you’ve got to work with individuals still. We want people to understand that the main thing, the thing you hear me repeat in every session, is the individual side. And I know that’s the same with anyone that you coach, but it’s just heightened and emphasised a little bit more with people on the spectrum. I know that makes our jobs more difficult as coaches, but it’s also something to be celebrated. (Tutor – interview).

However, the extent to which coaches can resist dominant discourses within the field is mediated by issues of power. The course pedagogy centralised impairment knowledge and functioned to construct cultural boundaries between coaches and disabled people, positioning people with ASD as ‘other’ to be ‘included’ in line with a normalising and ableist coaching gaze that was secured through the acquisition of coaching ‘strategies’ and thus developing the confidence to work with marginalised groups. To take the example of inclusive teacher education, Slee (2010) argued that ‘effective’ models position technical issues as a secondary concern, with primacy given to the cultural and political dimensions of practice. This includes the critical deconstruction of individual attitudes, beliefs and practices (Slee, 2010) whereby coaches can be educated to debate and challenge existing conditions, rather than simply implement and reproduce the status quo.

So far, this chapter has demonstrated that there were competing discourses about disability that were implicit in the construction of the course and they had explicit effects in the formation of coaches’ knowledge. Within the course pedagogy, the dominance of medical model discourse defined ‘best practice’ strategies and interventions for coaches to use in relation to people with ASD, thus improving their awareness of autism and their confidence to work with disabled people. The prescriptive pedagogical approach defined the needs of people

with ASD within “a functional and medical paradigmatic framework” (Reindal, 2008, p. 136), and coach learning was simplified to a simple process of adoption and replication of generic and reductive coaching practices designed to promote inclusion. The next section deconstructs the pedagogical ideology of inclusion related to disability and describes its effects in terms of coaches’ knowledge.

5.2.3 Ideology of Inclusion

According to Bourdieu (1986), “the most powerful principle of the symbolic efficacy of cultural capital no doubt lies in the logic of its transmission” (p. 246). Even where no specific theory is identified, the design and delivery of any course will reflect an implicit learning ‘theory-in-use’ (Brockbank & McGill, 2007), rooted in strong underlying beliefs about learning and what is ‘good’ for learners. The structure of the course, while varied in length, often followed a ‘theory-practice split’¹⁵, which was an orthodoxy reflective of the wider coaching field (cf. Nelson *et al.*, 2012; see chapter six, section 6.2.1) as one participant explained:

Education is important, but nothing can better the experience of actually going and delivering to a group to learn how to enhance your own coaching skills. (Coach – survey data).

Indeed, Bourdieu (1977) suggested that ‘learning by doing’ is a powerful practice, as coaching “exerts by its very functioning...an educative effect which helps to make it easier to acquire the dispositions necessary” (p. 217). The tutor explained how she developed dispositions toward coaching people with ASD, and how it influenced her beliefs about coach learning:

Coaches need the practical side. They need that hands-on experience. One thing I stress at the start of the day, you’ll still have to learn on - I had to learn as I went, learn from the participants. (Tutor- interview).

Here, the tutor sought to establish pedagogic authority, which “strongly marks all aspects of the relation of pedagogic communication” with legitimacy (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 19) and sought to exert a power of symbolic violence framed by experiential learning. Indeed, it could be argued that the tutor’s experience of coaching people with ASD reinforced and confirmed ways of organizing, teaching and assessing the course, which secured the practical

¹⁵ All formats except for the 3- hour ‘awareness building’ course incorporated practical ‘learning’ activities.

focus as it represented the attempt to reinforce a particular habitus associated with coaching, reflective of particular dispositions recognised as legitimate (Brown, 2005):

The practical helped to focus everyone to some of the difficulties children/adults on the spectrum have and so therefore put more preparation and thought into the delivery of sessions is needed to help engage them. (Coach – survey data).

Furthermore, to contextualise some of the theory on the course, the tutor would often use examples from her coaching practice, secured with symbolic capital, to legitimate ‘theory’ and practical strategies on the course:

I know I sometimes joke in sessions, saying “oh, I don't know if I practice what I preach”, but because of the examples that you’ll know from coming to the courses, a lot of the examples I give are from the guys that I coach. (Tutor – interview).

The concept of pedagogic authority suggests that by drawing on her experiences of coaching people with ASD, the tutor was able to position herself “with the technical competence or personal authority which is, in reality, automatically conferred on every pedagogic transmitter by the traditionally and institutionally guaranteed position (s)he occupies in a relation of pedagogic communication” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 21). Framing the pedagogic action of the course with experiential learning discourses created a power dynamic between the tutor and the participants to create a relation of pedagogic communication that was valued:

The tutor was really good, (it) certainly helps doesn’t it [when] you can connect to the people around the table. (Coach - interview).

Actually, I feel better equipped simply by meeting and networking with other coaches who were on the course, including the tutor. (Coach – survey data).

Although it is widely agreed that coaches learn through coaching experience, the peer-to-peer coaching adopted on course was unreflective of many coaching dilemmas that practitioners faced, presenting coaches with largely de-contextualised situations, as one coach explained:

I think you have to be coaching to really get just how much has to go into the sessions and how you have to adapt your sessions to suit all your different disabilities. I don’t think courses can actually give you that because until you’re actually with the different spectrums of disabilities you don’t know what to expect from each individual. (Coach – interview).

As Jones and Wallace (2005) argued, no comprehensive framework currently exists that represents the complex reality within which all coaches work. This is also the case within disability sport, with relatively little evidence illustrative of the coaching context and the nature of coaches’ work. While evidence suggests that coaches and practitioners learn through

interactive experience in coach education (see chapter two, section 2.2.1), the peer-to-peer coaching adopted on course was unreflective of many coaching dilemmas that practitioners faced presenting coaches with largely de-contextualised situations (Jones & Turner, 2006). Below is an example of the scenarios coaches had to plan for:

The tutor is addressing the cohort during a practical ‘warm up’ as if they were participants with ASD and is explaining her practice:

Tutor: I don’t know if you noticed but I was watching all your movements while you were doing it, that way I can see how you’re gonna cope with that activity for the warm up. If I see that you’re struggling with that I’ll probably adapt, if someone has a problem with their proprioception or vestibular system and they’re all over the place it might cause problems, quite a tight space in here, but by asking you to do that first I can sense how you’re gonna cope with that

How did we cope with that?

Tutor: You coped very well, well done (Laughter) One other thing is I’ve kept the equipment in squared areas (*away from the group*), I would even move you further away from it so the equipment was behind you so people weren’t thinking ‘oh we’re gonna play with the ball soon, we’re gonna play with the ball soon’ rather than listening to the instructions.

If I was coaching in here with some autistic kids, they’d be up and gone, upstairs, how would you control a group?

The amount of times I’ve seen kids kicking windows, doors

Tutor: there’s a lot going on a lot of distracting stimuli. I’d probably try and work out what’s the most distracting stimuli and keep you away from that.

The group splits into groups to plan and deliver activities.

Tutor: You are to plan an activity which involves scoring points. One participant is on the autism spectrum and tends to be in a state of high arousal most of the time. They don’t enjoy team environments or big groups. They struggle to process a lot of information at once and may run away from the session if they feel overloaded or anxious. They like rules to be in place and to be followed by all.

(Field notes)

As Jones *et al.* (2012) argued the impact of traditional didactic coach education is limited as practitioners are restricted to working *within* existing knowledge; that is, what the learners already ‘know’. Furthermore, such pedagogical practices have been criticised for being divorced from the knotty reality of practice and of not developing new, progressive knowledge, thus not fulfilling their intended function (Jones *et al.*, 2012). As Nelson *et al.* (2006) highlighted, the application of “largely de-contextualised learning by having practitioners coach one another” (p. 250) is an enduring concern as peer-to-peer coaching– or sometimes

‘guinea pig’ athletes – is unlikely to truly reflect the coaches’ typical coaching context and will therefore induce a vastly different set of coaching issues and responses. Coaches do not simply occupy an external and separate context where they learn – they are part of the situation where they learn, and their learning is part of the practices of that situation (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008).

Indeed, as I have already demonstrated, the discursive space of the coach education course was permeated by implicit and explicit assumptions about disability, most prominently the medical model. In the scenario-based learning the coaching focus was on technical procedure and given ‘strategies’ providing sequence and direction while disabled athletes were viewed as problematic (DePauw, 2000). The strong medical model discourses combined with the pedagogical conditions had ‘real’ effects. For example, field note data described how, during the peer-to-peer coaching, some participants ‘acted’ autistic to replicate the demands of coaching people with ASD. In this example, coaches would ‘take on the role’ of the autistic participant; mimicking perceived autistic behaviours, being verbally disruptive, over-exaggerating hyperactive behaviours, and in one case physically abusive to other participants.

Today was my first time observing the course, and I decided to go full participant observer. During the second afternoon of the course, we dispersed into a practical activity. A group of four coaches were delivering a session they had just planned. In this session, hypothetically they had to include a participant that was ‘on the spectrum’. This character was supposedly in a state of ‘high arousal’ and liked ‘to count things over and over’.

The coaches were lining us up along one of the painted lines in the sports hall. We were asked to stand behind different coloured cones along this line in groups of three. As I moved to my green cone, one of the other coaches – a professional cricket coach! – started shouting at me “MY CONE” and much to my bemusement started punching me on my right arm! I met this guy yesterday! Other members of the group started doing this throughout the other sessions then. Walking round like ‘zombies’, ignoring instructions and being verbally disruptive and loud.

(Field notes).

The experience a category of agents has of pedagogic action depends on the degree to which they accept “the legitimate mode of imposing cultural arbitrariness” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 16). By framing the pedagogic action through orthodox experiential and practical learning tasks, these disablist practices were not reduced to isolated incidents. For example, during another course in a different area, with different participants, I observed the following:

During today’s practical session I observed a coach asking the members of their peer-group to “go and find a space” in the hall, I watched as a professional football coach took off running around the sports hall keeping close to all four walls, shouting

nonsensical words, before running out of the main doors. He returned less than ten seconds later, laughing.

(Field notes).

These behaviours then were specific effects of pedagogic action, while simultaneously expressions of individual habitus that aligned with the pedagogical conditions, forming shared ideological understandings of what ASD ‘looks like’ in practice, that is providing an illusion of practical mastery (Bourdieu, 1989). Importantly, despite not being explicitly told to do this, these practices were recurring and considered to have an important pedagogic function, highlighting the “key features of the landscape of social exclusion” (Thomas, 2004b, p. 34) in coaching, and were not problematised:

It was up to the initiative of some coaches to role play during the practical session which highlighted the core elements of communication with autistic people. (Coach -survey data).

I maybe did it a couple of times (laughs) just looking back I deliberately just took everything they said- just to wind them up- literally just to be awkward (laughs) because I’ve seen it myself. (Coach - interview).

Everett (2002, p. 72) argued that “meaning and consequences are not transparent to actors themselves...habitus is that part of practices which remain obscure in the eyes of their own producers”. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) proposed because every pedagogic action that is exerted “commands by definition a pedagogic authority, the pedagogic receivers are disposed from the outset to recognize the legitimacy of the information transmitted and the pedagogic authority of the pedagogic transmitters, hence to receive and internalize the message” (p. 21). Thus, the practices highlighted were an integral part of the course, as they consciously or unconsciously shaped coaches’ understandings of disability:

I understand more so some of the ways that individuals will potentially act in the session and the reasoning behind this. In terms of my coaching, it is about getting to know my players’ traits even further and developing mechanisms to support them further in the sessions. (Coach – survey data).

These practices were problematic. Thomas (1999) suggested that disablism is not just a social issue; disablism can be internalised and embodied through the generation of prejudicial meanings, ideas, discourses, stereotypes and behaviours towards disabled people. In this regard, it might be said that the participants acted as “agents of disablism” (Thomas, 1999, p. 48). As a result, whilst the pedagogical environment produced an ideology of inclusion; “the whole idea is to celebrate that individuality and learn from our participants” (tutor - field notes) the reality was that by ‘acting autistic’ the participants internalised, embodied and reproduced

homogenising, discriminatory and stigmatic assumptions about people with ASD that contributed to a form of oppression. Coach learning was then based on implicit assumptions, ideologies and stereotypes about disabled people (which can be observed in chapter seven, section 7.2). In doing so, the participants and tutor contributed to a form of interpersonal disablism (Thomas, 1999) which was manifest in oppressive practices (i.e. acting ‘disabled’), contributing to a form of dissonance occurring where what was ‘learned’ contradicted what the aims of teaching were. Importantly, whilst the tutor was not supportive of these discriminatory practices embodied by participants, she suggested it created a ‘realistic’ coaching scenario to learn from:

I did expect it. I gave them the scenario and they took it upon themselves, I’m not gonna stop them from doing that because the other participants *learn quite well from it*, but it is a dangerous thing to do because we spent quite a lot of time talking about the stereotypes and the coaches were sat there shaking their heads in disbelief and then when we went on to do the scenario they were acting out the stereotype so I think it highlights that the stereotypes are there, but we just need to be careful that we’re not tarnishing autism. That’s not accurate. (Tutor - interview).

Thus, disablism operated consciously in social interactions between the participants and was institutionalised and embedded in the organisational structure of the course (Thomas, 1999). Here, learning involved participation in a set of wider social practices that contributed to conceptual change (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008). Instead of reflecting critically on their practice (through a social model), the coaches emphasised the ‘problematic’ nature of the athletes they coached (Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2015). A potential cause of this was the pedagogical conditions that served to ‘other’ people with ASD, constructing cultural boundaries between the coaches and disabled people (Thomas, 1999). Such an uncritical mode of learning can be attributed to the pedagogical conditions that attempted to focus coaching practice directly on the ‘problem’ of ASD and the pedagogic discourses that defined the needs of people with ASD in coaching contexts (Reindal, 2008).

Together, these data are illustrative of an understanding of disability captured within “a functional and medical paradigmatic framework” (Reindal, 2008, p. 136). The pedagogical conditions of the course served to reinforce the entrenched medical model assumptions that permeate coaching by positioning disability as a ‘problem’ to overcome and offering a fixed body of knowledge to acquire and apply to specific contexts. Applied to coach learning, the data suggested that the practical aspect of the course provided participants with the illusion of ‘practical mastery’, influencing the development of particular patterns of behaviour and

knowledge required to occupy coaching positions. However, while these behaviours can be understood as expressions of habitus formed through the internalisation of the structures of the social world (Bourdieu, 1989), the structures of coach education did not impose uniformly on all participants:

I think you have to be coaching to really get just how much has to go into the sessions and how you have to adapt your sessions to suit all your different disabilities, and I don't think courses can actually give you that because until you're actually with the different spectrums of disabilities you don't know what to expect from each individual, so working with them gives you an insight into the person and then obviously you can adapt your session. (Coach - interview).

I think on the practical day as well, one of the things we struggle with, we'll show other coaches sessions that we do and they'll show us ones they do but it's very difficult to replicate what we see (in practice). (Coach - interview).

It's probably left me with more questions. As it stands I'm not sure coaches learn anything that they don't know just by working with autistic people. I left feeling slightly disappointed and of the opinion that there would be nothing new for coaches. (I) think it's all about knowing and supporting people that you are delivering to- which good coaches should do anyway...I still have nothing to go off to be able to support them better than I already do. What are the things that I could try if someone present x or y or z traits? That's the expertise bit I would want. What have I done as a coach that's wrong so I know not to do it again? (Coach - survey data).

These data show the struggle to impose pedagogic action on all participants, or more precisely shows the “ideological struggle” for groups who seek to reject the pedagogic legitimacy (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 16) of coach education. Indeed, the data presents a clear contradiction where some coaches displayed a preference for more coach education and yet were critical of current provision. Others were uncritically accepting of the pedagogic discourses. These data highlight the difficulty in instituting heterodox discourses (coach education) into orthodox learning discourses constructed primarily through social practice. That is, practitioners arrive at coach education with habitus conditioned by prior experience in coaching seeking to enhance their practice, but there was a disjuncture between what was sought and what was found. Furthermore, the data hints at the security that grounding knowledge in medical model discourses can offer to coaches; by providing ‘best-practice’ prescriptions and an individualised understanding of impairment:

I wanted to know more about the condition, I think a good coach should know about the disability and it was something I didn't know a lot about. (Coach - survey data).

(It's important) to have a clear understanding rather than thinking someone is being difficult. (Coach – survey data).

(I expected the course) to give an understanding and awareness of issues faced by those with autism, to give practical information and idea of how to work effectively with people with autism. (Coach – survey data).

Thus, through exposure to the pedagogic action of the course, coaches perceived that their awareness of ASD increased, and they therefore learned.

The tutor is addressing the participants and is about to discuss content related to the characteristics of autism by introducing four hypothetical scenarios in which characters with autism display different tendencies and coaches are asked how they would potentially include them in their individual sessions. This is considered an important reflective function.

Tutor: There's a massive awareness of autism now, but there's no point having that awareness if it doesn't turn into understanding, we'll continue to talk about that throughout the session.

(Field notes).

Bourdieu alluded to the potential of 'new conditionings', which refers to the possibility of influencing habitus following the raising of awareness and accumulating additional knowledge (Brown, 2005). However, coaches began to construct understandings of ASD that were largely based on medical model discourses, that prescribed how coaches should appreciate, differentiate and respond to disabled people (cf. Bourdieu, 1984; Thomas, 2007). However, the entrenched medical model discourses that permeated the course were both structuring of and structured by the pedagogic habitus of the coaches on the course. This, it may be argued, was a result of the marginalisation of disability within the coaching field, and the overarching concern to present coaching framed by medical model discourses as 'best practice'.

5.3 Commentary

This chapter has provided substantive evidence that short-term, standardised and context-isolated modes of coach education contribute only marginally to a disability coach development agenda. Coach education is responsible for the professionalisation of coach education (Piggott, 2015), but when applied to disability sport a number of problems are evident. The current model of provision identified in this study can be identified as additive; isolated and passive learning episodes that focused on exposure to disability content (DePauw & Goc Karp, 1994). Such modes of coach education are underpinned by the assumptions of the medical model of disability, attempting to develop 'interventionist' coaching practices around a 'problematic' impairment. Discourses about disability can both enable and constrain coaches as they function to produce knowledge that is legitimate, right and 'best practice'.

Furthermore, they give socially constructed categories of meaning to disability “formed in particular temporal and spatial contexts” (Thomas, 2004b, p. 44). In this case, despite inclusive ideologies, the educative focus was not on the exclusive structures of sport or the lack of knowledge on behalf of coaches, but instead on the limiting and varied impairment effects of autism as the cause of restrictions of activity (Thomas, 1999, 2007).

Bourdieu (2000) suggested that educational programmes attempt to present a set of dispositions, attempting to produce “transcendental” (p. 285) cognitive structures that are common, within specified forms, to all members of a discipline, which in this instance were coaches. Therefore, in attempting to restructure the forms of knowledge within the field, the course prescribed coaching ‘strategies’, controlled by the tutor that had symbolic capital and were expressed in terms of ‘best practice’ to enhance practitioner learning as part of a shared pedagogic habitus (Grenfell, 2010). However, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued, the success of educational programmes ultimately depend on the degree to which coach education takes into account the “distance between the habitus it aims to inculcate and the habitus produced by previous pedagogic work” (p. 45). Therefore, coach education should aim to ensure “accelerated inculcation of the habitus” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 45) through exposing the social conditions of its primary production. However, in this case, the coaching focus was directly on the ‘problem’ of autism and the pedagogic discourses that defined the needs of people with ASD in coaching contexts (Reindal, 2008), reflecting an “overwhelming pursuit of knowledge-for-action instrumental strategies” (Bowes & Jones, 2006, p. 237; Jones & Wallace, 2005). It may be argued that coach education entered a doxic mode where coaches were left to ‘self-medicate’ and cherry-pick coaching strategies based on a shared cultural ideology and self-referential approaches to coaching as expressions of their individual and collective habitus (Bourdieu, 1989):

I thought it was absolutely brilliant; I really, really enjoyed it. The theory was good at reinforcing a lot and as I say learning the odd new thing, and the practical day I thought was fantastic because you learn, I enjoyed the practical side because it gives the coaches the opportunity to actually pinch ideas off each other. (Coach – interview).

Despite the individual nature of each coaching position, when participants attended the course they formed a social network that enabled the expression of shared knowledge about coaching disabled athletes (cf. Bourdieu, 1977). It was apparent that coaches internalised and expressed cultural messages about disability to varying degrees and the evidence showed that under certain conditions, the course contributed to the reproduction of coaching knowledge

through the distribution of cultural capital associated with coaching people with ASD. Coaches constructed uncritical discourses and disability ideology that organised and constrained coach learning through exposure to the course. The course therefore provided an environment for the manifestation, reproduction and transmission of ideology about disability, similar to the logic of reproduction alluded to by Bourdieu (1990a). It is necessary therefore to explore further the ‘cultural economy’ of disability sport coaching and how it contributes to the process of coach learning (cf. Cushion 2011b).

Having explored disability coach education, in this chapter, a number of issues around coach learning emerged. Namely, the suggestion that the problems with coach education are not just pedagogical but trapped in the ways that coaching cultures (and therefore coaching knowledge) follow a model of uncritical reproduction, characterised by the assumptions of the medical model of disability. In particular, it can be suggested that exposure to the field constituted class habitus reflective of medical model dispositions, which remain unchallenged in coach education, and were instead reinforced through the illusion of practical mastery (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). It may be suggested therefore that coaching in disability sport, where disability coach education occupies a marginalised status within the field, follows a powerful form of socialisation which requires further exploration. Indeed, this chapter highlighted how coaches established and marked differences by internalising uncritical dispositions toward ASD (Bourdieu, 1984) as part of a shared habitus developed within the coaching field. Coaches therefore constructed divisions between bodies and between “relations to the body” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 468) that shaped their knowledge in coach education. Thus, there remains a contradiction in the field where there is generally a lack of disability-specific coach education, with suggestions that there should be less focus on difference and more focus on coaches and social practice as the unit of analysis in coach education. However, as we can see from the data presented in this chapter, coaches evidenced preferences for impairment-specific information and pedagogic discourses underpinned by medical model discourses as ‘sense-making’ practical scaffolds.

5.4 Conclusion

As coaches assume an increasingly important role in not only improving the sporting performance of disabled athletes but encouraging higher levels of sustained participation (Sport England, 2016), the efficacy of coach education and training programmes is increasingly important (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). The training of coaches is considered central to sustaining

and improving the quality of sports coaching and the ongoing process of professionalisation (Mallett *et al.*, 2009) and this is particularly the case in disability sport. Developing informed and impactful learning environments for coaches is a complex task and it is clear that there is an ongoing challenge to theorise and implement the optimal environment for developing coaching knowledge in disability sport. Despite the clear need for the value of CPD to facilitate practitioner growth in disability sport, identifying the processes and mechanisms of ‘effective’ models remain elusive (Griffiths *et al.*, 2016; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). In fact, there is generally a lack of evidence regarding what works in disability coach education compounded by a lack of evidence as to what is being ‘done’.

The significance of this chapter therefore lies in its close-up and sustained focus on coach education and the insights gained. In so doing, I wade into a heated argument; namely the pressing concern on how to best educate coaches. Given our current knowledge base, continuing to present the interventionist medical model of coach education as the only way to view ‘disability’ and to present it as a “benevolent and benign aspect” of coach education is disingenuous (Rice, 2006, p, 263). As long as coach education positions disabled people as ‘different’ to the degree that separate structures are required to educate coaches, inclusive sports coaching remains elusive. Exploring disability coach education exposed the unarticulated and extremely powerful ideologies that promoted accepted views of disability (Rice, 2005) and shaped coaching knowledge. However, the exploration of coach learning is incomplete without an examination of practice, as the data showed how coaches came to the course conditioned from varying exposure to the coaching field. Their experiences were structured by a lack of disability-specific training constituting habitus formed through uneven experiences in the field. This ‘snapshot’ of coach education therefore exhibited signs and problems related to the dominance of medical model discourses and the uncritical nature of the development of coaching knowledge in relation to disability. However, the focus of this chapter was on coaches and coach education in isolation, without further understanding of the coaching context in which social practice unfolds. While the research has suggested that the process of learning is connected to cultural discourses about disability, there remain gaps in our understanding of social practice. Therefore, in the next two chapters I address a specific case-study of coaching practice and attempt to explore issues related to coach learning in disability sport, within the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu, to provide further insights into coach learning.

Chapter Six

Field of Power

“A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated”.

Bourdieu (1998, pp. 40–41)

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented a case-study of disability coach education. I suggested through analysis of the impairment specific mode of coach education that coaching practice is more influential in structuring coach learning than formal coach education. This, it may be argued, is because in mainstream coach education disability is often marginalised, meaning that the coaching workforce is often untrained in the specifics of disability sport. Furthermore, the analysis showed how medical model discourses about disability were powerful factors in shaping coaching knowledge, and the pedagogic discourses in the case-study were shaped by medical model assumptions. However, the analysis did not reveal the nature of coach learning, rather it highlighted the ways in which disability coach education impacted on coaches' knowledge, because it showed coaches with entrenched schemes generated through unstructured experiences in the coaching field.

To address the nature of coach learning therefore there is a need to examine the field and social practice as a generative site of knowledge. The following two chapters examine the construction and expression of coaches' knowledge in a specific disability coaching context. The first chapter considers Bourdieu's notion of field in order to focus on the coaching landscape and the practice of coaching as a lens through which to understand coach learning in the disability sport context. This is important because an understanding of the logic of the field of investigation provides a context for the study and the presentation of the practices and struggles that structure the field. As Bourdieu (1998) suggested, socially constituted interests only exist in relation to a socially constituted space.

6.2 Logic of Practice

A field is a social arena in which individuals manoeuvre: it has its own logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance (Cushion & Jones, 2014). Fields, according to Bourdieu (1990a) are semi-autonomous, and characterised by their own determinate agents (players and coaches), its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action and its various forms of *capital* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fields are organised both horizontally and vertically. At the 'top', and thus working across all others is the field of power. The field of power exists 'horizontally' through all of the fields and mediates the struggles within it through the control of the 'exchange rate' of the forms of cultural, social or physical capital between the fields themselves. Thus, the field of disability cricket does not operate in isolation. The practices of disability cricket (coaching and playing) are located within the field of cricket,

which is itself located within the field of mainstream sport (Kitchin, 2014) of which coaching is a central and defining practice. Fields, such as disability cricket, operate horizontally in that it was semi-autonomous and it had its own “rules, regulations and generative practices that agents are attuned towards understanding” (Kitchin & Howe, 2014, pp. 67-68), such as explicit conditions of entry, markers of distinction (kit), and access to resources (e.g. funding, equipment) to mobilise within the field.

The field of disability cricket, had four ‘elite’ sub-fields of consumption that were divided according to different impairment classifications. The four impairment groups were: players with physical disabilities (PD), moderate learning disabilities (MLD), visual impairments (VI) and hearing impairments. The learning disability squad – of specific interest here - was one of four impairment-specific performance squads that each operated autonomously, within which agents competed for resources, stakes and access that permitted them to execute a range of strategies (Kitchin, 2014). The heavily stratified nature of these fields reflected a significant investment from the governing body in disability cricket (cf. Kitchin & Howe, 2014). Kitchin (2014) noted how the development of disability cricket prior to 2007 was left to not-for-profit Disability Cricket Development Organisations (DCDOs) to oversee the game from grassroots to elite level. However, the appointment of Brian as Programme Director marked a starting point for change:

RT: So, you took over in 2007?

Brian: 2007

RT: So, what changes have you seen since then?

Brian: *sighs* The game is unrecognisable now from what it was then. So, in 2007 first off you look at the set-up that you’re involved in now and again you - it’s just not comparable, we had no understanding of LD at all really, not to the depth that we’ve got it now. It was, I was involved in it and I can tell you now how amateur it was compared with what we’ve got now. (Interview).

These amateur-professional binaries evident in the data show how permeable the disability cricket field was to issues of power within cricket (Townsend & Cushion, 2015). These binary oppositions were used to “lend meaning to the world” (Everett, 2002, p. 66) and formed the basis for the logic of the field sustained by doxa. The data here show how the doxic order (see section 6.2.2) was built on a binary logic of amateurism and professionalism and generating meanings associated with ‘performance cultures’ (Swartz, 2012) which formed the building blocks of habitus for the occupants of the field (see chapter six, section 6.2) and created a set

of structural constraints that guided the learning process of the occupants of the field. In this case, coaches, support staff, and players within the field each laboured to accumulate various species of capital that enabled their progression and secured their position according to a ‘performance’ coaching culture.

The sub-field of the learning disability squad was comprised of objective relations between the players and the coaching staff. At this level of the coaching pathway the players had access to highly-qualified coaches (level three ‘performance’ and level four ‘master’ coaches), sport science input (nutritionists, physiotherapist, and team doctor) and support staff (strength and conditioning coaches and a personal development and welfare officer) that contributed to an integrated ‘high-performance’ coaching process. Brian discussed how from his perspective, the disability cricket pathway required a ‘performance’ element in order to be seen as ‘progressive’:

Actually, this has grown so much now, and the national squads have come on so much that there is a need for a performance element to this. It was just one of the things that I felt you know if we’re gonna have credibility in this game there needs to be a (performance) pathway structure because otherwise it devalues disability sport. (Brian – interview).

The genesis of the disability cricket field has parallels with that of the Paralympic field, as it was not the sporting *abilities* of the athletes that necessitated a disability cricket performance pathway (cf. Hargreaves, 2000). Rather, it was the players’ *disabilities* that created a “sports world specifically for them – separate, spatially and symbolically, from the ‘real’ world of sport outside” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 181). The considerable investments in the ‘game’ (both economic and ideological) guaranteed its continued existence. The players received a level of funding sufficient to cover travel and accommodation expenses for training camps throughout the winter months and had access to the same playing and training kit as the men’s and women’s national representative sides. The coaches received daily rates for their involvement, funding for equipment and kit expenses and access to any other resources deemed necessary for the development of the team (e.g. professional development courses for coaches, extended overseas training camps with selected players or sponsorship towards furthering their coaching qualifications). In addition, playing and coaching staff worked within competition cycles whereby they built up to international (often overseas) tours against other nations, the most recent of which was held in 2017. These data show how the squad operated according to an entrenched ‘performance’ culture and attempted to bring together members of staff most

closely aligned to what Bourdieu termed the ‘doxic order’ (1977). This doxic order framed the environment for coach learning.

Each field values certain cultural competencies that are misrecognised as symbolic capital. For instance, cricket values social and physical capital accumulated through playing experience (cf. Townsend & Cushion, 2015) – symbolic capital - with individuals positioned hierarchically according to the distribution of symbolic capital. Assistant coach Steve recognised the power of this form of capital, commenting on his playing past:

I think straightaway there’s an instant respect. There’s a respect I think from the start that these lads, you know, and I’m still playing now, which is nice, with my change in roles and jobs, and I think that there’s a respect as a player, although the lads have not really seen me play, they – there’s a respect there as a player. From what I’ve been involved with and what I’ve done as a player, obviously not, nowhere near as high as a lot of players, but I’d like to think that *I’ve certainly done enough as a player* to warrant a place in the performance environment, I think. (Interview).

These schemes of perception structured by symbolic capital were ever present in the coaching environment. For example, in ethnography, sometimes the fieldworker may find him or herself being ‘tested’, and it is not uncommon for new members within the group to effectively have to ‘prove their worth’ or gain acceptance (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) by completing a set task. In my case, during my first ‘official’ training camp, Steve challenged me to a throwing competition in front of the players, through which I was expected to demonstrate the technical skills he had been working on with the players and execute the throw towards a target around forty metres away. Failure would have undoubtedly resulted in good-natured ridicule and ‘banter’, and perhaps more insidiously, undermine my credibility as a coach. As it happened, I executed the throw well and hit the target to the cheers of the players and indeed to my own delight. Steve was then left with the task of maintaining face with the players by completing the ‘challenge’ himself. Afterwards, banter aside, he explained that “the boys love that sort of thing, you have to be able to do it y’know? To get their respect” (field notes). From the analysis, it can be suggested that the logic of the disability cricket field was guided by a powerful ‘performance’ culture, characterised by a level of professionalism and cultural competencies associated with performance sport and ‘elite’ coaching (see chapter six, section 6.2.3). The logic of the field therefore provided the structural framework to guide the process of coach learning, akin to a model of reproduction alluded to by Bourdieu (1990a).

6.2.1 *Illusio and ‘rules of the game’*

Rather than having clearly demarcated boundaries, fields are symbolic insofar as they are determined by the limits of that which people feel is at stake in the field and are worthy of contest, and that activities and practices within are guided by an underpinning logic. Every social field requires those within it to have the relationship to the field that Bourdieu called *illusio*, embodying habitus that is aligned to the logic of the field (Bourdieu, 1998). *Illusio* is Bourdieu's term for the tendency of people to engage in the 'game' and believe in its significance; that is, believe that the benefits promised by the field are desirable without questioning them (Bourdieu, 1998). *Illusio* ensures that individuals not only 'play' the game but understand implicitly the 'rules' that guide practice. The 'game' was exemplified by Brian – the programme director - who explained how the structure of the disability cricket pathway enabled him complete autonomy in 'handpicking' the staff he felt were most suited to the logic of the field:

Well look at it from the bigger picture, of all disability sport, cricket is one of the very few sports where the mainstream governing body looks after the disability side of stuff. [The NGB] are looking after all disability programmes now that's great as a model and absolutely how it should be, the challenge for me is that I'm having to fight for everything amongst the mainstream game for males and females and that will always be a higher priority than the disability side of it, so whilst we benefit from the commercial angle, the kit and sponsorship and stuff like that, the downside is that I have to fight for the support services, and so one of the advantages of being de-centralised is that I've had a degree of flexibility to go out and get the staff that I want to come into the programme as opposed to having to use the centralised staff some of whom may want to be involved in disability cricket, some of whom that wasn't what they got into sport for so you know they want the elite men's side of stuff, so I'm able to a degree hand pick who comes into the disability programme. (Brian – interview).

For Bourdieu, there are two 'fields of production'. There is, on the one hand, the "de-limited field of production" and, on the other, the "large-scale field of production". In the delimited field, production is for the other 'producers', i.e. the agents and institutions in the field (Brown, 2005, p. 11). As Brian noted, the disability cricket provision fell 'outside' of the NGB's 'mainstream' remit (i.e. elite men's and women's) that drew the most funding and resources. This meant that the disability squad was staffed according to a 'decentralised' model (Thomas & Smith, 2009), occupying a "separate universe" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 160) whereby different species of capital interacted and were misrecognised as symbolic in order to structure the disability cricket coaching field. Hence, Brian sought to assemble coaches according to a scale of preference most favourable to the doxic order (Bourdieu, 1990a), as the learning disability squad drew its resources from the 'performance' arm of the governing body – a relatively recent change:

At the moment, our emphasis has shifted briefly and recently disability cricket was part of the under the recreational arm of the [NGB]. Over the last eighteen months, two years we've been fortunate we've now been embraced by the performance department which has raised our awareness of our responsibilities towards performance. This is the first tournament where we're going into it as part of the [NGB] performance department so that's still a relationship that we are looking at sort of formalising and a bit of clarity on each other's expectations. (David - interview).

Related to *illusio*, the concept of 'interest' is the fact of attributing importance to a social game, to participate, to admit that the game is worth playing (Bourdieu, 1998). In this sense, game refers to the social practices within a field, such as coaching. These concepts are the product of the relation between habitus and field, or as Bourdieu (1998) described: the "relation of ontological complicity between mental structures and the objective structures of social space" (p. 77). Hence, Brian attempted to secure and defend the maintenance of a 'performance' cricket culture within the disability pathway by recruiting coaches that embodied the symbolic attributes and necessary capital required to reproduce the constructed coaching ideology:

Brian: A good sign of where things have changed in that respect is that, going back to 2007 when we were recruiting coaches it was literally a case of having, almost having to take the guys who put their hands up, whereas now there are *serious* coaches that want to come into the programme. I recruit now for performance level cricket so what I'm looking for. I want to understand the coach's motivations; why do they want to come into this programme? Because historically we've had average coaches wanting to come in because they like the kit and they quite fancy the kudos of saying they're [national] coaches. I want to get to the bottom of that what is your motivation for coming into this programme? And the best coaches will have somewhere within their answer I want to challenge myself, *I want to learn*, I want to work in an environment that is still relatively, new quite immature and I want to be involved in it going to the next level they're the sort of answers that I'm looking for. You still get quite a few answers that are like 'oh these guys are so special they *deserve this*' they don't deserve fuck all in an elite programme they're there because they *want* to be there and they *want* to improve and be the best that they can be if they come in with a sense of entitlement then they ain't gonna stay in very long it's about them wanting to improve themselves and that has to be the common theme between coach and player. (Interview).

The data is illustrative of the way that coaches in the field were directly influenced by the doxic order and the capital associated with high-performance coaching, thus learning it may be argued had a reproductive nature (which can be evidenced in chapter five, section 5.2.2). The notion of reproduction can only be secured if people maintain belief in the value of the 'games' that are played in everyday life. *Illusio* illustrates the social value of the game itself, and serves to focus and sustain social fields (Bourdieu, 1993):

(Coaching) it's massively important. Great coaches, good coaches, effective coaches are adaptable, flexible, they listen rather than talk, and that's no different in disability

as it is in mainstream. It's about the coach opening their mind to what the ability is as opposed to what the player can't do. (Brian - interview).

Illusio is secured and reproduced through the distribution of capital within the field, and fields can enter a *doxic* mode when beliefs become taken-for-granted and unquestioned. Bourdieu used the term *doxa* to describe the discourses which a field articulates and tend to be viewed as inherently true and necessary (Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002, p. xi). Doxa is the product of the relation between disposition, and position - habitus and field - and functions below the level of consciousness and discourse, to make possible the production of a common-sense world (Bourdieu, 1984).

Cultural competence can only be converted to cultural capital through participation in an educational system (Bourdieu, 1977) whereby it can be objectified in the form of coaching resources (e.g. knowledge and skills, see chapter five, section 5.2.2) and institutionalised in terms of coaching qualifications (Cushion, 2011b). As noted in chapter five (see section 5.2.1) while coach education is responsible for the distribution of capital within coaching, disability is often missing from mainstream coach education (Bush & Silk, 2012). Underpinning this separated position is the coaching education framework within cricket. The attention given to disability cricket within the cricket coach education pathway varies from limited to non-existent (Kitchin & Howe, 2014, p. 73). At lower levels of the coach education pathways (level one and two), courses focus on general 'modifications' that coaches can make for disabled people to ensure they can play the mainstream game (Kitchin & Howe, 2014) as head coach David noted:

Within cricket there is currently no specific disability provision to my knowledge. Most of the levels of the pathway will incorporate a module which will give a very brief overview but yeah, no specific [content] through cricket. My specific education around coaching disability cricket was a two-hour module on a level two fifteen years ago where I was given a bunch of kit and I was told that you've got a blind player how are you gonna modify this game for them, that's it. (David – interview).

The data here reinforces the findings in chapter five, in that disability-specific coach education as an institutionalised form of cultural capital had very little efficacy within this coaching field. Instead, as noted by Brian (above) institutionalised cultural capital associated with 'performance' cricket (i.e. level three and level four coaching qualifications) was valued within the field. Indeed, both David and Steve had progressed through the cricket governing body's performance coach education pathway, and had been left to 'learn on the job' in disability cricket:

So, a lot of the sort of specific knowledge I have around working with LD has been generated through my educational experience which provides some more formal training and through my own personal investigation and research. (David – interview).

The reality is that in disability cricket well I haven't been prepared (by coach education). I'd find a way through experience, repetition, reflection. The strategies I've developed have just become second nature. (Steve – interview).

Importantly, these specific data highlight the epistemological 'gap' between 'mainstream' coach education and the practice of coaching in disability sport, and how the distance between education and practice served to structure coach learning in this context:

David: My gut feeling is that the coaching pathways, the tiers within the pathway and the content, the delivery often seems to be very much weighted towards working in 'best-case' scenarios with the highest quality players. So, level three seems to be very much geared on being able to work consistently on a one-to-one relationship with players within EPPP [emerging player performance programmes] academy county programs. Level four was very much geared around working in a professional environment. The environments that I work in, the circumstances I work around, I've always felt that I've had to try and relate it back to my specific environment and it didn't always directly relate to that environment.

RT: so, it's the experience that you've had outside of coach education that has shaped your practice and your understanding of disability now?

David: yeah, working specifically with disability athletes yeah.

(Interview).

The data support the messages from chapter five, that knowledge specific to disability tends to be absent from mainstream coach education, which meant that the coaching field and its boundaries with other fields acted as a site for learning and coaching was defined according to medical model (i.e. normalising) assumptions. The following interview data from Bert – the team manager – is illustrative:

I would love for coach education to have a compulsory section on coaching people with a disability. I think organisations that do a specialist disability coaching course, I think is a load of old twat. For me, sorry, I'm going to rant now. For me, it's going, why, why do we need that? Why can't we just have good coaches who are good people? And get them to look at things as a group differently? Why – what is a specialist course going to give already qualified and motivated coaches to work in that field? I don't understand that, I think that's a bit of a – not a gimmick, but I've done a six-hour e-learning course in autism, brilliant. Actually, okay, when was the last time you've gone and worked with someone with autism and watched them explode? That's the wrong phrase but watched them have a behaviour of concern because their favourite mug isn't available because it's in the dishwasher (laughs). And see how quickly people change then. (Interview).

This issue of coach education raises an important discussion for researchers to engage with, as for many coaches who work with disabled people there are a lack of ongoing education and training structures with coaches left to negotiate, develop and apply knowledge to a complex practice with very little ongoing support. This was explored specifically in chapter five (section 5.2.1), which showed how coaches on the coach education course tended to operate without any previous support and training in disability sport. This was also evident in the following data:

At the outset, some sort of formal support there would have possibly been helpful to avoid falling into the trap of assumptions about how people with LD will react to certain circumstances, situations, how you establish an appropriate environment for athletes with an LD, I think for me personally at the outset I think I was too protective of them. (David – interview).

This is a common finding within the existing literature (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Fairhurst *et al.*, 2016; Tawse *et al.*, 2012), and consistent with these messages, none of the coaching staff had been through formalised training or education aimed specifically at disability sport. The orthodox discourse within the disability coaching field privileged knowledge and competencies developed through experiential learning with disability (chapter five, section 5.2.3) and, in this case-study, mainstream ‘performance’ cricket. Disability-specific knowledge was thus marginalised and pushed into the background of coaching, with the embodied cultural capital associated with high performance coaching, and learning, taking on symbolic efficacy:

Brian: I believe that every coach that goes through a coach education course has got the ability and the skills to work with disabled people, it's whether you choose to activate those skills. Coming out of these programmes you should be able to communicate effectively and have an awareness and understanding of the need for flexibility, and the need for flexibility in communicating to communicate well is consistent for whatever group you're working with. What coach education doesn't do at the moment is give you disability-specific knowledge and I don't blame it for not delivering that because disability coaching isn't prescriptive. In a coach education programme with the time limitations that it has you can deliver a scenario but the chances are when you work with your first disabled group that scenario isn't going to appear but a whole load of other ones will and what are the skills that you need to deal with those different scenarios, adaptability, flexibility and communication and they're the key things that we need to be majoring on in coach education and you'll never give coaches confidence to work with disabled people until they actually get involved and start doing it.

RT: Okay, so impairment-specific information is secondary to coaching knowledge?

Brian: Yeah. It's, for me it's secondary that's my personal view. (Interview).

These discourses related to coach education further serve to illustrate the way that the arrangement of the field privileged the skills and competencies that coaches developed within mainstream performance coaching. This marginalisation created the conditions seen in chapter five, whereby effective coaching in disability sport was defined in relation to able-bodied coaching and placed value on these symbolic attributes:

RT: What makes a good disability sport coach?

Brian: *Exactly the same* as what makes a good mainstream sport coach. Communication, adaptability and flexibility, not having all the answers, enabling the player to formulate their own solutions to problems so the coach is not a teacher. It's the difference between teaching and coaching, the coach is a facilitator to get the best out of the player with the ability that the player has. Success is enabling that player to be the best that he can be now the coach has only got part of a role in that because the majority of it has got to come from the player, but what the coach does is frees it, frees it up, enables the player should they want to be the best that they can be gives them the room for growth. (Interview).

Knowledge of disability however – embodied cultural capital – was marginalised:

I don't think it's about knowledge I think it's about attitude because if I was to say I need my coaches with the LD squad to have this level of knowledge of LD, this level of knowledge of mental health issues, this level of knowledge of anxiety - those guys don't exist! There's a lot of level four cricket coaches out there but there's not many of them with as good an understanding of LD as [Bert] for example. But I think what I should expect from the guys that come in is an attitude of well I'm gonna learn here, I'm gonna try and understand and I'm gonna be prepared to put a bit of time a bit of own time into doing some background on these sorts of issues. (Brian – interview).

The coaching staff, for instance, valued cultural competencies associated with a lens of 'adaptability' (Taylor *et al.*, 2015):

That's where I have a critique of the [coach education] courses. You know, because the reality is, do you know – I'll tell you how you judge a coach, and I'd love to see the day this happens, is that someone rocks in for their level two or three exam, and the whatever you call them, coach educator or what's it called? Tutor just rips the piece of paper, brings in a completely different set of players and goes, right, crack on. That to me, how can you adapt? Adaptability and versatility is not addressed in [coach education], up to level two, definitely not, and arguably level three as well. Maybe it's a strength of mine is adaptability, so I think that's something that I've bypassed if you like, because I don't think it's necessary a skill you can teach very easily, because you need a confidence to do it, you need a belief. I could coach these boys with a stump and three cones for a day if you want me to, and a couple of balls I'd find, I'd find a way. I think it's crucial, I think the adaptability you've to work with disability cricket is something that – I've witnessed within the environment a lot of coaches who are, you know, very rigid in their beliefs and their views; they have a set way of looking at it, and regardless of what happens there is a tunnel that they're looking down and that is how they're going to do a session or a series of sessions, or a practice, and I think that

that's a very, very dangerous environment to coach the LD players, personally. (Steve, assistant coach – interview).

'Learning' to coach in the disability context in this sense took on a symbolic nature. Through submission to the "collective rhythms" of the field, the group structured not only the representation of the world but the group itself (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 163):

The guys I don't want are people who think they know it all. That pre-judge, that decide what something's gonna look like before they come to work. I want people with a thirst for learning - you speak to [David] he'll tell you he learns every camp something and that's what you want isn't it you want people who want to challenge themselves and want to be better and who want to help. You know I still think we've got, there's still a bit of a patronising culture I think sometimes towards disability and I think some of our coaches have had it when they've come but I think they soon lose it once they start working with the guys and they see the ability. I don't think disabled people want continuously reminding of their disability, they want to be spoken to as cricketers. (Brian – interview).

These data illustrate the way in which Brian as a bearer of cultural authority dictated the limits of 'learning', and the coaches were expected to adapt to and embody the prevailing coaching culture. In so doing, by aligning to the 'rules of the game' the coaches exercised symbolic capital associated with 'learning':

I think if you go to any environment engage in any conversation, interact with any people if you have the openness and the intention to learn there's an opportunity to learn. The question was put to me quite recently what is your motivation to still be involved? Why are you gonna stay around? What is there left for you to do with it? And I would say the answer I've given to that and when I've been asked similar questions in the past is at the moment I still feel like I've taken more away from this experience than I've given in. I feel like I've been the biggest beneficiary. I like to think I've helped the players and the environment, but I will only stop learning from this experience and taking out and drawing from this experience when I consciously decide I don't want to learn anymore, so you know there's just opportunity to learn all the time. (David - interview).

I believe the more I learn and any experience, any situation I experience, any type of athlete I work with will develop my skillset and toolbox to a high level. I was striving to learn off other people, my experience is, learning for me is the key thing, if you're not learning as a coach every day you're working then, you know, you're apparently the perfect coach which is no such thing. The good thing about being a coach even when you're working with the same set of players every day you're still learning. (Oscar – interview).

The prominence of the coach learning discourse meant that for the coaches, 'learning' was seen as a powerful symbolic and cultural capital to exercise, as Steve noted:

I never want to be the coach who says, no, that's the right way and that's it, that is the only way, it's not. There's always someone that knows more than you, and even if there's not, even if they don't know more than you, they might have a different opinion on your idea, and it's worth listening to. I have a belief in life that if someone is more experienced than you, or more of a professional in their field then they're worth listening to, for the first thirty seconds, and if not, no I'm joking. But no, I do, I think everyone, I think that you can learn from everyone, whoever it is, whatever they coach, whatever they do, whether it's a drill, an idea, a belief, a philosophy, I don't like the word philosophy, but a viewpoint, a stance, whatever, just you can never stop learning as a coach, but as I said, you've got to be true to your beliefs and yourself with what you do. (Steve - interview).

Thus, the concept of *illusio* illustrates how the institutional culture of the governing body was able to subvert the logic of practice towards a 'performance' coaching culture designed to accentuate and focus on the athletic ability of these disabled athletes. The logic of practice was therefore refracted from wider mainstream sporting fields and concentrated within a specific sub-field of coaching to orient coaches, their methods and subsequently the athletes towards a singular purpose. Within this specific culture, 'learning' took on a symbolic nature and acted as valued capital in the maintenance of the 'performance' environment, in that it was in the *interests* of the coaches to 'learn'. Indeed, the same situation can be seen from the analysis of the coach education programme (chapter 5, section 5.2.2), whereby engagement in the programme enabled the accumulation of cultural capital and shaped the habitus of the participants accordingly.

6.2.2 Performance Doxa

Coaching is illustrative of the process of social reproduction, whereby certain forms of knowledge, beliefs and values are legitimated and drawn on by practitioners to inform their practice (Cushion & Jones, 2014). As Cushion and Jones (2014) argued, in coaching a major function of socialisation "relates to the imparting of enduring values and an ideology that guides behaviour in accordance with given expectations" (p. 277). The resultant learning is therefore tacit, embedded in practice and misrecognised. Therefore, the covert logic that guided coaching was generated through the interaction of habitus, capital and field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990a):

The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of the field (or of a hierarchy of intersecting fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense or with

value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. (Bourdieu, in Wacquant, 1989, p. 44).

Doxa refers to a socially and culturally constituted way of perceiving, evaluating and behaving in coaching that becomes accepted as unquestioned and self-evident, i.e. 'natural' (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu argued for viewing the world as socially produced through a "collective work of construction of social reality" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 239) within which there is a 'taken-for-grantedness' in empirical experience (Grenfell, 2007). Doxic beliefs are so 'accepted' that they are seen as orthodox, 'self-evident' and natural ways of understanding. Views that appear to contradict the orthodoxy are heterodox (Bourdieu, 1977). Put briefly, the concept of *doxa* is 'the point of view of those who dominate by dominating the state and who have constituted their point of view as universal by constituting the state' (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 57). Brian, from his position within the NGB exercised symbolic and economic capital to shape the discourses across the impairment-specific coaching fields. In the case of the LD squad, there was a normative, performance-oriented discourse that was secured through the alignment of coaching practice to the doxic order:

The element that I'm involved in is a performance programme. To the point where as far as possible disabilities are left at the door when they come in. (Brian - interview).

Bourdieu's use of habitus helps to articulate how processes of socialisation cause legitimate social rules to become embodied frames of reference that influence behaviour. For the management staff, there was an implicit need to align themselves with the doxic order, as while they acted relatively autonomously, they remained tied to and influenced by the social structures in which they existed (Bourdieu, 1979). This new and developing professionalisation agenda meant that the management staff were expected to work towards the achievement of specific competition objectives and demonstrate a strong commitment to preparation (Rynne, Mallett & Tinning, 2006). For example, the staff were able to articulate the purpose of the squad, and therefore their roles, in relation to performance sport:

It's my first coaching role in a performance environment and the opportunity to work in a performance environment was too good an opportunity to miss, so work with the physio, the head coach, the manager, an S&C coach, it was really for, again for sort of a twenty-seven-year-old when I took the job it was too good an opportunity to miss out. (Steve – interview).

I see it as a performance environment. It's all about performance mate- I don't give a shit (about anything else). I think, really, if you can coach disability, then you can almost coach anybody. (Theo- field notes).

You know what, fucking they can fucking do it, they can fucking do it! This squad has become more high performance, as in the environment we're creating. (Oscar – interview).

For me it's a performance environment now. It wasn't four years ago. I think the fact that the players have matured, they've stayed together as a group, we've got better backroom staff, more professional backroom staff. I think by having people of that calibre around it automatically ups the game, and I think the players have responded to that. (Bert – interview).

These data illustrate how habitus constructed through coaching unconsciously shaped the relations between people and context (cf. Purdue & Howe, 2012). In other words, habitus was the link between individuals and the structured environment in which they were a part (Purdue & Howe, 2012). As Bourdieu (1977) argued, habitus construction – inculcation - can occur as a process of institutionalisation, which is accompanied by discourse and other symbolic support that formulates practical schemes and constitute them as principles. However, as Bourdieu (1977) stated, not all individuals that are exposed to the same objective conditions respond in unified ways. Habitus implies a transformative capacity. This capacity depends on the social situations in which coaches find themselves as the condition for its fulfilment. Habitus is defined in relation to field and though established dispositions can be compatible between fields, the possibility of a lack of fit is always likely (Adams, 2006). This 'lack' is the space where reflexivity can emerge. A disjuncture can occur between practices generated by the habitus and the objective conditions required (May, 1996). The idea of pre-objective fit between disposition and position does not rule out the strategic choices which an actor makes in the course of their conduct. For example David, as head coach, was more reflective on the notion of 'performance' and attempted to subvert the discourse away from performance ideals toward a focus on achieving potential and enhancing player learning in order to deliver performance outcomes:

David: Yeah, it's interesting you use the word 'performance' environment. It's something that I need to reflect on a little bit and give it some more thought because what is a performance environment? I don't think we can ever that we can ever really consider ourselves a fully-fledged performance environment. Yes, probably against some definitions we're a (national) team, there's a selection process, there's an elitism about it, we are challenging players to improve performance all the time. I think perhaps this is a bit wishy washy, but I would prefer to look at it and think of it rather than a performance environment we're trying to create a personal best environment and if we get that right we'll win some games of cricket.

RT: How do you think the other management staff would describe it?

David: Oh, look yeah I think probably it would be quite easy for them to fall into the trap of some familiar language, performance, we're a [national] team, so I think they would probably use that language to describe it which is again probably something that I've been giving some thought to about do I need to explore that with them? Do I need to touch on that with them or actually is what they're doing fitting that remit? So, do we need to go down that route? Is it just semantics of language? But yeah that's kind of where I'm at with it, it's just about challenging the guys to be the best version of themselves you know. (David – interview).

The degrees to which agents align with dominant discourses can vary, for instance David, in acknowledging difference, was more measured, arguing that “yes this is a performance environment, but we operate within a number of constraints. It's not like other performance environments, it is its own entity” (field notes). For David, the ‘constraints’ referred to not only the lack of contact and time between the coaches and the players, but also the players’ impairments and their subsequent ability to demonstrate and sustain progression:

I think we've clumsily played around with what is a performance environment and we've tried to deliver what we perceive to be a performance environment based on other examples of performance environments and with very little respect or regard to the audience we're working with. So a performance environment was about a level of fitness it was about a level of attitude and approach, it was about a level of commitment, it was about a level of skill, it was about a level of delivery of results and I think we've gone down those little cul-de-sacs at different points on the journey so we had at one time a big issue around, there was some talk about imposing physical benchmarks on all the disability squads and it just didn't make sense, well it makes complete sense but it doesn't fit so I think sort of, I think I used a probably a phrase a few months back about we're a performance environment with constraints and for me I think sort of I think personal best environment feels a better fit to describe what I hope we're trying to achieve. (David – interview).

The data also evidences a process of misrecognition, whereby social practices appeared as one thing whilst achieving something else, with the coaches involved not necessarily seeing how this works (Bourdieu 1984, 1990a). For Bourdieu, there is a distinction between rules and practices. In rejecting the instituted discourse, David still worked within the limits of the “universe of reference” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 18), and while he was able to (mis)recognise and problematise the structure, he worked within that structure nonetheless:

Disability cricket coaching you know we are forging a path at the moment there isn't really a clear direction at the moment. I think we had this really interesting grey area where we suddenly went from being part of the wider [NGB] organisation to being repositioned into the performance programme and I think that really lost us for a while and we lost our direction there and we tried to impose direction on people based on what a performance environment could or should be or look like and we had a set of expectations that didn't reflect the world that we were occupying. (Interview).

This meant that for David, the considerations and expectations of a performance environment was in constant tension with the nature of the players. However, as Adkins (2003, p. 36) argued, simply “the habitus will always submit to the field”:

RT: to what extent do results on the pitch drive what you do?

David: They are always in the background we have to be conscious of that if we are asking for additional support.

RT: In terms of finance?

David: Yeah, what we will often get challenged with is performance outcomes from hierarchy within the [governing body]. So that’s still a relationship that we are looking at formalising and a bit of clarity on each other’s expectations.

(Interview – stage one).

This discourse suggests that David reproduced the doxic order through his acceptance of the structural conditions of the field and misrecognition of the performance doxa as it manifest in coaching practice (see, for example, chapter seven, section 7.2.4). He was simply articulating the orthodoxy in a way that aligned with his worldview and legitimated the practices of the individual members of the management staff. Together the definition of social reality that the management staff created served particular interests which they tended to “present as universal interests, common to the whole group” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 80) that contributed to the maintenance of the doxic order. Indeed, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggested that “social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents” (p. 127). Reay (2004a) suggested that a collective understanding of habitus is necessary in order to recognize that individuals contain within themselves their past and present positions. The use of habitus therefore highlighted the “inconsistent imposition of the social world and its structures on differing actors” (Cushion & Jones, 2006, p. 145), and it acted to facilitate or inhibit learning, by providing a sense of limits of possibility (Bourdieu, 1977; Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the concept of habitus, with its constituent dispositions, equates learning to the process of confirming, developing, challenging or changing dispositions toward coaching through engagement in the field.

Analysis of the field of power applied to disability coaching suggests that the coaching context was permeated everywhere by powerful performance doxa. It was actualised in the structure of the broader coaching field by a performance-pathway model that was defined in relation to mainstream elite-level sport (Kitchin, 2014) and reproduced at a micro-level within the coaching context through the integration of members of staff most aligned to a

‘performance’ worldview. Therefore, it can be suggested that the performance doxa of the disability coaching field – produced and sustained by the relationship of the disability sport field to able-bodied sport (DePauw, 1997) – was more influential in coach learning than any coach education. Members of the management staff internalised the performance discourses that were institutionalised in the field and sought to express their own ideological definition of the world (Bourdieu, 1979). Theo – a strength and conditioning coach – was relatively new to the squad and an example of the instituted orthodoxy was evident in Theo’s discourse about the coaching environment:

Theo: The whole point of sport, we’re in performance and why we’re in it is to win, simple as, it’s representative of [the national team], no matter what team it is... That is sport. That’s the reason why I’m in. I’m pretty sure it’s why you’re in it. You’re in it to win it, simple as. I’m pretty sure [Steve] would be pretty pissed off if he put all his coaching work and then we weren’t going to win. "Oh, we’re just going to and put out a good representation of ourselves and show [the NGB] I’m doing really, really well on their personalities and their further development." Well, this is sport. If you want to be a better person, then you need to go and see a life coach or psychologist. (Interview).

This section has attempted to explain the ways in which the management staff understood and articulated their working context. These data taken together are suggestive of the influence of structure on the expression and formation of ideology-specific understandings about disability (doxa). When considering the learning process of coaches then, it is useful to adopt Bourdieu’s (1990a, p. 52) suggestion that “objects of knowledge are constructed...and...the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring practices and dispositions, the habitus”. There was a clear effort to construct the definition of social reality that was most congruent with a ‘performance environment’, and while not all views were explicitly aligned, they were subtle variants of the common matrix (Wacquant, 2008). The coaches attempted to realign their purpose in line with institutionally supported performance coaching ideals in such a way that maximised their symbolic capital by association while constraining the agency of the players. It was clear that the field was, and continues to be, the site of transmission of ideological principles of division that created the ‘common-sense’ world (Bourdieu, 1977):

And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127).

6.2.3 Coaching hierarchy and domination

Fields have within them a hierarchy of species of capital that vary across various fields. Species of capital are ‘valid’, in that the accumulation and use of them is valuable, but their relative

value is determined by each field (Bourdieu, 1984). Within the sub-field of the learning disability squad, there were numerous competing species of active capital as agents competed for recognition, position and therefore a legitimate voice (Schirato & Webb, 2002). Each member of the management team brought with them dispositions and attributes – both valued and not – that they sought to either align with the field or to impose on the construction of the field. The distribution of power within the field is of the utmost importance because the hierarchy of power structures the field and the instruments of knowledge within.

Bourdieu argued that ‘individuals or groups are objectively defined not only by what they are but what they are reputed to be’ (1990a, p. 135). Forms of capital within cricket structure the field of practice (see Townsend & Cushion, 2015). It has been further suggested that cricket has an entrenched sporting culture with individuals placed hierarchically within it (Galvan *et al.*, 2012). Bourdieu’s concept of capital helps to elucidate this process of hierarchisation and domination; and this process was very much ongoing within the coaching and management staff with the squad, and in particular in relation to my involvement. The organisation of the LD squad was along hierarchical lines, with David the most ‘senior’, not only in terms of his position as head coach, but symbolically in terms of his candidature in charge, being the longest serving national head coach within the disability squads. Steve and Bert jostled for next in line, with competing species of capital determining their relative position, with Bert seemingly the next most senior member of staff (though perhaps not the most powerful). Buzz, Gill, Theo (and Oscar) occupied similar positions due to a disciplinary divide – that is, their involvement with the players was reduced to isolated contact sessions within the training camps, and they had little managerial involvement, but were full members of the management staff.

Most of the time during training was dedicated to cricket coaching sessions led by Steve and supported by myself. David’s coaching input was ad hoc – he would brief the players and outline his expectations for the training camp, but session content was planned and led by Steve. Occasionally David would step in and work one-to-one with a particular player, or oversee a practice he designed for specific outcomes, at which point Steve would defer to David’s seniority. Bert operated in the background during training camps, sometimes removing players from sessions to ‘catch up’ or share plans with the players’ parents. Bert’s lack of ‘visibility’ during training weekends was a cause of contempt from Steve, suggesting that Bert was being paid for “fuck all” (field notes). Bert’s role as team manager was mostly

administrative, and his personal development and welfare work took place away from the coaching environment, often visiting players at their homes.

The players were at the bottom of this hierarchy. The coaches, though not in an authoritarian fashion, exerted a didactic hold on the players that were expected to conform to a ‘progressive’ and ‘empowering’ coaching regime. For example, although alcohol was not banned on training camps as players were encouraged to make their own “good decisions”, players would rarely drink in front of staff. The staff however, with the exception of David, had no reservations about drinking in front of the players. I questioned Steve about this over a beer:

There’s a difference Rob. We are *management*. They are players. There is no grey area. It’s black and white for me. (Steve – field notes).

The value of a species of capital hinges on the existence of a ‘game’ in which the efficacy of the species of capital can be actualised (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Capital can be used as a ‘weapon’ and as a stake of struggle, which allows its possessor to have an influence in the field. Power was exercised through symbolic capital by Steve and David as highly qualified coaches, with Steve’s distinction as a former professional cricketer embodying symbolic attributes that increased his symbolic value and manifested cultural authority (Bourdieu, 1990a) within the field of cricket:

I think sort of rightly or wrongly level four carries a lot of kudos in our game and I think sort of playing history plays a lot carries a lot of kudos, I think your background like that so yeah, it’s I think people will always be influenced by where you’ve come from and what you know. It’s really interesting sometimes, sometimes it can be to your benefit sometimes it can absolutely be to your detriment. (David – interview).

Symbolic capital is “nothing other than economic or cultural capital when it is known and recognized”, through the categories of perception that tend to reproduce and to reinforce the “power relations that constitute the structure of social space” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). As Bourdieu (1989) noted, symbolic capital can be officially guaranteed whereby somebody is granted a “socially recognised qualification” (p. 21) that secures their status within an institution through the process of symbolic violence. Indeed, educational discourses had an influence within the field, as for Steve, his coaching practice (and therefore his learning) was shaped through a combination of experiences outside of formal coach education, that had contributed to the accumulation of his embodied cultural capital. For example:

One of the key things that's helped with my coaching is my teacher training. Two sides help with my coaching, number one, experience as a player which we can talk about in detail later if you want, and number two, my experiences of teacher training, having gone through the PGCE and QTS, different strands, how to present information, how to, not to overload players or pupils, how to differentiate, different learning styles, kind of setting, auditory, visual, and all these things I've filtered into my coaching. (Interview).

Thus, Steve's habitus internalised discourses about teaching and learning that were associated with the educational field, and thus increased his cultural capital and pedagogic resources in the coaching field. David too was a qualified teacher and outlined how he felt there was some crossover in the skills and knowledge gained from the educational field applied to disability coaching:

I actually embarked on the graduate training programme which I guess sort of links in I eventually qualified as a primary school teacher so there's a little bit of crossover in sort of experience and knowledge there. (Interview).

Symbolic capital can also be attributed by one's status in the culture of the sport. In coaching, there is a tension between high level educational qualifications (such as David's coaching qualification) and the culturally symbolic attributes held by coaches that have 'played the game' to a professional level (Townsend & Cushion, 2015). For instance, Steve had played the game to a professional level, whereas David had been a 'good club pro' but had never played professionally. For Steve, his 'technical knowledge' developed from his playing background functioned as a powerful source of embodied knowledge and belief about how the game should be played, and therefore coached:

I've always been a big thinker about the game, and I think that I'm quite self-aware, I'm self-analytical and I think that maybe that was probably a drawback as a player, I over-thought things, and I think that that has probably helped, a) shaped my coaching, but b) steered me more towards coaching, because I think I'm probably a better coach than player, in my opinion. It's not an arrogance, but I think when you've played, you understand it, you know it and you've got an awareness. I think that the, the saying that you don't need to know how to play to coach, I agree up to level two maybe, but I think that once you go past that, cricket is such a technical game, cricket is a technically-based game, and you have to have a deep understanding of technical knowledge in order to facilitate and impart correct information on players, because if you've not got that understanding, because there's a feel to cricket, there's a feel when you're bowling, there's a feel when you're batting, there's a feel when you get your throws wrong, and you take a catch right, I think it's massive, I think the feel is massive, and I think that without a doubt my playing has helped benefit my coaching. Even things like running fielding sessions, if you can't, you know, you need to be able to play, it doesn't matter if you've never played, fair enough, but what about when you've got to hit flat catches forty metres away, not everyone can do that; it took me eight years to learn how to nick

off both hands, I'm not joking, I mean it's a serious point, I can nick left handed, you've seen me do it. (Steve – interview).

These data are illustrative of the process of hexis, whereby Steve's immersion in the professional game structured the reception and assimilation of pedagogic messages, resulting in ingrained dispositions toward coaching that seemed 'natural', and functioned as a marker of social position as they were imbued with social value (Bourdieu, 1977). For Steve, his coaching was guided by an implicit, incorporated, practical "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 82) that was guided by a practical sense - a key concept in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990a, 1998). This concept was developed as a "combined analysis of how a practitioner performs an action and how he or she learns to perform that action" (Christensen, 2009, p. 368). Steve's dispositions toward coaching in disability sport were directly constituted through hands-on and intuitive 'knowhow' within the field, constituting habitus that had symbolic capital associated with these attributes (Christensen, 2009).

In contrast David drew upon cultural resources available to him, and embodied symbolic capital associated with being a 'learning' coach:

I think I'm still I'm getting better but I've still got plenty to learn. I think it comes down to the point I made earlier for me that I will only stop learning from this experience and taking out and drawing from this experience when I consciously decide I don't want to learn anymore. So, you know there's just opportunity to learn all the time. I feel like we're getting to a point now and we're creating an environment where I feel it's a fairer balance I'm taking less and giving a little bit more but I don't think I'll ever stop taking from and learning from the environment. (David - interview).

Together, David and Steve represented the embodiment of dispositions that were valued within the field, as Brian described:

I think for me, whatever you've learnt in the past or whatever understanding you think you have about disability there's a high possibility that the environment that you come into, those experiences, they might help you a little bit but you're not gonna be faced with them again because of the scale and the scope of disability across the different groups. I think attitude and approach to it is more important. (Brian – interview).

Therefore, while the coaches accrued 'different' forms of symbolic capital, both were recognised within the coaching field, instituted within the national governing body, and applied to the structures of perception and appreciation which pictured the coaching context as 'self-evident' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21):

I don't think this is unique to disability sport and I don't think this is unique to this squad but any environment where the desire is betterment demands continual learning

and so for me that's just a - perhaps I've made the presumption or an assumption but for me that's where it starts is any member of staff that wants to be a part of this group has that duty and obligation to learn from their experience to learn from other members of staff to make this environment one that the players can't imagine being without. (David – interview).

By embodying a particular habitus associated with high-performance coaching, the coaches were able to legitimate their particular coaching ontology and secure symbolic capital (cf. Townsend & Cushion, 2015) through engagement in experiential learning. Learning in practice therefore represented an orthodox discourse about learning. Bourdieu (1990a) suggested that habitus is a product of history that produces individual and collective practices and therefore it is clear that practice in this context operated as the source of habitus; a “present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 54). The coaches by their shared habitus were constrained within the limits of the conditions of its generation (Bourdieu, 1990a). The refractory and destabilizing implications that the notion of field has for the concept of habitus can produce nuanced understandings of power relations and individual agency in coaching (Reay, 2004a) and particularly on the co-construction of coaching knowledge, and therefore how coaches learn.

As Bourdieu (1990a) argued, positioning within social space (consciously or unconsciously) is a result of schemes of perception, appreciation and subversive action that can modify categories of thought and orient individual and collective action. In the symbolic struggle for “the production of common-sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). Steve used his cultural authority at times in a subversive manner and was often critical of the management staff and the way things were run. Though never publicly stated, there was a tension between Steve and Bert. Steve disagreed with Bert's developmental and pastoral role with the players, suggesting that it was unnecessary, as exemplified in the following interview passage with veiled comments towards Bert:

Okay so, I believe Rob that there are certain characters within disability sport and the disability environment that actually encourage boys to conform to their disability labels, so a lot of the research around does labelling emphasise one's disability or not? I believe it can do, and my approach is coach the person coach the individual and by doing that I've found that actually we're able to take players further in their development and take them to new heights.

(Field notes).

In contrast, Bert felt that as coaches, Steve, David and I should be encouraged to engage with resources that addressed disability, and so “steered as much as possible to outside resources, outside of cricket, to do with disability, not just sports coaching but kind of educational stuff to do with actually not what is a disability but actually how do peoples’ disabilities affect their function and how it affects their life” (interview). Therefore, “in the determination of the objective classification and of the hierarchy of values granted to individuals and groups, not all judgments have the same weight, and holders of large amounts of symbolic capital, are in a position to impose the scale of values most favourable to their products” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). Bert on the other hand felt that Steve’s “blinkered approach” to coaching was ‘good’ for the team, yet held some personal reservations about Steve’s character:

We’ve got a brash, lively individual who wants to develop them as cricketers. Between me, you and your PhD research, I think he’s the right man for the job, whether he’s right as a person (laughs), whether emotionally he – no, I’ll start that one again. I think in terms of cricket coaching he is the best coach we could possibly get for these guys. I think emotionally and responsibly and socially he needs to mature. But we did the right thing by finding the best coach we could for the players that we’ve got. He learns the hard way, bless him. But watching him – he’s really frustrating because he (does) some really good subtle changes to his practice working with individual players but he doesn’t see that. (Interview).

There was a process of distinction ongoing within the structure of the coaching staff, with members jostling for places to maximise their symbolic value and secure their position within a ‘performance’ coaching environment. This meant at times there were veiled remarks, snide comments and overt clashes between members of staff as each sought to monopolise a view of the coaching environment that aligned with their interests. David was seemingly aware of this tension:

I think again I think it would be completely naïve to think that any environment where you are challenging for betterment won’t have moments of friction, tension, so that still exists from time to time but the thing that reassures me is that those moments of tension emerge from time to time but because the motives are right there isn’t a hangover from those moments of tension. (Interview).

While capital can be used as a ‘weapon’ in a particular set of interactions, it is also a way of securing and maintaining one’s position within the field. For example, cultural capital in the form of educational credentials was a valuable tool also, with the management staff seemingly at the ‘top of their game’ in contributing to the maintenance of the disability coaching logic:

I think where we're at as a management team at the minute is probably as strong as I've ever felt it. Yeah there's a high calibre of education, I think a high calibre of people is a different thing, but I think this group combine that education and personal attribute well. And I think we've got a healthy balance. (David – interview).

Capital is also central to the reproduction of inequalities, constituting 'legitimate' voices within the field. For instance, my lack of professional playing experience, coupled with my relatively low-level coaching qualification in relation to both the head coach and assistant therefore meant my cultural and social capital within the field was tenuous and my position therefore was at the 'lowest' end of the management group:

Theo and I had gone for a walk around the boundary during one of the games. As we discussed working with the team, Theo asked me for feedback on his coaching. At first, I was reluctant –

"I know very little about S&C mate"

"No, fuck that – you know coaching". We clapped as one of our players hit a boundary.

I paused as I thought how best to reply. "Okay well, you know your stuff. I think sometimes you use pretty complex or technical language with the players, I mean, it would throw me off, but you compensate that with clear demonstrations".

"Yeah that's important with these boys. You're right though I just can't help it sometimes. I've got to the point now where I just don't give a shit anymore" Theo replied defensively.

As we completed our lap we reached the rest of the coaching staff who were sat by the pavilion.

"Oh, here they are look, bet that was an interesting chat" Steve chirped. Buzz chuckled from behind Steve.

I laughed, "actually mate we were discussing coaching, funny how you never ask me for feedback on your coaching?" I smirked as David turned to Steve with his eyebrows raised.

"yeah it's because I don't respect you as a coach!" Steve laughed.

(Field notes).

Indeed, the social spaces in which coaches exist are not neutral, and these data suggest this environment was no different, replete with issues of "contestation and negotiation" (Jones *et al.*, 2014, p.2). Buzz in particular would subtly question my involvement with the squad, suggesting – perhaps jokingly – that I was "yet to do a day's work" in terms of coaching the players. Steve too would attempt to undermine my presence at times, for instance suggesting in front of Brian that "my back is hurting from carrying Townsend", though later privately

arguing “how the fuck would I do this without you” (field notes) when discussing my continued involvement in the team.

These data further highlight my contribution to the maintenance of the coaching hierarchy and the field of struggles within it. I would often engage in both subtle and overt strategies to attempt to secure my position in the field, to justify my presence to senior staff. My initial attempt to remain ‘distant’ but involved would have marginalised my position and yielded less rich data. I was able to leverage symbolic capital as a ‘good’ cricketer, and institutionalised cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications not only to access the environment (see chapter three – section 3.6.2) but also to gain some acceptance with both the players and the staff. David too valued my involvement, describing me at times as “the brains of the operation” (field notes) in a seemingly good-natured fashion. But these discourses reflected the ways in which the management staff were able to recognise and articulate the varying forms of capital that structured the field:

We’re very different people (which) is to me the biggest thing. We’ve got one and a half doctors (laughs) but when you get your letters at the end of your name then we’re going to have potentially two doctors involved in the squad. We’ve got a highly experienced level four coach; we’ve got a former pro. We’ve got a physio who works for first-class county. We’ve got a nutritionist who is also a teacher. So having not only a massive personality shift across the board but also actually everyone is pretty much kind of at the top of their game in terms of qualification, and that’s made a big difference as well. (Bert - interview).

Whatever the type or volume of capital each member of the management staff had, there was a subtle battle to impose their worth on the coaching context and align themselves with the overarching institutional structures, or the ‘rules’ of the field. These ‘rules’ were generative in that coaches were asked to conform to a coaching ideology that was imposed from the ‘top-down’ and had a powerful structuring effect on coach learning. Certain forms of capital functioning as symbolic capital served to mediate what knowledge was legitimate in the field. Coach learning then, arguably, was symbolic insofar as it was in the interests of coaches to embody certain forms of coaching knowledge (and therefore power), and by doing so consciously or unconsciously coaches were able to conserve or maintain their positions in the field.

6.2.4 ‘Disability’ coaching and symbolic capital

Understanding the performance doxa within the field and its effects, brings an understanding of the distribution of power and “the classifying and classified judgements through which agents classify and were classified” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 135) and thus provides critical insight into the symbolic structures that constrained the learning process. Symbolic capital is defined by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) as “the form that one or another of these species [of capital e.g. cultural, social, economic, physical] takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that recognise its specific logic or, if you prefer, misrecognize the arbitrariness of its possession and accumulation” (p. 119). The extent to which each member of staff could influence and advance the coaching process toward a ‘performance’ agenda depended on the position and attributes they held. The power that each member of staff had was perceived not objectively, but as that which was considered legitimate in the eyes of the beholder (Bourdieu, 1988; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). Bourdieu (1998) suggested that within social space, positions are ‘taken’ through the differences in agents’ properties and that individuals act according to their specific positional interests (Grenfell, 2010). In terms of capital, there was a conscious struggle for the staff to consecrate their own symbolic attributes within the ‘performance’ environment and to therefore subvert discourses away from ‘negative’ disability-specific associations. In this sense, the coaching culture was constituted by signs and symbols making up systems of communication (Grenfell, 2010). An example of this system of communication was the way in which all of the staff sought to modify the schemes of perception of their roles in order to maximise their symbolic capital. Kim (2004) suggested that social agents do not adhere mechanically to the ‘rules’ of a field, rather, they interpret those “supposedly fixed rules and norms in ways that are most likely to bring them the largest amount of symbolic capital” (p. 364) within the “space of the possible” (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 15-16):

It's the [NGB] on my CV that I see as being the positive, not the disability, which is why - Not because I undervalue disability sport, because I see it as a massive thing, but to somebody else, "Oh, so you've done disability sport." That's how I see the rest of the community looking at disability sport and saying, "Ah, but it's not elite, is it?" I mean, if I want to go to an elite sport, that's what I'm going to do. And my goals in elite sport are I literally want to win gold medals, I want to win world championships, I want to win leagues or get world records. That's what I want to do because that's the one thing, growing up, I've always seen sport as being pinnacle. Is disability sport the pinnacle? No. (Theo – interview).

I don't want to pigeon hole myself as a disability sport coach, Rob, I'm a coach. It doesn't interest me, I'm a cricket coach, this is just a stepping stone for me. (Steve – field notes).

I don't think anybody that I've encountered yet comes into it and goes and looks at me or any of the other four head coaches as being disability specialists that have been on this learning journey with disability cricket and are kind of like the disability gurus of the game. (David – interview).

Here, as Bourdieu (1984) described, the “cultural investment” (p. 79) each coach could ascribe to the environment depended on the social marks attached to the label of ‘disability sport’, and hierarchy of legitimacy within the field. The symbolic value of performance coaching was understood by Steve in particular, and to a certain extent David. Steve saw his role as the assistant coach to a national squad as a stepping-stone to either a head coach position within the NGB or a role in performance cricket (field notes). Thus, Steve needed to build a reputation and subsequently sufficient symbolic and social capital to enable his career progression. Wareham *et al.*, (2017) similarly suggested that coaches utilise the field of disability sport to further their career progression and professional development. Indeed, Brian commented that coaches should use disability sport and coaching practice as a site for development, and had no qualms about coaches moving on after a period of time in the disability game:

So, there are coaches coming into disability cricket or taking an interest in disability cricket now because they can see that they can learn from it and they can expand their own coaching practice as a result of being involved with cricketers with disabilities. So, I think with the national squads a three-year turnaround of coaches is pretty healthy. I'm quite happy to accept that coaches will come into the programme, do three years and then go back out somewhere else. But knowing that their own experience and their coaching practice has been developed as a result of working in the programme. (Interview).

Such reconversion strategies were employed as a means of reinforcing or improving their position within social space (Bourdieu, 1984), more so than undertaking coach education. The relationship between structuring processes, represented in the durable dispositions of habitus and the opportunity and willingness of actors – in this case the coaching and management staff – to exercise strategies that could enhance their position lies at the core of Bourdieu's investigation into various fields (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). In a given field of cultural consumption (i.e. disability coaching), the possibility of an agent to get ahead in his or her field is determined by the two factors: first, the universe of possibilities that is defined in terms of the currently accepted classification schema and the resources that he or she can mobilize to actualize some of these possibilities (Kim, 2004):

If you have the skills to work with a guy a youngster that has never picked up a bat before then you've certainly got the skills to work with somebody with a disability who's able to pick the bat up but might be a little bit unorthodox in how they achieve an end result. I think if we're able to deliver a workforce of with adaptability and

flexibility of delivery and who are always learning and who always want to learn then I'll have a great field of expertise to pull into the disability programme. (Brian – interview).

Simply, a coach's progression in the field was linked to their unconscious alignment to the doxic order of the field and their ability to use their networks, practices and knowledge to their advantage. Indeed, by defining disability coaching in relation to high-performance able-bodied sport, the distance between the two fields can be minimised. The use of capital elucidated the struggle to downplay disability whilst overemphasising symbolic capital associated with the national governing body, and therefore 'elite', 'high-performance' sport:

RT: Do you think there is stigma attached to the word disability?

Bert: Yeah. I think sport is that unique environment where they're seen as sportsmen first, people with a disability second. And for the people we work with and coach in this particular squad it's refreshing for them because they're treated like adults, like again using the term "normal", whatever that is. (Interview).

The staff apparently recognised that the disability cricket field was in a state of 'flux' driven by ongoing concerns to professionalise the field, and therefore the staff had to rework their symbolic attributes to those that were more favourable to a field that valued discourses of professionalism, high-performance and elitism. The consequence of this was that a number of the staff adopted linguistic strategies which emphasised alternative forms of capital to advance or secure their position:

RT: Do you think that there is a difference between the role of the coach in mainstream sport and the role of a coach in disability sport?

David: (7 second pause) there's a distinction. I don't think that people necessarily need to be singled out as a specialism. I think good quality coaching will show through in any environment. I think for me you know my philosophy is good quality coaching is about an appreciation of the individual you're working with you know, so for this environment the onus is upon me to develop my understanding. (Interview).

Bert too sought to articulate his administrative and personal development role within broader 'person-first' discourses that maximised his capital through association with valued sporting bodies:

I think – I get really hung up on these things. I think it's just a word and it really pisses me off when people say, oh, you know, I work in disability sport or I coach disabled athletes. It's kind of like, well actually no, you work with athletes. (Interview).

Oscar too explained how his view changed through his involvement in disability sport:

RT: Would you consider yourself a disability coach?

If you'd asked me that question about two years ago, maybe more, I probably would say, yeah, I deal with disabled athletes, but no, I'm just a coach mate. (Interview).

It may be suggested that the coaching staff embodied an elitist perspective (Wareham *et al.*, 2017) that attempted to maximise their subjective distance (i.e. disability coach versus performance coach) within social space to conserve social identity (Bourdieu, 1990a). However, as will be touched upon later (see chapter seven, section 7.2.4), the ideological uncoupling of disability-athlete was framed in empowerment rhetoric and imposed valued attributes and species of capital upon the players (Purdue & Howe, 2012), and therefore by association on the coaches:

The other stereotype is that you have to completely change the way you coach and deliver to work with a disability athlete. From the outside, there's a perception that you have to radically change the way you deliver and the way you behave as a coach which to me in my experience isn't the case. As I said at the beginning for me good coaching is responding to the needs of your group, we just have a concentrated collection of individuals with additional requirements. (David- interview).

These data suggest that the field of the learning disability squad – situated vertically within the broader elite disability cricket field governed by the NGB - operated autonomously and as a space of objective relations in which agents competed for capital. The positions within the field were objectively defined, not only in their function, but in the determinations, they imposed upon their occupants by their “present and potential situation” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97) in the structure and distribution of species of capital. Here, the coaching and management staff attributed distinctions to high-performance and mainstream sport, which suggested that this strategy was oriented by the pursuit of symbolic profits (Bourdieu, 1984). The competencies that the staff valued depended on the chances which different markets (other coaching positions) offered for “accumulating, applying and exploiting” their cultural competence (Bourdieu, 1984, p.79). A key finding from the research was that the coaches sought to reconstruct disability sport to enhance their own positions according to a powerful coaching culture instituted by the governing body. This had implications for the knowledge and practices that the coaches used as they were influenced by the social structures in which they worked. Thus, “the more legitimate a given area, the more necessary and ‘profitable’ it is to be competent in it” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 79). Indeed, these schemes of thought, generated through unstructured experiences in the field, might therefore frame how coaches seek to

improve their knowledge by attending coach education courses, as shown in chapter five (section 5.2.1).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the coaching context, situated across the sub-fields of disability cricket and disability coaching, was mediated by the field of power. By conceptualising the sub-field of the learning disability squad within Bourdieu's *field of power* the process of coach learning can be understood as controlled, constrained and shaped by the overarching culture and secured through the misrecognition of certain forms of capital. This means that coaches' ongoing learning took place within broader social structures that had valued certain symbolic attributes and competencies, and had a logic that organised thoughts, perceptions and actions into a symbolic coherence (Bourdieu, 1990a). For Bourdieu, practice involves a blend between the conscious and the unconscious, a product of practical sense or a socially constituted 'feel-for-the-game', thus explaining how cultural settings operate according to their own internal logic and how people – often unconsciously – become competent social actors within these cultural settings. The field of power and the struggles within it therefore generated practices that were "compatible with the objective conditions – but also practical in the sense of convenient, that is, easy to master and use" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 86). Learning was therefore closely related to practice and was shaped by principles related to high-performance coaching and disassociations with disability, constituting an interrelated and "practically integrated whole" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 86). It is to these practices that my focus now turns.

Chapter Seven

The Logic of (Coaching) Practice

Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician

Bourdieu (1990a, p. 86)

7.1 Introduction

Chapters six and seven, together, attempt to describe and understand how coaches construct and express knowledge about coaching disabled athletes within a specific disability coaching context. In the last chapter I analysed the field of power applied to coach learning in disability sport. The analysis revealed that there were certain discourses in the field about disability that were generated, reproduced and internalised by the coaches in the context constituting a doxic order as they were taken-for-granted. In terms of coach learning the doxic order (Bourdieu, 1977) worked to constrain and influence the learning process of the coaches (see chapter six, section 6.2.2). Together, the doxa and capital highlighted in the field were reflective of the logic of practice shaped by normalising, performance values. To understand how this logic influenced social practice, this chapter will provide a practically-oriented view and focus down on the ways in which the doxa was internalised by coaches and expressed within coaching practice. Specifically, how beliefs about ‘disability’ and the material and symbolic practices in coaching constituted specific doxa, and this process was secured through a continual process of misrecognition. Central to the doxic order was the way that disability was positioned within the field, as it had very ‘real’ effects for the production of coaching practice. This chapter analyses the collective social relations that constructed, produced, institutionalised, enacted and performed disability (Smith & Perrier, 2014) within practical coaching activity, and therefore how coaches learned.

7.2 Assimilation of Disability

As I have already argued (see chapter six, section 6.2.2), the coaching context had within it specific doxa that reflected the logic of the high-performance coaching field. The logic of the field was primarily associated with high-performance values and ideals. This had implications for the way in which disability was assimilated into the coaching field, the way coaches learned about disability and disability coaching. Assimilating disability into the logic of high-performance cricket had ‘real effects’ by legitimating and reproducing specific forms of knowledge about coaching and the disabled body. A way of understanding how the coaching and management staff adjusted to the assimilation of disability is through the use of habitus. Whilst habitus is constituted individually, doxa transcends any one particular habitus (Atkinson, 2011). Even if doxic beliefs are produced by particular habitus – namely those possessing symbolic power – it is fed back into and sustained by multiple habitus as shared

beliefs and orientations (Atkinson, 2011). Secondly, doxic experience is secured by the synchronisation of objective relational structures (e.g. coaching staff) and the subjective perceptions of their habitus. With the coaches, management and support staff I sought to explore their working understandings of ‘disability’ and ‘impairment’ to provide insight into how these constructions influenced their practice and shaped learning. For example:

I don't think that deeply about it. So, if you were to say to me what's the difference between a disability and an impairment, to me both of them are just labels, impairment implies fault, disability I think in the minds of some can present an image of sticks and wheels. I probably prefer the term impairment. I think we *have to focus on the ability* and the function as opposed to the disability, the impairment and the lack of function. So, I think the more that we can talk to coaches about working with what the player can do, I just think we've got to get away from disability and impairment, literally all that is to me is a grouping of where they sit on the pathway for progression. (Brian, programme director - interview).

In sport, the disabled body is inseparable from the complex web of socio-cultural relations that, as Edwards and Imrie (2003) argued, creates “sites of contestation” (p. 240). Bourdieu (1989) argued that “differences” such as disability can “function as distinctive signs and as signs of distinction, positive or negative” (p. 20). These distinctions can be shaped by the structures of the field, which in this case was a ‘high-performance’ coaching context. For example, Steve (coach), attempted to institute a universal principle of classification whereby the players’ disabilities were rejected:

RT: Given the context that you work in, how do you understand the difference between disability and impairment? Is this important to know?

Steve: No, I don't want to know, I'm not – to me I don't overthink it that much Rob, I don't, disability, impairment, you know, whatever you want to call it, it doesn't interest me, I've got no interest in that. To me that question is, I don't know, I'm not being blasé, but it doesn't affect, disability, impairment or the difference between it, would not affect how I run a session, would not affect how I deliver the session, how deliver a spin session, how I deliver a sweep session, how I deliver a team talk, it just doesn't even affect me mate, so I don't know. (Interview).

In this sense, Steve incorporated the ‘rules’ of the game and the cultural field, and that functioned as a delimitation that not only reproduced knowledge, but also produced a ‘self-interested ignorance’ (Schirato & Webb, 2002, p. 258). Disability, for Steve, held no meaning, as he sought to disassociate himself from disability, and frame his practice in such a way that increased the perceived legitimacy of coaching (Purdue & Howe, 2012):

What's my attitude towards disability? ‘Disability’? It's just a fucking label. It doesn't exist.

(Field notes).

In this sense Steve (i.e. non-disabled) re-constructed undesirable bodies (disabled athletes) (Azzarito, 2009) as disability represented negative distinctions and offered a heterodox discourse. To frame disability discourse in this way – that is, to coach the ‘athlete’ – was therefore an orthodox discourse and by internalising and expressing the performance doxa Steve was able to leverage symbolic capital to maintain a specific metanarrative about coaching disabled athletes:

Yeah, you need an understanding of LD I think, you need to understand the wider context of the individuals, not that that would affect what you do, but the awareness of what’s going on in their lives etc. etc. does sometimes explain certain behaviours, or certain characteristics I think is a fair statement, so an understanding of that helps. An ability to adapt, massively in all situations. An ability to be true to yourself and challenge the individuals and see past the disability or see past the impairment whatever you want to call them, I don’t know... But yeah, so just see past that and actually just view it, view them, view these guys are cricketers and players that, every cricketer can improve, every cricketer, for me has an undefined ceiling of talent. Now, no, talent’s the wrong word actually, of ability and potential, whatever you want to call it. For me, the sky’s the limit for these guys, because if they work hard enough they can, technically they can be as good as they want. (Steve – interview).

The rejection of disability was an exercise of consecration, as Bourdieu (2000, p. 97) argued, “once one has accepted the viewpoint that is constitutive of a field, one can no longer take an external viewpoint on it”:

Players were often given ‘individual’ time in which they would go and work in small groups on different aspects of the game. Commonly, the players would receive direction from members of the coaching staff or being encouraged to work off their ‘action plans’ which defined areas for improvement in their cricket. During this particular session, as some players were hitting balls in the nets, Steve and I were observing as Oscar joined us.

“The players seem to be working well”.

Steve laughed. “These drills are great for them. I don’t approach this as a disability environment. I coach these boys like I would a 13-year-old boy, in the same way. I can go an entire weekend without thinking these boys have a disability- I forget about their disabilities. It’s true Rob!”

Oscar agreed. “yeah, it used to be a bit like a PE lesson. Now it’s proper, they’re always fucking busy”.

Later, over dinner, I questioned Steve about what he said.

“What did you mean earlier, when you said you coach them like a 13-year-old boy?”

“Well, it’s simple, Rob. Otherwise I’m changing my beliefs as a coach, aren’t I? Which would mean I’m coaching the disability *not* the cricketer”.

(Field notes).

These data are illustrative of the way in which Steve’s habitus aligned with the field and expressed in homogenising terms and was seen similarly with the participants engaged with the coach education programme (Chapter five, see section 5.2.3). Here, Steve exercised his “power to impose and to inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible and explicit social divisions” that functioned as a “power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Steve’s rejection of disability was representative of the ways that he tried to maximise the symbolic capital associated with working in ‘performance’ cricket and rejecting the negative capital associated with disability.

While Steve attributed negative distinctions to ‘labels’ of disability, for other members of the staff there was a more ‘positive’ and progressive discourse about the players when considering the assimilation of disability into the coaching environment:

There’s no difference between disability and impairment, because actually we should be looking at it going, actually, they’re athletes first – people first, athletes second, someone with a disability impairment third. Not the other way around like some people say it. (Bert, team manager - interview).

From Bert’s perspective, assimilating disability into the high-performance logic emphasised the cultural capital of disabled *athlete* (cf. Purdue & Howe, 2012) and the value of the social and symbolic capital derived from being associated with elite disability cricket. Oscar, the strength and conditioning coach, too sought to reframe discussions about disability and impairment in line with athletic discourses, as to do so was ‘self-evident’ (Bourdieu, 1977):

RT: Given the context that we work in, disability sport, how do you understand the difference between disability and impairment, is there a difference? Is it important to know?

Oscar: Pretty much a similar thing aren’t they, I mean is there a definition for them? I don’t know, like I said I mean for me it’s irrelevant, you know, I’m dealing with people with impairment or disability, however you want to put it, but they’re just a group of players, which just have slightly different needs to another group of players, but those group of players have a completely different need to these players, you’re just coaching a group of people. (Interview).

Habitus ensures the endowment of a particular social field with an orthodoxy that is secured through the alignment of coaches’ experiences and the continuous reinforcement of similar

experiences (Bourdieu, 1977). This process produces the ‘common-sense world’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 80). Though, the constructed coaching discourse was accepted and acquired with varying degrees of resistance. For instance, David was more reflective of the link between ‘disability’, ‘impairment’ and coaching. Importantly, this variability ensued because expressions of habitus are perceived through the categories of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a):

Perhaps the preconception [is that] disability refers to something that is catastrophic. It’s unchangeable it’s un-influence-able, it’s viewed as being very final, whereas I think if you talked to people about impairment I think they’d probably see a lot more opportunity within that word. They’d probably just view it as a limitation but for me all these guys are defined as having a disability, but we haven’t arrived at an end point for anybody yet. My experience is that impairment, disability, there isn’t a gaping chasm between the two they are inextricably linked. (Interview).

However, structuring dispositions are themselves structured by dominant social conditions (Bourdieu, 1990a) and David’s framing of disability in progressive, empowerment terms ensured acceptance of the ‘common-sense’ coaching culture. The nature of disability for the coaching staff was “shaped by the interaction of biological and social factors, and [was] bound up with processes of socio-cultural naming” (Thomas, 1999, p. 43).

Coaches’ understandings of disability were potential stakes in a struggle for position in social space, as Bourdieu’s notion of classification offers an explanation for how people impose judgement on others, according to both objective practices of scientific classification (i.e. the intellectually disabled), and subjective dividing practices that are reflective of individual habitus (i.e. ‘athlete’). In this sense, the socially structured schemes of perception employed by the coaching staff worked against the objective classifications of medical diagnoses (Bourdieu, 1991) to assimilate ‘disability’ into the logic of the high-performance coaching field. Disability represented a classifying and classified schema that had an “appearance of naturalness” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 468) within the social space. As Edwards and Imrie (2003) argued, disabled people are usually understood symbolically, only insofar as they “deviate from a prescribed set of norms” (p. 244). For Theo – relatively new to the environment - the capital associated with scientific classification meant that he articulated his understandings of disability in relation to medical model discourses (see chapter one, p. 5):

An impairment is just some category of a disability, surely? I mean, I’m not really thinking in-depth, but from how I see it is impairment, I suppose, is specific to a person because some people find their disability as an impairment and some people find their disability, they don’t let it be an impairment. I think that’s more of a psychological one, to a point, because obviously some disabilities are definitely more of an impairment than others. But again, I don’t want to undercut people with a disability thinking that

it's not an impairment when, really, all disabilities are impairments, but there's different degrees. (Interview).

Taken together, the analysis demonstrates the “struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 20-21). Coaches struggled to make explicit the categories of perception and schemes of classification that they operationalised in their practice. The way the coaches articulated their understanding of ‘disability’ suggests that they attributed notions of disability with various forms of negative symbolic capital, in that each coach sought to impose and rework their definitions of disability in ways that maximised the symbolic capital aligned with high-performance sport. Importantly, this filtering of knowledge was not always a conscious pattern of thought, and for the coaches a lack of clarity of understanding about disability can be attributed to a reaction based on experience that functioned “beyond the grasp of consciousness” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 93). These deeply-rooted medical model assumptions were evident from the coaches in the coach education programme even when social model rhetoric was present (see chapter five, section 5.2.1) thus illustrating their pervasive and deeply-held nature.

An understanding of disability was reproduced by the coaching staff by the inscribing of distinctive dispositions (‘athletic’ ability) into the durable reality of things (coaching practice), a process that Bourdieu (1990a) called the institutionalisation of distinction. Consequently, the disability coaching environment can be understood as a doxic structure where certain symbolic forms (identity) had a logic and efficacy of their own. By assimilating disability into the high-performance environment, the field was characterised by binaries (i.e. disabled/non-disabled; high-performance/disability sport), that manifested in doxa that functioned to provide a *sense of limits* of possibility (Bourdieu, 1977; see chapter six, section 6.2), and to reproduce objects of knowledge that were founded in practice and legitimised as the “right” or “correct” way. This doxic order referred to the assimilation of disability within a broader subsuming performance environment, the rejection of ‘disability’ and the distinction afforded to ‘athletic’ identity. Importantly, the analysis suggests that for the coaching staff, the reframing of disability was not simply an instrument of cognition but fulfilled an important practical function (Bourdieu, 1998), that is, the nature of learning was grounded within coaching practice and contingent on habitus aligned with the dominant structural conditions of the field. The refractive nature of the logic of the field meant that among the staff there was a conscious effort to align their working understandings of disability to the doxic order, and thus to coach the ‘athlete’, not the disability. The constructions and expressions of knowledge about

disability were therefore an effort to conserve and secure their position in the field. Indeed, disability as a division of the social world, along with its sub-divisions, can present an endless contestation of meaning which is further complicated by the field it is expressed in relation to. Athletic identity was thus closely related to social location (cf. Bourdieu, 1991) and was therefore unstable as, particularly within this case study, coaches sought to negotiate, produce and reproduce an ‘athletic’ identity that was in tension with the players’ ‘official’ social categories (Bourdieu, 1991).

7.2.1 Coach the ‘athlete’, not the ‘disability’

Doxa are ‘regimes of truth’ that represent values and discourses which constitute the fundamental principles of a field and are thus taken-for-granted. Doxa differentiates the field and can predetermine an agent’s perception of which stakes are valuable. This section explains how the distinctions created by the coaching staff between coaching the ‘athlete’ and not the ‘disability’ were actualised and reinforced in practice. This distinction reflects what Purdue and Howe (2012) described as the ideological uncoupling of identity, whereby the field required individuals to respond to disabilities in different ways (Adams, 2006):

I’ve not once approached the environment here as a disability environment, I’ve just approached it as another one of my coaching roles. That might be hard for you to understand because they say oh isn’t it great these lads are playing cricket, it’s so lovely and to me it’s all bollocks, it’s all spiel. (Steve - interview).

By distinguishing between ‘athlete’ and ‘disabled athlete’, the staff subverted and modified schemes of perception towards a more practically oriented and ‘empowering’ view that looked ‘past’ the players’ disabilities (Peers, 2008). Attributing an ‘athletic’ identity to the players had associated symbolic capital and a pre-defined set of valued expectations and dispositions, as the imposition of a recognised name i.e. ‘athlete’ was an act of recognition of “full social existence” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.482):

They’re cricketers and first and foremost they’re cricketers. Yes, they’ve got a disability, but when a ball’s coming towards you at seventy-five miles an hour, nipping away, you know, you’re not getting asked an algebra question, you’re getting asked to deal with a stimulus situation that’s put in front of you, you can’t lose sight that these lads are cricketers and they want to be the best they can be. (Steve – interview).

The schemes of perception and action employed by the coaches were acquired *through* practice and applied *in* practice and exerted their “structuring efficacy only to the extent that they are themselves structured” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 97). The implications for coach education are crucial as the field therefore served as the generative site of knowledge – a powerful source of

learning. As described above, practice for Steve was constructed according to an understanding of disability subsumed under a broad ‘high-performance’ logic that were expressions of habitus constituted through exposure to the culture of cricket. Through such informal learning, habitus orients practices and inscribes objects with value, and engages in a process of constructing and evaluating the social world (Bourdieu, 1984). The habitus:

“Is a socialised body. A structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world – a field - and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world”.

(Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 81).

Reay (2004a) argued that for Bourdieu there are no explicit rules or principles that dictate behaviour, rather “the habitus goes hand in hand with vagueness and indeterminacy” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 77) an example of which can be found in Steve’s perception of his coaching:

I know that I try and coach the cricketer not the SEN¹⁶ player. There are ways I will deliver it differently but with regards to the way I challenge players technically, no I’d say it wouldn’t differ. (Steve - interview).

Steve therefore valued association with dominant discourses of performance and elite sport, that as Azzarito (2009) argued, can be institutionalised and embodied in such a way that they function to ‘normalise the body’ by promoting the ideal athletic body. The practical attributive judgement whereby one puts someone in a class by speaking to them in a certain way (Bourdieu, 1984) is a way of simultaneously relating to one’s own body.

Through his [Steve’s] kind of lack of experience of people with a learning disability he’s come in and *coached*, and the players have really responded to that. Actually, he’s focussing on the cricket, he’s not worried about what they’re doing emotionally, socially, because actually he wants to coach cricket. And they’ve seen that and they’ve responded to it really well. (Bert - interview).

Through repeated exposure to the social conditions of coaching, and therefore the doxic order, coaches can create an illusion of spontaneous understanding and a tendency to conform to a specific set of values and discourses. Thus, as Adams (2006) argued, the field “instantiates us as subjects and reproduces social distinctions via the enactment of habitus” (p. 514). The coaching field was no different, for example:

I think probably I went in a little bit too easy with some of them. I think one of the things was I was a bit too hesitant on what they could or couldn’t do. I need to treat

¹⁶ “Special Educational Needs”.

them like a normal human. How I see it is that coaching is coaching. They're exactly the same as everybody else. Everybody's always developing, no matter what. You've got to look at everyone as the same, no matter what disability they've got or how good they are. They've all got to get better. If they can't get better, then there's no point in you being there. (Theo – interview).

These data highlight how Theo's preconceptions of learning disabilities influenced his practices at the outset of his involvement with the squad. Over time, and through exposure to the dominant social conditions, he began to align with the dominant logic of the field:

I think my coaching is the only thing that's sort of really changed because was I always very open-minded and very accepting of disabilities, really. I mean, obviously I probably got a little bit more frustrated earlier because I was like, oh, why can you not do that? It's gotten better and better and better. Now it's like, as long as they take one thing away from the session, just one thing that's all I care about, one thing. (Interview).

Thus, involvement in the coaching environment on the coaches had a powerful structuring effect on the coaches, as Oscar explained:

Oscar: I probably thought they'd be worse than they actually were.

RT: As in more severe?

Oscar: Yeah, I was thinking, you know, shit like, this is really going to test me. But then, it's tested me, don't get me wrong, but I suppose it took me a long time to realise, this comes from my own coaching development, but four years ago I wasn't the coach I am now, I didn't have those values and principles I go by now, which I've been going by. Yeah, so I assumed them to be worse and it took me a while to understand what they actually need, but the more I coach them I actually understood that they just need what everyone else needs. (Interview).

The analysis indicates that, in this case, structural issues were responsible for defining and dictating coaches' learning processes, that is through habitus construction aligned to the logic of the field. Bourdieu used the term *class habitus* to describe the common behaviours that individuals share as a result of the embodiment of their similar experiences in a particular field. Class habitus is a means to understand how knowledge and practice can be legitimised, reproduced and transmitted through exposure to the same objective conditions (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The development of a particular class habitus is only possible with a common history of involvement in a particular field. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the coaches formed a shared view of coaching through lasting exposure and socialisation within a coaching culture that had powerful institutionalised discourses and constraints. The coaching culture – institutionally supported – produced habitus that was in the interests of the coaches to internalise, as it enabled further progression and maintenance within

the field. This was evident too with participants in chapter five, who sought to further their position in the coaching field through the accumulation of cultural capital associated with disability (see chapter five, section 5.2.2).

Thus, the coaching staff sought to impose athletic ideals onto the players as a way of subverting a ‘disabling gaze’. This resulted in a coaching environment that was constructed around what DePauw (1997) described as the ‘invisibility of disability’, whereby disability was forced into the background of the sporting context and athletic identity superimposed onto the players (Bourdieu, 1984) in such a way that it influenced the material practices (coaching). It was in practice that the habitus of the coaching staff was collectively (re)aligned with the dominant discourses about how best to work with the players:

When I first started out with this squad it took me a while to understand what they (the players) actually need, but the more I coach them I actually understood that they just need what everyone else needs. For me (disability) it’s irrelevant I’m dealing with people with impairment, disability, whatever you want to put it, they’re just a *group of players* which just have slightly different needs to another group of players; you’re just coaching a group of people, just an athlete who wants to be coached. (Oscar - interview).

By (re)constructing the coaching reality the staff and players were engaged in a symbolic struggle of classifications (Bourdieu, 1998) which is the attempt to impose a view of the world most in line with their interests. Expressing symbolic instruments categorised under a “coach the athlete, not the disability” ideology had a number of effects. The coaches (re)constructed their coaching reality and subsequently knowledge of how to coach; found a common means of communicating within a particular culture; and it functioned as an instrument of domination that created a particular form of oppressive relationship that was misrecognised as a form of empowerment and disability-specific resistance (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984; Thomas, 1999).

Indeed, Bourdieu (1984, p. 481) warned against the “evocative power of utterance”, as this specific ideological device in the context of this research functioned as a doxic practice – that is, it was accepted and unquestioned. The data indicated that the dominant culture in disability coaching produced its specific ideological effect by “concealing its function of division (or distinction) under its function of communication” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 80) i.e. to “coach the athlete, not the disability”. The ideological function of the field of production (i.e. disability cricket) was organized around the “opposition between orthodoxy and heterodoxy” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 82), and the struggle for legitimacy in relationship to mainstream sport. To

treat the players as athletes was a ‘natural’ (orthodox) state that was created by the imposition of classificatory systems and mental structures that were adjusted to the social structures of the field. The field therefore functioned as a source of an “implicit pedagogy” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 94) capable of instilling a way of coaching observed as ‘natural’ and established.

The evidence suggests that coaches imposed their own definitions of disability according to the view that worked ‘best’ for them, but also reflecting the view from the ‘top’, that is, the structural view, reproducing and maintaining a doxic order that was considered legitimate. Data also highlights the social construction of the coaches’ ‘eye’ in relation to social issues around disability – that is a gaze mediated by the individual’s own socialisation and their location and exposure to dominant social fields. It is important therefore to understand how and why the coaches produced this definition of social reality as a means of legitimating and justifying the practices employed:

I heard this so many times when I came into this environment. I shit you not. Five words: “it’s because of their impairment”. They can’t do this because of their impairment. I’ve not once heard from a player in this environment, I can’t do it because of my disability, not once has a player said to me they can’t do something because of their disability. They might’ve said, they can’t do it, but the players have never hid behind their disability, so why should a coach? Why should the management team or coaches attribute failure to a disability? It’s bullshit. (Steve- interview).

The way that the coaches conceptualised disability was closely related to the coaching practices that they utilised. Discourses about disability can be produced and reproduced within socio-cultural and ideological formations in particular cultural spaces (Thomas, 1999), as was evident not only in this case-study but in the case study of coach education (see chapter five, section 5.2.3). These discourses, if left unquestioned, can result in coaching spaces becoming trapped in the transmission of ‘legitimate’ ideology about disability and coach learning therefore risks becoming dogmatic, rigid and uncritical. In the next section I discuss the practices within the field that were influenced by the alignment of habitus to the logic of the field.

7.2.2 Symbolic Violence: Structure, Routine and Behaviourism

According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is the imposition of meaning, experienced as legitimate (Jenkins, 2002), that is secured upon dominated agents (players) by dominant groups (coaches) through pedagogic action. For Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) pedagogic action is

achieved through pedagogic work, which in this case can be understood as coaching practice.

Pedagogic work is:

“a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a desirable training, i.e. habitus, the producer of internalisation of the principles of cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after pedagogic action has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of internalised arbitrary”.

(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 31).

Pedagogic work, in this case, was the mode of coaching in which the long-term function was the production of dispositions which those with pedagogic authority (i.e. coaches) valued. Brian explained how the coaches had previously had trouble in exercising pedagogic work with the players:

RT: What challenges have you faced with the LD squad, specifically?

Brian: I would say up until the last three or four years a lack of understanding of what LD is, how it manifests itself and how we can build an environment that works for the players, and so with hindsight now looking at the environment we have now compared with then it wasn't appropriate for the group of guys that we're working with. Although at the time we didn't know, you know what I mean we - what we didn't have was a massive understanding of LD. (Interview).

The structure of the national squad was highly organised, routinized and planned. Training weekends typically ran across two days, once a month from October through to April. Management staff would meet for breakfast between 8-8:30am on Saturday mornings to 'catch up' and for the head coach (David) to outline the plan for the weekend. Players who arrived on Friday night would typically sit apart from the staff, others would arrive at the training venue from 11am onwards, accompanied by their parents. The staff would arrive early and 'prep' the training area for the players' arrival. Numerous photographs from previous international tours adorned one wall of the training hall, depicting team celebrations and individual achievements. Laminated sheets with the words "OUR (Ownership, Unity and Responsibility) TEAM" were placed centrally to these photographs, reminding the players of the values of the squad. At every camp, David wrote out the training programme for the day on the whiteboard fixed adjacent to the entrance to the hall. The players were expected to be 'on deck' by 11:50am, to be welcomed and briefed by David. These briefs, more often than not, were lengthy, repetitive and concerned the behaviours the management staff expected throughout the weekend:

One of the really strong ones for me is consistency. So, communicating in a consistent manner, communicating consistent messages, acting and behaving in consistent ways.

That's really important and that's important from me from the whole of the management that group we give the guys a degree of consistency. (David – interview).

The players don't handle change or change at short notice they can't handle it. One of the things we've learnt over the years is don't do that to them. (Brian – interview).

This training structure rarely changed throughout the winter, reflecting a commitment to clarity and consistency in the coaching approach. During one particularly disruptive camp, Bert remarked:

The players coped so well with the changes and juggling things around. A lot of that is down to us and our calm consistency. (Field notes).

In the coaching staff, Steve assumed the official role of “assistant coach”, but according to the head coach, he was the “technical lead” (field notes). Therefore, it was Steve who spent much of the time during training camps and fixtures “on the shop-floor” with the players and myself in a supporting role. The players had no input toward, or choice about, their schedules, as the coaching staff determined training routines and durations:

I inherited a group of players that were very set on a routine of things, and I think that that was understandable. That's their nature and something they like, isn't it? I think when that is broken, I think that LD athletes may find that harder. (Steve - interview).

These data highlight the ‘routine’ of the training activities which was closely related to entrenched understandings of learning disabilities. Team manager Bert explained:

I've had input into getting some routines better organised. This is the order of what we're going to do the next day, down to things like supporting the coaches to understand that actually the training environment is there and if it's a set routine, you always come to [the training venue], you always go to the same hotel, that actually then you can start playing around a little bit with things inside that. So, we've got a good structure, a good routine around we always go to the same place for training. Opposition is pretty much the same all summer. We play at the same grounds, so there's that familiarity with where we're going, what we're doing. So, the players are hopefully more relaxed when they get to the grounds, when they get to the venues, because they've been there before, they've seen it, and actually then they can focus on the bit that they should be focussing on, which is the cricket. (Interview).

Thus, the players were exposed to a continuous process of socialisation through pedagogic work that constrained their reality but was wrapped up in didactic methods legitimated through a shared understanding of learning disabilities. There was a concerted effort to develop within the players a particular set of dispositions that were recognised as legitimate and valued in the field:

What we are looking about and what we talk about on a regular basis from all aspects is about achieving potential and that's a big driver for us. That can relate to players achieving potential with bat and ball, through to achieving potential with time-keeping, achieving potential with personal management, hygiene, any issues that they might sort of arise within the individual, achieving potential within their responsibility to each other, and the requirement of them to support one another, so that's really where we focus a large percentage of our time. (David, head coach – interview).

These data are suggestive once again of a contradiction underpinning the coaching process. That is, on the one hand, disability was dismissed, but at the same time allowed for and addressed through the pedagogic work underpinning these processes of socialisation. For example, within the LD squad, players were not only required to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the game, but also to learn wider life skills that would enable the players to be able to 'function better':

Not only are they being treated with respect as a cricketer, because they're at the peak of where any sportsperson wants to be, which is representing their country, they're given that respect, they're given that respect as an adult. More importantly, for me, they're functioning in a peer group that is all functioning at the same sporting level. (Bert – interview).

These ableist, normative dispositions were reflective of a medical model perspective on disability. As highlighted in chapter one, the medical model defines disability as any lack of ability resulting from impairment to perform an activity within the range considered normal for a person (Goodley, 2011), wherein solutions to 'disability' are directed at the individual, thereby leaving the social environment and associated oppression unchallenged. Thus, exposure to pedagogic work was recognised as 'good' for the development of the players. The coaching staff saw their work as related to helping the players to 'fit' not only within cricket, but in wider society or, put another way, to merge habitus and field:

RT: how do you measure and view progress with the players?

Bert: Four years ago, when I first started, for the first year, I was last to bed, first up in the morning. Because not all the guys are great at getting themselves up, not all the guys were good at putting themselves to bed at a sensible time for training. For me, progress now is that actually when I wake up in the morning I don't have to be first down for breakfast, a little tick list to make sure everyone is up. I – trust isn't the right word, but the players have responded to being treated like an adult, so now their behaviour has been modified. But that positive behaviour they've now shown is because they've been given that responsibility to manage themselves. That's been the biggest kind of change. (Interview).

The environment of the learning disability squad incorporated not only a formal coaching process but involved a process of socialisation framed by medical model discourses whereby

athletes had to conform to the imposition of a singular and prescribed coaching model or ‘right’ way of coaching cricket. This too was evident in chapter five, reflective of the dominance of medical model discourses (see chapter five, section 5.2.2), that influenced coach learning and to the extent that the formal coaching process was characterised by a behaviourist model, whereby the players were passive recipients of a sequentially-ordered and controlled coaching process. The running of training camps reflected a behavioural model, whereby practice was progressed step-by-step and coaches would revisit and build on previously learned skills from month-to-month. Thus, camps more often than not were repetitive, providing an environment that was highly controlled, offered simplicity and a method for teaching cricket skills in relatively straightforward ways (cf. Tusting and Barton, 2006):

Obviously with some of the attached issues for the players with their learning disability, their ability to retain information, to process information, what we tend to find is that development is a decelerated process. So, it’s very much about very simple key messages that can be repeated and revisited at a maximum volume. I think sort of the important thing is when planning is that you don’t just plan for one camp you plan for six months because that’s probably the amount of time it’s going to take to make any meaningful progress, so then factoring in how you provide those repeat opportunities to embed, you know that’s the thing you always have to keep in mind is these guys, because of their disability, information retention is a challenge for them so a chance to revisit, repeat and get volume in is quite important to them. (David - interview).

Furthermore, due to the demands of ‘performance’ cricket, the socialisation processes the players were a part of meant that they were expected to demonstrate behavioural changes across sporting and lifestyle domains, despite their impairment impacting on their embodied functioning in diverse ways. As David explained:

We’re challenging guys in different areas than just being able to hit a ball at 75mph off the back foot though a certain area. (David – interview).

A distinguishing feature of the behaviourist model embedded within the coaching context, for instance, was the growing disciplinary hold of the sports sciences. The function of Theo, Gill (nutritionist), Buzz (physiotherapist) and Bert (in his personal development and welfare role) was to effect ‘positive’ behavioural change with the players. One area for development concerned the the weight and physical prowess of the players:

As you can see from the physical condition of some of the players they’re not what you would necessarily look at as typically international athletes. (David – interview).

However, the following extract from the parent focus group highlights the difficulties with effecting ‘positive change’ with the players:

Parent: For D at the moment, but when the coach says to him, "Go and do these exercises. Do them three times a week," as soon as he gets in the car he's forgotten about that and he won't bother, frankly. But he will do it here. You know, if you tell him to do whatever, he will do as he's told here, definitely. But being self-motivated, to be motivated to do that himself, it's very, very difficult.

RT: In terms of the prehab¹⁷ and nutrition?

Parent: Yeah. It doesn't matter to him. Playing cricket matters to him, but the nutrition and the exercise and stuff like that, he knows the value of the exercise and the nutrition and things like that, but he doesn't practice what he preaches.

Parent: the journey's tough, but I think, collectively as parents, we're probably a group of people who have to spend an awful lot of time reinforcing behaviour. So really the way that we work with this coach group here and we work with the athletes, we probably do as much work independently as the coaches do in terms of reinforcing those positive messages and saying, look, you shouldn't be eating that. I think if you didn't have that drive for them to do well yourself, I think a lot of them would just fall off the programme. Which is why you don't see a hall full of athletes, I guess.

(Parent focus group).

As a result, staff briefings on camp regarded players' hydration levels, their physical fitness or concerns about their weight, to the point where sanctions and punishments were considered as a means of reinforcing the messages from the staff. The players were constantly asked to monitor their meals and make 'sensible' choices:

Bert sent a message to the management WhatsApp group this afternoon, providing detail about his meeting with one of the players (A):

You'll be impressed by the amount of calories A has consumed today! It's interesting to note who has jumped at the chance for something unhealthy when they are not in the performance environment

Gill replied: Well it is interesting also that they don't think we might discuss this.

(Field notes).

The players, despite their acceptance, recognised the constraining nature of their involvement in the squad:

A: being in this squad does have a lot of disadvantages outside of the squad like not able to do social events, not able to do loads of other stuff because you're either playing or training, very little rest time.

¹⁷ "Prehab" was management speak for the pre-rehabilitation practices players were expected to do away from training camps as a means of injury-avoidance and physical conditioning.

RT: what about the nutrition and the S&C support, do you find that hard when you're away from the squad to try and watch what you eat or carry on working out?

R: my mum and dad talk to me about nutrition a lot because I eat a lot of food if I'm honest.

The players laugh.

R: no not a load of rubbish I eat good stuff but I eat a lot of it if you know what I mean and I kind of exercise to burn it off so the nutrition we always talk about what we could eat instead and I always know from Gill about what nutrition stuff I should be eating so I've learnt a lot from nutrition side.

A: I enjoy the nutrition and the S&C, no, I do like the extra support we've got.

RT: is it hard?

R: yeah.

A: now I'm working it's a lot more harder it's a lot harder to [work] and think about other things as well especially when we've got a team of us that all just go to the chippy and it's like.

Laughter.

PJ: parties - it's hard to stay sociable.

(Player focus group).

Coaching might be described as a “weakly autonomous field in that it is highly permeable to the influence from other fields” (Brown, 2005, pp. 6-7) resulting in the formation of dogma and practical truisms that solidify and become resistant and difficult to change (Piggott, 2011; Cushion & Partington, 2014). These data are illustrative of the ways that involvement in the learning disability squad produced a habitus that in various ways had value for the broader sporting field and the political field in terms of the “ordering of bodies in social space, health practices and, of course, athletic performance” (Brown, 2005, p. 7). The interest and subsequent influence demonstrated by these practices as part of the coaching process can be understood as “part of the larger field of struggles over the definition of the legitimate body and the legitimate uses of the body” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 122). During the winter training camps, there had been a growing concern over the players' hydration levels, with Gill measuring and monitoring all players and ‘naming and shaming’ consistent dehydration offenders in her nutrition sessions. Gill's involvement reflected an ongoing concern to educate the players in terms of their nutritional and lifestyle habits:

I came in to this environment with this view of what performance nutrition would be like, and I quickly realised this wouldn't fit with this group. It's more around nutritional

and lifestyle advice, not support. (Buzz) sat me down and explained to me a few things. I was always fine with the practical, education side of things, at first if I didn't feel like I had a direct influence on them, after a while I realised it wasn't necessary to feel like you've taught something, it's taken me ages to figure that out, I always felt I had to achieve something major. (Gill –field notes).

In terms of their physical conditioning, Theo provided the players with a comprehensive list of 'prehab' exercises to conduct every day in their own time.

Their spectrum of disability, it's probably the hardest one to coach to get the desired quality and improvement I want. The fact that these guys aren't going to be able to do everything perfectly at the same time and do they necessarily understand what they're doing, where they want to get to. They don't understand. It sounds bad, but you realise at this camp actually how dumb they are. (Theo - field notes).

On the way home I'll say to [D], "how was it and what did they tell you to do? What exercises did they tell you to do?", "oh, nothing". Early on this week he was going, "oh Christ, I should have done some exercises". "Well, why didn't you tell me, then? I asked you, but you didn't bother to tell me". It's just things like that really, the miscommunication.

(Parent focus group).

Within this socialisation process, the social environment and coaching culture were treated as unproblematic and disabled athletes were instead viewed as disadvantaged by their own bodies (Oliver, 1996). This finding resonates with the data describing the learning culture on the coach education courses (see chapter five, section 5.2.3). In this case study, the focus was on the reinforcement and refinement of a particular athletic habitus, embodying symbolic capital, through practice in the de-limited field of the learning disability squad (cf. Brown, 2005). While the overt coaching process was characterised by a model of behaviourism, the socialisation process encapsulated a tendency to problematise disabled people and view them as an object for intervention (Quinn *et al.*, 2002). The lack of reflection on the social environment was a product of the assimilation of disability into a prevailing 'performance' environment, whereby coaching was fundamentally about improving sporting performance against the limitations disabled athletes had. Therefore, by providing the players with the 'same' support as a 'performance' side the focus was on the disabled individual and the expectation to make behavioural change a product of symbolic violence, enacted through pedagogic work and legitimated through empowerment discourses. A crucial part of the underpinning ideology was related to 'challenging' the players beyond their assumed capabilities under an 'empowerment' discourse.

7.2.3 Ideology of Challenge

I think we'd got into a state of overprotection. I think what we did badly now, and it felt it didn't feel great at the time, but it feels a lot worse now on reflection, was we made assumptions as to how players would respond to certain situations, certain environments, certain challenges and we didn't actually explore what they could respond to and how they would respond to it. So, I think we fell into a trap of being an unhelpfully supportive environment. I think we'd got into that trap where you know to have success in a coaching environment I think it's important that players feel supported there's no getting away from that in my opinion, but what we were doing was we were skipping the challenge element and we were going straight to the supportive environment. Whereas for me the supportive element comes after the challenge and I think also what we fell into a trap of was actually that support meant picking people up and encouraging them and giving them a pat on the back and being sympathetic. (David - interview).

Underpinning both the coaching and the socialisation process was a shared ideology that was related to providing an 'environment of challenge' for the players. This was a relatively 'new' ideology that provided a "sense of limits" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164) of the coaching environment and associated practices. Such an ideology represented an orthodox discourse that was generated through David's involvement with the squad over a number of years:

I think over a period of time I've become a little bit braver with the players. I've raised and extended my expectations of them. I think I was very cautious with my expectations initially and I think that probably led to an environment initially that wasn't necessarily as stimulating or as inspiring as the guys would have liked and I think as well, as I've developed as a coach and as I've developed my bravery to challenge the guys. The guys have responded to it and have enjoyed that additional challenge and raised expectations of them, being clear on what we are expecting of them and consistent is important. It's not necessarily about how high you raise the challenge I think it's about just making sure they are clear and understand what the challenge is but then I think they have also enjoyed the independence that has created by having a clear expectation of what they were working towards. (David – interview).

Thus, the management team sought to assemble agents who aligned with the 'new', legitimate orthodoxy within the field, and subscribed to the ideology of challenge:

Biggest thing for me in terms of change in the last year has – one great example is – and I hate to talk about him, but [Steve]. He is a very different character and a very different coach to our old assistant coach. Thankfully one thing that [Steve] through his kind of lack of experience of people with a learning disability is that he's come in and coached, and the players have really responded to that. Actually, he's focussing on the cricket, he's not worried about what they're doing emotionally, socially, because actually he wants to coach cricket. And they've seen that, and they've responded to it really well. [Steve's] enabling that through his unique way of coaching. I think the fact he sees them as cricketers first is massive for the landscape of learning disability cricket. I think that it's a real challenge for the players. So that's been the biggest change. (Bert-interview).

From the outset you know I was, my remit if you like was to try and ramp things up a level. The bottom line is that, like any performance squad, or any team, or club side, you change your culture, you change an ethos, you challenge people. (Steve – interview).

The occupation of a social position such as coaching influences the development of patterns of behaviour. The knowledge needed to occupy that position requires the development of habitus. By disguising the acquisition of knowledge through habitus construction, certain forms of knowledge were predisposed to function as symbolic capital i.e. to be unrecognised as capital and recognised as legitimate competence. Cushion and Jones (2006) argued that because habitus is acquired as a result of the occupation of a position within the social world, and while not everyone has the same habitus, those who occupy the same position tend to have similar habitus (Ritzer, 1996) in that “each person has a unique individual variant of the common matrix” (Wacquant, 1998, p. 221). For instance, Steve’s appointment to the role of assistant coach reflected the recognition of certain dispositions as valued in the changing circumstances of the field and David’s own habitus development. Indeed, habitus tends to recognise itself in others:

David: I think for me it was important we moved away from that over-supportive environment. There was an opportunity that presented itself to bring someone in...someone with another fresh pair of eyes. I was conscious that the guys needed a coaching environment that they could connect with. It now needed to move on a little bit. We then had the opportunity to bring in a new assistant coach and that just felt like an opportunity that we couldn't miss and was important we didn't stuff up and so I had to give some thought about what it was I was looking for because there were three or four really good coaches who came forwards for the role more than capable of doing a job but it was just what job they needed to do. So, confidentially between you and I we had the interview day where we interviewed like I think it was nine or ten coaches for three roles, and there was a couple of coaches that appealed to me but [Steve] just stood out and absolutely fitted the model the remit that I'd got in my head. So, in MBTI terms I'm a reflective thinking blue who takes a bit of time to get things done, I felt we needed a pretty strong red that was gonna get things done and would bring some energy would bring some expectation and some demand to it which as I say [Steve] stood out from the crowd on that interview day as having that.

RT: How have the players responded?

David: Better than I could have anticipated. We've moved away from now a situation where we assumed that a supportive environment was one where you just were sympathetic rather than a supportive environment is one where in our terms now for some of the guys it's we give them support through challenge. (Interview).

Steve, from his position in the coaching hierarchy exercised his considerable symbolic capital in order to influence the coaching reality through a legitimate voice:

One of my key observations when I first came into the environment was that we were wrapping these boys up a little bit, which I think can be, can be done, in a performance environment because you've got the S&C here, you've got the physio, you've got the coach, you've got the nutritionist, you've got all these roles, and people will feel they need to justify roles, and I think that there's a danger with that, that we can molly-coddle these boys and wrap them up. I felt we protected the boys too much and were very quick to state 'ah well that's because of their disability' or 'they do that because of this', when in fact they did it just because you know that's how they were it was nothing to do with their disability, so I think that there's a danger that if we attribute everything negative to a disability that when you're attributing something positive what do you attribute it to then? Disability? Or is it that actually they're doing really well? (Steve - interview).

The ideology of challenge was linked to the reconstruction of 'disability' in more seemingly 'positive' terms and the development of valued dispositions towards performance-level cricket. By distancing themselves from devalued 'disabled' identities, the coaching staff were able to contribute to the reproduction of the social order by producing "objectively orchestrated" practices that were adjusted to those divisions (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 163). Simply, the staff implemented a definition of coaching practice that most suited their interests, and so imposed a higher level of expectation and demand on the players. It is in these conditions that fields enter a doxic mode where the taken-for-granted nature of practice is discursively recognised yet unchallenged and accepted:

The coaching staff, since Steve's come on board there is a big oomph in performances and training sessions which are more intense. To me I've gained a lot more since Steve's come on board and I've improved since Steve's come on board. (A – player focus group).

Players, when not being directed by Steve or David, were expected to operate at a level of autonomy in working on their individual 'games' from an individual 'action plan' that was written by David and Steve. Staff, too were expected to raise and maintain the level of 'challenge' during training:

During one particular management briefing over breakfast, the head coach laid out the rules for this camp to the staff:

There's no getting away from it. Because of the time we have these weekends are demanding. My challenge this weekend to the staff is that I want to see a player cry. If I don't see a player cry, we've failed.

The management team laughed.

(Field notes).

The practical manifestation of this directive of ‘challenge’ was a level of technical aptitude and progress that the players were expected to attain and demonstrate, and player learning was reduced to observable changes, facilitated through practices designed to encourage ‘failure’. This was not a subversive act – the coaches explicitly told the players they expected, demanded and guaranteed failure:

So, I think one of my observations when I first came to the environment is that we need to push these boys more, we need to give them more, a bit more respect maybe, as what it is they can achieve if we allow them to. There has to be an element of allowing these guys to fail. Since I came into the environment we’ve had tears, we’ve had sweat, we’ve had bleeding, you know we’ve had all of that in the winter, a lot of tears from different players, because they’ve never been challenged and so to me that’s bollocks. I’d rather them fail, or be in tears, or be frustrated around us, because we can help them with the strategies and tools required to bounce back from it. (Steve – interview).

Coaching practice today was focusing on playing off the ‘back foot’ at pace. There were four ‘working’ nets, each with a bowling machine with a different task to be completed. They were generally presided over by the players who moved between nets in groups of three and four, feeding each other six to twelve balls each before swapping. Steve presided over one net, with me observing, and we worked with a player (J). As I observed the practice, I noticed the level of intensity in this particular net. It involved J repeatedly facing balls out of the machine upwards of 75mph, generally directed towards J’s chest, neck and head. J’s directive was to “get in a good position”.

Time after time the ball flashed past J’s head, thudded into his gloves or crunched into his rib cage. More than once J ended up in a heap on the floor, getting to his feet shakily. As this happened, the rest of the players began to watch. As I stood next to the coach, I could see J’s face getting redder and redder, his eyes wide. The coach continued to feed the balls into the machine, giving J little respite as the ball continued to strike him on the pads, into his thigh-pad or whistling past his head. There was a hushed silence from the other players, broken only by loud exclamations from the coach. I could see that the player was in pain and getting anxious and upset. This practice continued until eventually there were no balls left, and J walked out of the net in tears.

(Field notes).

J: I will confess last year I had a bit of a shock to the system in terms of how much I’d been challenged in the past although I’d been challenged it was still relatively within my comfort zone, whereas working with Steve and particularly working on the short ball with (you) as well.

RT: we took you out of your comfort zone.

J: It really did, I will confess as well, I actually broke down in one session and it took me a while to get over it.

(Player focus group).

Later, I questioned Steve about this:

It's good for the other players to see a player of his (J's) stature struggle. [It] is a massive message that, hang on here, well J's struggling, I'm allowed to struggle. For me that was a defining moment because it became an *acceptance amongst the boys*, that actually you know what, we don't have to get it completely right every time, failing occasionally is okay. You know, I'm not going to get things completely right every single time, and to me that was a defining moment, a big statement that, a big statement. (J) was always going to bounce back, he's that sort of lad, he's keen, there's a wider context to it, he's always messaging me, he's looking for reassurance, he wants to improve his game, he wants to be the best he can be, so it wasn't, it was done in the right way. The intention wasn't to upset him. (Steve – interview).

Hence, the instruments of communication and knowledge constructed and used by the staff can be understood as instruments of power (Bourdieu, 1979) in that their use legitimated certain coaching methods as 'right' for this group:

Cricket doesn't stop mate. The game *doesn't allow* for their processing time, so the more we stretch them and their processing the better. We have to get them used to working outside of their comfort zone. (Steve- field notes).

David, in his role as head coach, gave a specific example from his coaching practice:

RT: At what point do you stop challenging them? At what point do you draw the line and go this is too much?

David: I don't think we've found that yet if I'm honest. I think we're still probing and exploring that I think that was probably where we let ourselves down in the past we probably pulled out a bit too quickly. We would see people reacting in certain ways, so I think back...I've got a guy who's been in my ear for the last twelve months about wanting to bat higher wanting to have more opportunity with the bat getting frustrated because he's not getting that opportunity. But without putting too fine a point on it he's a bit scared of a ball back of a length. He's saying he wants this extra opportunity, but I've not seen him doing a lot about trying to bridge that gap. So, I jumped into his individual time last month in the November camp. I stepped in and told him what I was gonna do and we just attacked back of a length, very straight line cramping him for space and we upped it a few miles an hour and I told him from the outset I was gonna try and hit him which is something I wouldn't have done two years ago. I wouldn't have been that bold and up front with it. I succeeded and I hit him a few times and I think two years ago I'd have either cranked the machine down or I'd have got down off the machine and I'd have gone down the end and I'd have used up his time by giving him a cuddle and telling him how great he was and how much I loved him and I didn't this time. I was consciously loud, and I was consciously in his face and I was consciously telling him what was gonna happen next and how I was gonna hit him on the thigh, I was gonna hit him on the hip, and I just really challenged him not just with his technical ability but with his ability to cope with that. I think I would have backed off much quicker a while ago but I had more confidence and conviction to stay with it to stick with it and we really pushed him through and he ended up getting through a really tough situation and he came out and probably in our old environment or less mature environment he'd have probably taken the option of going and sitting out and having a bit of a sulk and waiting for someone to come and put an arm around him but with a

little bit less of that not completely neglected but with a little bit less of that now he went away he gave himself some time, he composed himself and he got back into the environment and he sort of got into his next challenge and sort of that's a big change. (Interview).

Together, this coaching approach – disguised under a veil of ‘challenge’, fulfilled the purpose as an instrument of domination (or, more precisely, of legitimization of domination) whereby both players and coaching staff consecrated a way of coaching that was valued and perpetuated in the field. Thus, the ideology underpinning coaching served “particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, common to the whole group” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 80) and coaches ‘learned’ what was accepted and ‘right’ in coaching the players according to a dominant coaching ideology. The process of symbolic violence secured this ideology, as it referred to the way that the coaches had the monopoly on discourse about the social world (i.e. coaching) and imposed meaning on dominated groups (athletes). But, as with all of Bourdieu’s concepts, it is not restrictive. The imposition of a coaching approach characterised by pushing the athletes to ‘learn’ through failure and challenge, with breakdowns viewed as progressive was the result of a well-intentioned discourse of empowerment, which was an act of symbolic violence enforced in ‘real’ terms through pedagogic work (coaching practice), and secured through a process of misrecognition. Thus, the learning process was overt and formal in terms of ‘what’ was learned about ‘how’ to coach, but the process underpinning coach learning was closely linked to issues of power, ideology and domination.

7.2.4 Misrecognition & Empowerment

Bourdieu’s concept of misrecognition comes from his central concern with social practices in social spaces or fields (James, 2015). As James (2015) noted, misrecognition refers to a social practice of individual or collective misattribution:

“Misrecognition relates to the ways...(that) underlying processes and generating structures of fields are not consciously acknowledged in terms of the social differentiation they perpetuate, often in the name of democracy and equality”.

(Grenfell & James, 1998, pp. 23–24).

The analysis of the coaching practices suggests that the coaching process was legitimised through the tacit acceptance of ‘empowerment’ discourses. In Bourdieu’s view, social fields produce knowledge, and knowledge is a form of capital, associated with prestige or power (James, 2015) in relation to different orthodoxies. In this sense, the coaches collectively embodied the ideology of challenge in the construction of coaching practice, but this was

misrecognised as progressive, beneficial and empowering for the players. By housing the demanding, highly ordered and intense nature of practice in discourses of ‘empowerment’, ‘progression’ and ‘achieving potential’ both staff and players accepted this way as ‘right’, thus adhering to the orthodoxy, and displaying homogenous views about disability:

This new management has come in, they (the players) are more challenged, but the players love that because they’re actually, they’re playing, they’re challenged in a good way, they’re playing cricket. The drills, basically we used to hardly do anything at camps to be honest, I’d do my bit, those individual sessions, lots of individual sessions, but the cricket, lots of waiting around, not that much intensity, so they weren’t being challenged, physically, mentally, socially, they weren’t being challenged. Since you guys have come in, always fucking busy, in a good way, the boys are loving it, they’re playing cricket. They’re being challenged by having...being repeated to the same scenarios over and over again, and getting better at it, better at it, that’s a challenge. (Oscar – interview).

I think the reality is, is what are we doing here, are we preparing a wrapped-up group of individuals to play disability sport, or are we preparing them for a lifetime, and supporting their ambitions in mainstream sport, and I think a lot, most of our squad are playing mainstream cricket as well, and they wouldn’t be viewed by oppositions or teammates I shouldn’t think as a disability cricketer, I think they would just fit in as a mainstream cricketer. (Steve – interview).

These coaching approaches were agreed to be in the ‘best interests’ of the players, despite the impairment effects often impacting on the players’ functioning as a result of the training such as high levels of anxiety, poor concentration, misunderstanding and anxiety about new activities, and in some cases ‘meltdowns’ occurring not infrequently:

For me it comes back to that - better people, better cricketers. [Steve] is making them better cricketers, every time he has a session with them. The behaviours and the anxiety of the players I would much rather be managing that and them develop as cricketers rather than it being a case of we have no anxieties, no concerns from the players about what’s going on but they’re not developing as cricketers. It does go hand in hand (Bert-interview).

I’m constantly looking for me to challenge the guys you know I think that they value people having raised expectations of them. I think again going back to your question around stereotypes I think sort of that’s one of the stereotypes they’ve probably encountered quite a little bit is that people have reduced expectations so I think that’s really important for me I spend a lot of time reflecting and checking back have I, do I feel like I’ve challenged the guys appropriately there? Have I given them the degree of independence to challenge them? How have they reacted to the challenge? (David – interview).

However, the players’ dispositions towards training were reinforced and confirmed through exposure to the pedagogic work of the coaches (Bourdieu, 1977), representing an instituted discourse about the world in which the “whole group’s adherence to that self-evidence is

affirmed” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 167). The players, for instance, were exposed to these explicit discourses on a regular basis and would then try to embody these dispositions as directed by the coaching staff:

As the players gathered around David for this morning’s brief, the staff began to impart a number of well-worn coaching platitudes to the players. They were routinely encouraged to “challenge yourselves to be the best you can be”, to “step outside of your comfort zone”, to “challenge others” and to “get ‘aggy¹⁸”.

(Field notes, December 2015).

R: Like Steve or David talked about ‘brave cricket’ and I know exactly what they mean with shot selection, taking risks, taking catches, making that extra effort extra oomph almost.

J: Because of that friendship we have we’re able to push one another, it might go over the top from time to time, but we don’t mean in any way to offend anybody.

PJ: you fucking melt.

The players laugh.

J: And I think that’s the thing we all use that push ourselves to make us the better cricketer the following day when we wake up or the next time we walk onto the pitch wearing our [team] shirts.

(Player focus group).

Symbolic violence therefore is “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167). It is secured through misrecognition, whereby individuals accept the dominant values and the behavioural practices currently utilized in the field as necessary, ‘good’ and progressive. Thus, the performance logic of the coaching field was inscribed into bodies, and these resultant practices exerted a form of symbolic violence:

At the end of the day they either fail in a controlled environment where we are, and be tougher for it outside of it, which to me is our duty, if they as international disability cricketers, or we let them shirk it in our environment and then they fail in an environment where the support network isn’t there, then it goes to pot completely. It’s different for every individual, and that’s where the performance environment works, because it’s the little conversations about players, it’s the heads up, it’s the other management’s lifestyle, observations and advice, it’s the physio’s advice, it’s the head coach, you know, it’s all these coming together, which I think that where it works in disability is that they have so many support staff on hand, that it allows for that to work. (Steve, assistant coach - interview).

¹⁸ “Aggressive”. It was assumed that by getting “aggy” with each other in practice, the players would drive up the intensity of training sessions thus improving the outcomes of the coaching practices.

Every mode of domination presupposes a “doxic order” (Krais, 1995, p. 169): a system of practical beliefs that are shared by the dominated and the dominating (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Doxic orders are secured by a web of power relations that are “perceived not for what they objectively are, but in the form, that renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). Thus, Steve, David and the rest of the management staff (including myself) were able to justify such practices as in the interests of ‘empowerment’ and a discourse of ‘expertism’, secured by the symbolic capital of the management group. Bourdieu (1984) suggested that marginalized groups have two options to maintain and improve their social position. One way might be to adopt an activist stance, to highlight and accentuate the properties that are stigmatised by the dominant social order - what might be termed as ‘disability activism’. The other is to assimilate and conform to the dominant ideal and minimize any apparent differences (Bourdieu 1984). When I questioned the players on the demanding nature of the coaching sessions, they recognised the legitimacy of this coaching approach in so far as it was in their interests to submit to them:

A: making a player cry in a way is...no I don't think it is taking it too far because like what J said, you've got to break people from time to time, but I think what you can do is get it too far, I think getting them out of their comfort zone is good.

RT: what were you going to say R?

R: I wanna get pushed to the limit, that's just the way I go, I would never cry because I want to improve my game and I want as high intensity as possible I don't care if the coach screams at me if I'm doing something wrong I'll still push to the limit until I physically can't do it, that's the way I am.

RT: what were you going to say PJ?

PJ: I don't mind being pushed either.

(Player focus group).

As Brown (2005) argued, the refinement of a particular valued habitus is simultaneously symbolic capital, what Bourdieu (1998) referred to as ‘any property that is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which causes them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value’ (p. 47). The players came to recognise the value attached to habitus aligned with the working practices of the coaching staff, through the mechanisms of symbolic violence on both the athletes *and* the misrecognition of the coaches which exerted a structuring efficacy. These learning practices became orthodox, self-evident and a *taken-for-granted* part of the environment, which as we saw in chapter five was not challenged in disability specific coach education, which the athletes instead problematised under a pervasive individualising

pedagogic gaze (chapter five, section 5.2.3). To coach the athlete, not the disability was a doxic principle of organisation (Bourdieu, 1977), internalised in the habitus of the coaching staff and players, and justified in the course of practice by misrecognition that manifest in the imposition of a one-way coaching approach and a domain-specific message about what ‘disability’ ‘is’ (cf. Thomas, 1999). At a practical level, the coaching process was reflective of the “systematic application of principles coherent in practice” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 88) combining to create the illusion of practical mastery. Simply, the environment was a vehicle for the manifestation and transmission about disability and therefore the ‘best’ way of coaching disabled athletes. At the same time, this strategy had the underlying hidden agenda of ensuring the integrity of coaching through the redistribution of symbolic capital disassociated with ‘disability’ in order to secure the dominant position of coaches in the field. Together, the objective structures and structuring dispositions of the agents within the field constituted a doxic order, resulting from the logic of reproduction, as the established order was seen not as arbitrary but as self-evident, that “which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 166).

7.2.5 Acceptance and a sense of one’s place

Doxa, for Bourdieu, is the naturalisation of practices within stable social conditions (Bourdieu, 1977). All forms of power require legitimacy. The players, in assessing their position within the coaching culture, applied “a system of schemes of perception and appreciation which is the embodiment of the objective laws whereby their value is objectively constituted” and as a result attributed “to themselves what the distribution attributes to them” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 473):

R: It’s good because of my disability it’s pushed me a long way through...that’s a good thing I guess, I think there’s nothing wrong with having a disability, everyone can be the same. Just don’t treat, treat us differently. I mean, I’m proud of my disability really, shouldn’t be ashamed of it.

J: okay we’re labelled as having a disability but that shouldn’t be a reason for us to be belittled by the title, we have the same opportunities to compete as the professional players do. You have that little bit more of a challenge to take responsibility which obviously helps us as individuals with our life skills.

A: the [coaching] stuff is high intensity, I enjoy that.

R: yeah, I mean we’re up for it as well.

A: we’re up for it and the coaching staff.

PJ: know we’ll do it.

(Player focus group).

Here, the data reveal the relations of symbolic violence, specifically how the players contributed to what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) described as the “symbolic strengthening of power relations (*rapports de force*) that is implied in the recognition by the dominated of the legitimacy of domination” (p. 5). The players reproduced and reformulated some key forms of capital particularly related to coaching. For instance, J agreed that he tried to see the challenges as a ‘positive’, and in so doing discursively reinforced the social order through logical conformity (Bourdieu, 1984):

I'd rather call it challenges if you like. If you challenge yourself to the context that you can deliver not from the word go but as consistently as you can and as quickly as you can, showing your ability to perform and showing why you are selected for [the team] in the first place and obviously we're representing [the team].

(J - Player focus group).

The players exercised strategies which may not be ‘conscious’ per se but were employed to deal with a coaching environment that demanded the embodiment of certain attributes. The players did not – and perhaps were unable to – challenge the coaches’ discourses of disability and coaching. Rather, they functioned within the dominant social order according to the entrenched ‘rules of the game’ that dictated what was expected of them in relation to the parameters of the field. The players accepted the dominant values and classification schema that were imposed on them by the coaches (Kim, 2004). In this respect, the players’ habitus were reformed in the context of their involvement in the squad, internalising within them a worldview based on, and reconciled to, such a position (Bourdieu, 1984; Cushion & Jones, 2006). This internalisation was also a way of accumulating valued physical capital, thus suggesting that the social space of coaching in this context was a site of both empowerment and resistance for the players with disabilities (Berger, 2008). The impact of the symbolic violence on the players through the coaches’ practices helped the players to negotiate and nurture an affirmative identity, whereby they occupy an ‘athletic’ identity rather than one where they were ‘disabled’. Such a finding illustrates complexity in the interrelation between disabled bodies and sport, particularly a coaching culture that was reflective of a medical model of disability, and yet functioned as site of disability-specific resistance. This can be attributed to the effects of symbolic violence exercised by the coaching staff and the players were a product of the social and cultural constructions that produced them (Smith & Sparkes, 2012):

I think the evolution of these lads as a team over the four years has been — I never thought they would be able to function the way they do. I mean, if you walked into a dressing room with them, you probably wouldn't think they were disabled.

If you look at a lot of the lads now, all of them, you'd struggle to instantly say, oh, they've got an issue or a problem.

So, A definitely doesn't perceive himself as being disabled. He knows that he's in a programme like this and he qualifies to play disability cricket, but he doesn't consider himself to be disabled.

(Parent focus group).

Hence, the players' categories of perception and dispositions were adjusted to the established order, and thereby the interests of those who dominated it (Bourdieu, 1984). The analysis suggests however, that there remain some questions about the uncritical adoption of a performance environment that was defined in relation to able-bodied sport and imposed upon disabled athletes in such a way that enabled the accumulation of social capital and yet constrained their agency. The athletes did not produce a resistive discourse, rather they aligned with the identity imposed on them by the coaches, despite disability sport (and learning disability cricket in particular) being “created, given meaning to, established a unique history, and delineated customs by the authentic sense of identity of its members” (Goodwin *et al.*, 2009, p. 105; DePauw & Doll Tepper, 2000). However, this athletic identity was a stake in the “struggle to maintain an identity within the majority culture” (Goodwin *et al.*, 2009, pp. 104-5), that was imposed by the coaches. In this sense, the coaches reproduced an ideology of inclusion, and the complexity of disability in coaching cultures is highlighted. Here, as Bourdieu (1987) reminds us, for the players, ‘resistance can be alienating’ (p. 184), and ‘submission can be liberating...such is the paradox of the dominated’ (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 184; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

7.3 Reflexivity: Maintaining the logic of the field

Symbolic violence is a layered construct. Not only does it refer to the imposition of meaning on dominated agents, but to the ways in which the logic of fields can impose taken-for-granted meaning on dominating agents (that is, coaches). All the coaching staff were expected to embody the ideologies of ‘challenge’ and discourses of empowerment that underpinned the coaching process. It made ‘practical sense’ to do so (Bourdieu, 1998):

David: Guys, just echoing comments already made, this weekend was a really pleasing one from so many angles and the way the boys are responding to challenge at the

moment fills me with optimism going forwards. Thank you to you all for your continued and significant contributions. As I have shared with a number of you I feel our progress is underpinned by our strongly integrated approach from the whole group to affect positive change on the players. Great work all. (Personal correspondence).

For example, it was expected that I, as the newest member of the coaching staff, adhered to the instituted coaching ideology. As evidenced in the following field note data:

During the individual skills work at the last camp, I worked with A in a batting practice. My directive, from Steve, was to feed the ball quickly, quite short and straight, therefore likely to hit A in the chest, ribs or head. A was expected to “make a decision” to either get out of the way, to defend, or to play an aggressive shot. As we settled into the practice, my feeds gradually became faster until I let him ‘have one’. The ball leapt up and thudded into A’s ribs and he crumpled almost immediately. I hurried over to him, put my arm around him and tried to explain that it wasn’t on purpose as he struggled to control his breathing and hold back tears. He didn’t speak to me.

As I returned to my position, A faced up, and I fed a visibly slower, fuller delivery to which A played a tentative shot, moving in a mechanical manner. At that point David, with a grim face, looked at me from across the hall.

“Don’t let up, don’t back off. Let him have it”.

The next delivery was faster. A barely moved before it hit the back net, flashing past his shoulder. The next delivery was again, fast and short. A walked out of the net in tears, gesturing that he was in pain. After, I approached Buzz to ask if he had ‘taken a look’ at A.

“Yes, he came over to me. He said he’d been hit by a ball. End of conversation” He laughed.

(Field notes).

Bourdieu (1989) suggested that agents who “occupy similar or neighbouring positions are placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings” (p.17), and therefore may consciously or unconsciously acquire similar dispositions (and therefore practices) that imply an adjustment to the position occupied in the field. In this example, I found a “sense of one’s place” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17) that I exercised to ‘maintain my rank’ with the coaches, and ‘keep my distance’ from the players, and in so doing displaying the symbolic competences expected in that role. Learning required an acceptance of the pre-existent conditions that constituted the field upon entry to maintain capital, respect and ultimately contribute to a coaching environment expected to develop athletic performance. This required an acceptance of the logic of practice and the illusion that this was the ‘correct’ way of doing things. It involved thinking, acting and speaking in ways that were ‘accepted’, and ‘correct’, and in my case, acting in my own interest in that conforming to the logic of the field would be

advantageous in my data collection; that is exposing the processes and products of the field. However, in so doing I passed through the field, internalised it, and shaped my thoughts and actions in order to profit from it. In working to the doxa, I reproduced it.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the practices of coaches in a case study of high-performance disability sport as a means of exposing the link between practice and learning. In this chapter I have deconstructed how coaches constructed and expressed knowledge about coaching disabled athletes through analysis of the coaching practices and their effects. In so doing, I have brought the ‘undiscussed into discussion’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168) in articulating the processes through which practice was reproduced – through symbolic violence, misrecognition and the reproduction of ideology thus contributing to coach learning. Such critical analyses are crucial in coaching, in order to highlight the “distance between the practical experience of agents” and the mechanisms that “function with the unknowing complicity of agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 70) to structure coach learning.

To conclude, the material conditions of practice in the coaching field were an outcome of the symbolic struggles that formed the field and were closely related to learning. In this case disability was assimilated into the powerful logic of ‘high-performance’ sport, and coaching functioned as a practice that was structured by and structured this logic (and therefore learning) through a collective process of misrecognition. Understanding the effects of misrecognition was important as it highlighted how the coaching staff constructed a shared understanding of disability and its interrelation to coaching through powerful reproductive process which constructed habitus in alignment with the social conditions. This constructed understanding was reflective of a particular view of the world that was the product of a particular struggle to impose a definition of the world that made practical ‘sense’ (Bourdieu, 1979) and it therefore made ‘sense’ to reproduce associated knowledge. Coaching practice therefore functioned under an ideology of inclusion (Goodwin *et al.*, 2009), but was characterised by a hegemony in which the dominant class (coaches) presented their definition of coaching reality in such a way that it was accepted by other classes (players) as common-sense even though it served the interests of the dominant classes alone (Giroux, 1997; Kilgore, 2001). Learning therefore was power-dominated, taken-for-granted, and closely grounded in practices that aligned with the broader logic of the field, had symbolic capital (see chapter six), and the process secured through symbolic violence and misrecognition. With the context functioning as a powerful ideological

influence on coach learning, coaches then attend coach education with certain dispositions toward coaching, which may help to explain and deconstruct some of the issues identified in chapter five. Together it may be argued that without critical or interrogative coach education structures impacting on disability coaching, as evidenced in this case-study, coach learning follows a process of uncritical reproduction.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

“Every established order tends to produce...the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness”

Bourdieu (1977, p. 164)

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the nature of coach learning. In so doing I used disability sport as a powerful lens through which to deconstruct and develop an understanding of coach learning, through analysis of both coach education and coaching practice in disability-specific contexts. The research was conducted on two main premises. First, that the emerging literature in disability coaching lacked a critical agenda, which as Kim (2004) suggested is crucial to offer a critique of current practice so that social agents can liberate themselves from the grip of the classifications they employ and are employed by. Second, that research in coach learning only provided ‘snapshots’, were reductive in their focus, and lacked the application of sociology to understand its complexity. I have attempted in the preceding chapters, and throughout, to formulate a critique that “brings the undiscussed into discussion” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168) in order to ‘break’ the fit between subjective and objective structures and expose the doxic nature of coach learning. This approach reflected my concern to pursue specific interests in relation to coaching in disability sport, not only as a practitioner located in the disability coaching field interested in sport as an inclusive social practice, but as a researcher in the academic field concerned with initiating a critical dialogue in coach learning and development. The following chapter brings together the findings from the three empirical chapters, tying the findings together in relation to existing literature and demonstrating how the findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

8.2 The nature of coach learning

In this research, I have built on the emerging literature examining disability sport coaching (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Tawse *et al.*, 2012; Taylor *et al.*, 2014, 2015; Wareham *et al.*, 2017) toward a more critical understanding of the nature of coach learning. Previous research in coaching has suggested that coaches arrive at coach education with their own entrenched schemes of thought or fixed beliefs about coaching (e.g. Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Piggott, 2011; Nelson *et al.*, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2017). These schemes of thought can be thought of as expressions of habitus (Townsend & Cushion, 2015) that structure ‘learning’ in coach education contexts. However, there is a lack of attention given to how habitus is ‘produced’ and, in disability coach education, ‘how’ coaches learn considering individual habitus in relation to pedagogic transmission. Habitus is crucial, as has been seen in both coach education and coaching practice habitus imposes limits on coaches’ thought and practice (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Data from the longitudinal evaluation of a disability-specific coach education programme showed that participants arrived at the course with a “primary habitus characteristic of a group or class” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 42), with dispositions toward coaching shaped through exposure to the field (cf. Christensen, 2009). Habitus therefore constrained and dictated what could be ‘learnt’ according to the social conditions of its production (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) especially when considering that the “length of inculcation” (p. 34) in coach education is insufficient to legitimately produce habitus in relation to coaches’ engagement in the cultural arbitrary of the field (cf. Townsend & Cushion, 2015). Indeed, the findings suggested that the segregated nature of disability coach education meant that many coaches were operating without sufficient training and education in disability (and therefore lacked legitimate cultural competence). This primary habitus acted as the epistemological basis for the subsequent formation of any other habitus. When combined with coach education that reflected an entrenched medical model of disability, the course functioned as a vehicle for the reproduction and transmission of medical model assumptions about disability that served to constrain and inhibit coaches’ learning. This is an important contribution to knowledge, as this is the first research to look at an educational pathway that supports disability sport coaching, specifically considering the interrelation of coaches, coach education and its effects in terms of ‘learning’. Consequently, there is a need to question research which analyses either coaches, coaching or coach education in isolation as they are inherently linked and exist as part of a model of reproduction.

These issues necessitated a view to understand the mechanisms through which primary habitus were produced. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) suggested that ‘learning’ is an irreversible process, and the habitus acquired prior to coach education – informed by medical model assumptions – forms the basis for the reception and assimilation of the pedagogic messages from coach education. To this end, I conducted in-depth fieldwork with a high-performance disability cricket squad, to understand the way that coaches in this context constructed knowledge about disability coaching. Specifically, the research in chapters six and seven described how coaches constructed and expressed knowledge about coaching athletes with learning disabilities in ways that were shaped through their ongoing, unstructured experiences in a field dominated by a practical logic characterised by high-performance coaching values. The fusion of these two studies allowed for both a cross-sectional view, generating perspectives from a large number of participants, and a longitudinal understanding,

providing in-depth and context-specific descriptions of the nature of coach learning in disability sport. This is the first to do so in disability coaching research.

An overwhelming body of research has consistently argued that coaching knowledge and practices are derived from informal and non-formal sources (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Côté, 2006; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007; Jones *et al.*, 2012). The data from this research extends this work, by providing evidence that in disability coaching, coach education contributes very little to the production of coaching discourses. Instead, power and socialisation within a coaching sub-culture functioned as a means of distributing knowledge about coaching disabled athletes, which is a finding that has previously been overlooked when discussing coaches' 'learning' in disability contexts (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Tawse *et al.*, 2012). Specifically, habitus showed the underlying mechanism for the inheritance of ideology as an underlying basis for practice, which coaches accepted uncritically and applied uniformly across contexts to specific problems. The data showed, as Evans (2004) theorised, that habitus is not just sets of 'learned' dispositions, it is 'cultured' and subject to variation, according to the contexts in which it is formed and actualised. Coach learning in disability sport was shown to be 'doxic', in that coaching knowledge was formed of unquestioned beliefs about disability that were embodied and reinforced in practice. There is danger then that coaching in disability sport may demonstrate a trend of continuity rather than change (Brown, 2005), with disability sport refracting deep-seated beliefs about the nature of disability and its expression in social formations (Thomas, 2007; Goodley, 2011). The use of disability in this thesis therefore enabled a view of the "epistemological bases and dialectical relations" (Goodley, 2011, p. 59) in coaching to contribute to a "deep ontology of learning" (Michalko, 2002, p. 152). The specific focus on disability sport facilitated analysis of power, culture and habitus as pre-conditions *for* and *of* learning (cf. Hodkinson *et al.*, 2008).

However, emphasising that the coaches operated according to their own entrenched schemes and legitimate cultural practice is not to be critical of their work. Rather, the findings illustrate and evidence the challenges of negotiating the complexity of disability coaching (cf. Duarte & Culver, 2014; Tawse *et al.*, 2012; Taylor *et al.*, 2014, 2015), but extend this work by describing the influence of power and habitus on coach learning. The discussion of which is conspicuous by its absence within both the literature and coach education (see chapter two). The findings show that the coach learning literature fails to adequately understand the

formation of individual dispositions within disability coaching cultures, thus exposing the processes through which knowledge is formed according to dominant ideologies. That is, the nature of learning as taken-for-granted and a product of unstructured engagement in the field. This research provides empirical evidence of the *effects of*, and *mechanism for* the informal and unstructured nature of coach learning in the disability context, which existing literature had alluded to, yet not fully explored (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015; Douglas *et al.*, 2016; Douglas & Hardin, 2014).

In both studies, an ‘understanding’ of disability was implicitly at the centre of the formation of coaching knowledge, a finding which runs in direct opposition to the research that subsumes disability within a broad coach development agenda (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; Taylor *et al.*, 2014, 2015; Tawse *et al.*, 2012; Cregan *et al.*, 2007; Duarte & Culver, 2014) and forces disability into the background of coaching. Discourses about disability served to constrain the learning process by promoting an accepted view of disability that tended to overlook the structures of coaching and instead either assimilate disability into existing social structures or problematise the athlete under a normalising gaze. This is an important connection to make, as the research shows the permeability of coaching knowledge to macro-issues such as disability (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). Indeed, the data showed that disability was open to a process of refashioning (Fitzgerald, 2007), that was less emancipatory than it was oppressive, as it was either assimilated into a high-performance coaching logic or framed by disablist discourses within coach education. Importantly, both are reflective of the assumptions of the medical model of disability, which represented an orthodox discourse within its specific field – that is, it was seen as the ‘right’ way of framing coach learning in disability sport. Within the ethnographic case study, aligning to the logic of the field, consciously or unconsciously, through habitus construction functioned as a means of maximising the symbolic capital associated with coaching and minimising negative distinctions associated with disability. In coach education, on the other hand, coaches commonly located the impairment effects of ASD as a ‘problem’ to overcome through the adoption of a prescribed battery of coaching skills, as a result of exposure to pedagogic transmission. In each case, although not everyone had the same experiences and behaved in the same way due to their particular social trajectory and accumulation of capital (Bourdieu, 1990), each individual system of dispositions (habitus) can be seen as a “structural variant” of class habitus related to coaching in disability sport (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86) that had entrenched medical model assumptions.

8.3 *Field of Struggles*

Throughout the preceding chapters I have highlighted some of tension and contradictions in disability sport coaching that serve to reinforce the notion of coaching as a ‘field of struggles’. These tensions are reflective of the categories of understanding employed by coaches, positioned within structural constraints, which are a part of the individual and collective struggles through which social fields are sustained or transformed (Bourdieu, 1988). Fields are arenas of struggle for control over valued resources (Swartz, 2012). For example, the coaches in the ethnographic study sought to ground their knowledge within coaching practice and co-construct instruments of knowledge about coaching athletes with learning disabilities. These coaches tended to overlook ‘disability’ in favour of a more normative and performance-focused agenda. However, the coach education course data showed how some coaches felt they required impairment-specific coach education, and foregrounded impairment knowledge as essential to ensuring coaching success. Hence, it can be suggested that ‘disability’ held a tenuous position within the coaching field; this binary served to structure coaching. On the one hand, practitioners in the field distanced themselves from disability at a rhetorical level, despite implicit assumptions about the nature of disability influencing aspects of the coaching process. In contrast, some practitioners in coach education attempted to ‘fix’ disability through certain coaching practices or rejected the pedagogic discourses as incongruent with their practice. Given that each social space is a site where competence is produced and as one of the sites where “it is given its price”, it is unsurprising that fields value competencies created within them (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 81). Thus, high-performance coaching in disability sport valued practices associated with high-performance coaching and disassociated from disability as high-performance associations held the most symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1984). This was an orthodox discourse as these beliefs were formed through social practice, in the field. The findings provided specific evidence that practitioners arrive at coach education with beliefs about coaching formulated through orthodox, unstructured and experiential learning discourses (cf. Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Piggott, 2011; Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2017). This is important because habitus is an “endless capacity to engender products - thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions” whose limits are set by the “historically and socially situated conditions of its production” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95). The data thus evidences a struggle at discursive and agentic levels to consecrate a way of coaching and learning according to their deeply-held beliefs about disability conditioned through exposure to social practice. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that ‘learning’ happens in the collision of structure and agency, as coaches

arrive in the field of disability sport conditioned with class habitus through a *lack* of cultural capital as a result of a fragmented and weak coach education system. As such, coaches internalise orthodox discourses that align with their worldview as it makes practical sense.

However, in this specific case, as shown in chapters six and seven, coaches through exposure to cultural discourses and social practice, (re)constructed class habitus with certain dispositions which were left unchallenged in coach education. Instead, coach education in this case valued disability-specific and categorical approaches, which when combined reproduced medical model assumptions about disability, thus reproducing the orthodoxy. Coaches at a rhetorical level suggested that they required more coach education yet rejected knowledge incompatible with their habitus. The effect of class habitus meant that ‘learning’ can be seen as much symbolic as it was actual, where ideologies and rhetoric associated with ‘legitimate’ knowledge about disability coaching were embodied, expressed and reproduced by coaches. The findings of the research call into the question the degree to which learning can be conceptualised as an epistemological concept (e.g. McMaster *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald *et al.*, 2015), as the data showed that ‘learning’ was an empirical concept, grounded in social practice. In this sense, within disability sport, there is a danger that knowledge can follow a model of reproduction, as the data showed that the culture was responsible for the generation of distinctive dispositions that had the “power to shape consciousness” (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p. 279) and in turn reproduce the coaching cultures that place ideological limits on disabled people (Oliver, 1996).

In answer to the research question, then, the nature of coach learning was taken-for-granted, ideological and pre-disposed toward reproduction, as long as coach education failed to deconstruct these deep-seated issues. Consequently, the potential value of this research is twofold: firstly, in its attempt to reframe analyses and discussions about coach learning toward discussions of ideology, power and the emancipation from inherited categories of belief. Secondly, to redress the lack of discussions about issues of disability that constrain coaches’ knowledge and subsequently impact on the sporting opportunities disabled people can enjoy. By highlighting and expanding on the complexities, tensions and contradictions in disability sport, I provide a subsequent rationale for more critical work designed to deconstruct these tensions, providing a platform for more critical analyses of learning in different cultural contexts.

8.4 Conclusion

Coaching in disability sport was an arena of struggles for the “power to impose the legitimate mode of thought” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 170; Swartz, 2012). There is therefore a tension within the field – namely how best to educate coaches for the complex, wide-ranging and contested disability coaching context. In the absence of critical coach education structures, “doxic experience” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 3) constituted tacitly-accepted and taken-for-granted ideals about coaching in disability sport. This research has intimated that social practice – influenced by a powerful class habitus formed through unstructured experiences in the field – acted as a cultural resource that provided access to knowledge. The findings suggest that under certain conditions knowledge can be transmitted from one generation to another (Lareau & Weininger, 2003) through the reproduction of objective structures and construction of habitus according to what was valued within the field. This means that the dispositions and aptitudes required for coaching in disability contexts are often taken-for-granted and self-referential, with instruments of communication and knowledge preserved and reproduced (Bourdieu, 1977) with no available heterodox discourse to allow agents to question their “sense of limits” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164).

On a more cautious note, there exists a tension about the lack of professional knowledge associated with coaching in disability sport. In addressing coach learning, what was clear was that there was an absence of both a technical language and specialised body of knowledge. When addressing learning, there is a tendency to assume that coaching knowledge is a body of professional attributes and skills that has a fixed temporal quality (see chapter two, section, 2.2). In this research, however, it was difficult to identify something that was not there, as coaching knowledge was context-specific and dependent on issues of power, legitimacy and the dominant ideological understandings of disability within social formations. Thus, the nature of what was being ‘learned’ may be reflective of class habitus constructed in a field that was in a constant state of flux.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

“Knowledge seeks to defuse this sort of hold that social games have on socialised agents. This is not easy to do”.

Bourdieu (1998, p. 79).

9.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I have offered an in-depth, critical understanding of coach learning in the disability coaching context. The purpose was to understand something of the nature of coach learning as means of initiating critical dialogue about the professional development, preparation and professionalisation of sport coaching. This specific focus on coach learning reflects my critique of much research that has only captured partial aspects of coach learning, and researchers that are perhaps too eager to draw identifiable and pragmatic conclusions for coach education. The integration of sociological thought throughout enabled a ‘bigger picture’ of learning to be drawn, suggesting that learning has a temporal dimension, is structured by the social context in which coaches operate, and is predisposed toward reproduction. In so doing, I have attempted to construct a “complex-aware” (Jones *et al.*, 2014, p. 201) view of coach learning, and fill an epistemological ‘gap’ in the emerging disability coaching research. This research was emergent in nature and included critical analyses of disability coach education and the coaching field within a Bourdieusian sociological framework. Such an analytical framework allowed me to explore something of the complexity and ‘messiness’ of coaching in contrasting social configurations within disability sport, while enabling conclusions about the nature of learning to be drawn. Furthermore, this thesis is the first in this field to engage with critical disability studies (see Townsend *et al.*, 2016), highlighting the cultural discourses about disability and its complexity in relation to sport. The rest of this chapter details the specific empirical and theoretical contributions of the research and discusses the practical implications for coach education.

9.2 Empirical Contribution

The thesis makes a number of contributions to the sociology of sports coaching. First, and specific to research in disability coaching, the research contributes to an emerging discourse of coach learning that moves beyond research that is generally concerned with describing and explaining the learning processes of coaches. The research has focused on both coach education and coaching practices as complex social formations, and attempted to draw clear links between coach education, coaching practice, and disability discourses. The purpose of this was not to provide a basis for prescriptions of ‘effective’ coach development, but to identify broader issues in coaching that can inhibit coach learning. To do so, I have conducted *in situ* studies in disability sport that account for learning within the wider practical coaching context and generative social practice. This enabled a more detailed view of learning than the reductive

‘constructivist’ perspectives which focus on identifying learning ‘sources’ or categorising learning according to degrees of formality or mediation. In this thesis, examining high-performance coaching practice as a site for learning – in the disability context – is a significant step in furthering an understanding of coach learning. This is the first study to explain the development of coaching knowledge in any sociological detail, by – as Bourdieu (2004) suggested – moving closer to the site of social practice and production in disability sport. The utility of this approach rested on the apprehension of coaching as a complex social practice, and the attempt to place “specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context” (Cushion, 2014, p. 172). By immersing myself in the coaching context, I was able to show the social, political and relational nature of coaching disabled athletes and to map coaches’ learning against the affordances and constraints of the context in which they were situated. In disability sport, this is innovative, and the findings suggest that such an approach can be utilised in other related contexts to understand the production of knowledge about other marginalised groups in coaching, and the intersectional and constructed nature of identities in sport (e.g. gender and race).

Findings revealed how coaches were socialised into a prevailing legitimate culture that influenced their practices toward working with disabled athletes. Crucially, the coaches and athletes contributed to the maintenance of a ‘performance’ coaching environment that assimilated disability into the logic of practice, under a rhetoric of empowerment, that was instead a means of disguising a field of struggles where individuals laboured to gain and exercise symbolic capital. The process that structured coach learning was secured through coaches’ practices that aligned with the logic of the field, under a process of misrecognition that was related to the coaches’ working understandings of disability. Coach learning in this sense followed an ideology-specific model of uncritical reproduction. Taking this into account, one of the contributions of this research has been to illustrate the contribution that critical ethnographic methodologies combined with sociological inquiry can have in explaining the complexity of coaching, and to map coaches’ knowledge formation onto social practice and wider cultural discourses.

9.3 Implications for Coach Development

In terms of the empirical originality of the research, in chapter two, I highlighted a major ‘gap’ in coaching research in disability sport. This related to the distinct lack of research addressing either at a descriptive, analytical or evaluative level, disability-specific coach education.

Therefore, taking into account the recognition of coach education as crucial to the ongoing professionalisation of coaching (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), this research has evidenced the powerful structuring effect of coaching culture on knowledge and how this was realised within disability coach education. As a result, the research has shown how – through an in-depth evaluation – disability coach education plays only a minor role in coach development due to its marginalised position within the coaching field. The intimation from this research therefore is that coaches and the coaching culture that they are a part of is as responsible for learning as coach education in the disability context, which adds to the literature in disability sport. This initial step can encourage further research on the ways in which coach education can act as a platform for the reproduction of knowledge (cf. Piggott, 2011; Cushion & Partington, 2014) and provides evidence for the marginalisation of certain groups through the segregation of knowledge based on particular socially-constructed classifications. As such, this research has implications beyond disability, where analyses of the interrelation of gender, race and ethnicity and coach education are required.

Having deconstructed one particular disability coach education pathway, it is important to suggest an agenda for the reconstruction of coach education to impact on coach development. Over twenty years ago within the field of teacher education, DePauw and Goc Karp (1994) called for research to challenge the existing education system, and to reconstruct a new one. The issue of whether disability coach education should be addressed in discrete blocks (as evidenced in chapter five) or integrated into mainstream coaching structures is an issue of considerable debate, and while discussions of this nature have been initiated within the field of physical education (see, for instance, DePauw & Doll-Tepper, 2000; DePauw & Goc Karp, 1994) it is a debate that coaching is yet to have. The data in this thesis has shown that disability coaching is characterised by separatist thinking and practices that structure coach education and reinforces the notion that the segregation of knowledge about disabilities is needed. However, to redevelop coach education requires an understanding of disability that moves beyond reductive medical model conceptions (DePauw & Goc Karp, 1994; DePauw, 2000) toward an understanding of disability in the context of social relationships (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). Such a social constructionist perspective views disability not as a ‘fixed’ or problematic state but reconstructed according to oppressive societal conditions and restrictions (DePauw & Goc Karp, 1994). It may be argued from this research that current coach education provision requires a review whereby ‘inclusive’ training is embedded across coach education pathways, which – it can be argued – is long overdue (cf. DePauw & Goc Karp, 1994).

Moreover, the research highlighted issues to do with the relations within coach education, such as relations of pedagogic transmission combining to reproduce knowledge considered oppressive to disabled people. In this sense, pedagogic design for disability coach education should carefully consider the assumptions that underpin teaching and learning practices. While pedagogic design for disability coach education should attempt to expose coaches to the complexities involved in responding to diverse situations in sporting contexts, it may be worthwhile examining the knowledge, practices and skills of the coach in the first instance (i.e. social practice) (DePauw & Gavron, 1991) and engage with models of disability as reflective frameworks on which to further understandings of disability and its interrelation with sport (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). From a critical perspective, the development of coach education opportunities that challenge understandings of social categories such as disability are crucial as the logic that maintains structures of privilege and oppression can become deep-seated, legitimate and a common-sense lens through which people view and interpret their everyday experiences (Kilgore, 2001). Such critical reflection enables coaches to understand the way in which their practices and the coaching environment function in relation to disabled athletes to act as arenas for empowerment or oppression. The data also reinforces the importance of carefully structured field experiences, the relevance of critical theorising and reflective work; the practice of deconstructing entrenched discourses and examining belief systems about disability. On this theme, dominant discourses (such as the medical model) and the belief systems it represents and promotes, need to be exposed and deconstructed as part of an effective coach education programme. However, the caveat to these recommendations is that while coach education offers a heterodox discourse to practitioners conditioned through field experiences, it will not hold the power to challenge coaching orthodoxy or facilitate coach learning

This work – in part – has provided an important contribution to knowledge by examining an impairment-specific form of coach education, an area that as of yet that has not been investigated. My hope is that the research can provide a stimulus for discussion and for further questions that explore other pathways of coach development in disability sport, whether they are sport-specific or impairment-specific programmes. Indeed, as Lyle and Cushion (2017) argued, for change to occur in coaching, in particular in disability sport, there needs to be a clear and critical focus on coach education, and for research to contribute empirically-grounded accounts in order to effect change in disability sport coaching. The development of

progressive, integrated and ideologically-conscious coach education structures, it may be argued, is one of the most pressing issues in sport and physical activity.

9.4 Reflexive Epilogue

Bourdieu argued that the researcher is “socially situated, included in the very object he or she wishes to objectivize” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 32). Thus, in the preceding chapters I have attempted to understand the structure and functioning of disability coaching, of the “various species of power that are efficient in this universe” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 32), and of the “trajectories and connections of agents who come to take up positions in it” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 33). Here, it is important to adopt a reflexive position in “objectifying one's own universe” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 33), which as Jones (2009) argued is an essential feature of socially sensitive coaching research. There is always a challenge when studying a world to which we are linked by specific investments, in this instance my involvement with the cricket coaching culture that I studied. First and foremost is the obligation to confront the epistemological problems related to the “difference between practical knowledge and scholarly knowledge” (Bourdieu, 1988, p.1), and particularly the difficulties involved in breaking with inside experience and articulating the knowledge generated by means of this break (Bourdieu, 1988). These are problems caused by proximity rather than distance, particularly when alignment to the doxic practices outlined in chapters seven and eight (see sections 6.2.2., 7.2.1. and 7.2.3.) were in my interest - not only as a researcher, but in gaining a sense of acceptance and possibility for progression in coaching. However, my practice always reflected a sense of uncertainty, caused by exposure to structural conditions and the objective relations within the field through the development of a shared habitus. Put simply, while I could invest in the ‘game’, and see the value of ‘playing the game’, my sense of unease with the methods and assumptions within the environment was ever-present and inhibiting of total investment. The logic of the research process then forced me to ask myself at every stage what I was doing and what I was looking for, and when I sought to ask myself how ‘else’ practice should be, my answers were blinded by doxic familiarity. That is, if not this way, then how?

My capacity to exercise enough symbolic capital to influence change in a field dominated by the weight of history, with its specific forms symbolic, economic and cultural capital, was limited as long as I occupied a heterodox position. Furthermore, there were advantages to being in a relation of belonging; money, travel, association with an ‘international’ squad, bespoke kit, support for my coach development, closeness and friendship

with players and staff. Over time I feel that the answers more or less lie with coach education. Specifically, an educational system designed to highlight doxic experience, to shed light on structural constraints coaches face, and to explore coaches' individual learning and biographies. However, this requires empirical research that works *with*, rather than *on* coach education and coach educators. My abstractions in chapters six are a somewhat benign reflection of time spent researching disability coach education; a period of research characterised by uncertainty, mistrust and resistance. There were times when data was withheld from me, my relationship with the course tutor strained, my research methods questioned and my presence – at least implicitly – resented. I was not innocent in this, in my naivety attempting to present socio-analysis without epistemological transparency or theoretical lucidity (cf. Bourdieu, 1988).

9.5 Future Research

Throughout this research I have drawn upon and extended the work of Pierre Bourdieu to understand coach learning in disability sport and attempted to infuse the research with insights from critical disability studies. This is the first study to do this. The work is of course historically and culturally located with its own unique configurations, relations and findings. This research represents one specific example of both coach education, and coaches working with one particular set of athletes. Echoing Bourdieu, to extend this work beyond its boundaries may have all the appearances of “ethnocentrism” (1998, p. 2), however, it is a case of ‘what is possible’ in disability coaching, one that by apprehending the principles of construction of coaching has aspirations to universal validity (Bourdieu, 1998). Such interdisciplinary inquiry is very much in its infancy and provides – I hope – a basis for future studies to draw, extend, and improve upon to generate more critical insights into disability sport, and ultimately to encourage positive changes. This thesis therefore represents an attempt to understand the “principles of the construction of reality” to work towards an epistemology of coaching (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 165). Importantly, the research shows the permeability of coaching to macro-issues such as disability, as the analysis showed how, by analysing the production of disability within coaching and coach education (cf. Thomas, 1999), coaching practice and relatedly coach learning was constrained, influenced and reproduced according to cultural discourses about disability. I hope then that this research can be read as generative (Bourdieu, 1998).

This research lends further empirical weight to the suggestion that coach learning follows the logic of cultural reproduction, as alluded to by Bourdieu (1973, 1977, 1984, 1990a), as this research has found that knowledge in coaching in disability contexts is a product of the distribution of power within a specific field. More research therefore is required to deconstruct the instruments of knowledge coaches co-create about coaching disabled athletes and understand in critical detail how they are produced, in order to contribute to a progressive discourse of coach learning that takes into account the relational nature of habitus and field. A Bourdieusian approach has powerful transformative potential as the production of discourse in coaching fields is often obscured or misrecognised, and it is this cultural arbitrariness that Bourdieu attempts to expose through reflexive and critical sociology. A critical sociological framework enables researchers to “get behind the curtain, to move beyond assimilated experience, to expose the way ideology constrains the desire for self-direction” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 297) and expose how wider social relations can be refracted in micro-contexts such as coaching. Whether or not existing practices and ideologies in the macro- and micro-social structures of coaching can be recognised and transformed depends, however, on the “particular configuration of power relations” in any given context (Adams, 2006, p. 518), and the emancipation from inherited categories of belief.

In this sense, more research is required to build a picture of the impact of disability-specific coach development structures available for coaches. In disability coaching we are in a space where not only do we not understand how best to educate coaches, but we have little understanding of what is being ‘done’. The development of ‘guiding principles’ to inform coach education is particularly important, which provides further fruitful avenues for research framed by participatory or action research methodologies. Finally, it is suggested that research should attempt to understand the origin and function of coaches’ theories about disabled athletes, about knowledge, coaching and learning which can help bring the process of socialisation into the profession “under greater critical control” (Eraut, 1994, p. 62). Relatedly, the continued engagement with critical disability studies is essential in order to widen the disciplinary boundaries of coaching.

9.6 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the aim of this research was to understand coach learning in disability sport. In doing so, this thesis has answered long-standing calls to understand the learning and development of coaches in disability sport (DePauw, 1986) and provide empirical evidence

about disability coach education (Reid & Prupas, 1998). This research, in part, represented an attempt to “reveal, and therefore challenge, the kinds of deeply engrained cultural practices” that are likely to inhibit progress in coaching (Piggott, 2015, p. 25), and in so doing connect the analyses to understandings of disability. The nature of coaching as a situated practice (Jones & Thomas, 2015) means that it is important to note how the reflexive *relationship between* coaches, athletes and the context in which practice unfolds is permeable to the influence of other discourses within society, such as gender, class, race or in the case of this research, disability (cf. Bourdieu, 1993). Thus, disability sport provided a useful lens to challenge and extend an understanding of coach learning, as coaching is permeable to cultural issues, and this research represented the first study to do this in this way. In this thesis, models of disability helped to connect cultural meanings about disability to coach learning in a way that gave primacy to both social structure and agency, through the work of Pierre Bourdieu. This is the first research to address these limitations and represents an important theoretical step as coaches’ knowledge has the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product (cf. Bourdieu, 1977).

Specifically, the research has shown that coach learning in disability sport is a taken-for-granted concept and follows a powerful model of reproduction that is firmly structured by and through practice. Coaching practice constituted and established practical differences between divisions of the social world – divisions between coaches and disabled people – or more precisely establishes the meanings and values associated with individuals occupying positions defined by these divisions (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). In this sense, socialisation involved the integration of the symbolism of social domination and submission (Bourdieu, 1984) as one of the generative principles of coaching knowledge. The ways that disability was understood (knowingly or unknowingly) influenced the practices utilised by coaches. The implications of this are critical as it may be suggested that culture was as responsible for learning as the coaches and coach education, through the social integration of an arbitrary order (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Furthermore, at the heart of this research lies a discontent with the trend in the coaching literature to focus on the conscious, autonomous and delimited individual as the bearer of meaning and as an active and acting subject (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009) around which the coaching context revolves. The application of sociology to understanding coach learning helped to decentre the emphasis with regards to what constructs perceptions, thoughts and

actions within a context, which socially creates expressions of subjectivity (knowledge) limited in time and space (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). The data generated show that, from a Bourdieusian perspective, coach learning occurred within a doxic structure and referred less to an epistemological concept (i.e. what is known) but an empirical concept that had symbolic attributes and followed a model of reproduction through the construction of shared habitus in relation to the logic of the field coaches were situated within. Hence, 'learning' was constrained "within the limits of the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). Finally, the field of disability sport may be understood both as a site of resistance, whereby disabled athletes can be empowered, and domination whereby coaches internalise and express dominant cultural messages about disability (Kilgore, 2001), hence reproducing the very structures that can limit disabled people (Oliver, 1996). Coaching is therefore a field of struggles, and coach learning characterised by the logic of reproduction. Indeed, as Swartz (2012) described, fields are rarely sites of social transformation.

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Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport

Athlete Information Sheet

Understanding Learning and Development in Disability Sport

Lead Researcher:

Robert Townsend, PhD Researcher, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU.

r.townsend@lboro.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

- *The aim of this study is to understand how coaches learn to work with athletes with autism, within an inclusive disability sport.*

Who is doing the research?

- *This research study will be conducted by Robert Townsend*

Why are you doing this research?

- *This study is part of a research project that aims to develop an effective and inclusive coach education programme for coaches who work in disability sport.*

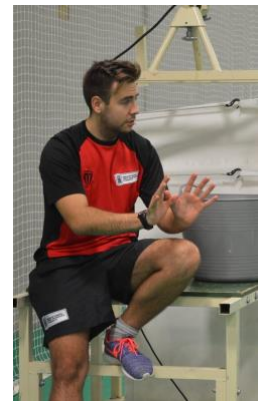
How will data be collected?

- *A method called ethnography will be used to collect data which will require the lead researcher to spend a prolonged period of time (6 months) with the England MLD cricket squad to gain an in-depth understanding of this social setting.*
- *Data will be collected through observation, listening to your experiences and understanding your views through informal chats. Observations and informal conversations will be recorded by writing field notes*

How can I assist the research?

- *Participants are encouraged to engage with the lead researcher, share their views on sport coaching.*

How will you ensure that my identity is kept confidential?



- Any data collected (e.g. field notes, audio files) will remain strictly confidential. When writing up or presenting the findings quotes will be used to illustrate important findings, however, these quotes will remain strictly anonymous through the use of code names
- Data will be stored safely and securely and held for ten years, after which it will be destroyed, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The data will be owned by Loughborough University and will only be used for the purpose of this study. Only the research team will have access to the data.

What will happen to the results of the study?

- The findings of this research will be written up for publication in an academic journal and in the writing of a PhD thesis.

What if I am not happy with how the research is conducted?

- The University has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing\(2\).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm).

Do I have to provide informed consent to participate?

Yes.

How can I *withdraw myself from the study*?

- If you do not wish to be a participant in the research then please contact the lead researcher. You can withdraw from the research at any stage and do not have to provide a reason for withdrawal. Withdrawal will mean that any observations or informal interviews with you will not be written up as part of data collection. Should you wish to withdraw this will not affect your relationship with the researchers, the ECB or Loughborough University.

I have some questions who should I contact?

- If you have questions please contact the lead researcher (Rob Townsend)

Thank you for your time.



Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport

Parent Information Sheet

Understanding Learning and Development in Disability Sport

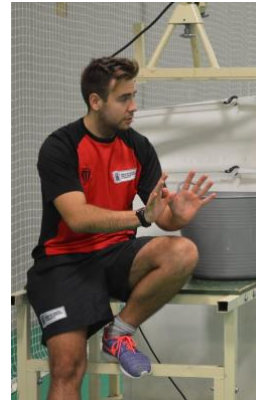
Lead Researcher:

Robert Townsend, PhD Researcher, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU.

r.townsend@lboro.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

- *The aim of this study is to understand how coaches learn to work with athletes diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, within an inclusive disability sport.*



Who is doing the research?

- *This research study will be conducted by Robert Townsend*

Why are you doing this research?

- *This study is part of a research project that aims to develop an effective and inclusive coach education programme for coaches who work in disability sport.*

How will data be collected?

- *A method called ethnography will be used to collect data which will require the lead researcher to spend a prolonged period of time (6 months) with the England MLD cricket squad to gain an in-depth understanding of this social setting.*
- *Data will be collected through observation of the players and coaching staff. Observations and informal conversations will be recorded by writing field notes*

How can I assist the research?

- *Participants are encouraged to engage with the lead researcher, share their views and discuss autism and disability sport coaching.*

How will you ensure that my identity is kept confidential?

- *Any data collected (e.g. field notes, audio files) will remain strictly confidential. When writing up or presenting the findings quotes will be used to illustrate important findings, however, these quotes will remain strictly anonymous through the use of code names*

- Data will be stored safely and securely and held for ten years, after which it will be destroyed, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The data will be owned by Loughborough University and will only be used for the purpose of this study. Only the research team will have access to the data.

What will happen to the results of the study?

- The findings of this research will be written up for publication in an academic journal and in the writing of a PhD thesis.

What if I am not happy with how the research is conducted?

- The University has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing\(2\).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm). If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University's Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee:
- Ms J Green, Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423. Email: J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk
- The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/>.

Does my child have to provide informed consent to participate?

Yes.

How can I withdraw my child from the study?

- If you do not wish your child to be a participant in the research then contact the lead researcher. You can withdraw them from the research at any stage and do not have to provide a reason for withdrawal. Withdrawal will mean that any observations involving your child will not be written up as part of data collection. Should you wish to withdraw your child this will not affect your relationship with the researchers, the ECB or Loughborough University.

I have some questions who should I contact?

- If you have questions please contact the lead researcher (Rob Townsend)

Will my son be asked to be a participant?

- Yes, players will be invited to take part in an interview. A participant information sheet has been provided and the purpose of the study explained verbally to the players. If as you would like withdraw your son as participants in this study please contact Robert Townsend.

Will I be asked to participate?

- Not at this stage of the research



Understanding Learning and Development in Disability Sport

Participant Information Sheet

Coaches and Support Staff

Principal Researcher: Robert Townsend, Peter Harrison Centre, for Disability Sport, National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU.

r.townsend@lboro.ac.uk.

Supervisor:

Professor Christopher Cushion c.cushion@lboro.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the broader study can be noted in the following research question:

- How do coaches learn to work with athletes with a disability?

The study aims to identify what sources of knowledge coaches draw upon to inform their practice in disability sport. It aims to highlight how coaches interact with the athletes and how that interaction informs their practice. It aims to understand the coaches' experiences of coaching in disability sport, and athletes' experiences of being coached.

It is hoped that the data obtained will inform the writing and delivery of a disability coach education course.

Who is doing this research and why?

The research is being conducted by Robert Townsend, a PhD researcher under the supervision of Professor Christopher Cushion. The study is part of a research project in partnership with the National Autistic Society and is supported by Loughborough University.

Are there any exclusion criteria?

No.

What will I be asked to do?

Participants will not initially be asked to do anything other than go about your routine, everyday activities whilst in training.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

However, once the results of the study are published and the dissertation has been submitted (expected to be by September 2017), it will not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research.

Will I be required to attend any sessions and where will these be?

No, I will not ask you to attend any sessions outside of your contact time with the England MLD training camps or fixtures.

How long will it take?

The demand on your time will be minimal.

What personal information will be required from me?

Some personal information may be asked regarding your experiences of coaching and working with disabled athletes. All data will be kept strictly confidential and shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose of the study.

This study is not about training practices, tactics, sport science or technical knowledge of disability cricket, and as such any data regarding this will be kept strictly confidential.

Potentially sensitive information will be kept discreet and treated accordingly.

Are there any risks in participating?

The research poses no risk to the participants.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All data obtained from the day will be kept strictly confidential and will only be available for the researchers listed above. Under the data protection act, interview and audio data will be saved onto a password protected hard drive and any field notes kept in a locked draw.

All participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have some more questions; who should I contact?

Please contact the principal researcher, Robert Townsend- r.townsend@lboro.ac.uk or the supervisor listed above.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will form part of a wider investigation into coach learning in disability sport. Information collected will be used in the writing of a PhD thesis, and may result in publications in academic journals or presentations at academic conferences. Furthermore, the data may be used to inform the writing and delivery of a disability coach education programme. In so doing the names of participants will be anonymised in the research.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University's Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee:

Ms J Green, Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423. Email: J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk

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Understanding Learning and Development in Disability Sport

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in this study.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Your name _____

Your signature _____

Signature of investigator

Date
