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Formalised Mentoring as a Professional Learning Strategy for Volunteer Sports Coaches

By

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, that the original work is my own except as specified in acknowledgments or in footnotes, and that neither the thesis nor the original work contained therein has been submitted to this or any other institution for a degree.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine formalised mentoring as a learning strategy for volunteer sports coaches Despite the popular use of mentoring as a learning and support strategy across many professional domains, there has been comparatively little research on structured mentoring programmes in sports coaching, and there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to support claims for its efficacy in supporting and enhancing coach professional learning Moreover, despite the significantly high numbers of voluntary coaches that support sports coaching in the UK, there is a lack of research that addresses the professional needs of this population

Data are reported from a 12 month longitudinal study of 7 coach mentors and 18 mentees that were organized into formal mentor partnerships in one region of the UK Methods included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups with all participants Data analysis was undertaken using a constructivist revision of the Grounded Theory Method (Charmaz, 2006), recognizing that themes and categories are constructed from data and are mutually negotiated 'Core' conceptual categories were identified, depicting actions that embody mentoring processes. Findings from the study revealed that mentoring was the result of continuous interaction between coach and context, and that context must be understood in both spatial and temporal terms The context of volunteer coach mentoring can therefore be viewed as what Day & Sachs (2004) have called, "situatedness in time", that is, the mentoring process was valued when interaction was situated 'locally' (spatial), and where participation was perceived as relevant to practice (temporal)

Four key implications from the findings of this study suggest 1) that formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches needs to be clear about assumptions around learning that inform it, and what the objectives of any formalised programme might be, 2) that requisite competencies, skills and motivations of both coach and mentor need to be acknowledged when recruiting participants to a formalised mentoring programme, 3) coaches' conceptualisations of mentoring were shaped by individual interpretation, and located within wider fields of social practice, which then shaped, directed and brought into focus what was important to coaches as they engaged with mentoring These experiences need to be elevated and considered before engaging with any learning

activity, 4) there is a need to re-conceptualise coach mentoring in ways that differ from 'borrowed' formal models with quantifiable cost-benefit outcomes Instead of traditional coach mentoring schemes that conceive mentoring through a dyadic relationship between mentor and novice, the findings from this study suggest that volunteer coach mentoring should be located within a community model that can maximise professional learning in a shared and sustained social network. A community of practice framework recognises a community identity that, in turn, shapes the identities of its members; and such community exists because participation has value to its members Re-thinking coach mentoring programmes in this way re-configures the learning strategy of mentoring as something that is local, grounded in practice, and valued by coaches

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

Over the past 10 years, particular attention has been paid to the role of coach education in preparing and supporting coaches for practice (Abraham & Collins, 1998, Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003, Knowles, Borrie & Telfer, 2005a, Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006; Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Côté, 2008) Although it has been argued that this research has not always kept up with the accelerated pace of coach education policy and funding in many Western countries (Cassidy *et al*, 2006), the literature has began to illuminate how both researchers and policy makers might improve the effectiveness of programmes designed to improve the quality of coaching During a critical period of professional growth for coaching in the UK (North, 2009), and global initiatives to professionalise coach education (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006), the dissemination of coaching knowledge through formalised coach education and continuous professional development (CPD) programmes is clearly identified as a means of improving the quality of coaches and their practice (Cushion *et al*, 2003)

Although increased research examining the development of coaches has been welcomed by coaching practitioners (North, 2009), Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2006) have argued that a deeper understanding of how coaches develop has sometimes been constrained by a lack of definitional clarity Nelson *et al*, (2006) contend that researchers have used multiple labels and terms in examining coach development coach education, coach training, coach development, continuing professional development, and coaching and sport instructor certification programmes These terms, which are used imprecisely and uncritically, argue Nelson *et al*, (2006), have *"clearly impacted upon the development of the field, as few models of coach preparation and development exist"* (p 248) These authors concluded that the concept of education was conceptually restrictive because it represented notions of formality, typically captured in the structures of formal education (e g certification) Coach learning, conversely, is more conceptually appropriate because it embraces knowledge construction from inside and outside of educational settings (i e including experience) For Nelson *et al*, (2006), *"while the coach learner is an essential element in the learning process the coach educator is not, as learning often occurs without teaching"* (p 249) Coach learning then, is a more useful term for two reasons first, because it captures a mix of different learning situations (e g formal, non-formal,

informal directed, self directed), and second, because using the term learning focuses attention onto the learner, as opposed to the term education, which focuses on the educator (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005b) Subsequently, the term coach learning is used throughout this thesis to capture the multiple ways coaches learn

Even though the coaching literature has seen the emergence of coach learning as a field of study, there still appears to be paucity of empirical research that addresses how coaches learn, why coaches learn, and how coach learning is facilitated. Where examples do exist, these tend to focus on either performance/elite coaches (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Knowles *et al*, 2005a, Nash & Collins, 2006, Nash & Sproule, 2009) or development coaches (Erickson *et al*, 2008, Stephenson & Jowett, 2009) Where the learning needs of recreational/volunteer coaches are addressed, the context is either New Zealand (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006), USA (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005) or Canada (Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007, Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007) At the time of writing, there appeared to be no research that focused on volunteer coach learning in the UK. Bearing in mind that volunteer coaches represent 76% of the coaching population in the UK (North 2009), this gap in the literature would appear to limit the development of learning frameworks designed to improve coach development within this population

One particular area of coach learning that has attracted considerable attention however, has been mentoring In coach education, mentoring programmes (formally and informally) are employed enthusiastically at a number of coaching qualification levels, with mentoring being viewed in terms of learning professional practice and becoming part of an organisational culture (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Gilbert & Trudel, 2005) As both Cushion (2006) and Cassidy *et al*, (2004) have intimated, mentoring offers the potential to situate coaches' learning in authentic practical experiences and within supportive frameworks, structures that have been identified as facilitating learning (Vygotsky, 1978)

In spite of the pervasiveness of mentoring across many professional domains (Colley, 2003, Griffin & Ayers 2005, Dodds 2005; McMahon, 2005, Colky & Young, 2006), there has been comparatively little research on structured mentoring programmes in coaching, and there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to illustrate any long-term impact of coach mentoring initiatives (Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009) The rationale for

this study was, therefore, to examine formalised mentoring as a learning strategy for volunteer sports coaches Specifically, the research wanted to understand how a group of coaches and mentors engaged in, and made sense of, the mentoring process It could be argued that gaining a better understanding of mentoring for volunteer coaches is an essential step in the design of effective professional development structures and processes for this large workforce

1.1 Coaching as 'a professionally regulated vocation' – a UK context

In order to further understand the mentoring process between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured mentoring framework, a detailed picture of personal mentoring interaction at a micro-level, was required However, Colley (2003) has argued that the positives and negatives, the successes and failures of mentoring are not always confined to the efforts of individuals Mentoring, as a social and cultural phenomenon, operates within social structures (e g class, gender, race), and the dialectic relationship between individual and structure impacts upon behaviour Therefore, to better understand mentoring, the interplay between individual and the social context must be kept in view (Colley, 2003)

There is a consensus in the literature about the complex nature of coaching, the interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete, and the coaches' pivotal role in the development of talent (Abraham & Collins, 1998, Saury & Durand, 1998, Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002, Lyle 2002, Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) Moreover, an emerging body of work, where researchers draw from sociological and pedagogical theories, has described how coaches operate in a socially dynamic and educational environment (Cassidy *et al*, 2004, Jones, 2006) Alongside these descriptions of coaching function, role and context, Lyle (2002) has described coaching as a process-driven activity· one in which rather than representing coaching as the aggregation of isolated training activities, coaching should be viewed as a series of *"direct and indirect, formal and informal activities and interventions"* (p 40) For Cross & Lyle (1999), coaching is a coordinated and integrated process involving intervention, monitoring, planning, evaluating, implementing and reflecting upon performance

These selected descriptions of coaching are significant in their marked contrast to traditional approaches to coaching that were located within bio-scientific and product-

orientated discourse (Potrac *et al*, 2002; Cassidy *et al*, 2004) Within this context coaches were seen as 'mere' technicians (Macdonald & Tinning, 1995), who transferred coaching knowledge in a linear and unproblematic way Unsurprisingly, coach education mirrored this coaching role, delivering discrete units, within multi-dimensional programmes, and focusing on specific and narrow aspects of coaching knowledge (e g physiology, psychology). The outcome of this approach has been that coach education, historically, has delivered coaching knowledge decontextualised from the complex and messy reality of the coaching environment (Jones & Wallace, 2005), resulting in accusations that coach education fails to offer any real value or relevance for the practicing coach (Cushion *et al*, 2003).

Alongside a growing and developing body of literature which has begun to offer new insights into the complex human interface at the centre of the coaching process (Kidman, Thorpe & Hadfield 2005; Jones, 2006), the UK has seen the development of a new national coaching certificate (UKCC) The UKCC emerged from the UK government funded Sports Strategy Coaching Task Force in 2002 The Task Force was charged with developing a 'world class' coaching structure that would support coaches in the UK Data from the latest Sports Coach UK survey (North, 2009), revealed that the coaching workforce in the UK presently totals 1 1 million adults, and composed of 76% volunteers, 21% part-time paid, and 3% full-time paid Among the population of 'head' coaches within this workforce, 68% hold some form of coaching qualification, whereas 36% of assistant coaches hold a coaching qualification The UKCC was conceived as a means of addressing the needs of this diverse workforce, and, *"to supply suitably skilled coaches to guide the improvement of sports participation"* (North, 2009, executive summary) The broad aims of the UKCC include,

> *1   "Development of consistent and robust qualification specifications, learning programmes and resources based on good-practice principles from emerging coach practice and the wider education sector It rejects the 'teacher-centred' approach in favour of 'learner-centred' approaches, 'problem-based learning' and an applied and integrated approach to delivery The UKCC aims to promote 'athlete-centred coaching practice' and 'learner-centred coach education"*

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2 *"The UKCC focuses on coaching as a critical thinking activity –
enabling and empowering coaches to make effective decisions The
emphasis is placed on the 'how' (e g communication), 'what' (e g
technical/tactical) and 'why' of coaching practice in learning
programme design, rather than simply on 'what' (which was
perceived to be the more traditional pattern) The UKCC allows
for horizontal and vertical performance and developmental
coaching pathways to occur".*

(Sports Coach UK, 2007, p 9)

These aims, as well as indicating a cohesive and integrated approach to coach education
in the UK, also reveal aspirations for the professionalisation of coaching in the UK, and
specifically, the notion of coaching as a 'professionally regulated vocation' As
Sportscoach UK, the organisation charged with delivery the UKCC make explicit,

*"Enhanced coach education is an essential feature of emerging
professionalisation, and the continuing evolution of the UKCC reflects
an increased reliance on research and evidence-based policy making"*
(Sportscoach UK, 2007, p 2)

Even so, the notion of coaching as a legitimate profession has been challenged by a
number of researchers Armour (2004), for instance, has questioned whether the coaching
literature has the level and depth of critical scholarship demanded of a professional
occupation Indeed, Bowers & Jones (2006) have argued that a lack of critical mass in
coaching research, *"is a deficiency that has left the subject area open to accusations of
theoretical imprecision, assumption, and speculation"* (p 235) This would appear
problematic for the professionalisation of coaching because, arguably, one of the criterion
for being viewed as a profession is an active scholarly community (Shulman, 1998) A
professional community is identified by its formal body of research, and the transfer of
wisdom and practice of its expert practitioners (Jones *et al*, 2003), Within a scholarly
community, members should have both subject knowledge, and a broader understanding
that allows for contextual flexibility and interpretation of practice in their domain (Jones
et al, 2003) These markers of professional identity are important because as Armour

(2004) has argued, if coaching seeks recognition as a profession, it must continue to establish its scholarship base

1.2   Focus of the research

Beyond the initial process of professional accreditation and formal education, organisations have viewed continuing professional development (CPD) as reform strategies for enhancing the quality of their practitioners Coaching has been described as a complex and ambiguous activity, and so any CPD that can maximise coach professional learning appears to hold much promise for the future development of coaching Specifically, there is a growing interest in the use of mentoring from both National Governing Bodies (NGB) and national organisations (Nelson *et al*, 2006; Cushion 2006)

As described earlier, the use of mentoring as a learning strategy has found support in a variety of contexts and its potential value within professional development in a range of fields is recognised However, the conceptualisation of mentoring within coaching, as in many other disciplines, is under-developed at both practical and theoretical levels, and arguably results in an approach to mentoring that is over-simplistic and largely uncritical (Colley, 2003, Cushion, 2006) Within the coaching literature, researchers have acknowledged the popular but simplistic and uncritical consumption of mentoring as a learning tool in coach education and CPD programmes (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al*, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). For instance, Cushion's (2001) study of professional youth football reported that mentoring, in its informal and unstructured form, was very much in evidence and that it was both powerful and effective in maintaining the status quo More recently, Cassidy & Rossi (2006), Gilbert & Trudel (2006), and Jones *et al*, (2009) have all challenged researchers and coach educators to consider the potency of mentoring, but be sensitive to its perceived weaknesses in supporting coach learning (e g the impact of formalised mentoring where relationships are imposed) Indeed, Jones *et al*, (2009) have called for greater empirical evidence of coach mentoring that might then contribute and inform coach education

In summary, this chapter has identified a growing interest from researchers in coach learning, and particularly, the potential of formal mentoring as a learning strategy Yet despite this interest, there is a lack of empirical evidence concerning how coaches use mentoring, and there is a paucity of research that has examined the learning of volunteer

coaches, who make up the majority of coaches in the UK This thesis aims to address this gap in the coaching literature Therefore, the main research questions in this study were,

> What can be learnt about coach learning from the interaction between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured mentoring framework, and what is the potential for mentoring to enhance the professional learning of coaches?

In order to address this question, the following sub- questions are posed·

- What do participants understand about mentoring as situated within the context of coach professional learning?
- What are the social interactions that underpin meaningful participation within a formalised coach mentoring programme?
- What contextual and intervening conditions influence the mentoring relationship in a coaching context?
- What actions or outcomes resulted from the mentoring relationships under study?
- What theories help to explain an individual's experience of participating in formalised mentoring?
- What is the role of mentoring in developing coach learning?
- How do the findings inform views about the potential for mentoring to underpin coach professional development?

1.3 The research process

The methodology and methods used in this study are described in more detail in Chapter 3, but an introductory overview is provided here The study, adopting an evaluative case study approach (Stake, 2000), drew coaches and mentors from a County Sports Partnership in South East England, specifically, mentors and coaches involved in the Active Sports Programme The Active Sports Programme focused on nine popular sports athletics, cricket, basketball, girl's football, hockey, netball, swimming, rugby union and tennis, and offered young people coaching sessions, sports festivals, after-school clubs and performance coaching specific to these sports The Actives sports programmes were composed of a programme manager and administrator who recruited coaches to deliver

sessions Alongside delivery, Active programmes also sought to support coach education and coach development

The Active Sports programme was purposively sampled because it was in the process of constructing a formalised mentoring programme for novice coaches. The programme was led by David (pseudonym), who worked for a national sports organisation, but was professionally linked to Active programmes Through open invitations to coaches in the programme database, seven mentors and nineteen coaches agreed to take part in a formalised mentoring programme Mentors, from a variety of sports were identified by David, and asked to attend a 3 hour mentoring workshop The programme was formalised through matching of mentors and mentees, development training for mentors, and a formalised development plan and tracking system; for instance, at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, transactional exchanges in terms of establishing and negotiating goals, outcomes and expectations were established and negotiated Mentors and coaches were matched by David and linked by their sport.

This formalised mentoring programme formed the 'case' for the study Data were collected over a 12 month period and split into three phases. In phase 1, interviews and questionnaires were used to elicit a mentoring baseline from which to measure subsequent progress During phase 2, questionnaires and focus groups were used to monitor and generate data. Phase 3, involved exit interviews, questionnaires and a focus group, during which participants were asked to evaluate their experiences of the formalised mentoring programme Data analysis was undertaken using a constructivist revision of the Grounded Theory Method (Charmaz, 2006), recognizing that themes, issues and categories are constructed from data and are mutually negotiated 'Core' conceptual categories were identified, depicting actions that embodied mentoring processes Data generated through these methods were collated to construct individual databases, case study profiles, and analyses of key themes

1.4   Background

Within the social science literature there is a predilection to acknowledge and elevate the researchers' active role in the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) Indeed, I became increasingly aware that my biography, interests and experiences played a central role in the configuration of the components that constituted the research process

described in this study For instance, the origins of this thesis emerged from my personal experiences of coach education, experiences shaped by my professional occupation as a teacher of physical education and, more recently, a lecturer in Higher Education Throughout my professional life I have attended numerous formal coach education courses, motivated by a perceived need to 'acquire' drills and practices that would quickly enhance my practical skills Yet, in recent years, my attendance at such courses has been unfulfilling For instance, prior to this study I had successfully completed a rugby Level 2 course ('success' is defined in terms of receiving a certificate) but was left totally dissatisfied with my newly acquired accreditation. It seemed to me that knowledge was delivered piecemeal, with coaches then required to re-assemble this knowledge in their own coaching context Although the NGB perceived me as an accredited coach after completing this qualification, my technical knowledge felt fragmented and my 'tool box' of skills isolated to specific and narrow areas of practice

As a result of this uncomfortable experience, I began to reflect on the learning that coaches take from such courses and the role of sports organisations in maximising the learning opportunities formal programmes might afford I began to question the place of coach education in developing quality coaches and, specifically, volunteer coaches A number of questions began to form, for instance how do volunteer coaches continue to develop their coaching knowledge after their initial accreditation? Is it effective for CPD programmes to be confined to isolated weekends and pockets of interaction? Within existing coach education programmes, how is a balance struck in terms of technical and pedagogical knowledge content? As I critically reflected on my experiences of coach education, and sharpened by my academic vocation, I began to recognise Jones's (2006) observation that,

> *"such revelations can be disturbing to learners as they are focused*
> *outside their traditional cognitive comfort zones to deal with the messy*
> *and problematic reality of knowledge in the social world we inhabit"*
> (p 12)

Clearly my interpretation and frustrations with this particular coaching award were influenced by my pedagogical biography, I tend to view any coach education experience from a teaching and learning perspective The importance of acknowledging this

pedagogical worldview (Pope, 2005) is demonstrated when recognising how the topic area, research question, and methodology were influenced by my biography Such recognition is to assume a degree of research reflexivity, which is defined in the literature as a process of self-examination that is informed principally by the thoughts and actions of the researcher (Breuer, Mruck & Roth 2002) For Breuer *et al*, researchers are drawn to a particular topic for a variety of reasons: intellectual and emotional comfort, individual interest, professional associations that can exert influence at both the micro and macro levels, and topics that are pertinent to current events or reflective of the discourse of the dominant culture As a practising coach and as a lecturer in coaching studies, my interest in mentoring as a learning strategy was inextricably linked to my personal and professional positions

Looking back at the research process, I would argue that my biography was both a strength and weakness in undertaking this study. In the first instance, I hoped that my biography would provide me with an "insider's" perspective on this topic area Both coaching and teaching roles had provided me with many opportunities to interact with coaches from all levels (participation to performance), thereby enabling me to gain a *"broad sweep of the* [coaching] *landscape"* (Charmaz, 2006, p 14) Furthermore, from this position I felt equipped to understand the meanings and significance of the idiosyncratic slogans, language and symbols that are embedded in sports coaching culture (Cushion, 2006) Yet, I was also aware that the strength of an insider's perspective might also be its weakness, i e leading me to overlook the familiar, and resulting in a changed relationship between researcher and 'colleagues' In following Ghaye & Ghaye's (1998) contention that, *'reflection is like the glue that holds the research process together'* (p 68), I would argue that this reflexive focus on the origins of the study has prompted me to question my role as a researcher throughout the study, and offers the reader an insight into the researcher behind the research process

1.5 Significance and Outcomes of the Study

Mentoring as a method of supporting and enhancing professional learning appears to be regarded by some organisations as something of a panacea that can resolve a whole range of learning problems (Darwin, 2000, Allen, Eby, O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008) It has been argued that coaches learn much from experience (Cushion *et al*, 2003), yet the capacity to critically reflect on experience in a planned and systematic way can create a vital link

between tacit knowledge and professional knowledge that is embedded in formal coach education The ability to critically reflect on practice is limited by the practitioner's level of knowledge (Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne & Eubank, 2006), suggesting that the opportunity to share experiences might offer a more robust, meaningful and sustainable means of supporting and enhancing coach knowledge

Despite the enthusiastic application of mentoring as a learning strategy, coach mentoring remains a highly descriptive concept, often treated in a functional and highly unproblematic way (Cushion, 2001). Therefore, there is a compelling need to clarify and operationalise measures of mentoring in terms of function, role and process, if mentoring is to be effectively utilized as a learning strategy in coach education (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006, Gilbert & Trudel, 2006; Jones, 2009) Such re-thinking seeks to optimise mentoring and its embodiment as part of any future professional coach development programmes The aim of this study was therefore to build on previous coach mentoring research in order to extend knowledge and understanding of mentoring when used as a professional learning strategy with volunteer coaches

This study did not seek to provide findings that could be generalised across all coaching communities Indeed, the concept of generalisability would go against the key epistemological tenets of interpretive research (Thomas, 2002, Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) Instead, the study offers possibilities for coaches in similar contexts relate to the findings and to examine their own actions and situations (Silverman, 2005) It is also hoped that findings that might help coach educators understand the challenges, and opportunities, afforded by formalised mentoring as a learning strategy Further, by using a case study approach, localised stories might be linked to other studies that have used similar theoretical frameworks (Silverman, 2005) Finally, the development of sport coaches has been described as complex process (Nelson & Cushion, 2006), and so coaches' constructions of their mentoring experiences, and the sharing of these experiences and processes through their stories offers possibilities to contribute to the wider coach learning literature

1.6   Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised over nine chapters Chapter One has identified the problem, contextualised the study, framed the research questions, outlined the methodology,

identified the significance and outcomes of the study, and acknowledged the active researcher in the research process Chapter Two critically reviews the literature linked to this study· mentoring, learning theories, informal learning, and coach learning Chapter Three describes and justifies the methodology, and methods of data collection and analysis used in this study The chapter also addresses ethical and trustworthiness issues linked to the study Chapter Four analyses and describes the conditions for coach learning. Chapter Five examines how coaches' experiences of mentoring were characterised by continuous negotiation. Chapter Six investigates perceived barriers to mentoring participation. Chapter Seven provides two case of coach mentoring Chapter Eight presents a theoretical discussion of the study's findings, linked to the relevant literature Finally, Chapter Nine offers conclusions, implications and recommendations for further study

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter examines key literature linked to the research questions,

> What can be learnt about coach learning from the interaction
> between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured
> mentoring framework, and what is the potential for mentoring to
> enhance the professional learning of coaches?

Material selected in this chapter draws from the coaching, education, nursing and business literature Although aware of the limitations of 'borrowing' from other disciplines, these different contexts all involve complex social encounters, and therefore a comparative analysis can provide a broad framework within which coach mentoring can be considered

The chapter is divided into two main sections. First, definitions and attributes of mentoring are addressed This section also examines how social theories of learning and models of learning have conceptualised mentoring as a learning strategy The second part of the chapter then considers mentoring in the context of coaching by examining concepts of professional coach learning, coaching knowledge, and the role of reflection in knowledge construction The chapter concludes by considering mentoring strategies and elements of good practice

2.1   Overview of Mentoring

The popularity of mentoring in all spheres of human interaction, and the common use of the term in professional learning discourse (Higgins & Kram, 2001), represents a challenge for both researchers and policy makers In as much as mentoring is highly regarded as a professional learning tool, there still remains confusion about what mentoring is, and what it is not (Colley, 2003, Allen *et al*, 2008) Indeed, Colley's (2003) case study of a community mentoring programme for disaffected youth concluded that, '*existing research evidence scarcely justifies* [mentoring] *use on such a massive scale,* [since] *the movement has not yet developed a sound theoretical base to underpin policy or practice* (p 1) Yet despite this apparent conceptual vacuum, mentoring continues to be advanced in professional domains as a strategy for developing and

supporting professional practice. In coaching, for instance, mentoring has been acknowledged as a means of advancing high-quality practitioners by developing coaches' knowledge and expertise (Bloom et al, 1998, Jones *et al.,* 2009) In other fields, mentoring is conceived as a mechanism for enhancing and fulfilling career development and psychosocial support. For instance, in education, Cawyer, Simonds and Davis (2002) examined how formalised mentoring might be used in the socialization processes of a new faculty member Findings from this study suggest that although formalised mentoring made explicit the supportive relationships from more experienced colleagues, the most important qualities of formal mentoring were accessibility and opportunities for multiple mentoring relationships Similarly, in a monograph dedicated to research examining the mentoring process with PE teachers in the United States, Ayers and Griffin, 2005 concluded that effective mentoring needed to· a) recognise personal agency in the process (both mentor and mentee needed a voice in the process), b) acknowledge that mentors and mentees need to receive formal training and; c) mentoring may sometimes operate in a network configuration, where the mentee shares learning responsibility with multiple mentors What is evident in both Cawyer *et al* (2002) and Ayers and Griffin's (2005) research is how mentoring, in supporting career development, is seen to embrace notions of reciprocal and flexible mentoring configurations, and where the facilitation of mentoring relationships is motivated by the needs and empathy of participants Similar findings have been promoted in business For example, in their theoretical paper on the utility of social network theory, Higgins and Kram (2001) point out that the mentoring process is shaped by multiple relational sources, and consequently, mentoring sometimes takes up alternative forms and configurations It is therefore more useful to consider the mentoring process in terms of multiple developmental relationships that support the career growth of both mentor and mentee

In a recent review paper, Ketola (2009) re-evaluated a formalised mentoring programme that had been set up to support nursing undergraduates at a University in the US Originally constructed in 1999 to address issues of recruitment, support and retention within the student body, Ketola (2009) concluded that formalised mentoring programmes, in the context of University student support, need to consider three areas· matching (mentees needed to have a role in selecting their mentor), training (mentors needed mentoring training and support), and context (effective mentoring operated in an active community of reciprocal mentoring support between all participants) What is clear from

this paper is the critical role the nursing profession had in optimising the effectiveness and sustainability of the University mentoring programme The implication being, that for mentoring to work, mentoring needs to be valued and supported by the profession and organisation within which it is situated

There appears to be a consensus in the literature that the mentoring process is conceived as dynamic, flexible, reciprocal, multi-developmental, and predisposed by situation and context Yet it is interesting to note that although these selected papers treat mentoring as a process, Jones *et al.,* (2009) have observed how mentoring has also been described in terms of the person. Baird (1993) for instance, described mentoring through the function of the mentor 'helper', 'carer', and 'sharer', while Crow and Matthews (1998) described the mentor as a 'guide', and the mentee as a 'traveller' This fuzzy landscape, where mentoring is treated as a process, person and activity, has led Colley (2003) to suggest that historically, the mentoring literature has provided a *"limited view of what tends to happen as opposed to the rich possibilities of what can happen* (p 3)

2.2 Defining Mentoring

As intimated, definitions and terms of reference for mentoring are elusive and wide ranging. For example, in a theoretical review of mentoring and in the context of undergraduate education, Jacobi (1991) identified 15 different definitions of mentoring in the educational, psychological, and management literature In agreement, both Gibson (2004) and Parsloe & Wray (2000) have noted that in the business literature, there is no consistent definition or description of roles and functions The outcome of this situation is, as Roberts (2000) has observed,

> *"That definitional clarity of mentoring is a problematic area It is not that authors are incorrect It is rather that they do not share the same or possibly even similar perceptions of the mentoring phenomenon"* (p 150)

This lack of definitional consensus is perhaps not surprising because, as Kerka (1998) has argued, mentoring is a complex social and psychological activity It may be the case that researchers have felt disinclined to constrict mentoring to specific definitions because, as Roberts (2000) has argued, it limits its capacity to then embrace the myriad and unique mentor-mentee relationships that operate Nonetheless, in the design and adoption of

mentoring to programmes of professional development, there is clearly a need to understand what mentoring is, what it is not, and what it aims to accomplish

A useful starting point in defining mentoring is Colley's (2003) observation that mentoring can been addressed from two broad approaches First, a number of studies have examined mentoring in terms of its function and role For instance, in Dodd's (2005) phenomenological study of the meanings that physical education teacher education (PETE) women academics drew from their mentoring experiences, participants defined mentoring as; *"someone who is there to share information and provide guidance"* (p 359) In Higgins & Kram's (2001) conceptual paper, and based on a large database of empirical evidence, the mentor was defined as, *"a senior person working in the protégé's organisation assists with the protégé's personal and professional development"* (p 265) Similarly, Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, & Newman's (1984) empirical study of 50 mentoring dyads, Merriam's (1983) review of the mentoring literature, and Fletcher's (2000) book on mentoring in secondary schools in the UK, all refer to the mentor as a teacher and counsellor who supports and guides the novice in professional practice From these selected definitions, there is a sense that the mentoring literature understands mentoring to be a tool to facilitate change, assisting the novice in identifying, negotiating and optimising learning opportunities from what might appear, at times, to be a perplexing array of work place and personal experiences (Parsloe & Wray, 2000, Cassidy *et al*, 2004, Jones, 2006; Jones *et al*, 2009) It is also interesting to note that within these definitions, there is an implied reference to a dyadic (one-to-one) relationship within a formal organisational context

The second perspective from which to define mentoring is through mentoring relationships In a review of mentoring between 1978 and 1999, and across different occupational settings, Roberts (2000) identified the mentoring relationship as an essential quality of mentoring Similarly, the female academics in Dodd's (2005) study also described mentoring as, *"a personal intense relationship"*, where the mentor was *"someone who believes in you and has a real desire to help you to succeed"*, and *"the sounding board, the person you can trust, the person you can tell anything to and lets you listen to yourself"* (p 359) In the same way, both Singh, Bains & Vinnicombe (2002), and McMahon (2005), have suggested that close support relationships are essential for both career and professional development, and where good mentors are sponsors,

challenge-givers, exposure-providers, loyal and nurturing, social supporters, and most importantly, possess superior communication skills. Although discerning, these descriptions from the literature clearly acknowledge the quality of a personal and emotionally committed relationship

In summary, the literature points to mentoring being characterised by an intense 'caring' and 'guiding' quality It is also evident from the literature that before confining mentoring to narrow definitions of actions and processes, researchers have instead advocated using mentoring qualities (Roberts, 2000) By capturing the qualities of mentoring, practitioners and researchers have the flexibility to then build a model of mentoring that is sensitive to the situational, personal and professional dimensions that are indicative of the mentoring process (Jones et al, 2009) The following table describes mentoring qualities taken from the mentoring literature.

Table 2 0 A summary of mentoring qualities

- mentoring is characterised by a unique relationship between individuals
- mentoring is a learning partnership
- mentoring is a helping process
- mentoring supports career and personal development
- mentoring relationships are reciprocal, yet asymmetrical
- mentoring relationships are active and dynamic
- mentoring relationships change over time

Source Roberts (2000), Colley (2003), Brockbank & McGill (2006), Allen et al, (2008)

These qualities point to mentoring being more than traditional, functionalist approaches to mentoring, where the experienced mentor takes responsibility for the welfare and development of a mentee in relation to organisational norms (Brockbank & McGill, 2006) Indeed, Hay (1995), in her book titled 'Transformational Mentoring', has even argued that the term mentoring fails to capture the true potential of the relationship, and instead, promotes the term 'developmental alliance' Hay (1995) defined developmental alliance as, *'a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is*

enabled to increase awareness, identify alternatives, initiate action, and develop themselves' (p 3) The intuitive appeal of this definition is that it would appear to capture the reciprocal learning and developmental characteristics of mentoring that have been clearly identified in some of the recent mentoring literature (Higgins & Kram, 2001, Allen, 2003, Packard, B , Kim G , Sicley, K & Piontkowski, 2009)

Although tying mentoring down to specific terms and labels has proved elusive, there appears to be a consensus in the literature concerning the outcome of mentoring interactions; that is, to produce change through the learning and development of the individual (Roberts, 2000, McCaughtry *et al*, 2005, Brockbank & McGill, 2006) For example, recent studies in business and education have addressed mentoring as a co-learning activity in which mentor and mentee exchange ideas and information and, in so doing, construct new knowledge for instance, organisational level knowledge, and personal knowledge (Higgins, 2000; Higgins & Kram, 2001, Gilles & Wilson, 2004) Hence, in their study of teacher induction, Gilles & Wilson (2004) observed how organisational knowledge was constructed through the mentoring relationship, which served to share organisational information, and where aspirations were discussed and formal and informal systems understood In terms of personal knowledge, Kram (1985) has argued that mentoring serves the purpose of clarifying professional identity, illuminating personal values, strengths and weaknesses, and, increasing awareness of developmental needs Subsequently, mentoring as a source of learning has received considerable attention, and particularly where individual work lives span transitions between multiple social and organisational arenas (Higgins, 2000) Careers have been described as 'boundaryless' in nature (Higgins, 2000), so that both internal and external, traditional working boundaries (such as hierarchy, function and geography) are blurred Consequently, the notion of professional learning, and the role of a mentor to manage and facilitate this process, would appear particularly pertinent to volunteer coaches who typically combine coaching with the membership of multiple social arenas (i e professional occupation) Therefore, any learning strategy, such as mentoring, that offered 'short cuts' to coaching expertise would appeal to national and local coaching organisations as they seek out ways of improving the quality of their coaching workforce

2.3 Models of Mentoring

In pursuit of operational clarity, a number of mentoring models have been conceived that go some way in identifying mentoring concepts of structure, measurement and organisation One such example is derived from the seminal work of Kram (1985) In her book based on mentoring relationships of junior and senior colleagues in a corporate setting, and drawing from a large database of empirical work, Kram considered mentoring as having 2 main functions, 1) psychosocial development (competence, identity and professional effectiveness) and; 2) professional development (career advancement) Alongside mentoring functions, Kram described the mentoring relationship as a dynamic and fluid process that proceeded through four stages of development. initiation (establishing relationship), cultivation (developing relationship), separation (roles change), and redefinition (relationship assumes different characteristics) In conceiving mentoring in such a way, Kram's work offered ways in which to consider strategies in building developmental relationships, but perhaps more significantly, Kram described mentoring beyond the traditional dyad configuration, and instead, offered possibilities for a variety of mentoring forms (e g peer mentoring) in the work setting.

In another example, Anderson and Shannon's (1988) paper titled, *'Toward a Conceptualization of Mentoring'*, proposed that mentoring was a three stage process model. Conceived within teacher mentor programmes, Anderson and Shannon suggested that the mentoring process was characterised by defining the mentoring relationship (role model, nurturer), the functions of mentoring (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling, and befriending), and activities as part of the mentoring process (acting as an observer, giving feedback, demonstrations, and facilitating social support) It is interesting to note that although distinct, both models reveal that although mentoring relationships are unique, mentoring follows a general pattern of development, relationships develop, evolve and then dissipate (Lentz & Allen, 2007)

From within the field of sports coaching, Jones *et al* (2009), and drawing on the work of Geen (2000), described three mentoring models· Apprenticeship Model, Competency Model; and Reflective Practitioner Model The Apprenticeship Model reflects a belief that learning arises out of reproduction and imitation, and where the mentor's role is to provide a model of good practice However, it could be argued that this model provides

little opportunity for creativity, and perhaps resulting in the production of clones of the mentor. The second model, Competency Model, describes the mentors' role as systematically observing the mentee, and then providing regular feedback by reference to pre-determined knowledge, skills and understanding (Jones *et al*, 2009) Yet Kerry & Shelton Mayes (1995) would argue that such a model cannot break teaching down into a list of pre-defined competencies, teaching is a more complex, situated and contextual activity than this model portrays The final model, the Reflective Practitioner Model, promotes a self-analytical and reflective approach to mentoring, where teachers are encouraged to examine and evaluate their experiences, and to learn from those experiences. Yet as Jones *et al*, (2009) point out, and in practical terms, students generally want mentors to offer feedback and opinions, rather than encourage self-reflection Although offering some direction, Kerry & Shelton Mayes (1995) have argued that these models, viewed separately, are both partial and inadequate Conversely, when viewed together, they tender a more holistic understanding of mentoring, particularly when used at the relevant developmental stages of the mentee.

Contained within these models and together with the mentoring literature in general, descriptions of a mentor working with a mentee in a conventional one-to-one relationship are prevalent (Smith, 2007) However, a growing body of literature has acknowledged that individuals develop through more than one mentoring relationship over their careers (Scandura & Pelligrini, 2007) Building on Kram's (1985) original work, researchers have acknowledged how individuals actively seek out multiple mentors in fulfilling multiple developmental needs (Higgins & Kram, 2001) Indeed, Higgins & Kram (2001) have recently begun to reconceptualise mentoring away from conceptions of a single dyad, and instead, accommodated alternative mentoring possibilities, such as network or multiple mentoring Within this expanded notion of mentoring, the mentee has a network of simultaneous mentoring relationships Illustrative of this configuration, Scandura & Pelligrini (2007) have defined network mentoring as,

> *"a multiple mentoring model capturing the existence of a constellation*
> *of different mentors at one point in time rather than a sequential*
> *existence of single mentoring relations"* (p 78)

The utility of thinking about mentoring in this way, is that it reconceptualises mentoring beyond the traditional dyad (though this is still one possible configuration), and acknowledges mentoring as possibly characterised by multiple relationships Recent empirical evidence has suggested that this reflects the reality of learning and development in professional occupations For instance, in their study of mentoring with PE teachers, Ayers and Griffins (2005) described mentoring as a series of multiple relationships, mentor(s) created or existed in an environment that encouraged co-participation in a 'nexus of relationships' in order to meet personal and professional needs. As a result, Ayers and Griffin (2005) argued that mentoring was best considered, *"a mosaic that focuses on creating learning partnerships across the professions"* (p. 370). This model is also supported by Cawyer *et al*, (2002), who described mentoring as, *'a configuration of relationships'* based around accessibility and seeking colleagues who were convenient when seeking particular forms of professional and social support Thus, instead of the mentor taking full responsibility for the mentee's learning, the mentee learns to share responsibility for learning and increasingly becomes self directed In this way, a form of shared accountability and responsibility is created.

It is evident from the literature that the past decade has seen a shift in conceptual approaches towards mentoring Traditional notions of mentoring held that relationships were organisationally/job related, hierarchical in structure, formed around a single dyad, and were focused on mentee learning (Higgins, 2000) However, recent studies have begun to illuminate mentoring to be something more mentoring relationships that are intra and extra-organisational (profession, community, and family), multiple dyads/networks, career/person related and involving mutuality and reciprocity The outcome of this reconfiguration is, as Scandura and Pelligrini (2007) conceived, to understand that individuals draw mentoring support from multiple relationships Such reconsideration begins to perceive mentoring as more of a developmental network, as individuals look beyond the boundaries of organisations in seeking out professional support and development As Higgins & Kram (2001) have argued,

> *There will always be an important place both in research and in practice for traditional mentoring relationships, but our review of the career and mentoring literature suggests that this traditional model is but one configuration individuals may expect to experience in their careers Just*

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as the boundaries of organisations and careers today have come under review, so too is it time to reconsider the boundaries of mentoring (p 283)

2.4 Mentoring Context

The context of mentoring has historically been categorised as either formal or informal (Brockbank & McGill, 2006) Formal mentoring is defined by its facilitated support and situated within organisational structures Informal mentoring is more spontaneous, and where there is little intervention other than initial introduction In table 2 1, Colley (2003) offers a summary of the main features and characteristics of formal and informal mentoring

Table 2 1: Mentoring Styles: informal and formal

Informal	Formal
Unplanned	Planned
Voluntary participation	Degree of compulsion
Individual goals	Policy and institutional goals
High level of negotiation	Low level of negotiation
Shared background and experiences	Social distance
High social intensity	Low to medium social intensity
Self-sought friendship	Relationship mediated by matching process
Indefinite time-span	Limited time-span
Less directive	More directive
Difficult to track	Intensely monitored on specific criteria
Located in familiar surroundings	Located in institutional settings
Relates to wider social ties and peer group	Focuses on individual
Rooted in the local community	Separate from local community

Source· Colley, 2003, p 165

In the mentoring literature, research has found merit in both formal and informal mentoring In business, for example, research has suggested that individuals perceive formal mentoring arrangements to be more beneficial to their career development (Godshalk & Sosik, 2003) In a complex working environment, formal mentoring offered a secure and supportive framework in dealing with situations which can be, at times, ambiguous, unstable and intimidating However for Dodds (2005), informal mentoring was more powerful in its impact, typically lasts longer than formal mentoring, and *"has evolving rather than preset goals,* [that] *adapts better to individuals involved"* (Dodds, 2005, p 345). Further, Allen & Eby's (2003) found that formal mentoring (in a business context), where an individual feels pressurised to mentor others, may actually result in a decrease in intrinsic motivation, *"behaviour that is intrinsically motivated is behaviour that is formed out of enjoyment and engaged interest, rather than obligation or fulfilment"* (p 471) Even mentors who have volunteered to take part in formal structures may feel they are 'going through the motions' or 'just doing their job', which may detract from enjoying the relationship Hence Allen & Elby (2003) concluded that mentors who took part in formal mentoring may not always accumulate the same psychological benefits as those engaged in informal mentoring In agreement, Singh *et al* (2002) have suggested that whilst supportive in its intent, formal mentoring could stifle the development of constructive, secure and personal relationships; formal programs are typically focused on the mentee, whereas informal relationships are established because of some form of mutual attraction for both parties As Klasen and Clutterbuck (2001) describe in their review of mentoring practices in business, over-formalising the mentoring relationship,

> *"Can play a role in hindering or enhancing the formation of rapport,*
> *affecting the degree of trust and openness This in turn has an effect on*
> *the quality of the relationship and thus the degree of learning and*
> *development that is likely to occur"* (p 118)

In contrast to formal mentoring in business, the coaching literature has described informal mentoring as a key feature of many coaching environments However, it is argued, in its current form, it is uncritical, unstructured and unhelpful in developing a professional knowledge base from which both organisational and individual learning can be facilitated (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004) Interestingly,

Cushion (2006) has argued that the hub of the debate should not be about formal or informal context, but that whatever the mentoring circumstances, mentoring must facilitate the transformation of experience into knowledge and expertise. Subsequently, rather than deal with binary forms of mentoring context, it might be more valuable to see mentoring contexts on a continuum, from formal through semi-formal to informal (Morton-Cooper and Palmer, 2000) This would then seem to capture the reality of 'development' mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001), where mentoring relationships and contexts change over time

2.5 Mentoring to facilitate socialization

Within the mentoring literature, particular reference is made to mentoring as an instrument through which to facilitate organisational socialisation (Carmin, 1988; Kerka, 1998; Singh *et al*, 2002, Buck, 2004) Organisational socialization is defined as, *"the process through which newcomers acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes required for effective participation in an organisation* (Allen, McManus, & Russell 1999 p 456) Where coaching in the UK aspires to become a professionally regulated vocation, it is therefore not surprising that mentoring is perceived as an important instrument in contributing to the social systems of a sports organisation (Cushion, 2006), hence through mentoring, organisational culture is promoted, strengthened, and affirmed As Singh *et al*, (2002) illustrated,

> *"mentors are transfer agents of corporate culture, providing mentees with information on how to navigate the subtleties of the organisations informal political system, as well as appropriate behaviour"* (p 392)

Mentors as transfer agents represent 'instruments' for maintaining and transmitting organisational cohesiveness and continuity, particularly through periods of change, such as when individuals leave and new members are recruited and absorbed into organisational working practice Wenger (1998) has suggested that in a world of flux and fast changing conditions, continuity must be addressed at both an institutional and community level in maintaining equilibrium of practice in which *"communities must tune their practice constantly in their attempt to get the job done"* (p 94) This point seems particularly pertinent in coaching which is characterised by isolation (Knowles *et al*, 2006), voluntary contribution, good will and high attrition rates (North, 2009) What is

needed is some form of continuous support that allows a coach to construct and build on effective practice

A number of studies that have addressed mentoring as an instrument of socialisation (Cawyer *et al* 2002, Ketola, 2009), make reference to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory From this learning perspective, newcomers vicariously learn through the modelling and observation of more experienced practitioners, mentors provide models of experienced behaviour in navigating the complexities of the organisation (Allen *et al*, 1999) Formalised mentoring, therefore, represents important sources of information and knowledge as newcomers seek to understand the salient features of their working environment Yet where mentoring is conceived as a systematic and personalised strategy in which to socialise individuals into the culture of the organisation (Kerka, 1998), this form of socialisation is not unproblematic Indeed, Cushion (2006) has argued that mentoring can represent a form of social editing where mentees maybe exposed to 'limited' views of practice held by their mentor Further, Cushion (2006) questions the degree of power and control held by the mentor and how this might constrain the creative and reflective skills of the mentee, for this reason the mentoring process is conceived as a political act where the mentor represents the gatekeeper regarding what is legitimate knowledge (Cushion, 2006) As a result, mentoring is understood as a socially constructed power relationship, and where the power held by the mentor can enable and constrain the mentee's experience of the mentoring process Understanding mentoring relationships in this way has implications on how mentors and mentees are recruited and supported in formalised mentoring programmes

In summary, this review of mentoring literature has identified how mentoring functions and processes resonate with current theorising about how individuals learn In other words, mentoring as a learning strategy is socially constructed, experiential, and situated Accordingly, Kerka (1998) has suggested that the most effective mentoring involves 'guided experiential learning' Moreover, recent studies have begun reconceptualise mentoring in terms of a multiple, developmental or network mentoring (Higgins, 2000, Kram & Higgins 2008, Scandura & Pelligrini, 2008) Thus, instead of the mentor taking full responsibility for the mentee's learning, the mentee learns to share responsibility for learning by setting priorities, identifying (multiple) resources, and increasingly become self directed In this way, a form of shared accountability is created Notably, this

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reconfiguration of mentoring is underpinned by a social approach to learning where individuals construct meaning from their interaction with others In responding to Colley's (2003) observation that mentoring is, *"a practice that remains ill-defined, poorly conceptualised and weakly theorized"* (p 13), the following section addresses social learning theories that inform a richer understanding of mentoring, and mentoring practices

2.7 Theories of learning

Although there is no single theory that embraces the many activities in human learning, it has been argued that all approaches to learning are based on assumptions concerning the individual, their environment, and the relationship between the two (Cushion, 2006) Yet beyond this overarching notion, there is little agreement among researchers about what learning is (Brockbank & McGill, 2006) For instance, behavioural psychological approaches to learning have focused primarily on the individual as the unit of examination (Boud & Garrick, 1999) From this perspective, learning is defined as the enduring change of behaviour which can then be observed and measured (Ennis, 2007) Cognitive psychologists on the other hand seek evidence of change by focusing on the 'inside' of the learner (Brockbank & McGill, 2006) Recently, however, researchers have placed greater emphasise on learning in context (Lave & Wenger, 1991), focusing on the interrelationship between knowledge, context and practice Adopting such a perspective, results in an examination of the social nature of knowledge construction (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Paechter, Preedy, Scott & Soler, 2001; Azzarito & Ennis, 2003) Learning is thus not seen solely as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, so much as a process of social participation, impacted upon by the nature of the situation It is this latter approach, where learning is better understood as a form of social practice, which has underpinned much of the current research in mentoring (Higgins, 2000, Higgins & Kram, 2001, Colley, 2003, Brockbank & McGill, 2006)

Before proceeding to consider social learning theories, Moon (2004) has argued that *"to deal properly with a topic requires focus and boundaries or the discussion will be woolly"* (p 12) To this end, although there are multiple approaches to learning, and despite the lack of interpretive consensus towards learning, Knowles *et al*, (2005b) has argued that there are a number of key components of learning that can be gleaned from the literature change, filling a need, learning as a product, learning as a process, learning

as a function, natural growth, control, shaping, development of competencies, fulfilment of potential, personal involvement, self-initiated, learner evaluated, independent learning, and learning domains (p 17) Out of these learning characteristics, Knowles *et al*, has defined learning as, *"the process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise"* (p. 17) In structuring the following section, and in the absence of any definitive consensus, this definition would seem an appropriate starting point from which to examine theories of learning.

The subsequent section now examines learning as a social process Learning is conceived in social terms because the context of the learning domain impacts upon the individual's interpretation of the situation. Individuals bring to any learning domain experiences, and these experiences filter any new learning situations With this in mind, the following highlights the inseparable duality of the social and the individual by drawing on constructivist and situated learning theories The application of these theories are then addressed through Knowle's (1973) Adult Learning Theory, and Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice, which are employed in much of the mentoring literature as models, or frameworks, that consider learning in social terms

2.8 Learning as social practice

Since the publication of Lave & Wenger's (1991) book, *Situated Learning*, there has been considerable attention paid to how individuals learn new knowledge, activities and skills, beyond the provisions of formal education and training (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005) Informed by perceptions of society arranged through social relationships (Wikely & Bullock, 2006), researchers have begun to examine the meaning and processes of learning grounded in social activity (Fuller *et al*, 2005) Indeed, Lave & Wenger (1991) state that their motivation was to produce a comprehensive theory of learning as social practice, and where, *"learning is not merely situated in practice, learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world"* (p 35) By refocusing attention on the relationship between learner and context, is to appreciate how learning is understood as a dynamic process of decision making and perception, as the individual engages with physical, socio-cultural and organisational context (Kirk & McPhail, 2002) Learning is very much situated in context.

Situated learning is but one component of a broader constructivist approach to cognition. The constructivist paradigm (though also considered a theory), frames cognitive development as a socio-cultural process (Fox, 2001), knowledge is not only possessed individually, but shared amongst members of a community Its central claim is that knowledge is acquired through a process of construction (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998), learners construct understanding collectively through their involvement in events which are forged by cultural and historical factors As a useful summary, Fox (2001) describes the main tenets of constructivism as

1 Knowledge is personal
2 Learning is an active process
3 Knowledge is socially constructed
4 Learning involves making sense of the world
5 Effective learning requires challenging, meaningful problem solving

Within a constructivist approach, learning is perceived as something that is active and dynamic; individuals actively seek to construct meaning of their present situation The meanings that are made are tempered by the culturally and socially bounded context the learner finds themselves (Chen & Rovegno, 2000), indicating the temporal nature of meaning-making from the activities experienced

The work of Vygotsky's sociocultural constructivist perspective underpins social learning discourse and draws attention to the role of 'scaffolded instruction' (Vygotsky, 1978), that is, the assistance and support provided by a perceived expert, competent peer or mentor in allowing the learner to complete a task or solve a problem Scaffolded learning is characterised by the use of prompts, comments, explanations, questions and suggestions, a form of support that fades or evolves as the learners assumes an increasingly autonomous level of performance Such an approach is significant in shaping the content, process and evaluation of mentoring relationships as part of CPD provision For example, Williams, Matthews & Baugh (2004), reported on a study that evaluated the outcomes of a programme for the preparation of school principals in the US Participants reported that mentoring aided them in bridging the link between theory and practice, and was viewed as a powerful mechanism for learning practice Hence the mentor's role was one of *scaffolding growth-promoting experiences'* (p 56) in which the learning

relationship was characterised by an evolving and active strategy from nurturing to challenging, supporting to prodding

The central pillar of constructivism is that understanding is built through the collaboration and reflection of experience, new knowledge is built actively rather than regurgitated. Effective learning is collaborative, situational and based in communities of practice (Chen & Rovegno, 2000) Within a constructivist approach to learning, learners are guided, supported and encouraged to negotiate personally relevant constructed knowledge within the communities in which they exist In an educational setting, this might involve making available authentic and real world learning opportunities that make learning more meaningful Such opportunities highlight the role of social interaction as a means of constructing learning through dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration (Bonk, Oyer & Medbury 1995).

However, in a cautionary note, Fox (2001) has argued that researchers must also be sensitive in over focusing on the situated and social context of the learning environment As well as learning being a social activity, individuals must take ownership within the learning process As Fox illustrates,

> *"to focus exclusively on teaching as the shared construction of knowledge runs the risk of ignoring the extent to which learning depends on independent practice and problem solving It tends to highlight learning as conceptualisation and to ignore learning as the formation, or revision, of skills As well as sharing knowledge, we have to make knowledge our own"* (p 30)

With this in mind, research (von Krogh, 1998) has suggested that mentors should not only address socially constructed knowledge, but the personal memories and perceptual systems that might influence the learning process This personal dimension in the construction of knowledge is reflected in the work of Tinning (1996) and teachers' professional development Tinning concluded that teachers' value knowledge which is relevant to their own teaching lives (ideographic), specific as opposed to general (nomothetic), is utilitarian, and has the ability to engage them in some form of action Tinning, utilising Schon's (1983) description of teachers developing their own

ideographic 'theories-of-action' concluded that this is part of a teacher's tacit world This 'hidden knowledge' requires considerable reflection on one's own teaching to bring to the surface, knowledge which is essential in underpinning learning strategies

In summary, learning is not seen solely as the acquisition of knowledge by detached individuals, so much as a process of social participation, situated within a cultural context The nature of the situation impacts significantly on the process, resulting in learning being more than simply 'learning by doing' or experiential learning As a result, any study of mentoring that adopts a situated perspective focuses on the individual, the process and the context of the programme The researcher is therefore presented with a triad of relationships in examining mentoring, as opposed to the traditional and restricted notions of a dyadic mentoring relationship which confines the researcher to deal in binaries (Higgins & Kram, 2001) In the work of Lave & Wenger's (1991), the concept of 'situatedness' involves people being full participants in the world, and generating meaning and understanding from this interchange As Wenger (1998, p 13) concluded,

> *"Theories of situated experience give primacy to the dynamics of everyday existence, improvisation, coordination, and interactional choreography They mostly address the interactive relations of people with their environment They focus on the experience and the local construction of individual or interpersonal events such as activities and conversations"* (p 13)

The application of a situated learning perspective is accommodated within the learning frameworks that are Communities of Practice (CoP) and Adult Learning Theory, and it is to these that the chapter now turns.

2.9 Communities of Practice

As described previously, a theory of situated learning focuses on the social settings that construct the learner's ability to learn Importantly, situated learning is built around two premises first, knowledge construction is made difficult when transmitted knowledge is decontextualised, abstract or general; and second, new knowledge and learning is conceived as being located in communities of practice For Lave & Wenger (1991), learning is situated in the sense that it involves legitimate peripheral participation in a

CoP in which the 'novice' can move towards 'full participation' through being involved in particular experiences and practices A CoP is defined by Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002) as,

"a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a
passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in
this area by interaction on an on-going basis" (p 4)

The notion of a CoP is central to Lave and Wenger's (1991) version of situated learning They claim that the activities of a CoP provide learners with a framework for making sense of this specific sphere of life The social and cultural contexts in which a CoP exist, and to which its activities contribute, have a significant influence on what is learned and how learning takes place For Lave & Wenger (1991), the ways in which a CoP is structured, in terms of its social relationships, define possibilities for learning

- Learning is legitimate in that knowledge is not just factual but genuine and contextually bound;
- Learning is peripheral in that it involves the interaction of individuals, activities, knowledge and the social world,
- Learning involves participation in that there are activities to be engaged in and projects to be completed, often, though not exclusively, participation that is embedded in the activities of the community

The strength of the term CoP resides in its potential as a 'thinking tool', identifying practice and concepts of identity as entry points into the broader conceptual framework of social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998) For Wenger (1998), CoP are underpinned by a social theory of learning that seeks to integrate the components that characterise social participation These components include

1 Meaning - *"Learning is first and foremost the ability to negotiate new meaning"* (Wenger, 1998 p 226)
Meaning is described as a way of talking about life, experiences and the world as being meaningful Wenger describes the duality of participation and reification in generating meaning from actions Participation is described as those activities involved through

social enterprise. Reification is described as the process of giving form to our experiences, for example codifying knowledge through texts, manuals and curriculum However, although reification seeks to "*describe our engagement with the world as productive of meaning*" (p 58), it can represent decontextualised and procedural understanding, particularly when set away from practice, as may happen in coach education programmes delivered through 'theoretical classroom' simulated work. In reference to learning, Wenger concluded; "*the primary focus* [of learning] *must be on negotiating of meaning rather than on the mechanics of information transmission and acquisition*" (p.265)

2   Practice - a way of talking about shared history, social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action Concepts of practice are important because knowledge, that is "knowing how" as opposed to "knowing that", is integrated in the endeavour of practice Certainly in university based physical education programmes, school experience has been identified as the most productive period in learning to teach (Capel, 1996) In support, and in the context of formalised mentoring, Merriam, Bradley, & Baumgartner (2003) reported how participants identified, "*real learning was in the hands-on experiential activities, the practice itself*" (p. 178) Fundamentally, Wenger has argued that learning is not simply the acquisition of information, but is fixed in practice that allows people to make sense of and use that information in contextual enterprise

3   Identity - ways of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories in the context of our communities A community of practice is encompassing in the sense that it is "about" something, it is not just a set of relationships as found in concepts of network The community has an identity that shapes the identities of its members The importance of identity is that it helps organise what is attended to, what is rejected, and what is participated in Having a sense of identity is an essential facet of learning in any organisations

4   Community - a way of talking about the social configurations in which enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and participation is recognizable as competence For Wenger (1998) a community of practice is characterised by three dimensions a) its members engage in joint enterprise, which is understood and continually renegotiated, b)

mutual engagement which binds its members around a social fabric of enterprise, c) and a shared repertoire of procedures, routines and styles that members have developed Significantly, members of a community are informally bound by what they do together, from engaging in lunchtime discussions to solving difficult problems Communities of practice engage in practice that is both explicit and tacit, knowledge that is formally articulated and knowledge that is assumed

In harnessing the potential of CoP as sites of learning, Wenger (1998) has argued that it is necessary to recognise that knowledge is developed through both the 'core' and 'boundaries' of the community Although the core represents the centre of expertise, it is at the boundaries of the communities where new insights into understanding also emerge For Wenger, CoP truly become organisational assets when their core and their boundaries are active in complementary ways. The challenge for developing volunteer coaches in the UK is to expand community boundaries and acknowledge that coaches bring with them, consciously and subconsciously, the knowledge, culture and identity from their 'other' formal, informal and salaried communities of practice By doing so, a potential coaching CoP embraces a wide range of community membership and occupational contexts.

Intuitively, Wenger's CoP is appealing in that it articulates social participation embedded in the learning process However, in a cautionary note, Kirk & Kinchin (2003) suggest that perceptions of the apprentice moving seamlessly towards mastery of 'goods' as a legitimate peripheral participant in any CoP is not unproblematic, *"unless there is a publicly established and shared concept of excellence within a CoP, there can be no learning trajectory and, in effect, no community of practice"* (p 230) Essentially, there is a need to establish those 'dominant norms' and competences in relation to the skills and knowledge which are fundamental to the attainment of excellence and acceptance of the coach as a learner within the community The challenge for formalised coach mentoring is to capture the essence of communities of practice in pursuit of a dynamic and developing coaching pedagogy for coach education programmes As Wenger (1998) suggested,

> *"those who can understand the informal yet structured, experiential yet*
> *social, character of learning – and can translate their insights into*

designs in the service of learning – will be the architects of our tomorrow" (p 225)

2.10 Adult Learning Theory

Building on their generic definition of learning described earlier in this chapter, Knowles *et al.,* (2005b) defined Adult Learning Theory as, *"the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise"* (p 174) Described as a set of guidelines, a philosophy, a set of assumptions, and a theory (Merriam, 1983), adult learning theory advocates that adult learning differs from learning in childhood Based on a set of flexible core principles (discussed later in this section), adult learning theory, it is argued, offers a lens through which to shape and build a more conducive learning process for adults (Merriam, 2001)

In a review of adult learning development, Merriam (2008) has described how, historically, adult learning research has used concepts such as transformational learning and self-directed learning to focus on the individual learner. Specifically, how the learner processed information, and how learning empowered adults to learn More recently however, and influenced by situated cognition theory, adult learning research has addressed issues of historical and socio-cultural context (Merriam, 2008) Emerging from this conceptual shift are studies of work place learning, which focus on space, power, and identity (Fenwick, 2008) The result has been for adult learning research to move away from focusing on understanding adult learning from solely the learner's perspective, and instead, begin to understand adult learning by examining the learner in context (Merriam, 2008)

In an attempt to further understand the application of adult learning theory in practice, Kiely, Sandmann, & Truluck, (2004) have proposed a 'four-lens' model from which to conceptualise adult learning Within each lens, a number of key concepts and dimensions are identified

1 learner (i e participation motives, learning styles, experience, andragogy, self-direction, and learning environments that involve complex and novel situations)

2 process (i e learning processes, reflection, dialogue, transformational learning, experiential learning)

3   educator (i e teacher beliefs and assumptions, philosophical orientations teaching style)

4   context (i e. learning communities, interactive and structural, power, situated cognition)

In considering the efficacy of adult learning theory to underpin formalised mentoring, these four 'lenses' are now considered in more detail

1) Learner

The acknowledged distinction between child and adult learner is firmly entrenched in the learning literature (Merriam, 2008) So much so, that that the terms pedagogy and andragogy are now part of the lexicon of terms used to capture specific contexts in learning In his seminal work, Knowles (1973) defined pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children, and andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn Certainly the core assumptions that underpin andragogy are seen as, "*invaluable in shaping the learning process* [and] *to be more conducive to adults*" (Knowles *et al.*, 2005b, p 2) In this regard, Knowles (1973) premised five assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from assumptions about child learners (Table 2 3)·

Table 2.2: Characteristics of Adult Learners

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1 Self-concept· adult learners have a need to be self-directed

2 Experience adults have a wealth of experience that they use as a resource for learning

3 Readiness to learn learning is very much linked to their social roles

4 Orientation to learning orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness

5 Motivation to learn Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning would satisfy

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Source Brown, 2006 p 707

Embedded in these assumptions, the concept of self-direction is particularly prevalent Within a learning context, self direction is defined by Montgomery (2009) as the process where adult learners take the initiative for their own learning, identify needs, devise goals, recognise resources, engage with appropriate activities, and evaluate outcomes The significance of these attributes is that adult learners require a degree of control in the planning, implementing and evaluating of learning (Montgomery, 2009) From a practical perspective, understanding learner needs, prior experiences and knowledge would appear an essential requirement for any adult learning activity.

2) Process

The process lens within Kiely *at al* , (2004) model focuses on how adult learners learn Informed by Mezirow's (1991) model of transformational learning, adults engage with what is called 'perspective transformation'. Capturing both the process and outcome, 'perspective transformation' is defined as,

> *the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective, and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings"* (Mezirow 1991, p 14)

At the core of adult learning thinking is an acknowledgement that adults need to be in control of their learning processes It is this perception of self control, it is argued, that leads to increased learning (Kiely *et al* , 2004) For Knowles *et al* , (2005b) this involves the learner being involved in four distinct planning phases First, individual learning needs are identified Second, a strategy is conceived and resources identified in achieving learning goals Third, learning strategy is realized and resources utilized Finally, the learner evaluates the process of achieving their learning goals In practical terms, it is a reminder to instructors (and mentors) involved in adult education that self concept is both a characteristics of adult learners, and at the same time, a purpose

Attention to the concept of self in the learning process also serves to highlight the role of adult educators For instance, perspective transformation is triggered by what Mezirow

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(1991) called 'disorienting dilemmas", where critical or significant events are experienced, and where interpretation of these events is incongruent with existing frames of reference For Knowles *et al* , (2005b), the adult educator encourages and prompts the learner to engage in critical reflections and to consider alternative perspectives In this way, the adult educator facilitates the potential of the learner to become more autonomous learners As Kiely *et al* , (2004) concluded;

> *Transformational learning processes can help adult learners recognise and overcome distorted assumptions that make up their personal perspectives so that they are more developmentally functional in guiding observations, interpretations, and actions (p. 23)*

3) Context

As described earlier in this chapter, context plays a critical role in shaping learning and learner's perceptions of learning, and much of the recent literature in adult learning has been informed by situated cognition theory (Caffarella and Merriam, 2000, Merriam, 2008, Fenwick, 2008) Situated learning explicates the interactive and reciprocal learning relationship between learner and context, and by doing so, focuses on learning *in* the situation and the impact of the situation *on* the learner As a result, recent studies in adult learning (Fenwick, 2000), have begun to recognise the problematic nature of knowledge transfer meaningful and validated knowledge in one context may not be legitimate in another context The importance of examining context results in researchers considering issues of power, gender, race, disability, and sexual discrimination in effecting learning processes (Kiely *et al* , 2004)

Recognising that adult learning is more than cognitive processing, and that adult learning is multidimensional and contextually situated, offers opportunities to both expand and consider new instructional strategies in facilitating adult learning From a practical perspective, encouraging adult educators (mentors) to find authentic and 'real-life' problems and situations from which to fully engage learners, offers possibilities to fully engage the adult learner in a process that has value and relevance

4) Educator

Unequivocal evidence suggests that adult learning is best facilitated where the adult educator adopts a facilitating role as opposed to a didactic instructional role (Currie,

2000) As Galbraith (1991) has observed, effective teaching and learning experiences are challenging, active, critically reflective, collaborative and transforming. Since adult education draws heavily from humanistic traditions (Imel, 1999), the term facilitator is used in the literature to infer a supporting, fostering and assisting role in the learning process One of the strengths of Kiely *et al*, (2004) four lens model is that it draws attention to the role of the educator in the adult learning process In the design of any learning environment, this would seem critical because adult educators hold perceptions of their role, values, and assumptions of learning which then shape and influence the practical teaching strategies that are adopted.

It has been argued that adult learning theory should form the basis of the content, process and evaluation of learning in mentoring (English, 1999, McCaughty *et al*, 2005; Cassidy & Rossi 2006) Indeed English (1999) has suggested that using adult learning theory to underpin mentoring interactions maximises the potential of mentoring as a professional learning strategy for both new and experienced practitioners As described earlier in the chapter, Colley (2003) has argued that mentoring lacks a theoretical base from which to underpin practice Adult learning Theory addresses this short fall, and would seem to offer a framework from which to further examine the potential of formalised mentoring

From the literature reviewed, a social learning perspective appears to be particularly useful when considering the professional learning of volunteer coaches Typically, volunteer coaches operate during weekday evenings and weekends, and are often involved in sport as volunteer taxi drivers, support workers, care-givers, role models, laundry service and fundraisers in maintaining their sports teams (Jones, 2006) Subsequently, there are substantial barriers (e g money and time) in accessing formal 'learning' structures as promoted by national governing bodies A social learning perspective acknowledges that learning cannot always be designed, it belongs to the domain of experience and practice and can therefore only be 'designed for' (Wenger, 1998) As Wenger intimates, *"communities of practice are about content, about learning as a living experience of negotiating meaning, not about form"* (p 229)

A narrow view of learning has traditionally placed knowledge acquisition within educational institutions and formal settings However, by broadening a view of learning in which, as Rogoff (1995) has suggested, learning is seen as the product of participation

in social practice, it is then possible to recognise and incorporate workplace/work based activities within a learning framework As a result, learning is seen as engaging in the social world and consequently, with a broader conceptualisation, numerous learning opportunities present themselves As a result, conceptualising the context and the quality of the learning environment allows organisations to embrace issues of lifelong learning or 'life-wide' learning (Cheallaigh, 2001), capturing both formal and informal learning settings The following section now examines the concept of informal learning and the opportunities afforded by considering alternative learning environments and activities in developing a learning coach. The context, in relational to this study's aims, is to consider volunteer coaches mentoring interactions when situated outside of formal learning provision

2.12   Learning Situations - Informal Learning

The nature of coaching learning, principally 'participation' coaching as opposed to 'performance' coaching, is characterised by voluntary and independent practice, with neophyte coaches attending one-off workshops and coaching qualifications in order to develop their coaching knowledge (Cushion *et al*, 2003) As described earlier, this type of formal coach education has been criticised for its narrow approach towards learning (Abraham & Collins, 1998), formal coach education is characterised by organised learning events or packages, the presence of a designated teacher or trainer, the award of a qualification or credit, and external specifications of outcomes (Eraut, 2000) However, research confirms that coaching experience and learning from other coaches are the primary sources of knowledge for coaches (Saury & Durand 1998, Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Irwin, Hanton & Kerwin, 2004, Jones *et al*, 2004) Coaches serve an apprenticeship of observation in the coaching environment, but this may not be embraced (formally) within the coach education process (Cushion *et al*, 2003) As a result, research has concluded that informal education was the most important source of knowledge for coaches' developmental needs because it was relevant and meaningful to their practice (Jones *et al*, 2004)

Learning environments have been traditionally described as either formal or informal (Williams, 2003) formal being represented by educational institutions and informal by workplace engagement Yet it could be argued, both perspectives merely represent forms of social practice Indeed, for Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm (2003), it is not possible to

separate formal and informal into distinct and polarised categories Rather, Colley *et al*, have argued that there is a need to recognise the interrelationship of formal/informal learning and the interchangeable attributes of both within the context in which they are delivered. Recognising informal and formal attributes in relation to the learning context thereby allows learning to be placed along a continuum (Stern & Sommerland, 1999)

Fig 2 0. Formal continuum of learning situations

Informal		Formal
Implicit	←————————————————→	Classes
Unintended		Workshops
Unstructured		Qualifications
No teacher		
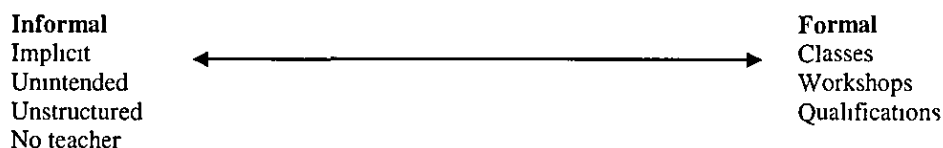
The outcome of this broad view of learning for both researcher and policy maker is neatly summed up by Colley *et al*, (2003),

> *"the challenge is not to combine informal and formal learning, for informal and formal attributes are present and interrelated, whether we will it so or not, The challenge is rather to recognise and identify them, and understand the implications of the particular balance or interrelationship in each case"* (p 64)

At this juncture it is perhaps worth highlighting issues of terminology in the informal learning literature, and the variety of terms used to articulate informal learning discourse Eraut's (2000) paper on informal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work addresses this debate Eraut preferred to use the term *"non-formal learning"*, as informal learning is associated with other meanings/interpretations and features of situations (e g dress, discourse, behaviour), thus, the label informal learning doesn't capture alternative approaches to formal learning *"its colloquial application as a descriptor of learning contexts may have little to do with learning per se"* (Eraut, 2000, p 12) However, the European Commission's (2001) communication paper on life-long learning identifies and uses the label non-formal learning as a third intermediate category, between formal and informal, non-formal attributes include learning that is not provided by an educational institution but that is intentional from the learner's perspective In reviewing these and a number of other publications within the informal literature, Colley *et al*, (2003)

suggested that the use of informal or non-formal terms is dependent on the dimension in which the writer situates themselves· either political (empowering underprivileged learners) or theoretical (understanding context outside educational institutions) In the political dimension, writers tend to use the term non-formal, while in the theoretical dimension, researchers use informal However, in summation, Colley *et al*, (2003) posit that there was no significant difference between the two; rather, they appear interchangeable Bearing in mind that the study described in this thesis sits within Colley *et al*, (2003) description of a theoretical dimension towards mentoring, the term 'informal' is used throughout this study

A number of researchers, working in a variety of professions, have acknowledged informal environments in supporting and developing professional learning For example, research by Eraut, Alderton, Cole & Senker, (1998), and drawing from healthcare, engineering and business, reported that,

"learning from other people and the challenges of work itself proved to be the most important dimensions of learning, Although some reported learning from formal education and training, this was often only of secondary importance" (p 37)

Similarly, teachers within a project assessing model professional development reported that informal learning captured the essence of successful CPD. that is, an on-going process rather than a 'one hit' activity in which teachers transfer thinking back into their environment (Johnson, Murphy & Filby, 2000) For this reason teachers felt that informal learning captured the context specific knowledge of their occupation, identifying meaning and relevance in supporting knowledge construction Interestingly, the authors described powerful CPD practice through an analogy of building a house formal training captures the blueprints, tools and materials needed, but there is still a need to construct the physical structure, informal learning captures the construction process in actually building the structure through collaboration and social practice In relating this to teacher CPD, Johnson *et al*, (2000) suggested that, *"informal approaches expand professional development to include learning while doing and learning from doing"* (p 21)

With a greater acknowledgement of the opportunities afforded by informal learning, researchers are now beginning to explore frameworks to both capture and measure it, and are asking, what makes an informal setting conducive to learning? How can we measure the learning effectiveness of informal activity? In addressing the former, Gamble (2001) suggested a working environment that encompassed task variation, opportunities to interact with experts (both inside and outside the workplace) and work roles that stimulated learning Similarly, the work of Lave & Wenger (1991) captured the importance of a supporting environment that allowed for peripheral participation in a community of practice Interestingly, Skule's (2004) paper on learning conditions at work addressed both conducive learning environments and measurement, and tenders a vision of what workplace pedagogy in coaching might look like Although possibly limited in its generalisability by contextual (private sector corporations) and cultural (Norwegian survey data) setting, it offers possible ways of thinking about the contextual and organisational factors that challenge or promote informal learning Skule identified 7 factors conducive to learning in the workplace:

1   Exposure to change - products and processes,

2   Exposure to demands - from clients, colleagues, manager,

3   Managerial type responsibilities - decision making, project management,

4   Professional contacts – participating in professional forums, networking,

5.   Feedback – seeing direct results of performance,

6   Management supporting learning – supporting and encouraging,

7   Rewarding proficiency – not just monetary, but possibly distribution of more interesting tasks and improved career opportunities

The individuals within Skule's study flourished in environments in which they were stretched, challenged and empowered in their daily working lives The result was, as the participants perceived it, environments in which high learning intensity (defined as a composite of subjective judgement, learning time required to master the role, and durability of acquired skills) was acknowledged and extensive informal learning could take place Intrinsically, Skule's seven factor framework suggests a means of assessing and enhancing informal learning environments, allowing organisations to possibly measure informal learning, and recognise and validate learning conditions within the workplace

The strength of informal learning situations have been recognised by numerous researchers (Cole, 2004, Gasparini, 2004, Frensch & Runger, 2003; Martz & Shepherd, 2003, Gourlay, 2002) These include·

- Flexible provision which captures a multitude and variety of activities and settings,
- Used as a complimentary partner to formal learning experiences,
- Recognising and capturing the social significance of learning from others,
- Greater freedom for learners to identify themselves within the social practice of work, identifying relevant and meaningful learning opportunities (Eraut, 2004)

Yet despite evidence supporting the powerful efficacy of informal learning on practitioner's practice, Billet (2002) has argued that the simplified conceptualisation of a particular learning situation as "informal" constrains and underestimates the development of what he has described as, a 'workplace pedagogy' Following Billet's argument, in the coaching process, there are intentionally structured goal-directed activities underpinning practice, and coaching roles involving deliberation, reflection and judgements about performance Labelling these experiences as informal learning therefore limits an understanding of learning to what might be termed, a dichotomy of convenience, formal or informal, rather than a framework of interdependent learning situations between the individual and social practice (Colley et al., 2003; Billett, 2002) As Eraut (2007) confirms, most human learning does not actually occur in formal contexts, as researchers in both education and coaching CPD will acknowledge (Cushion et al, 2003, Jones et al, 2004, Cassidy et al, 2004)

Current CPD activities within coaching have been characterised by provision that is formalised and qualification dominated (Abraham & Collins, 1998) Furthermore, Armour & Yelling (2004) have suggested that it is ineffective to provide a series of 'one shot' professional development activities, undertaken away from the place of work, without specific follow up and without making links with previous learning Within education, Klinger (2004) has made a similar point and labelled much of existing CPD as "sit and get", characterised by stand alone workshops / sessions, where relatively passive

participants are introduced to the latest thinking by "experts" However, coaches arrive at coach education courses with powerful personal beliefs and dispositions derived from formative coaching experiences As a result, coaches may be forced to attend/pass (some governing bodies insist on evidence of attendance in order to retain registration), but that doesn't mean they have to learn anything or to continue to learn. It may be the case that a 'dynamic' and 'integrated' CPD framework is one in which opportunities for informal learning and the development of a workplace coaching pedagogy, alongside a formal structure of knowledge dissemination, are recognised by both individual and organisation. Thus coach/mentor interaction, embedded in the coaching workplace, might follow formal educational practice, allowing coaches to contextualise new knowledge gathered from attending these courses.

2.14   Professional coach learning

"If coaching is to be a profession, then professional development is what professional coaches need" (Armour, 2004, p 110).

The professional development of coaches is acknowledged as a complex and multifaceted process, characterised by provisional and individual learning pathways (Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Nevill, 2001, Nelson & Cushion, 2006) Central to this developmental process has been coach education Typically, and based on empirical and anecdotal evidence, coach education has been negatively regarded, described as fragmented in delivery and availability, with little or no follow up, offering few opportunities to transfer theory in to practice, and with knowledge that is removed from the reality of practice (Nelson & Cushion, 2006) As Ian McGeechan, an elite rugby coach commented in Jones *et al ,* (2004) study of expert coaches, *"if you are relying on a coaching course, you are relying on things that are probably about five years out of date"* (p 59) It is therefore not surprising that coaches don't value coach education (in its current form), but instead, consistently identify experience and observation as key drivers in the construction and development of their coaching knowledge (Cushion *et al ,* 2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006, Ericsson *et al ,* 2008) As Eraut (1994) has argued, professional learning has been described as the ability to change practice, and a substantial proportion of learning in relation to change occurs in the context of use.

The identification of coach learning as a central concept underpinning much of the policy direction of coach education in the UK, Canada and Australia, has generated noticeable attention in recent years (Irwin, Hantoon & Kerwin 2004, Wright *et al*, 2007, Nelson *et al*, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) Coach learning has been defined as learning that embraces *"all forms through which coaches acquire the knowledge that informs their professional practice"* (Nelson *et al*, 2006, p 249) Examples from the literature include Nelson *et al.*, (2006) observation that coach learning was a mix of formal (coach certification), non formal (coaching workshops), informal (experiential learning), directed and self directed learning experiences Werthner & Trudel (2006) on the other hand, described coach learning situations as mediated (guided by an external source), unmediated (learner takes responsibility for learning), and internal (reconsideration of existing coaching ideas) The implications from such studies are fourfold firstly, that sources of coaching learning are multiple, secondly, that one source of coach learning doesn't take precedence over another, thirdly, that coach learning processes are complex and multi-dimensional, and fourthly, that in recognising the multiple sites of coach learning, it is possible to move coach education beyond traditional training models underpinned by notions of "knowledge transfer' (Côté, 2006), and to consider cooperative and social means of knowledge construction Put another way, and using learning metaphors from Sfard (1998), it would be possible to expand coach education beyond 'acquisition' and consider 'participation' in coach learning (Wright *et al*, 2007; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006)

In conceptualising coach learning beyond the formal structures of coach education is to acknowledge possibilities of coach learning through occupational or 'workplace' situations Occupations are rich in context, culture and emotion and therefore act as powerful determinants of learning (Wenger, 1998, Billet, 2002) From this perspective, learning can be seen as the product of 'situadeness' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) As described earlier in this chapter, a situated theory of learning re-focuses the learning spotlight on social participation to capture the processes newcomers experience as they learn from more experienced members

In recent years, there has been a growing body of coaching research that perceives learning as an active process of 'becoming' a member of a community and, in so doing, constructs and re-constructs an identity that influences the interpretation of learning

opportunities within that community (Culver & Trudel, 2006, 2008) The findings from such work support a considerable body of literature that has recognised the importance of constructing and sharing coaching knowledge through social interaction (Jones *et al*, 2004, Jones 2006; Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004; Côté, 2006). As one coach in Wright *et al*, (2007) study of youth ice hockey coaches stated, '*You learn more about coaching from other coaches than anybody else*' (p 136) Mentoring is a case in point. Mentoring as a learning strategy is viewed as a co-learning activity in which mentor and mentee exchange ideas and information and, in so doing; both construct new organisational level knowledge and personal knowledge (Gilles & Wilson, 2004) Hence, and in the context of professional development and coach learning, mentoring might even be recognised as a 'micro-level knowledge constructing community of practice' (Singh *et al*, 2002)

Recent studies on coach learning have begun to develop conceptually rich accounts of coaches' learning situations For instance, in a study of 44 Canadian coaches (levels 2/3 on the NCCP certification framework), Ericsson *et al*, (2008) found that coaches learn from a variety of learning situations (i e formal, non-formal and informal), but that the most important sources of coaching knowledge were learning by doing, and interacting with other coaches and peers In another study that examined influences on youth football coaches' learning, Stephenson & Jowett (2009) identified professional training (formal), social learning (informal), and internally reflective learning situations (informal) as three key factors to successful coach development In a study of volunteer ice hockey coaches in Canada, Wright *et al*, (2007) identified seven sources of coaching knowledge large-scale coach education programs, coaching clinics/seminars, formal mentoring, books/videotapes, personal experiences related to sport, family, and work; face-to-face interactions with other coaches, and the Internet These sources were categorized under the labels, mediated learning situations and unmediated learning situations The findings from these three studies suggest two important points, First, researchers and policy makers need to be mindful of the emphasises placed between acquisition and participation structures in the architecture of coach learning provision It appears to be the case that coaches want a mix of learning situations and experiences to give them both a broad understanding of the coaching process, and sport specific knowledge that has value and relevance to their practice Secondly, researchers need to continue to examine coach learning, but should go beyond identifying learning situations in order to examine

learning processes at these sites (Werthner & Trudel, 2006) It is by understanding the agency-structure relationship within the coach learning experiences that it is possible to optimise professional learning programmes for developing coaches

In a key discussion paper on coaching science, Woodman (1993) addressed the issue of professional recognition and suggested that professional occupations were characterised by certain key requisites; *"unique skills, a philosophy, code of practice, evaluation of effectiveness and a knowledge base "* (p 7) Woodman contended that understanding the nature of knowledge within the coaching process was important for its application to practice, because the coaches' knowledge base influenced the learning tasks selected Further, it has been argued that a closer examination of a coaching knowledge base will not only inform practice, but inform the nature of coaching learning in relation to what knowledge should be taught, how this knowledge should be delivered to coaches and, ultimately, how to assess learning has taken place (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Jones *et al*, 2003, Côté, 2006) In light of claims for the professional status of coaching to be accredited (Woodman, 1993; Lyle, 2002), the importance of establishing an overarching framework of accepted understanding and knowledge is recognized as an essential criteria for categorizing occupational domains as professional (Shulman, 1998; Hoyle and John, 1995)

2.15 Coaching Knowledge

One of the central tenets of professional practice is concerned with the process of changing existing situations into preferred ones (Glaser, 1999) However, the ability to manage this process requires a knowledge base that will, for example, help practitioners create avenues of inquiry, select appropriate methods to explore problems, define areas of relevance, and ultimately, establish and create meaning (Kuhn, 1970) Consequently, the importance of establishing a clear and universally accepted knowledge base within a professional framework has been argued (Pope, Smith, Goodwin & Mort 2003, Glaser, 1999, Eraut,1994), in the absence of such clarity, *"all the facts that could possibly pertain to the development of a given science are likely to seem equally relevant"* (Kuhn, 1970, p 15) At the heart of professional knowledge is the belief that a profession bases its practice on a body of technical or specialist knowledge This notion of professional knowledge would appear critical for coaching's aspirations to professional recognition, particularly where questions remain about the nature of a coaching knowledge base and

the levels of critical scholarship that contribute to this knowledge base (Jones *et al*, 2004)

The delivery of procedural knowledge through National Governing Body (NGB) coaching qualifications has been recognized and criticized (Abraham & Collins, 1998, Lyle, 2002, Cushion *et al*, 2003) Procedural knowledge which is described as knowing 'how to' (Lyle, 2002), has been the dominant knowledge structure in the UK NGB qualification framework, where short descriptive coaching courses, delivering snippets of procedural knowledge from an array of disciplines has been the standard format (Cushion *et al*, 2003) However, relying on procedural knowledge limits a coach's ability to appreciate the context, variability and domain-specific nature of coaching. Drills that are acquired during these courses as 'good practice' and 'gold-mark' activities fail to achieve the level of success when delivered away from the structured course environment (Cushion *et al*, 2003) As Lyle (2002) has argued, coaches are given access to procedural knowledge without the supporting background that facilitates critical reflection and flexibility. Abrahams & Collins (1998), therefore, suggested building declarative and propositional knowledge into coaching programmes, alongside procedural knowledge Declarative knowledge which is described as knowledge 'about things', and propositional knowledge which is described as understanding relationships between concepts (Lyle, 2002), then facilitate the transferability of knowledge by allowing coaches to understand the reasoning behind a selected activity For Abraham & Collins (1998), coach education programmes should be characterised by cognitive and experiential learning experiences, broad problem-solving activities, a central theme of reflection on coaching performance, and a strong underpinning (scaffolding) which allows for future professional development However, as they acknowledged;

> "All of this should be delivered as early as possible if sturdy 'scaffolding' is to be erected This would certainly contradict the pattern of coach education in the UK, that is, the lower down the coaching structure you go, the shorter the course Rather than being the shortest course, the first basic coaching award should be the longest" (Abraham & Collins, 1998, p 75)

Utilising the work of Schulman (1998), Jones *et al.*, (2004) have argued that a greater understanding of pedagogical content knowledge, the conflation of content and pedagogy that separates coaching from merely instructing, is required to contribute to the professional knowledge base debate. They suggested that there are valuable lessons to be learnt from education as coaching seeks to transplant models of knowledge into the domain. For instance, Hoyle and John (1995), reflecting on a knowledge base within education, suggested that constructing a professional knowledge from other fields was problematic. Using an analogy of medicine to illustrate the point, they described how medical practitioners drew upon and applied laws from chemistry, biology and physiology in diagnosing. They therefore drew from a theoretical body of knowledge to guide their actions. Yet, argued Hoyle and John, an over emphasise on theoretical knowledge has sometimes underplayed the importance of case studies and experience that practitioners' used to inform their practice. As Hoyle and John concluded, problems occur where academics and practitioners take polar positions: academics emphasising technical knowledge through codified and published texts, while the practitioner is more concerned with practical knowledge and the act of practice.

A particularly useful way of conceptualising professional knowledge is to draw upon Eraut's (1992) work in which he identified three kinds of knowledge propositional, process and personal. Propositional knowledge included domain-specific knowledge, concepts, generalisations and practice principles. Process knowledge was identified as *"knowing how to conduct the various processes that contribute to professional action"* (Eraut, 1992, p 105). The third knowledge is defined as personal knowledge which is constructed from the interpretation of experience. The personal knowledge that a learner brings with them to professional practice influences their understanding, interpretation and the application of propositional knowledge.

A number of studies in coaching have borne out the efficacy of Eraut's (1992) knowledge map. For example, Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell (1995), acknowledged the domain specific and situational nature of coaching knowledge. Drawing on expert high performance gymnastic coaches, a model was constructed which demonstrated the dynamic and interrelated relationship that exists between structures of the coaching process, competition, training, organisation, coach's personal characteristics, athlete's personal characteristics and contextual factors such as working conditions. When

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evaluating the gymnast's potential, coaches would consider their own coaching abilities and limitations, athlete characteristics and level of development, and contextual factors From this information, coaches then developed mental models to construct a "working" plan of action which was used to decide which knowledge was important in relation to the 'central components' of competition, organisation and training The use of mental models, alongside stored hierarchical structures of generic knowledge, allowed coaches to update, modify and re-evaluate practice and hence 'think on their feet'. Intuitively, the appeal of mental models is one of situational context That is, rather than a set of prescribed or precompiled knowledge structures, such as schemas, expert coaches utilize sport specific knowledge, adapting this to the perceived situation, and complimented by the use of generic coaching knowledge

Saury & Durand (1998), utilising a qualitative research design in the form of in-depth interviews and inductive coding, assessed the practical knowledge of Olympic expert sailing coaches Previous studies were criticised for viewing the coaching process as a series of well defined operations which could be specified and planned in advance (Côté et al, 1995) Saury & Durand however saw the reality of the coaching process as a series of constraints to be overcome and therefore a degree of flexibility based on cognitive anticipation. Using Schon's (1983) framework of professional knowledge in which the practitioner is faced with an ill defined and undeterminable series of problems, Saury & Durand illustrated the constraints faced by the sports coach, complexity, dynamism, singularity, and conflicting values The value of such criteria highlighted the unpredictable and uncertain nature of the coach, athlete, environmental relationship in which the coach relies on the ability to problem solve and make decisions as they evolve in front of them As Saury & Durand (1998) commented,

"Coaching tasks are not problems posed naturally to a coach They only become problems once they have been understood and delimited In other words, a problem must be delineated and constructed so that strategies for solving can be devised or elicited" (p 263)

In identifying the knowledge structures used by expert coaches, Saury & Durand concluded that practical knowledge could be expressed as explicit or implicit Explicit in the form of descriptive and declarative knowledge, such as scientific or technical

knowledge, and implicit in the form of tacit knowledge, such as professional 'know how', processes derived from experience and observation

Abraham and Collin's (1998) work on the nature of coaching knowledge and its implications for the development of coaching expertise is also helpful Adopting a cognitive psychological perspective, they postulated that expert coaches are characterised by their expert declarative and procedural knowledge and their capacity to organize this knowledge Consequently the expert coach is able to interpret, solve and apply expert interventions and coping strategies to the coaching situation The approach to problem solving is highlighted by an expert's subject domain. In the natural sciences, such as physics, biology or maths, experts select one rule (production) in defining a solution to a problem, termed as a 'forward reasoning approach'. However, in the social sciences, such as coaching, there may be several methods used to achieve a solution Abraham & Collins (1998) have termed this approach a 'breadth-first approach' The coach is faced with a number of constraints to which solutions must be provided and therefore a combination of deductive reasoning and cognitive organisation of knowledge is utilized by the expert coach. Implications for coach education programmes are clear,

> "Expertise is the knowledge of making correct decisions within the
> constraints of the session Thus coaching is not a behaviour to be copied
> but a cognitive skill to be taught" (Abraham & Collins, 1998, p 68)

In drawing together this section, and in considering implications for coach mentoring, the literature has revealed how expert coaches, alongside experts in other fields, search for new knowledge which they apply creatively to unique and novel situations Moreover, experts share knowledge, make better use of knowledge, and have extensive pedagogical content knowledge, including deep representations of subject matter knowledge (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, Housner & French, 1994) The outcome of this knowledge base is that expert coaches have better problem solving strategies, better adaptation and modification goals for diverse learners, better skills for improvisation, better decision making, and greater sensitivity to context The lessons from examining professional knowledge for coaching mentoring, and the content of these interactions, are therefore two fold First, it could be argued that volunteer coaches need a knowledge base that facilitates professional impact (performance, social, educational), and secondly, volunteer

coaches must demonstrate they have the technical, reflective and ethical qualities to operate in their professional domain As Hoyle & John (1995) have argued,

"Public confidence can only be gained if the profession openly asserts its expertise, a process which can be given greater credibility by the existence of a recognised body of professional knowledge" (p 74)

In reviewing expert coaches' knowledge, Jones *et al*, (2004) have argued that professional knowledge is constructed through interactions with the social world, and therefore to understand coaching knowledge, and how coaches utilize it, there is a need to understand the membership of the coaches' occupational and social worlds Central to this perspective is that coaches (as all social actors do) construct knowledge through the reflection and interpretation of their social and cultural worlds. The following section therefore considers the process of reflection in the construction of professional knowledge

2.16   Professional Knowledge and Reflection

The role of reflection in constructing knowledge has received considerable attention in the coaching literature (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, Knowles, Borrie & Nevill, 2001, Nelson & Cushion, 2006, Knowles *et al*, 2006) Reflection is conceptualised as a meta-cognitive process, reflection creates and enhances mental networks for the processing of information and the development of complex mental interconnections in allowing practitioners to improve their knowledge base and actions (Barnett, 1995) Consequently, many researchers see reflection as a catalyst for higher order thinking (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, Barnett, 1995) and the opportunity for 'critical reflection' is a desired outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship (Gilles & Wilson, 2004)

In his classic work on professional practice, Schon (1983) argued that a gap exists between propositional professional knowledge and the reality of how a professional practitioner acts Unlike the practice of scientists who are presented with well defined problems in which theory naturally drives practice, disciplines such as social work, education and nursing must work with *"messy, indeterminate and problematic situations"* (p 21) Adopting an experiential learning perspective, Schon argued that knowledge construction is derived from both the reflection-in-action (thinking on our feet) and reflection-on-action (after the encounter) of professional practice The point is

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made where reflection involves an understanding of the action, critically analysing the situation, restructuring and then further application, Schon labelled this, *"a reflective conversation with the situation"* (p 165)

Historically, Schon suggested that the knowledge base for professional activities has been dominated by the 'Technical Rationality Model' in which problem solving and the construction of knowledge are made rigorous through the application of scientific theory and technique, resulting in, *"the positivist epistemology of practice"*(p 40) However situations which might be viewed as complex, uncertain, instable and unique, do not fit the Technical Rationality Model As a consequence, Schon suggested, the Technical Model observes professional knowledge as a process of problem solving but fails to acknowledge problem setting, the process by which we identify the ends to be met and the means to achieve them Schon illustrated this from examples in psychotherapy and social work where the practitioner must make sense of a situation which initially makes no sense, has ambiguous ends and shifting contexts of practice Critically, Technical Rationality, Schon argued, depends on agreed ends In light of the contextually dynamic environment in which coaching operates (Lyle, 1996; Dick, 2007), the use of Schon's experiential learning theory from which to examine the construction of professional knowledge through reflection upon experience, could be fruitful for the coaching literature

An example of the process of reflection in building coaching knowledge is found in the work of Gilbert & Trudel (1999, 2004, 2005) In an attempt to address what they perceived as a shortfall in the research literature, Gilbert & Trudel (2004) examined how youth sport coaches constructed knowledge through experience, utilising Schon's learning theory Findings suggested that the process of reflection was fundamental to the improvement of a knowledge base and, consequently, professional practice Gilbert & Trudel (2004) supported Schon's argument that reflection should be viewed as a series of deliberate cognitive constructs, rather than random trial and error deliberation, and that four central themes have been identified in sustaining the reflective process First, individuals attempt to construct and understand the reality of their world, which Schon termed 'frames' Accordingly, within each discipline, practitioners may perceive a variety of roles For example, some coaches may perceive their role as one of moral and social development, whereas other coaches would emphasize the role of performance

development The way an individual frames their role influences which information they perceive as pertinent and important Second, learning takes place within the reflective process when problem solving is treated as a unique construct in which a solution must be sought, the solution then provides a frame of reference which the individual can then store or modify existing strategies The third theme in the construction of knowledge is through experimentation Utilising a cyclical structure, the individual adopts a strategic development, experimentation and evaluative approach, which allows them to solve a dilemma. Schon's final conjecture is that professionals create virtual worlds in which scenarios are played out before transferring to reality Certainly at the elite level of sports performance, an increase in the use of computer software and video analysis is used to not only evaluate performance but to play through endless virtual scenarios.

The influence of Schon's work concerning professional knowledge has also been documented within teacher education (Eraut, 1994, Moon, 2004, Herman & Mandell, 2004) Fendler (2003), tracing the genealogy of reflection in teacher education in the US, states that Schon's *"practitioner based intuition"* (p 19), was enthusiastically embraced in education because it was seen as a way to raise social status and professional identity In the coaching literature too, the role of reflection in constructing coaching knowledge has been acknowledged For example, Bowes & Jones (2006) examined the underpinning of a coaches' interpretations and decision making processes, suggesting that these cognitive actions were grounded in the reflection of experience, and the social learning from these past events then, *"acts as a skeleton around which constantly dynamic situations are interpreted"* (p 242).

Yet the role of reflection in the construction of contextually sensitive content knowledge is not without challenges Fendler (2003), for example, has argued that an array of meanings in reflection discourse has resulted in a confused agenda and a body of mixed messages Reflection has been defined as a way of becoming more professional, a tacit and intuitive understanding of practice, the evidence of self consciousness, a planning approach, accessing tacit knowledge; and the development of more effective practices (Fendler, 2003) Consequently, it becomes critical that future coaching research establishes how reflection is to be used, and how it will guide the construction of professional knowledge Further, Fendler has suggested that reflection may at times be simply a process of rationalising and reconfirming pre-conceived ideas, as opposed to

challenging assumptions As a result, reflective practitioners may limit themselves to the confines of their personal knowledge. Interestingly, both Fendler (2003) and Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler (2002) have suggested that practitioners might add a social dimension to reflection by making it available to critique among peer groups and colleagues Intuitively, the ability to frame knowledge, understanding, learning and vicarious experiences through reflected collaboration and partnerships, would seem to suggest a role for mentoring in the construction of professional coaching knowledge (Jones *et al*, 2004)

2.17 Coach mentoring

The challenge we face in coaching and coach education is to find ways of utilising the positive aspects of the apprenticeship and mentoring while being cognizant of their weakness, as well as having it informed by current educational/adult learning research" (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006, p 239)

Although mentoring is very much evident in policy documents and coach qualification frameworks in the UK (Heuze, 2005, North, 2006, Lyle, 2007), in practice, informal mentoring has been identified as a key feature of many coaching environments (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) Indeed, and as suggested by Jones *et al*, (2009), if mentoring is defined as learning from a more experienced other, then coaches and athletes across the sporting landscape would be able to identify somebody they have sought out for advice Yet, and as described earlier in the chapter, in its current form, mentoring in coaching, as with many other domains, is uncritical and unhelpful in developing professional knowledge (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004) Subsequently, informal mentoring may only serve to perpetuate and reproduce existing coaching cultures and practice (Cushion *et al*, 2003) The challenge for coaching organisations that view mentoring as a strategy for enhancing professional practice is to make explicit the tacit knowledge that is constructed within such relationships Only by doing this can new knowledge be disseminated into the organisational and cultural network to be used as codified knowledge by others However, it could be argued that the reality of the volunteer coach structure is that money and time are insurmountable barriers in formalising existing informal coaching mentoring relationships In the determination to

consider coaching as a 'professionally regulated profession' by 2016 (North, 2009), it is interesting to speculate on the ways in which it is possible to formalise existing structures and relationships in order to deliver a CPD programme that is systematic, planned and reflexive (Wenger, 1998)

There is a considerable body of empirical research in coaching that has identified mentoring as an important source of coaching knowledge For instance, Irwin *et al*, (2004) conducted a study of 16 elite gymnastics coaches, examining coaching knowledge and how coaches increased their knowledge base. Coaches reported that the two most important sources of their coaching knowledge were mentoring and trial and error/experimentation For this reason, Irwin *et al*, (2004) concluded that;

> *"Mentoring in both formal and informal capacities allows a shift from the self focus of the novice and promotes the development of their pedagogy in relation to their students' learning"* (p 437)

In another example, Gilbert & Trudel's (2005) study of Canadian coaches, advocated the development of mentoring embedded within 'coaching pods' (local community coaching groups), and the identification of nominated individuals to facilitate the mentoring process The fundamental nature of such a model was that mentoring was 'local', and embedded in contextual practice, which Ayers and Griffin (2005) have recognised as CPD that has real "take home" value In Gilbert & Trudel's study, where mentoring was locally based, CPD was able to demonstrate clear relevance to professional needs

The capacity to experiment, particular with newly acquired knowledge, was identified as an important element of CPD activity in a study by McCullick, Belcher & Schempp (2005) Participants were candidates on professional golf education programme Coaches reported that the ability to transfer information from the classroom onto the practice tee and work with 'live' students proved to be highly effective From this activity, candidates were not only able to explore theoretical issues and transfer these into a practical setting, but were able to receive immediate feedback from their instructors Through this 'applied' experience, candidates established ownership of knowledge in creating meaningful and significant learning for their own social setting Essentially, course tutors were at hand to aid and capture significant moments during the practical, and in

discussion with the candidates, assist perception in identifying important cues during the learning process, cues which neophyte coaches, working in isolation, might not recognise.

A review of the coach mentoring literature has revealed that mentoring is a popular, but a rather poorly conceptualised learning tool recommended for coach education (Cushion, 2001; Cushion *et al*, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Cushion, 2006) Despite lacking conceptual support, researchers still recognise the potential of mentoring as a strategy in bridging the perceived gaps in coach education, and support the potential role of mentoring in extending and developing coach learning (Cushion, 2001; Cushion *et al*, 2003; Cassidy *et al*, 2004; McCullick *et al*, 2005; Cushion, 2006, Jones *et al*, 2009). Indeed, research has found that both experienced and novice coaches have identified mentoring as essential to their development, and pointed to the need for structured mentoring programmes to support continuing professional development (Cassidy *et al*, 2004, Nash & Sproule, 2009) In this regard, the following section draws from the mentoring literature descriptions of effective mentoring programmes and the characteristics of good mentoring practice

2.18 Mentoring strategies – recommendations for practice

From a review of the mentoring literature, it is evident that the adoption of a situated perspective to mentoring encourages the researcher to consider the individuals, the process, and the context of the programme This paradigm shift away from traditional, dyadic notions of mentoring instead draws attention to the active and dynamic relationship between learner and context With this in mind, the following elements of effective mentoring programmes are considered under this triad model

Individuals
- Thought must be given to mentor requirements In borrowing from the work of Cushion *et al*, (2003), Jones *et al*, (2009) advocate a 'job description' of mentor competencies that include possessing the appropriate mix of *"social, cultural and symbolic capital to 'carry off' the role* (p 276)
- Consideration to matching participants The mentoring literature clearly acknowledges the quality of a personal and emotionally committed relationship,

therefore, relationships need to be matched according to some form of shared 'worldview' (Jones *et al*, 2009)

Process

- Rhodes *et al*, (2004) advocate the creation of learning contracts, but instead of the mentor taking full responsibility for the mentee's learning, the mentee learns to share responsibility for learning and increasingly becomes self directed In this way, a form of shared accountability and responsibility is created

- Training provision for both mentors (Jones *et al*, 2009) and mentees. Participants need to be primed for mentoring

- Acknowledge the reciprocal learning and developmental characteristics of mentoring

- Adult learners need to be in control of their learning processes. Subsequently, both mentor and mentee need to take the initiative for their own learning, identify needs, devise goals, recognise resources, engage with appropriate activities, and evaluate outcomes (Montgomery, 2009)

- Engage in critical reflective practice (Colley 2003) As well as mentors interacting with their mentee, configurations might also involve peer mentoring, or collaboration between mentors Mentors require time and space to share their experiences and to feel supported in their efforts (Jones *et al*, 2009)

- The mentoring programme must offer opportunities for participants to increase awareness, identify alternatives, initiate action, and develop themselves (Hay 1995) Hence the learning environment must encourage innovation and participants to seek out evidence from their practice (DfES, 2005). This might involve a form of action research, and from which dyads and multiple dyads collaborate to exchange information

- Awareness that mentoring is a fluid and dynamic process Mentoring evolves (Higgins & Kram, 2001)

Context

- Operate within a network or community Mentoring relationships that are intra and extra-organisational (profession, community, family), operate in multiple dyads/networks, and are career/person related and involving mutuality and reciprocity In this way, mentoring is considered as more of a developmental

network, as individuals look beyond the boundaries of organisations in seeking out professional support and development

- Although aware of over-formalising the mentoring relationship, a degree of structure is required This might involve some form of agreement involving role expectations, ground rules for communication, and programme goals for the mentee

- The mentoring experience must be challenging for both mentor and mentee (Jones *et al*, 2009) and involve meaningful problem solving opportunities.

- Coach educators need to give mentoring relationships a of degree flexibility in terms of the formality of structure (Jones *et al*, 2009) It might be more valuable to see mentoring contexts on a continuum, from formal through semi-formal to informal (Morton-Cooper and Palmer, 2000) This would appear to capture the reality of 'development' mentoring, where mentoring relationships and contexts change over time (Higgins & Kram, 2001)

2.19 Chapter Summary

"Can a formalized and structured mentoring program, where mentors are selected, accredited and to a certain extent imposed on coaches, be effective?" The challenge we face in coaching and coach education is to find ways of utilising the positive aspects of the apprenticeship and mentoring while being cognizant of their weakness (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006 p 40)

Mentoring as a source of learning continues to challenge both researchers and organisations, particularly in the context of complex and shifting organisational structures where mentoring is sometimes regarded as a solution to all professional development needs (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004) Coaches learn some things from experience, but the ability to critically reflect on experience in a planned and systematic way can create a vital link between tacit knowledge and the professional knowledge that is embedded in national governing bodies awards and supporting CPD workshops However, reflection is limited by the practitioner's own knowledge, suggesting that the opportunity to share experiences would offer opportunities to develop a more effective knowledge base (Knowles et al, 2006) Certainly in the coaching literature, the ability of the coach to

integrate and transform knowledge and skills from existing formal CPD programmes to the context of their practice has been questioned (Cassidy, *et al*, 2004) The place of social reflective conversations with a skilled mentor, or mentors, in a supportive community of practice may go some way towards bridging this perceived limitation Despite the promise of mentoring as a learning strategy, there has been comparatively little research in coaching on structured mentoring programmes, and there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to corroborate the long-term impact of coach mentoring initiatives

Chapter 3: <u>Methodology</u>

3.0 Introduction

To frame this study in terms of how volunteer coaches might learn and develop their professional practice through interaction with a mentor is to situate it within a social constructivist paradigm A constructivist approach focuses on the ways in which individuals create personal meaning from shared social experiences Emphasising the role of individual agency, constructivism views learning as a process of meaning-making and a process defined by the personal interpretation of an experience (Fensham, Gunstone, & White, 1994) Essentially, the meaning-making/sense-making constructions of individuals are of interest because it is these constructs that determine future action or inaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) However, it is important to acknowledge that individual cognitive functions are not constructed in isolation but operate in social interactions and, as a result, it can be argued that meaning-making cannot be separated from its social context

In line with this philosophical perspective, the study reported in this thesis examined the social interactions and processes that took place between sports coach and mentor, interactions that if perceived as meaningful, have the potential to enhance and promote coach learning The central research question in this study was

> What can be learnt about coach learning from the interaction
> between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured
> mentoring framework, and what is the potential for mentoring to
> enhance the professional learning of coaches?

Alongside the research question, a number of guiding questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or sub questions (Cresswell, 2007) were developed that helped break the central issue down into clear topics to be examined Hence in terms of the participants being part of a structured and formalised mentoring programme, a number of procedural sub questions were identified.

- What do participants understand about mentoring as situated within the context of sports coach mentoring?

- What are the social interactions that underpin meaningful participation within a formalised coach mentoring programme?

- What is the role of mentoring in developing coach learning?

- What theories help to explain an individual's experience of participating in facilitated mentoring?

- What contextual and intervening conditions influence the mentoring relationship in a sports coaching context?

- What actions or outcomes resulted from the mentoring relationships under study?

- How do the findings inform views about the potential for mentoring to underpin coach professional development?

It should be noted that the clarity of the research question and ensuing study design took much deliberation and involved considerable evolution. The research design became increasingly coherent as a result of personal experiences in coach education, a review of pertinent literature, and a series of pilot interviews held prior to the commencement of the main study. For instance, it was through pilot interviews that the significant role of a coaches' biography in shaping meaning towards professional development activities was first identified.

The aim of the chapter is to describe, in detail, the development of the study from initial conceptualisation to write-up and to ensure the research process is transparent. Although presented chronologically, suggesting a linear research process, in reality the process was multi-directional and is best characterised as an integrated and continuous operation of critical reflection, transformation, and re-direction. However, to ensure that the stages of the inquiry are clear to the reader, the chapter is organised using Denzin & Lincoln's (2005) conceptualisation of the research process and separated into two distinct parts. The first section of this chapter explains and justifies the research paradigm in which the study was located, the research approach used to answer the research questions, and the participants who took part. The second part of the chapter then moves on to present the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation employed. This section of the chapter concludes by considering issues of research trustworthiness.

3.1 Paradigm Rationale

Any process of formal inquiry is guided by a collection of beliefs and conventions which for a particular field of study, *"influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted"* (Bryman, 1992, p 4). These beliefs underpin the form of the inquiry and are shaped by three questions: what is the nature of knowledge or reality (ontology); what is the relationship between the researcher and knowledge (epistemology), and how the inquirer should go about finding out knowledge (methodology) (Guba, 1990) This belief system determines how the researcher sees the world and acts, and so the nature of research and the methods employed are a reflection of the researcher's bound network of ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions This aggregation has been termed paradigm (Kuhn, 1970), an interpretive framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) A paradigm of inquiry guides the researcher about what is significant, legitimate and tenable in a systematic inquiry

In reviewing contemporary coaching research literature, it became apparent that there was a conceptual shift in the way researchers examined coaching Rather than adopt a 'paint-by-numbers' and rationalistic approach to understanding coaching, researchers had began to acknowledge the complexity and ambiguity inherent in the coaching process (Potrac *et al*, 2000, Jones & Wallace, 2005) Moreover, Cushion *et al*, (2003) have argued that in developing and extending an understanding of coaching, there is a necessity to appreciate that it is both an individual and a social process and, as a result, is, *" inextricably linked to both the constraints and opportunities of human interaction"* (p 216) It could be argued, therefore, that in addressing the aims of the research, there was a need to adopt research practices that were not only driven by the research question, but were also sensitive to the context of the phenomena under investigation (Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992) Hence, in examining coaches' constructions of their experiences of formalised mentoring, a methodology needed to be adopted that was mindful of participants' subjective interpretations, shaped by historical, cultural and contextual factors

Within the sports coaching and sports pedagogy research fields, researchers have tended to position themselves and their work within one of three distinct paradigms (Macdonald,

2002) the positivist paradigm, the critical paradigm, and the interpretive paradigm The term paradigm is used in this context to capture distinct approaches to research that help inform, guide and interpret the research process A positivist paradigm maintains that objective accounts of the real world can be sought (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) Such an approach values the measurement of variables, logic, experimentation, causal effects and universal theories (Macdonald, 2002). Researchers who utilize a positivist paradigm in examining the social world believe that human activity can be broken down into discrete and measurable components, with the key aim of explaining and predicting human behaviours (Curtner-Smith, 2002). A critical approach to research is based on the belief that an understanding of the ways in which power operates in society is central to understanding social life Specifically, this approach examines inequality in the power relationships between individuals and groups, and has the goal of seeking to address inequality through self-empowerment and emancipation (Curtner-Smith, 2002). For Creswell (2007), the critical researcher seeks a better understanding of social institutions and their potential for transformations, and the social struggles of dominated and alienated individuals and groups An interpretive paradigm (within the overarching term, qualitative research) rejects the notion that universal truths can be uncovered, arguing that individual behaviour is based on intentions and beliefs within context-rich and situated realities This perspective leads to a research approach that seeks to understand the subjective and inter-subjective meanings that participants assign to their realities, realities that have multiple perspectives and interpretations Within this paradigmatic approach, the researcher constructs understandings from the participants' constructed data and subjective interpretations of their reality (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991)

In the context of this study, an interpretive approach seemed to hold much promise Indeed, Patton, Griffin, Dodds, Sheehy, Arnold, Henninger, Gallo, & James (2005) expression that, *"the social and situated nature of mentoring learning lends itself to a qualitative design"* (p 308) seemed to suggest a particular methodological direction Yet despite recognition of the suitability of an interpretive paradigm to the research design, the impact of issues around epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology as they related to the proposed study, were not fully appreciated at the beginning Further, it became increasingly evident that researchers inevitably bring to a study interpretive and theoretical frameworks that shape its development As Creswell (2007) has argued, good research makes these assumptions and frameworks explicit in its writing, acknowledging

their influence on the conduct of the inquiry This explains the purpose of the next section

3.2 Qualitative Research Paradigm

Although the overarching label qualitative research has its roots in phenomenology, social action, and symbolic interactional models (Jupp, 2006), and all three are bound by a common intent of understanding society and how social actors interpret it, the qualitative paradigm is characterised by an *"increasingly complex conceptual environment"* and *"range of intellectual antecedents"* (Edge and Richards, 1998, p 340) This has resulted in the production of a number of alternative research methodologies, or meta-paradigms (Bryant & Bailey, 1997) that embody distinct epistemological and ontological strategies (e g critical theory, constructivism, postpositivism) Bryant & Bailey (1997) have argued that not only does this reflect the evolution of the qualitative paradigm, but can refer to specific views of research

It is important to bring to the fore that any discussion around research paradigms must acknowledge human constructions, and therefore their susceptibility to human frailty As Guba & Lincoln (1994) have suggested, *"no construction is or can be incontrovertibly right, advocates must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position"* (p 108) Furthermore, there is still considerable debate concerning reference to definition, meaning and the implications of terminology and labels used in paradigm discourse (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Creswell, 2007) For Denzin & Lincoln (2005) the researcher utilizes the paradigm that is best situated to guide the inquiry, but there may be occasions where the researcher can blend elements of one paradigm with another that share similar values (axiology), issues and basic beliefs For example, within qualitative research paradigms, a number of researchers have suggested that both constructivism and participatory paradigms, although distinct in their beliefs and worldview, share approaches to issues of rigor and ethics, the use of natural settings, and the researcher as an instrument within the study (Appleton & King, 2002, Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Creswell, 2007) Such an approach, it would seem, and within a qualitative framework, supports an eclectic position in a study's paradigm of choice

The challenges faced by the researcher, in an increasingly complex and varied interdisciplinary approach to research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004), are illustrated by

the debate concerning a study's guiding paradigm For Denzin & Lincoln (2005), commensurability between opposing paradigms (positivist v interpretive) is problematic because the belief systems of each model are contradictory and mutually exclusive, however commensurability within paradigms that share axiomatic elements, such as positivism and post positivism, and constructive and participatory is possible Building on this debate, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) have argued that an epistemological position does not dictate specific data collection or analytical strategies that the researcher must use, indeed it may be the case where a qualitative researcher uses data collection methods synonymous with quantitative research For Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), research methods selected within an inquiry must be based on a, *'needs-based or contingency approach"* (p 17) as opposed to researchers treating, *"epistemology and methods as being synonymous"* (p 15) Consequently, they encourage researchers to consider research strategies that are inclusive, pluralistic and complimentary

In considering the natural development of a study, the researcher then seeks out strategies and a paradigmatic framework that best offers guidance in addressing the aims of the research Denzin & Lincoln (2005) have addressed this issue by describing the qualitative researcher as *'bricoleur and quilt maker'* (p.4) A bricoleur is described as someone who continually invents strategies for comprehending reality, reflected in the notion of qualitative research as multi method in application (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As such the interpretive bricoleur produces a bricolage, *"a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation"* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p 4) Accordingly, the qualitative researcher uses a variety of tools, methods and techniques of representation and interpretation, the choice of practices that Nelson *et al*, (1992) described as, *"pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive"* (p 2) In considering the design and implementation strategies for this study, three paradigms underpinning qualitative inquiry, as identified by Denzin & Lincoln (2005), were considered post-positivism, participatory, and constructionism

Post-positivism holds that only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced A postpositivist paradigm is characterised by an approach that is logical, underlines empirical data collection, considers cause and effect orientation, and is deterministic based on *a priori* theories (Patton, 2002) It does, however, recognise the discretionary role of the researcher within an inquiry, that methods are imperfect, and therefore there is

a need to use multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) A participatory paradigm is defined by Creswell (2007) as research that contains, *"an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers' lives"* (p 21) In dealing with marginalised groups and the issues they face (e g. oppression, alienation, hegemony), such a belief system seeks to give a voice to participants in bringing about change to practice The final paradigm considered was constructionism In education, constructionism has been described as a theory that focuses on learner activity in constructing knowledge (Hepburn, 2006) Although Bryman (2004) has intimated that constructionism can be used interchangeably with the term constructivism, Crotty (1998) has argued otherwise Acknowledging the ease with which the two terms are used reciprocally, Crotty defined constructivism as *"the mean-making activity of the individual"* (p 58) and constructionism as *"collective generation (and transmission) of meaning* (p 58), with a focus on the role of culture in influencing how individuals see things. Although the distinction is small, its application to this study was helpful Hence a study that uses constructivism focuses on the unique contribution to knowledge of the individual Building on this, and drawing from the work of Jean Piaget, constructivism can be defined as the process whereby individuals engage in constructing meaning through their interactions with the external world Researchers who adopt a constructivist perspective study how and why participants construct meaning and actions in certain situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005)

Recognising a social dimension, a social constructivist perspective focuses on how individuals perceive their situation, and how meaning is negotiated and constructed from the interactions between their social, historical and cultural lives Within such a reality, meaning is shaped by the interaction between the subjective interpretations of the actors and the context of the situation This philosophy results in a research strategy in which the researcher seeks to understand and represent the subjective perspective and interpretive processes of the individual or group This position results in a rejection of learning as the passive assimilation of new knowledge; instead, learning is understood as an active process by which learners are integrated into, a 'knowledge community' (Wenger, 1998)

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In summary, the use of a social constructivist paradigm appeared to hold much promise in understanding and examining formalised coach mentoring This was not a case of legitimizing one paradigm over another; rather, a social constructivist paradigm appeared to offer a framework within which the research questions could be fully addressed A researcher who utilizes a constructivist paradigm recognises that such a study is characterised by an emerging design, a context-dependent framework and the use of inductive data analysis procedures (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, in adopting a social constructivist research paradigm, the researcher's situated position in interpreting the reality of the phenomenon of interest, as opposed to passive objective reporting, is clearly acknowledged As Charmaz (2006) noted,

> *"No qualitative method rests on pure induction – the questions we ask of the empirical world frame what we know of it In short, we share in constructing what we define as data Our conceptual categories arise through our interpretations of data rather than emanating from them or from our methodological practices"* (p 510)

In their critique of educational research paradigms, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) have argued that qualitative researchers have sometimes failed to pay sufficient attention to providing a rationale for interpretations of their data Furthermore, as they contend, *"without public inspection and adequate standards, how is one to decide whether what is claimed is trustworthy or defensible?"* (p 16) With this in mind thoughts jumped to consider a methodological approach for this study The following section first describes and justifies the use of a case study approach that was used, and then proceeds to present Grounded Theory Method as the 'tool' for analysis An in-depth explanation of the procedures of Grounded Theory employed in the analysis of data are discussed later in this chapter, but at this stage it is important to establish a rationale for its use

3.3 A Case Study Approach

The decision to recruit volunteer coaches through a County Sports Partnership (CSP) was motivated by a need to examine mentor/coach learning 'in action' (Bassey, 1999) As Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) have articulated, case study research, *"provides a unique example of real people in real situations"* (p 181) The CSP reported in this study mirrored the functions and structures of the other 49 CSP's in England However, before

moving on to discuss the data collection methods used to access this group, it is necessary to describe the type of case study used

The label case study is a generic term concerning the broad investigation of an individual, group or issue. It can also be expressed as both the process of inquiry and the product of that inquiry (Stake, 2005) Certainly writers such as Yin (1994), Merriam (1998) and Stake (2005) identified case study research as a method, whereas Wolcott (2001) used case studies as a form of reporting. There is some agreement, however, when defining case studies. For instance, Stake (2005), captured a certain consensus by defining case studies as, *"the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances"* (p. xi) Hence a study that uses a case study approach focuses on a *"specific, unique and bounded system"* (Stake, 2005, p 445) However, the literature diverges when describing types of case study, which is characterised by myriad of interpretations, categories and labels For example, Yin (1994) identified 3 types of case study. exploratory (used as a pilot before developing other studies); descriptive (a narrative of the experience); and explanatory (testing theories). Stake (2005) and Creswell (2007) also identified 3 types but marked these as intrinsic (focused on the case itself, in which there is uniqueness about its format), instrumental (investigating a particular case in order to relate to external issues and theories), and collective (multiple cases to illustrate an issue) On the other hand Stenhouse (1985) identified 4 types of case study which he labelled· ethnographic, evaluative, and educational and action research These examples reveal a range of meanings and terminologies; a landscape which Bassey (1999) was unable to summarise, observing that,

> *"to draw such comparisons is a dangerous game, for I cannot be sure I have correctly elicited what these writers have meant by the terms they have used and, dare I say it, neither can we be sure that these writers themselves had clear, unambiguous concepts in their minds and managed to express them coherently"* (p 35)

In pursuit of methodological coherency, and in considering case study categories and types of, Bassey's (1999) conceptual reconstruction was found to be particularly useful in this study Bassey identified 3 types of case study. Theory-seeking and theory-testing

case studies (focusing on a specific issue); story-telling and picture-drawing case studies (narrative/descriptive accounts of events/programmes/systems), and evaluative case studies (enquiries into events/programmes/systems to determine their worthwhileness) Although recognising the dangers of categorisation, and that issues and activities might and do overlap, such categories make clear the *purpose* of the selected case study The study reported in this chapter is, therefore, consistent with Bassey's evaluative case study approach, with its focus on the concept of mentoring as a learning strategy with volunteer sports coaches.

Although issues of generalisability and trustworthiness are addressed later in this chapter, it is important at this stage to say something about these issues when using case study designs Recalling Patton's (2002) comments on the practical challenges of conducting research, case studies are often selected because of direct accessibility, convenience, and the straightforwardness with which data that is pertinent to the research question can be collected (Silverman, 2005) Certainly this was a contributing factor in this study where contacts with local coach education stakeholders allowed for introductions to a readily available community of volunteer coaches. However, the selection of such case studies is also characterised by purposive sampling (also synonymous with theoretical sampling; Charmaz, 2006; Silverman, 2005) in which the researcher selects cases because they illustrate features which are of interest (E g the CSP in this study was in the process of formalising a mentoring programme) As Patton (2002) has suggested, the power and logic of purposeful sampling is that this strategy seeks out 'information rich' cases for study, and in doing so, one might argue, that the researcher is therefore making a theoretical choice around issue of sampling

Within the case study literature the concept of generalisation is addressed, and researchers have asked how case study research might add to the cumulative knowledge of a field, and in doing so, develop new theoretical insights In addressing this point, a number of scholars have argued that it is important to make explicit the features of the case so that other cases with similar features might be compared (Silverman, 2005, Tripp, 1985) An example of this can be illustrated through the work of Tripp (1985), who has argued for a process of bringing cases together, in what he calls 'qualitative generalisation' In order to do this, the researcher must be sensitive in reporting the salient features of the case These features can be divided into what Tripp (1985) called

comparable features (e g sex of the participants, socio-economic status, and age) and comprehensive features (particular circumstances of the case) and all are reported in this chapter

3.4 Grounded Theory Method

The use of GTM in over 3600 journal articles (Mills, Chapman, Bonner & Francis, 2006a) reflects its popularity in qualitative research As Thomas & James (2006) remarked, it is now the paradigm of choice for qualitative researchers, suggesting that grounded theory is perhaps, *"the major contributor in the acceptance of the legitimacy of qualitative methods in applied social research"* (p 767)

The use of grounded theory, within a constructivist paradigm, has been identified by a number of authors (Charmaz, 2000, 2001, 2006, Appleton & King, 2002; Annells, 1996, 1997, Mills *et al*, 2006a, Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006b) A constructivist grounded theory acknowledges the co-construction of meaning through the subjective interrelationship of researcher and participant (Mills *et al*, 2006a) Indeed, Mills *et al*, (2006a) have argued that a constructivist grounded theory therefore represents an 'evolved' grounded theory, in which the researcher is recognised as an active agent within the research process

This subjective re-alignment of constructivist grounded theory maybe considered as a development from 'traditional' grounded theory which, it has been argued, was shaped by its positivist foundations and through which the researcher was perceived as an objective observer (Charmaz, 2006, Mills *et al*, 2006b) A traditional model of GTM, based on the original work of Glaser & Strauss (1967), is characterised by an emphasis on logic, analytical procedures, unbiased observer, critical realism and theories that 'emerge' from data for the researcher to 'discover' Interestingly, Mills et al (2006a) have suggested that, rather than represent divergent approaches to GTM as a, *"situation of binary opposition"* (p 3), that the metaphor *"methodological spiral"* (p 3) might be used to represent the variations of grounded theory Importantly, different GTM approaches are a condition of the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher Thus, the later work of Strauss & Corbin (1998) represented a departure along the methodological spiral from the original grounded theory text of Glaser & Strauss (1967), and their work can be characterised by a relativist pragmatic position that sits between post positivism and

constructivism (Mills et al, 2006a) Within such an approach, there is an acknowledgment of the interplay between researcher and subject studied A further shift along the methodological spiral, in terms of paradigmatic emplacement, can be seen in the work of Charmaz (2006) and her 'evolved' constructivist grounded theory Such a perspective acknowledges and reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants, resulting in a perspective that recognises the researcher as author/co-author in the research process This shared relationship between researcher and participant frames the construction of knowledge, and recognises that themes, issues and categories that are acknowledged in the data collection and analytical process are contextual and mutually negotiated

The use of Mills *et al*, (2006a) methodological spiral goes some way to address issues of grounded theory legitimacy. Since its conception 40 years ago, a schism has evolved between researchers in the clarification of specific procedures, resulting in studies pursuing either a 'Glaserian' or 'Straussian' approach to grounded theory methods (Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004). As a result, researchers can find themselves espousing a particular procedural orthodoxy, despite both Glaser (1999) and Strauss & Corbin (1998) emphasising the importance of methodological flexibility and encouraging the researcher to be sensitive to current research interests in considering methods It may be, as Piantanida *et al*, (2004) have suggested, that there is no *"pristine singular model of true grounded theory"* (p 330) and that grounded theory offers fairly broad parameters and strategies for the qualitative bricoleur to apply This contention is taken up by Charmaz (2006) who suggested that the strength of grounded theory is not as a set of prescribed procedures, but a set of flexible analytical guidelines In addressing what Mills *et al*, (2006a) has argued as, *"consciously subjecting beliefs to an ontological interrogation"* (p 2), and through the conceptualisation of grounded theory along a methodological and epistemological spiral, the adoption of a constructivist grounded theory methodology was found to be most congruent with the objectives of this study

Although aware of criticisms of GTM because of its *"procedural machinery"* approach in the treatment of data (Thomas & James, 2006, p 791), GTM provided tools for analysing processes, and helped in articulating the links between individuals and their practices As Thomas & James have conceded, new educational researchers are naturally attracted by its procedural grounds in *"navigating the open terrain of qualitative inquiry"* (p 791) The appeal of GTM therefore lay at its potential to provide a 'tool box' of procedures from

which to generate theory from qualitative data, a theory grounded in the lived experiences of participants Theory as identified in this study does not refer to quantitative definitions of theory as creating explanatory and predictive power, but to a constructivist rendering of theory where theory offers an interpretive framework for understanding coach/mentoring relationships

In summarising the first part of this chapter, and in order to address the central research question, the most appropriate theoretical framework for the study was identified as social constructivism. In the traditions of constructivism, the study was characterised by an emerging design, inductive data analysis, and 'context dependent inquiry' (Creswell, 2007) Within a case study approach, qualitative methods of data collection were employed and, in order to provide a structure to the often unstructured data, a constructivist revision of grounded theory was employed to analyse data The chapter now moves to consider the methods that were used in addressing the research

3.5 The Case Study

As described in Chapter One, the volunteer coaches who participated in this study were affiliated to a County Sports Partnership (CSP) in South East England There are 49 CSPs in England, each one responsible for organising sport at a county level, CSPs provide a link between national agencies and groups, with local delivery. Of particular interest to this study were the volunteer coaches who operated under the Active Sports programme The Active Sports programme focused on nine popular sports athletics, cricket, basketball, girl's football, hockey, netball, swimming, rugby union and tennis In the context of this study, Active Sports programme included providing training and development opportunities for coaches and volunteers Through a professional relationship between the University and the CSP, I became aware that the CSP were in the process of constructing a formalised mentoring programme to support their coaches Significantly, many of the features of the CSP and Active Sports programme suggested that data produced would allow the main research questions of this thesis to be addressed

3.6 Pilot Study

Prior to the main data collection phase, pilot interviews were conducted with 2 volunteer coaches The coaches were known to me through our collaborative efforts on the undergraduate sports and coaching degree at the University I was based at The purpose

of the interviews was twofold to develop and test the adequacy of interviews (clarity and effectiveness of the research questions), and assess (and practice) using GTM data analysis techniques Interviews took place in my office at the University and were digitally recorded Following transcription, interviews were analysed and constructed categories were then emailed to the coaches who were invited to comment and give feedback

On the basis of the feedback received, the interview questions were revised to ensure optimal "theoretical relevance" (Strauss & Corbin 1990) For example, it became clear that I needed to make better use of probing questions in capturing greater detail of participants' interpretation of events and the meaning attached (e g "can you give me an example of that"?) Furthermore, the pilot interviews also enabled me to familiarise myself with the interview procedure, and to refine interview skills (establishing rapport, probing for details)

Beyond the practicalities of conducting interviews, the pilot study phase also allowed me to reflect on the questions being asked For instance, data analysis identified the role of a coaches' biography in shaping and interpreting any new professional development programme, and so I added questions that examined volunteer coaches' occupational history during the first round of interviews Further details of the reflexive role of the pilot study are described on p 98 in this chapter.

3.7 Sampling: Purposive, Initial and Theoretical

As described in the introduction chapter, the CSP was purposively sampled because it was in the process of constructing a formalised mentoring programme for novice coaches Purposive sampling is defined by Bryman (2004) as,

> *"An attempt to establish a good correspondence between research*
> *questions and sampling In other words, the researcher samples on the*
> *basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research*
> *questions "(p 333-334)*

Once the case (CSP) had been identified, my thoughts then turned to consider my sampling strategy within the case In other words, which of the constructed mentoring

relationships within the CSP did I need to focus on? As described earlier in this chapter, this study followed the logic of a constructivist version of GTM (Charmaz, 2006) The adoption of GTM influenced decisions about the population, sampling and the measure of data gathering So, for example, GTM advocates procedures that inductively develop a substantive theory around a central question, and where data are collected from several sites or cases By adopting a multiple site approach, the researcher adds richness to their conceptual categories, and to refine developing categories through the constant comparison of data. Through the collaboration of data collection and data analysis, the researcher returns to the field to seek cases which can add theoretical density to the constructed theory In GTM, this process is referred to as theoretical sampling

Unlike other forms of qualitative sampling which might address initial research questions, or reflect population distribution, theoretical sampling is characterised by its emergence during the data collection and analysis process, and is therefore difficult to plan prior to entering the field However, it is reasonable to expect the researcher to have a broad sampling strategy at the beginning of a study in order to consider sites and locations which will provide a rich source of evidence This category of sampling has been called initial sampling and is quite distinctive from theoretical sampling The distinction between the two is illustrated by Charmaz (2006) who suggested, "*initial sampling in grounded theory is where you start whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go*" (p 100)

The initial sampling phase of the study therefore represented a starting point, in which the aim was to find materials, information, and begin to construct categories that might help to explicate the meanings coaches and mentors attribute to mentoring as a learning strategy Moreover, this phase of the study also sought to conceptualise coaching through the eyes of the participants, to clarify definitions of mentoring and CPD, and to examine and re-examine my preconceptions concerning coach education and the potential of mentoring Following this phase, further sampling strategies in Phases 2 and 3 were informed by a theoretical sampling strategy in which the incidents and events that captured the interactions of coach mentoring were sought in order to refine and develop constructed categories For example after identifying temporal factors as determinants on mentoring, in phase 3 I asked participants more focused questions around their perceived phases of coaching development In GTM, this process is called discriminate sampling

This resulted in a sampling strategy that was directed by a need for representativeness of concepts as opposed to quantitative logic of representativeness of the sample (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) The end result is one from which this study's developing categories of coach mentoring become theoretically sufficient (Charmaz, 2006)

Despite the ambition to follow the logic of theoretical sampling throughout the study, the reality of volunteer coaches and mentors' involvement in the programme meant that during the final phase of the study the application of theoretical sampling was constrained by the mentoring cases that were still operating. For example out of the 7 original mentoring case that started the programme, by the end of the programme, only 2 cases were still accessible Subsequently, the reality of the research process resulted in a sampling strategy that was pragmatic rather than purposively. However, one particular mentoring case in the study was of theoretical interest because it had folded after only a few months The mentor in this case provided a rich and descriptive account of his perceptions of why the mentoring relationships hadn't work (described in detail on p 165). In doing so, this particular mentoring case provided a negative or 'deviant' (Silverman, 2005) case from which to further examine the categories that were constructed from early phases of data analysis. Although the interview data from the mentor in this case offered an opportunity from which to increase the density of the studies' conceptual categories, a constraint on the research was the lack of accessibility to the coaches in this particular case (coaches had either moved away from the area or were no longer interested in participating in the study) As a result sampling, towards the end of the study, was dictated by availability and accessibility of cases This reflected the nonlinear and 'messy' research process that was experienced throughout the study, and as has been experienced in other qualitative doctoral studies (Chalmers, 1998)

3.8 Participants

The formalised mentoring programme that was purposively sampled in this study was led by David (pseudonym) who worked for a national sports organisation but was professionally linked to the CSP The mentoring programme was formalised through matching of mentors and mentees, development training for mentors, and a formalised development plan and tracking system, for instance, at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, transactional exchanges in terms of establishing and negotiating goals, outcomes and expectations were established and negotiated Mentors and coaches were

matched and linked by their sport Mentors were defined as having 5+ years of coaching experience and had reached level 3 in their respective sports Coaches were defined as having a level 1 or level 2 qualifications.

Five of the fourteen mentors worked full time as sports development officers All of the coaches were volunteer practitioners. Identified mentors were invited to participate in a 3 hour Sportscoach UK mentoring workshop and matched to mentees according to sport Sports represented included, rugby, football, tennis and hockey The following table summarises the participants in this study Mentors are presented in bold and underlined In reporting the data, participants are distinguished by their position in the coach/mentor dyad and anonymized.

Table 3 0 Profile of participant

	Name	Sport	Age	Gender	FT Occupation
1	**David**	Hockey	43	Male	Sports Development
	Paul	Hockey	45	Male	Surveyor
	Neil	Hockey	30	Male	University Researcher
	Nick	Hockey	29	Male	Local Govt
	Kay	Athletics	37	Female	Health & Safety
2	**Alan**	Hockey	46	Male	Human Resources
	Ali	Hockey	26	Female	Sports Development
	Alex	Hockey	29	Male	Student
	Sally	Hockey	36	Female	Recruitment
3	**Steve**	Tennis	35	Male	Sports Development
	Ed	Tennis	28	Male	Student
	Ollie	Tennis	27	Male	Student
	Joanne	Tennis	21	Female	Student
4	**Martin**	Rugby	49	Male	Retail
5	**Matt**	Tennis	35	Male	Sports Development
	John	Football	30	Male	Retail
6	**Helen**	Netball	28	Female	Sports Development
	Ben	Football	18	Male	Student
	Chloe	Netball	19	Female	Student
	Sarah-Jane	Netball	35	Female	Marketing
7	**Elizabeth**	Hockey	30	Female	Sports Development
	Rebecca	Athletics	39	Female	Retail
	Claire	Football	27	Female	IT
	Guy	Hockey	36	Male	Construction
	Rob	Hockey	25	Male	Teacher

3.9 Data Collection

In order to collect the data needed to answer the research questions, the study used individual interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. The following section outlines the use of these data collection methods

3.9.1 Interviews

The interview has been described as the pivotal source of data in social research (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004). Conceptualised as a "*directed conversation*" (Charmaz, 2006, p 25), interviewing affords the researcher opportunities to explore, in-depth, a particular issue or experience. The nature of the process calls upon research participants to consider, reflect upon and interpret his or her experiences retrospectively and, in so doing, offer explanations in creating meaning from the significance of events Within this 'traditional' perspective the researcher, as an 'instrument' in the research process, seeks to elicit participants' perceptions, meanings, causes and consequences in a question-answer format, eliciting rich and thick descriptions (Williamson, 2006; Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004) Embedded in this conventional interview approach is a view of the interviewee as a stable '*repository of answers*' (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004, p 3) from which the interviewer will draw out participants' perceptions It is an approach that Jarvinen (2000) has called, the "*search-and-discovery mission*" (p 371)

In contrast, in a constructivist study, both the interviewer and interviewee approach the interview with an interpretive framework that shapes the meanings that are elucidated by the process Subsequently, the interview is articulated as an interactive process whereby the narrative produced is the outcome of shared negotiation between interviewer and interviewee (Charmaz, 2006, Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004, Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) The co-construction of meaning that is derived from this process is a function of what Murphy (2004) has called the '*chain of transformation*' In other words, Murphy contends, data are transformed twice, first through the researcher's choice of questions, and secondly, the ways in which informants extract from the totality of their original experience to repackage this experience for the researcher So within a constructive study, the researcher acknowledges that an interview represents a repackaged presentation which is influenced by the interactional and situated context of the interview process A constructivist conception of the interview therefore perceives a dynamic and *active* process as opposed to a passive one (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) In sum, the

constructivist interview used in this study was conceptualised as an active and reciprocal process whereby narratives were negotiated, shared, contextual and co-authored As a result, the interview process is viewed as meaning-making as opposed to data yielding (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004)

Building on this, the starting point for the interview design used in this study was not to elicit individual subjectivity, but to recognise that both interviewees and interviewer arrived at the interview already socialised from the cultural and social connections of their surroundings. These temporal and socially situated connections influenced the meanings we (researcher and subject) would attach to the observations and experiences of coaching As Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg (2005) illustrate,

> *"our currently accepted ways of understanding the world are a product not of the objective observation of the world but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other"* (p. 694)

In this study, the interview process was characterised by the biographically situated researcher and participant This resulted in both researcher and participant viewing the interview process from the perspective of their 'interpretive communities', which would influence the way the interview unfolded, and how data were interpreted An example of this came from an interview with David (M1), a mentor, whose background was in electrical engineering with the RAF David, a hockey coach, was asked to mentor Kay (C1), an athletics coach When asked at interview how he felt about mentoring a coach from a sport he was unfamiliar with, he used his engineering background to justify how he would approach the relationship,

REF:INT David M1,Phase 1
"I related it to when I was in the Air Force For internal quality control, the inspections were done by non specialists, so as an electronics engineer I would go into the mechanical engineering and ask fundamental questions about practice and challenge practice which has been going on for years"

For David, mentoring was about challenging coaches to examine their own practice From his perspective, mentoring didn't require sport specific knowledge, but the ability

to probe and guide coaches in questioning their practice His occupational background had informed this perspective

The question format used in the interview and focus groups in this study were open-ended, emergent and unbounded (Charmaz, 2006), and therefore contained lots of 'what', 'how', and 'can you tell me about' questions were asked The researchers' role was to let the story unfold but to probe concerning the participants' perceptions, implicit meanings, tacit rules and actions Therefore further developing questions, or what Charmaz (2006) has called 'intermediate questions' were asked to elicit aims, intentions, reasons and significance. It can be argued that such a strategy shares much with the traditions of symbolic interaction with its orientation towards action and process (Charmaz, 2006) The following illustrates how during the first phase of interviews with participants, the first guiding question was rendered into a set of open-ended interview questions·

Table 3.1 . Example of part of initial interview guide – Phase 1

Procedural sub questions	Example of initial open-ended questions	Intermediate Questions
What do participants understand about mentoring As situated within the context of coach mentoring CPD?	Tell me about your coach education (CE) experiences to date?	As you look back on your CE experiences, tell me about what activities /tasks worked well and what didn't work so well? *(Probe for what was memorable, what was remembered, what had impact)*
	What are you hoping to achieve by taking part in the mentoring programme?	Can you give me an example of the types of goals you have discussed with your mentor, and why you have identified these?

3.9 Focus Groups

In contrast to group interviews, focus groups were selected in order to use the group interaction as research data (Oates, 2000) Although such a model allows for individual experiences to be acknowledged, its value lies in the opportunity to analyse the interaction between participants As Morgan (1988) indicated, *"focus groups are useful when it comes to investigate what participants think, but they excel at uncovering why participants thinks as they do"* (p 25)

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Ivanoff & Hultberg (2006) have suggested that the crucial feature of focus groups is that they have the potential to reveal how participants talk and think, providing an insight into the shared discernments of everyday life, language and culture. Essentially, Ivanoff & Hultberg (2006) argued that individuals are *"products of their environment"* (p 127) and are influenced by people around them, hence by capturing the interaction that takes place, the researcher can gain an understanding of the meanings that people attach in their interpretation of their situation and environment Further, the composition of focus groups is framed around selecting participants that are homogenous in terms of the research foci As a result individuals are brought together in an environment which represents a *"collective remembering"* (Kitzinger, 1994, p 105) in terms of commonality and shared experiences As Ivanoff & Hultberg (2006) point out, focus groups represent a model of the situation from which the research is positioned, exploring participants' experiences However it was evident that such an environment represents a shared viewed and therefore represents a collective rather than an individual perspective as participants engage in shared discussion with both fellow mentors and coaches, and the researcher. The important point here is that both researcher and participant are presented with the possibility to mutually construct ground between each other, though as Kamberelis & Dimitriadis (2005) have suggested, this ground may be precarious and delicate To illustrate, the following extract is taken from the 2nd focus group conducted half way through the programme The conversation was between the researcher, David (Active Sports Manager), Elizabeth (Active Sports Administrator) and Matt (mentor) An outcome of transcribing this interaction was the refinement of open codes (e g 'Assessing content as lacking relevance'), which had been constructed after interviews in phase 1

Table 3 2 – Example of Focus Group interaction

Researcher Do you remember the last workshop? We had the mentors come in on a Sunday and as a thank you, you said we are going to put on these courses for you What courses do you want? And three turned up!
Elizabeth They even requested the night they wanted and the
David But in all honesty, that's lack of engagement from us We have to accept that these people's time is precious and we have to work at it We have to
Elizabeth But we asked them, do you want them? We will put them on if you want them Don't feel obliged, and they chose the ones that they wanted from the list and we had a pretty good idea what they wanted anyway

> Matt   I think you have to offer something which has relevance to their working world   If it doesn't have any relevance, then they are not going to turn up and they are not going to engage in it
>
> David   We need to think out of the box and rather than, oh we are going to do this standard Sports Coach UK workshop
>
> Elizabeth   They are just off the shelf packages   We need to make it completely relevant to them   My bet is that if you think of something like invasion games, and games for understanding, then they are going to want it

It is interesting to note how some researchers have argued that participants have a greater tendency for disclosure when they interpret the environment as permissive and non-judgemental (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006)   As a result, the researcher needs to be aware of the importance of promoting a relaxed and affable environment in which to conduct focus groups   With this in mind, meetings were led by the researcher, using a combination of discussion strategies (pyramid, group), and were recorded using a digital camera   It was through such interaction that the study was able to capture and comprehend the way coaches and mentors viewed their own reality, and, to draw closer to the 'coal face' of coaching in terms of the reality of practice and the issues faced   Focus groups also served as a form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in refining developing concepts

3.10   Questionnaires

The use of questionnaires in this study was influenced by a need to 'reach' coaches and to overcome the problematic issues of convenience and time when negotiating and arranging face-to-face interviews with volunteers   Questionnaires in this study therefore had two functions   First they were used as a way of tracking and encouraging coaches and mentors to reflect on their mentoring experiences between scheduled interview sessions   Second, questionnaire responses were used to inform discussions during programme interviews   Although aware of the challenges of using questionnaires, in particular completion rates (Silverman, 2005), it was hoped that the coaches and mentors in this study would feel prompted to engage fully in completing questionnaires because as Charmaz (2006) has argued, *"elicited text work best when participants have a stake in the addressed topics, experience in the relevant areas, and view the questions as significant"* (p 37)   In order to communicate questionnaires with respondents quickly and

conveniently, questionnaires were constructed in an electronic format and were sent and returned as an email attachment

3.10.1 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaires in this study were used at two different stages of the study: first, at the beginning of the mentoring programme to collect coaches and mentors background data, and secondly, during phase two of the programme. As well as informing exit interviews, questionnaires used at this programme mid-point also created opportunities to refine constructed conceptual categories from mentoring interactions

Although there is no definitive way to design a questionnaire, researchers have suggested practitioners might use 'guiding principles' in the construction process (Greenfield, 2002) For instance the guiding principles used in this study included, reliability, validity, and response rate Questionnaire reliability is described by Greenfield (2002) as questions that would offer the same response when addressed on different occasions. In order to achieve this, the questionnaire constructed in this study attempted to avoid ambiguous, vague or academic language Questionnaire validity is defined as questions that actually measure what they set out to do (Greenfield, 2002) Face validity, for instance, was established in this study using constructs acknowledged in the supporting literature The following table illustrates how face validity was translated into the design of a closed question,

Table 3 3 Example of construct supporting closed question

Construct from mentoring literature	Closed question
Confidence - Kram (1985) argued that a function of mentoring was psychosocial development	Has your mentoring experience affected your self-confidence to coach in your sport?

The final guiding principle used in the construction of questionnaires in this study, response rate, was addressed by attempting to avoid respondents' frustrations with questions that were irrelevant, repetitive and difficult to understand Before being handed out to coaches and mentors, both questionnaires were sent to the programme manager and administrator for feedback and editing

In terms of structure, both questionnaires contained open and closed-ended items that were designed in a format that didn't require a great deal of time to complete Filtering questions were also used that allowed respondents to go direct to questions that applied to them

Within the questionnaires, open questions were designed to collect data on the affective and cognitive dimensions of mentoring relationships (Higgins, 2000) Therefore the questionnaire included items relating towards feelings and beliefs about coach mentoring (e g what has been the most valuable aspect of your mentoring experience?) An example of both questionnaires used in this study can be found in the appendix (5 and 6)

3.13 Procedure

As described earlier, this study examined a formalised mentoring programme that was applied to a group of coaches and mentors from a County Sports Partnership (CSP) in the South East of England The CSP was contacted in May 2004 through email, and followed up by a telephone call. After a number of exploratory conversations with key stakeholders in the CSP (director, manager, coach education manager), and followed by series of developmental meetings with David (programme manager), an email was sent to all mentors and coaches in the formalised programme (14 mentors and 37 coaches) giving an overview of the study and inviting them to participate Those willing to take part were then sent a second email giving more details about the research, and a participant information sheet (appendix 2) which gave details on ethical considerations, data storage and dissemination, anonymity and the right to withdraw Once informed consent was obtained, arrangements were made for a workshop to be held in September 2004 (led by David) in which further information and paperwork (coaches' programme objectives) were given to participants In total, 25 participants (7 mentors and 18 coaches) participated in the study and it is their story that is told in this thesis

Phase 1 of the study involved a questionnaire (appendix 5) being emailed to all participants The aim of the questionnaire was to capture the coaching activities of the coach and mentor, their experiences of professional development activities, and what they hoped to achieve from participating in the mentoring programme In recognising the context of volunteerism, and where time and access are valuable commodities, questionnaires provided a quick and relatively easy tool from which to access a broad

understanding of the participants in this study Questionnaires also served the purpose of underpinning follow up interviews by contextualising questions specifically to the coach and mentor Twenty three questionnaires were returned by email

Following the return of questionnaires, an email was then sent out to participants in order to arrange a convenient time in which to meet In total, 18 interviews took place during January and February 2005 (7 mentors, and 11 coaches). Interviews were either held in my office at the University, participants place of work, or at their home Interviews ranged in duration from 45 mins to 2 hours

Phase 2 took place between June and August 2005 and consisted of interviews and focus groups Following a similar pattern, coaches and mentors were emailed to arrange a convenient time in which to meet   Seven interviews took place during this phase (3 mentors, 4 coaches) Interview questions focused on developing and refining constructed categories, and simultaneously, capturing new themes from participants experiences of formalised mentoring During this phase, 2 focus groups were also conducted. The aim of focus groups was to capture an understanding of formalised mentoring through the interactions of participants Due to the demands on coaches' and mentors' time both focus groups took place on Sunday afternoons.   Focus groups took place at the University, and were digitally recorded

The final phase of the study took place between December 2005 and Jan 2006 During December, participants were emailed a questionnaire (appendix 6) that attempted to capture participants' experiences of formalised mentoring 10 questionnaires were returned through email, and from this response interviews were then arranged with 2 mentors and 6 coaches Following on from the protocols adopted in Phase 1, questionnaires were used to focus and shape exit interviews

The research procedure of this study is presented as a research timeline in Table 3 5 The table illustrates the time of the year when the research was undertaken and how each research activity fitted into the wider research framework

Table 3 5   Research Timeline

A study of formalised coach mentoring					
	Pilot Study	Phase 1		Phase 2	Phase 3
		Main Data Collection Phase			
Dates	Aug-Oct 2004	Nov-Dec 2004	Jan-Feb 2005	Jun – Aug 2005	Dec 2005 – Jan 2006
Data collection	• Interviews • Observation (mentoring workshop)	Questionnaire	• Interviews	• Focus Groups • Interviews	• Questionnaires • Interviews • Focus Groups
Aim	Gain a broad understanding of coach education and perceptions of mentoring	Introduce programme to participants	Examine coaches biography, establish aims for participating in the programme	Monitor	Exit interviews
Sampling	Purposive Initial	Initial	Theoretical	Theoretical	Pragmatic
Programme		Formalised Sports Coach Mentoring ⟶			

3.14   Ethical Considerations

In line with Loughborough University Ethics Committee policy in research with human subjects, approval was obtained from all participants in the study Coaches and mentors signed a consent form before participating in the study (appendix 1) The consent form contained details of the purpose of the study, data collection methods, benefits of taking part, assurances of anonymity in all verbal and written presentations, and assurances that participants could withdraw at any stage of the research process

3.15   Data analysis

As discussed earlier in the chapter, GT methods of data gathering and analysis were utilised A distinguishing feature of GT is the co-action of data analysis alongside data collection Through an iterative process, the researcher 'mines' (Charmaz, 2006, p 46) the collected data for analytical ideas from which further data gathering and analysis is then organised Such a process of moving back and forth between data collection and data analysis, arguably, results in a research strategy that is flexible, reactive and dynamic, at

times blurred but, ultimately, *"provides a route to see beyond the obvious and a path to reach imaginative interpretations"* (Charmaz, 2006, p 181) The relationship between data gathering and analysis used in this study is represented in fig 3 1

Fig 3 0   Schematic Diagram of GT Methods

Data Collection	**Constant Comparative Methods**		**Theoretical Memos**
	Coding		
Literature Review	Theoretical Sensitivity	Open	Comparing and contrasting data	Conceptual
Interviews				
Focus Groups	Theoretical Sampling	Focused	Development of codes representing conceptual focus	Personal
Questionnaires	Theoretical Sufficiency	Selective	Writing Theory	Methodological

Source   Adapted from Chalmers, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, 1998

Data analysis began almost immediately after data were collected Transcribed interviews, questionnaires and focus group data were read and a process of labelling or coding events and actions in the text was applied Coding involved the interpretation of data by labelling segments of data in a way that captured, accounted for, and summarised their properties The aim of coding was to illuminate action, provide reasons, demonstrate context, and show relationships, and in doing so, begin to construct an analytical frame from which to build the analysis As articulated by Charmaz (2006), the coding process used in this study comprised of two broad activities·

- First, a line by line/ word by word coding process was conducted in which codes were applied to capture meaning

- Secondly, and building on this first activity, a more focused phase in which the most frequent codes were synthesised, gathered, consumed under category headings that not only began to identify significant concepts within the data set but began to create a sense of what was happening

Both activities were characterised by a process of 'constant comparison' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which included comparing data with data, data with categories, and categories with categories to decide on a best fit scenario This iterative process of constantly moving between data and categories resulted in the identification of core conceptual categories.

The coding stages used in this study included open, focused and selective coding and it is to these that I now turn However, although presented as discrete analytical procedures, it is important to stress that the researcher moved back and forth between these procedures throughout the data collection and analytical phases of the study

3.16 Open Coding:

Open coding involves breaking data down and naming events and actions from it Language used to fulfil this process was characterised by an orientation towards action that underscored the segment of data, as opposed to applying themes from pre-conceived categories In doing this, the study proposed to fulfil one of the tenets of GTM that open codes 'fit' the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) In other words, coding needed to be grounded in the data, to explicate concepts from the data, rather than enforcing concepts upon them For example, during the open coding phase, coding with gerunds was used in order to focus analysis on identifying processes and action behind the data In contrast, coding by using passive language, and applying pre-conceived themes, resulted in a tendency to make conceptual leaps before the analytical ground work had been completed Following recommendations from Charmaz (2006), coding using gerunds encouraged the researcher in this study to stay close to the data at the initial stages of data analysis

The following is an example of this process in the identification of the code 'Assessing Content as Lacking Relevance' Originally, this segment was coded as 'Relevance', with a clear reference to adult learning theory (Knowles, 1973) and the need for CPD

opportunities, for adults, to be relevant to their practice However, using the code 'Relevance' failed to portray the active and engaged cognitive processes that coaches go through when presented with new information; hence Assessing Content as Lacking Relevance seemed to be a better fit In this example, and throughout the open phase, coding was undertaken line by line over the transcribed texts Where the language of the participant was used to code a particular line (called *in vivo*) these were enclosed in quotation marks.

Table. 3 6 Example of open coding

REF:INT Alan M2,Phase 1	Open Coding
I was very disappointed about the Level 3 course which was at Nottingham Really I had been wanting to improve my coaching because when we came up to National League level, I felt limited and I did feel that there was more going on than I was really understanding My motivation for going on the Level 3 was really to improve myself Although the people on it were very good, I didn't find that I got the level of motivation from it that I had done from the Level 1 course and Level 2 After Level 1 and Level 2 I came back really bursting to try things out	Experiencing disappointment Prompted to seek out learning opportunities Perceived coaching position, critical incident, foreseeing limitations , growing awareness of demands, Motivating the self, facing issues of identity, Recognising quality delivery Experiencing disappointment Installing an appetite for learning
After the Level 3 I came back thinking, well they want me to fill two A4 binders full of stuff which has got to be documented I've gone through a morning on goal-keeping coaching and then been told that if you want to do goal-keeping coaching, you need to get a specialist in anyway, which I knew because that is what I do Apart from chatting to some ex-Internationals who are trying to be coaches which was really cool I have to say I thought it missed the point What I wanted out of it was a lot more of coaches talking about techniques about how to deal with players and how to deal with situations that come up	Reflecting retrospectively Laborious demands, Demonstrating competency Questioning course coherence Frustrating use of resources (time) Engaging in coaching conversations Engagement with elite practitioners Assessing content as lacking relevance, "Missed the point", Intervening conditions, Situated conversations, Needs based around problem solving
In my limitations, I have this problem where I find it quite hard to react quickly to a situation that is going wrong in a game, recognising it and doing something about it quickly I am very good at analysing video and	Awareness of limitations Reflective conversation on the situation Recognising the situation, Putting a plan into action, Recognising strengths

watching something endlessly replayed and saying 'Ah that is when they went wrong' It is that flash moment to identify something going wrong? It was that kind of level of stuff I wanted to get out of the course and I didn't feel it met that at all	Growing awareness Qualitative analysis Explaining course requirements Experiencing frustrations
Maybe it was the wrong thing to do, maybe it's not what I need because it is just a bit of paper I am not going to be a professional coach like a lot of the others I am just trying to improve my knowledge and transfer it on to the teams I'm coaching I don't have ambitions to be a 'Sven' and coach at very high levels I just want to improve my own knowledge and I didn't feel that it met that objective at all	Identifying take home value Lacking value, "just a bit of paper" Relevant CPD opportunities Improving knowingness, Assessing the transfer value of CPD opportunities Engaging in knowledge construction, failure to meet needs

At the same time as open coding was being conducted, theoretical memos were constructed to help refine early interpretations, while beginning to elevate codes to a more conceptual category level. Memos served to give identified concepts greater precision and specificity (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004), while making analysis more theoretically sensitive to developing constructs Indeed, memoing represents a crucial component in GTM of data analysis and Glaser (1978) has argued that by missing out on this stage, the researcher is not actually doing GTM. For Glaser (1978),

"Memos are the theorising write-ups of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst. Memos lead naturally to abstraction or ideation" (p 82)

An example of such a memo around a code name follows.

Table 3 7· Open code and associated memo

Memo· Alan - M2, Phase 1·
Code Name. **Assessing content as lacking relevance**
For coaches, any commitment to coach learning must demonstrate clear links to their practice This implies an active process of assessing and evaluating content presented to them It is important to appreciate the role of cognitive structures in shaping and influencing the interpretation process *Further questions for study - How does the coaching context impact upon coach learning interpretation? Do coaches view with multiple lenses?*

3.17 Focused Coding

The second phase in analysing data involved a more focused approach This phase has been historically labelled axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which involves gathering discrete codes around conceptual categories that best capture the commonalities among them Axial coding seeks to reassemble the fractured data from the open coding phase in order to construct thick conceptual relationships around a category or 'axis' However, a number of researchers have criticised axial coding process for its mechanical and cumbersome approach in which an analytical framework, as described above, is applied to the data (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004, Charmaz, 2006, Thomas & James, 2006) In particular, Glaser (1992) is critical of this analytical phase relating the process to a form of verification in which the data is forced into preconceived categories, hence moving away from the constant comparative method embedded in GTM from which *"data is allowed to speak for itself"* (Glaser, 1992, p 123) Within the literature, there is a growing acknowledgment that although axial coding has the potential to clarify and extend the analytical process, it is also liable to take the researcher away from what might be relevant by limiting, *"what and how researchers learn about their studied world and thus, restricts the codes they construct"* (Charmaz, 2006, p 62) This argument is also aligned with Thomas & James's (2006) contention that procedures of GTM constrain the open and creative interpretations which are traditional to qualitative inquiry

With this in mind, this study drew on Charmaz's (2006) version of this analytical level which she has called, 'focused coding' Moving away from the descriptive procedures in open coding, focused coding requires the researcher to make decisions about which open codes have the analytical sense to best capture the meaning of a segment of data

In the context of the transcribed interview script used earlier in this section (open coding), the example below illustrates how the following focused codes were found to be most useful when interpreting coaches experiences of coach education and how this would affect their perceptions of future learning opportunities

Table 3 8: Example of focused coding

REF:INT Alan M2, Phase 1	**Focused Coding**
I was very disappointed about the Level 3 course which was at Nottingham Really I had been wanting to improve my coaching because when we came up to National League level, I felt limited and I did feel that there was more going on than I was really understanding My motivation for going on the Level 3 was really to improve myself Although the people on it were very good, I didn't find that I got the level of motivation from it that I had done from the Level 1 course and Level 2 After Level 1 and Level 2 I came back really bursting to try things out	Prompted to seek out learning opportunities Motivating the self, facing issues of identity
After the Level 3 I came back thinking, well they want me to fill two A4 binders full of stuff which has got to be documented I've gone through a morning on goal-keeping coaching and then been told that if you want to do goal-keeping coaching, you need to get a specialist in anyway, which I knew because that is what I do Apart from chatting to some ex-Internationals who are trying to be coaches which was really cool I have to say I thought it missed the David What I wanted out of it was a lot more of coaches talking about techniques about how to deal with players and how to deal with situations that come up	Assessing content as lacking relevance
In my limitations, I have this problem where I find it quite hard to react quickly to a situation that is going wrong in a game, recognising it and doing something about it quickly I am very good at analysing video and watching something endlessly replayed and saying 'Ah that is when they went wrong' It is that flash moment	Reflective conversation with the situation

to identify something going wrong? It was that kind of level of stuff I wanted to get out of the course and I didn't feel it met that at all	
Maybe it was the wrong thing to do, maybe it's not what I need because it is just a bit of paper I am not going to be a professional coach like a lot of the others I am just trying to improve my knowledge and transfer it on to the teams I'm coaching I don't have ambitions to be a 'Sven' and coach at very high levels I just want to improve my own knowledge and I didn't feel that it met that objective at all	Identifying take home value Improving knowingness, Assessing the transfer value of CPD opportunities

The following is an example of a theoretical memo based on the focused code 'Identifying take home value'

Table 3 9 Focused Code and associated memo

Theoretical memo
Focused Code· **Identifying take home value**
Definition Recognising how attendance will benefit the coach in terms of their practice The code implies an ability to look at coaching (process and practice) from a wider perspective Codes also implies a temporal dimension

Open codes   Lacking value   Intervening conditions
              "just a bit of paper"   Situated conversations
              Improving knowingness   Critical incident
              Assessing the transfer value of CPD opportunities

There is a need to recognise that candidates demand transfer from course to practice, that course materials, content and interaction must have a bearing on the reality of sports coaches' situations There are clear consequences when considering "take home value" that will influence continuing coaching practice, seeking out learning opportunities as well as issues around the self self esteem, motivation If coaches are to make space for CPD opportunities, there needs to be perceived relevance to their situated practice Volunteer coaches' time is precious and therefore the cost/benefit equation of CPD participation is based around relevance, impact, context, intervening conditions (social conversations with other coaches) and ensuring that participation has positive consequences This possible engagement with CPD opportunities needs to be triggered by a critical incident which heightens a coach's perception of a need to improve their knowingness in order to survive future incidents

Following procedures described earlier, data were compared to data, and data compared to codes throughout the study, which gives the researcher the opportunity to refine the

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focused codes In so doing, focused codes allowed the researcher to condense the data while providing a 'handle' on them (Charmaz, 2006) Finally, by treating the focused codes as potential conceptual categories, the study began to construct and develop an analytical framework that helped explicated meaning, action and process of the mentoring experience This leads to the final analytical level employed in this study

3.18   Theoretical Coding

In this third analytical level, the categories generated from the open and focused coding phase helped the researcher to construct a 'story' about mentoring as a learning strategy with volunteer sport coaches This process is called theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006) The aim of this process is to, *"weave the fractured story back together"* (Glaser, 1978, p 72) by giving form to the focused codes As Charmaz (2006) has commented, theoretical coding has the function of moving the *"analytical story in a theoretical direction"* (p 63)

In Glaser's (1978, 1998) work, he presented a number of theoretical 'coding families' that support the researcher's effort to produce an analytical story that has coherence For instance, examples of analytical categories include. Six C's (causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances and conditions), degree; and dimensions Examples of conceptual categories include identity (self); means (goals), cultural, family, social context and consensus Although not exhaustive, and with a caveat attached (i e danger of imposing a forced framework on the studies data), they do serve the purpose of clarifying and sharpening the analytical process The following illustrates how this process was used in the study

The process of theoretical coding began by developing a *"general descriptive overview of the story"* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p 110) The aim of building a story was to begin to connect the constructed conceptual categories The story described below is an attempt to capture the volunteer coaches' experiences of a formalised mentoring programme Within this story, constructed core categories are identified 'Conditions of Coach Learning', 'Negotiated Boundaries' and Barriers to Engagement

Table 3.10. A story of formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches.

For volunteer sports coaches in this study, learning through formalised mentoring involved a series of complex, multi-dimensional and inter-dependent context rich processes These processes can be described as a form of selective engagement and consisted of 3 core categories The first category (Conditions of Coach Learning) represented the context from which volunteer coaches came to understand and engage with mentoring It was from this background that coaches decided to participate, or not, with coach mentoring The category was constructed from a number of focused codes that were identified in the data, namely· rendering reflection; recognising the social learner; identifying 'take home' value; and coaching identity

The second category (Negotiating Boundaries) reflected the negotiated processes undertaken within the coach-mentor relationship The category describes the continuous and cyclical processes in which coaches and mentors engaged as they framed, clarified, and negotiated meaningful mentoring experiences The category captures how coach mentoring was career-stage sensitive and required time and space as well as functional conditions that also changed with time At the same time, the coach learner operated within an environment that created a context that impacted upon learning Coach mentoring therefore needs to be situated in an individual's personal biography, because the learning process was characterised by individual interpretation, and the act of interpretation is embodied by the learner's background

The third category (Barriers to formalised mentoring) captures how formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches was impacted by myriad factors in both function and process These barriers included mentoring competency, interpersonal dimension; informal vs formal, time, and learning boundaries

In summary, volunteer coaches' participation and engagement with formalised mentoring was a product of selective engagement, which itself is constitutive of, and constituted by, multiple processes that are employed to differing intensities and locations Indeed for the volunteer coaches in this study, the processes of selective engagement is not exclusively driven by needs, but by a coaching identity which determines a motivation to participate in coach learning activities beyond the immediate boundaries of their practice

The 'story' was used as a way of constructing an integrated theory/interpretive framework about volunteer coaches' experiences of formalised mentoring, and was constructed through using theoretical coding By constructing a narrative of the mentoring experience, the aim was to pull together the open and focused codes that were constructed through data analysis In doing so, the study hoped to evoke Tripp's (1985) call for *"qualitative generalisation"*, by offering an interpretive analysis that invited the reader to identify significance and identification with participants' experiences.

The relationship between open and focused codes and the development of conceptual categories is included in appendix

3.19 Data Management and storage

A characteristic of a qualitative inquiry is the large amounts of messy and unwieldy data generated. Unsurprisingly, researchers in this field have looked to computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data (CAQDAS) software in managing this aspect of the research process Silverman (2005) observes that using CAQDAS has four advantages' speeds up handling large amounts of data, freeing the researcher to explore numerous analytic questions; improvement of rigor, including the production of counts of phenomena and searching for deviant cases, facilitation of team research, including the development of consistent coding schemes, help with sampling decisions (theory development).

Within this study, data was held and managed using the QSR NVivo version 8 software programme All individual and focus group interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, coded and stored in this software Focus codes and core categories were also constructed through NVivo As well as supporting the researcher in the construction of conceptual categories and theory development, an audit trail of systematic data analysis methods can be illustrated for external scrutiny In this way, the use of NVivo serves the additional purpose of demonstrating research credibility and dependability (discussed further in the next section)

3.20 Trustworthiness in the study of formalised mentoring

In the tradition of interpretive research, it was deemed appropriate to use qualitative notions of trustworthiness to evaluate this study Manning (1997) explains

trustworthiness as those methods used by the researcher to demonstrate that the research process was done properly For this reason Lincoln & Guba's (1985) seminal and much cited work proposed that naturalistic forms of inquiry would find traditional positivist forms of trustworthiness criteria (internal and external validity, objectivity, reliability) inconsistent with the axioms and procedures of qualitative methodologies Lincoln & Guba (1985) put the case for substitute criteria· credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability It should be noted that techniques used for ensuing trustworthiness were embedded throughout the life of the study signalling a view of the process as constructive rather than evaluative (Holt, 2003; Wolcott, 2001, Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002) In practical terms, and under the aegis of GTM, this meant moving back and forth between data collection and data analysis from which the researcher then re-examined methodological coherence and sampling (theoretical) sufficiency

3.20.1 Credibility

Credibility applies to the truthfulness of data In order to demonstrate what Lincoln & Guba (1985, p 295) call 'truth value', the researcher must demonstrate that they have represented the multiple constructions within the study sufficiently, and that those reconstructions are credible to the participants who took part

Credibility in this study was developed through a number of strategies prolonged engagement with coaches and mentors in order to build trust and develop an understanding of the culture of volunteer coaches, application of multiple data collection methods; and the construction of categories through a collaborative relationship between researcher and participant (member checking) Peer debriefing was also used which provided an external check of the research process

3.20.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the process of applying the results from one research situation to other similar situations Put another way, and adopting a more pragmatic view, what is the 'usefulness' (Charmaz, 2006) of the study's findings? Lincoln & Guba (1985) have argued that transferability, in its narrowest sense, is impossible in qualitative inquiry because such studies are characterised by small, information rich cases, utilising a purposeful sampling strategy However, they have suggested that researchers operating within a qualitative paradigm can develop theories which incorporate working hypotheses

when accompanied with descriptions of the time and context from which they were found to be held If the work presented incorporates thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), then it is possible to understand the phenomenon and draw interpretations of meaning that might be applied across different situations

Strategies used to offer opportunities to judge the transferability or usefulness of this study against different contexts were detailed presentation and analysis of data; the use of purposive and theoretical sampling; and the presentation of core categories supplemented by relevant examples from the data

3.20.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the criterion of rigor in relation to consistency of findings In practical terms, it is generally accepted that interpretive studies need to demonstrate that a systematic process has been systematically followed (Patton, 2002) To this end, this study had provided an audit trail which attempts to make transparent the research process undertaken, and through which data and theories can be 'tracked' (Guba, 1981)

3.20.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree in which interpretations in the study are grounded in the data as opposed to personal constructions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) Confirmability addresses judgements about the product of the study (data and reconstructions) This study has attempted to address confirmability through the presentation of a clear 'audit trail', and from which the reader can then address Charmaz's (2006) 'resonance' criterion in evaluating the study presented here,

1 Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?

2 Has the researcher revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings?

3 Has the researcher drawn links between larger collectivises or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate?

4 Does the grounded theory make sense to the participants who shared the circumstances? Does the analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?

3.21 Reflexivity

The process of self-examination within a research study has been termed reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) Reflexivity is principally informed by the thoughts and actions of the researcher, and clarification of the research process may in fact only emerge after a process of "*gazing back upon oneself*" (Hawes, 1998, p 100). In so doing, reflexivity acts as a mediator of the research process (Breuer *et al.*, 2002), for example, the continuous reflexive process embedded within a qualitative study helps to shape its direction, ideas, observations, analysis, validity and conclusions Moreover, the process of reflexivity identifies the researcher as the "*instrument*" of qualitative methods (Patton, 2002, p 64), and through the act of introspection, reflexivity proceeds to "*sharpen the instrument*" (Patton, 2002, p 64) to the nuances of the research process So, for instance, the researcher may experience an internal transformation, reshaping assumptions concerning what is taken to be true (epistemology), real (ontology), and of value (axiology) (Piantanida *et al*, 2004)

The following section demonstrates how the strategy of reflexivity acted as a mediator of the research process, and in so doing, seeks to illuminate and to operationalise the subjective nature of the research process It acknowledges the researchers' past and how this can screen the researcher to aspects of the data or at least filter how data is viewed This section is very much informed by a narrative approach Narrative writing is a way of linking the personal to wider social issues (Cassidy *et al*, 2004), and through a process of reflective writing, serves to elicit an understanding of the relationship between knowledge and action The strength of this approach is that the researcher, and reader, comes to better understand the series of circumstances that informed the research process

At the early stages of this study, and only now recognising the significance of my postgraduate 'scientific' biography, I was confronted with what Schwandt (1996) alludes to as "*epistemological discomfort*" (p 80) This is to say, in the early stages of the study I considered reducing the mentoring relationship to observable variables, asking participants to complete Dishman's (1981) self motivation inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale self esteem questionnaires (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach & Rosenberg, (1995) The decision to isolate the concepts of self motivation and self esteem was based on the work of Michael Eraut and informal learning in the workplace (2004) In this paper, Eraut found that an essential component for both novices and experienced

workers seeking out learning opportunities was confidence Confidence arose from meeting challenges, and the confidence to take on such challenges is dependent on the support network that workers feel

It soon became apparent that such an approach failed to illuminate an understanding of mentoring in terms of meaningful action and the processes The generation of fragmented and numerical data would have produced patterns, but limited an understanding of mentoring interaction, how this acted upon individuals, and determined future action As I reflected on early methods of data collection, I began to see the importance of understanding the participant's reality in terms of social and interconnected action, as opposed to confining data to manageable and isolated components of meaning The following example from pilot interviews illustrates the reflexive process, and through using the tools of grounded theory (open coding, memoing), helped clarify my thinking and methodological re-positioning In this extract, Chris a full time tennis coach is asked if he feels his National Governing Body supports his coaching development

Table 3 11 Reflexivity and GTM coding

Interview	Open Coding	Memo
"No I feel cut off and also I'm conscious of my ability as a coach I can get paralysed if I see someone who has been working with National Performance Players and I turn up and I feel that I'm just a recreational tennis coach down the road So I've really picked it up from magazines and watching Wimbledon and built up my self confidence that way	• Feelings of isolation • Aware of limitations in comparison to other coaches • Issues of self esteem and identity • Seeking out external sources in developing self confidence	"Cut off" is highly emotive Coach feels isolated, with little support from NGB Issues of respect, recognition and positioning, issues of power relationships between two strands of coaching pathways (performance v recreational) As a result there is a lack of self esteem in relation to other coaches and confusion concerning identity and orientation within the role

As I reflected on the interview data a number of questions began to emerge what role does the NGB have in the socialisation of coaches? Is this assumed? How is it communicated? What effect does positioning within the 'community' have on identity and its relationship with self perception? What impact does this have on motivation /

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participation? There was clearly a complex interplay of socially interconnected themes that needed to be addressed

In sum, my initial thinking, and influenced by my positivist research past, focused on breaking down the components of participation motivation in order to capture the causal relationships of participating in a mentoring programme Such an approach reflected an aim to explain, rather than aiming to understand (Pope, 2005) It reflected, what Holdaway (2000) described as, a passive view of human action However, what I came to realise was the active nature of being, one in which the social world and social structures are constructed, negotiated and interpreted by human action (Burton, 2000). At this point of the study, I began to recognise in myself what Wolcott (2001) labels as the, *"self consciously 'scientific' qualitative types"* (p. 20); I had reached the juncture at which my biographical past was confronted with the reality of my present inquiry

Consequently, I began to change the 'lens' from which I would view the study in order to *"bring scenes closer and closer into view"* (Charmaz, 2006, p 14) Hence, in terms of the participants being part of a structured and formalised mentoring programme· I wanted to understand mentoring as situated within the context of 'local' practice, I wanted the research process to be open in revealing possible new phenomena and influences upon mentoring, I wanted to explore its potential in extending and developing coach learning (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al,* 2003, Cassidy *et al,* 2004, Cushion, 2006), and I wanted to be in a position to understand social action and interaction within a formalised mentoring model in guiding the development of coach learning

It was as I began to question my own ontological perspective that I promoted the emerging relativist position from which I viewed the research process So, within a qualitative approach, that reality consists of both local and specific constructed realities and that 'truth', or agreement for what is valid knowledge, is the prevailing consensus at a particular time (Annells, 1996), and develops from the relationship between members of the stake-holding community (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) In situating the research within a qualitative framework, I recognised the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and the studied, and the impact on the research process of the situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005)

The outcome of reflexivity was that I recognised my position in terms of a relativist and co-constructed ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, and a methodology characterised by a hermeneutical approach within a naturalistic setting Such a position has been enunciated within a constructive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) A researcher who utilizes a constructivist paradigm seeks a better understanding of the phenomena at hand, and accepts that criteria for judging 'reality' and a validity is borne from community consensus about what is real, useful and meaning. Mills *et al*, (2006b) capture the essential ingredient of reflexivity on an interpretive study when they suggested;

> *"If constructivist grounded theorists are able to consciously bring to the surface their own histories and thinking, they will create a point of referral and interrogation for themselves, and subsequently the reader, in relation to their theoretical analysis. Such a strategy makes the researchers' impact on the reconstruction of meaning into theory clearer, allowing us to see how our value commitments insert themselves into our empirical work"* (p 11)

3.22 Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarised the methodology used in this study The study presented here is a case study of a county based sports partnership organisation with mentors and coaches being recruited from its database A formalised mentoring programme was initiated and the impact of programme was examined over a 12 month period A semi-structured interview framework was constructed though other questions were added as the study unfolded, and while this was the main data collection method, other data sources included focus groups and questionnaires were utilised. Interview questions were based around eliciting the "meaning" of mentoring to participants and the processes and actions that shaped its development, and pursued throughout the study The study was situated within a social constructivist framework which guided the data collection and data analysis phases, hence data collected rendered an interpretation of the coaches'/mentors' constructed meaning of mentoring Data were analysed using a constructivist version of Grounded Theory Method

CHAPTER FOUR - Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of volunteer sports coaches and their mentors as they participated in a formalised mentoring programme in order to understand ways in which mentoring can be an effective learning strategy in coach education

As described in the previous chapter, a constructivist version of grounded theory was used to collect and analyse data Primary data sources were face to face interviews and focus groups, supplemented by questionnaires. Using Charmaz's (2006) coding steps (open, focused coding, theoretical coding), alongside Glaser & Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method, a number of conceptual categories were constructed that captured the experiences of the participants in this study as represented by the data Three conceptual categories were constructed and form the main section headings for chapters 5, 6, & 7 The categories and their associated sub-categories are detailed in the table below·

Table 4 0 Core Categories and associated sub categories

Core Categories	Sub-categories	Description
1. Conditions for coach learning	Rendering reflection	re-examining practice, and as a consequence, seeking out new knowledge
	Recognising the social learner	acknowledging opportunities to interact with other coaches
	Identifying "take home value"	demonstrating that professional development had relevance and value to practice
	Coaching Identity	Coaching identity helped coaches to decide on what they should focus, what they rejected, and in what they participated
2. Negotiated Boundaries	Framing mentoring	Conceiving what the process would look like
	Clarifying role expectations	defining aims and expectations
	Negotiating social interaction	facilitating social boundaries for coach/mentor exchanges
3. Barriers to formalised mentoring	Mentoring Competency	mentors and coaches required a skill and mind set to engage fully with mentoring
	Interpersonal	compatibility between mentor and coach influenced lines of communication
	Formal v Informal	coaches and mentors already belonged to informal networks of support
	Mentoring as an "expensive luxury"	volunteer coaches did not prioritise formal mentoring arrangements
	Time	time was a valuable commodity which had to be managed carefully
	Learning Boundaries	coaches and mentors recognised the importance of 'local' support networks in underpinning learning

Each of the three conceptual categories represents an abstract conceptualisation of specific and also interrelated processes. It should be noted that the category titles are those constructed and interpreted from data because they appeared to furnish an understanding of the constructed story As Charmaz (2006) has suggested, the categories that are elevated in the coding process are those that *"render the data most effectively"* (p 139) Furthermore, the constructed sub-categories follow Charmaz's (2006) use of gerunds in order to capture the processes and actions that marked participants' involvement in mentoring

Volunteer coaches' and their mentors' experiences of formalised mentoring were characterised by complexity, interpretation, and influenced by context. Formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches, therefore, reflected much that is indicative of the complexity of any human interactional situation However, presenting the findings from the study solely through the identification of 'thick' conceptual categories runs the risk of losing a sense of the connected and social intricacies of coach mentoring. Therefore chapter eight reports two detailed mentoring case studies in order to present a coherent overview of data This chapter captures the chronological experiences of coach and mentors as they experienced mentoring over a 12 month period. By reporting data both vertically within two case reports, and horizontally across all case studies, a full picture of the findings can be conveyed

In chapters 5 to 8, data is drawn from the three main data collection methods used in this study interviews, focus groups and questionnaires Data presented in these chapters are indented and in italics, with direct quotes denoted by the use of quotation In each data extract, the source of the data is referenced by researcher allocated name and their role in the study (e g mentor/coach)

Chapter Four: Finding 1 – Conditions for coach learning

The category, Conditions for Coach Learning, described processes through which coaches came to view their coaching practice and, from this vantage point, were able to foresee and construct an appropriate path of professional development Hence, Conditions for Coach Learning represented the context from which coaches came to understand mentoring The category was constructed as an overarching concept which encapsulated a number of sub-categories, namely.

- rendering reflection
- recognising the social learner
- identifying take home value
- coaching identity

The following section now considers these sub-categories in detail

4.1 Rendering reflection

When the coaches in this study were exposed to professional development opportunities, their decision to participate was influenced by how they came to render the purpose and function of the volunteer coach The term rendering is used because it illustrates how coaches came to conceive and understand their practice, and as a consequence of this process, a propensity to seek out new knowledge Within this context, an understanding of practice was not only framed by individual interpretation (e g coaching experience and the observation of other coaches), but through a shared repertoire of coaching practice (e g national sports organisations. tools, resources, support mechanisms) For one such body, Sportscoach UK, the term 'learning coach' appears as a central construct that underpins the delivery of the new UK coaching certificate (North, 2009) For instance, at a Community Sports Partnership Workforce seminar for coaches and local sports agencies, attended by 4 mentors and 9 coaches from this study, this theme was conveyed unequivocally,

> *"The UKCC is centred on supporting the concept of the 'the empowered*
> *and learning coach' Although all coaches are individuals, thus having*
> *differing learning needs, the UK Coaching Framework should embrace*

this and outline a system where a 'learning culture' can grow and be firmly embedded in the role of the coach and coaching system" (Field notes· Workshop Powerpoint Slide)

For the coaches, and mentors in this study, the sub-category rendering reflection captured the cognitive processes whereby participants began to consider professional development through a re-examination of their own practice Whether through an isolated incident at practice, attendance at a coaching course or workshop, or a casual conversation with a fellow coach at the club house, it was the initial stage in any conceptual change For instance, examination of coaching dilemmas led participants to consider ways their practice might be supported and further developed The following extract from Alan, a level 3 hockey coach and mentor to three novice coaches in this study, recalls his previous experiences of working with a mentor It captures a sense that the coaches' interpretations (*I felt limited*) were confronted with uncertainty (*there was more going on than I was really understanding*), and in this instance, the outcome was for Alan to seek out support that would address these concerns,

> *"Originally, I had been wanting to improve my coaching because when we came up to National League level, I felt limited and I did feel that there was more going on than I was really understanding My motivation for going on the programme (*mentoring) *was really to improve myself so that I could maybe understand that" (Alan - mentor)*

How participants came about considering professional development was therefore grounded at the intersection where coaches' perceived roles and functions were confronted by uncertainty of practice Such 'moments' served the purpose of raising questions from which coaches would then seek out supporting and development opportunities (such as mentoring)

Not all the coaches who were initially invited onto the mentoring programme took up the offer These coaching 'stories' were of interest because they demonstrated how perceptions of practice influenced coach engagement with professional development activities The following accounts, from Julie (badminton coach), Jo (hockey coach) and

Matt (basketball coach), illustrate the concept of relevance for volunteer coaches, and its critical role in directing and motivating participation in any CPD activity,

> *"There isn't anybody. This might sound really big headed and I don't want it to because I'm not that sort of person but I don't think there's anybody in my county that I can go to that's going to give me anything that I don't already know because nobody's competed in the level that I have and I also feel that the people that I'm coaching here, I coach adults that are beginners/improvers, I coach some county juniors, I coach a couple of like county veterans that come from Salisbury, I coach at school. There is nobody that I feel I need to speak too to get advice on .. but maybe that's wrong because you're always learning and I think you should always be learning as a coach to get better" (Jul – coach)*

This extract comes from Julie who holds a unique position within the participants in this study. Julie's situation was interesting because she had only recently taken up tennis coaching, after a successful playing career in badminton. Julie has extensive playing experience at an elite level. In this account, Julie described how she had previously been invited to participate in a badminton mentoring programme within her county, but had declined. Julie acknowledged the characteristics of the learning coach, but did not perceive the cost of participation as benefiting practice. Her response resounded with Matt's description that,

> *I think if there were a lot of things that I'd done that didn't work and I could see that the kids just weren't getting it, I might consider asking someone for help. At the moment I don't run into that. I know that sounds quite arrogant. I don't think that is where the area of growth is. Maybe it is but I don't feel personally that it is (Matt - coach)*

In Matt's case, he couldn't perceive how mentoring would be relevant to his practice and so was disinclined to engage. Moreover, for another coach, participation in formalised mentoring required not only relevance to practice, but space, time, and energy. As Jo (hockey coach), commented,

"I feel at the moment I'm on a kind of plateau where I'm fairly successful at what I do but actually it is not enough, but because of the time restraints I have at the moment it is not possible to do it Mentally there is not the space nor do I have the energy to do it" (Jo - coach)

For Julie, Matt and Jo, coaching was recreational, and all three had full time occupations beyond sports coaching Professional development initiatives were not seen as a priority in an already crowded timetable of commitments. However it is interesting to note that although Julie and Jo had declined to engage with the formalised mentoring programme, they both recognised the need for coach development and some strategy for moving their practice forward Critically, both coaches identified an important theme that came across with many coaches; that a position of polarity existed between the community volunteer coach and imposed commitments towards professional development initiatives (e g attending CPD programmes to maintain tennis registration as an active coach) For Jo, *'mental space'* had already been taken up with occupational and personal commitments Such a volunteer coaching landscape brings into focus the dissonance between volunteer coaches' rendering of their practice, and the perception of value that any CPD activity would bring to that practice As David (mentor) articulated when asked why coaches don't always take up opportunities for development

"These people haven't got the time or they can't see the value Because they are volunteers they say they are too busy and they don't see the value" (David - mentor)

The coaches who took part in the mentoring programme in this study did so from two distinct entry pathways those that were invited (i e their needs were identified by their NGB), and those who actively sought out mentoring support (recognised needs) The condition or entry point from which coaches reached the programme had a significant impact on both their motivation, and their conceptualisation of mentoring as a support mechanism for learning Coaches who were invited onto the programme felt an initial elevated status, but lacked a sense of how, what or why they were involved, and hence their participation was marked by fractional and isolated pockets of engagement As Clare (football coach) reflected when asked about her expectations of the programme, *"I'm not sure I had any I wasn't sure what it was going to be or what it would involve I*

just tried to go in with an open mind" Claire met up with her mentor (Elizabeth) once during the year Rebecca, a level 2 athletics coach, tells a similar story, *"I've never been mentored by someone before because I haven't found that quality of skills in any coach I've come across in my athletics experience"* Rebecca was matched to a mentor with a background in hockey and athletics (Elizabeth) They met twice between January and April, after which meetings stopped because, as Rebecca concluded, *"it came to a stop after April because we both felt I had achieved the goals we had set in January and I'm not in a place to set new goals"*. For both Claire and Rebecca who had been encouraged to participate by their respective NGBs, participation was characterised by disconnected and isolated episodes of mentoring engagement

Diametrically, coaches, who came to mentoring through a cogent understanding of their learning needs, seemed to mark their participation in the programme with prolonged and engaging activity The following extract from Paul, hockey coach, demonstrates how his involvement was based on recognising the potential of mentoring to impact and change practice Paul's involvement in the programme lasted and went beyond the 12 month time frame of the study;

> *I also really believe that I think the thing that motivates me to do it more* [mentoring] *is that I think I have seen the benefit of effective coaching and how it can improve youngsters, and I have also seen ineffective coaching and how that can de-motivate So I'm very keen that coaches get, you know, ideas in their heads that improves their ability to coach and that's really what my motivation is" (Paul - coach)*

Other coaches within the study also had a clear focus that underpinned their involvement Lucy, a football coach, was helping out at her local after-school football club When she was first matched with her mentor, she had only been conducting football sessions for about a month, but was having problems with discipline within the group Lucy came to the programme after consulting with her NGB coach educator, who suggested she might be interested in mentoring as a way of supporting her practice I first interviewed Lucy after she had just met with her mentor (Katie),

Lucy· When I first met up with Katie, I was using the framework of coach development from beginner to expert and I really wanted to get to expert. So we identified what I needed to do and how my sessions went in relation to that There were sessions where I slid back into beginner so we'd talk about that and what that did to my confidence We did work around the session I did in the school where there was violence, truancy, language. . For example, one of the issues we identified was that kids didn't understand the difference between coach and teacher"

Researcher: How did you come to that realisation?

Lucy· I was talking about my frustrations that I was asking questions and getting nothing back and my issues with imposing school sanctions [detentions]. We talked about how I needed to be and what I needed to do and it became clear that I didn't have the teacher/coach balance right" (Lucy – coach).

What was evident in this mentoring relationship was that it was led by the mentee (Lucy) who had a clear vision of what she wanted from her mentor Such clarity provided a basis from which Lucy rendered the mentoring role and then proceeded to map out a course of action It was a relationship characterised by its active engagement and sense of ownership for Lucy,

"I had a clear role of what I wanted Katie to achieve I said to her "This is what works for me so this is what I need you to do and if we can find something else that works for me, that'd be good to " I guess because I come from a coaching set-up and my coaching is very athlete-centred, I felt ok to say 'this is what I want to do and this is how I want to do it ' It was all about me" (Lucy-coach)

The sub-category rendering reflection captures how coaches conceived the act of sports coaching and the role and responsibilities of the coach This process then shaped how participants viewed professional development activities The importance of this conceptual clarity was identified by David (mentor) David works for a national sports

organisation, developing and supporting coach development He works closely with local NGBs and Sports Partnerships in a collaborative framework. David is a level 3 hockey coach, who currently coaches a women's 1st team He attends the local hockey club 3-4 nights per week, not only organising his own team but spending time talking and supporting other coaches at the club His working, sporting, and personal life are closely entrenched in the local sports community David is passionate, enthusiastic and vocal around what he sees as the characteristics of good quality coaching, and what is needed to drive forward coaching as a professionally regulated occupation Within the mentoring programme, David acted as mentor to Kay (athletics coach), Neil (hockey), Nic (hockey) and Paul (hockey) Fundamentally for David, coaches need to be made aware of their practice Without a critical, self awareness of their abilities, strengths and weaknesses, David felt coaches would not see the value of any CPD activities;

> *"I think that one of my biggest roles and what I'm going to spend this year doing is raising people's awareness of what to look for in quality coaching So I'll get people aware of what quality coaching is and until they realise that, it's not happening I'm going to make everyone aware from being unconsciously incompetent and make them consciously incompetent Then, 'when I can get them to consciously incompetent stage, they will want to learn That is one of the reasons that people don't value something is because they think that it doesn't have anything to do with them Once you can demonstrate that, then they are more likely to take the opportunity" (David - mentor)*

For David, coaches must see the relevance and value that CPD has in relation to their practice if they are to fully engage with it In these data extracts, David argues that in considering CPD initiatives with volunteer coaches, there is first a selling role to be undertaken, selling an idea of what is meant by the term 'quality coaching', and through this process, raising coaches' awareness of their own abilities Without this selling process, expecting volunteer coaches to reach out and engage with development opportunities was problematic. It was a point Elizabeth (mentor) made as she reflected on the year, and her role in coordinating and nominating mentor/coach relationships As Elizabeth explained, the first question that needed to be asked was,

*"Do you want to develop? Are you happy where you are or do you want
to develop? If they are happy where they are then give someone else the
slot quite frankly, because I think we have probably come across some of
those types of people in this and that needs to be the first question and
then as we discussed before, what sort of coach do they want to be at the
end of it. And maybe what sort of coaches do we want them to be at the
end of it"* (Elizabeth - mentor)

4.2 Recognising the social learner

When volunteer coaches became alert to professional development opportunities, and
when asked what these developments would entail, many of them framed development as
offering opportunities in which to *"socialise"*, *"discuss"*, *"probe"*, *"compare"*, and
"question" other coaches (data from focus group discussion March 05) Coaching can be
an isolated activity, and therefore opportunities to engage in 'coaching conversations'
with other practitioners were warmly welcomed At its core, recognising the social
learner was about coaches seeking out opportunities to interact with other coaches As
Alan (hockey mentor) described, the opportunity to talk with other coaches offers
reassurance through the realisation that others are going through similar experiences,

*I have to say that the usual thing with the courses is that the best bits are
the coffee breaks and lunches when you are talking to the other coaches
To me that Level 3 should have been one long lunch hour"* (Alan -
mentor)

Many of the coaches who had come to reconcile their coaching practice with professional
development needs began a process of understanding what their development pathway
might be When participants were asked what type of CPD activities would they welcome
in the future (questionnaire Mar 05/question 8), responses included,

- *"being exposed to other practices"* [different coaches, different sports]
- *"interactional opportunities with more experience coaches"*
- *"seeking out a welcoming and supportive environment"*
- *"wanting value added"*

The following examples from interview data collected during phase 1, illustrate the social nature of the interactions that were identified,

> *Opportunities where you can get to get together in groups and talk about how you could penetrate a defence and try different things out (Ed - coach)*

> *I enjoy being on a course with lots of other coaches. I find I have a good time I enjoy the social aspects and socialise with people who work in the same field and talking about what you're doing. I think it's good to be able to compare because you can realise that actually you're doing pretty well (Joanne)*

> *Because there are other sports there,* (mentoring presentation evening) *it gives you an opportunity to listen to what they are doing and see how it works Yes, it's nice to listen to other ways of doing it (Neil - coach)*

> *I was quite fortunate that when I worked up in Stoke the coach for Leek, they got a level 3 hockey player and also got a guy who plays for England who coaches for them So it was quite good to sort of, go along with him and say "what are you doing" and "how are you delivering it, why are you delivering it" and he was quite good (Paul - coach)*

The social dynamics of coaching professional development were also recognised by the mentors in the programme

> *Perhaps what they will need is more of a group thing and I'm hoping that they will need and want is a group because I think I'll get a lot out of it It's fine to have a one-on-one for a specific issue but there is so much more to the dynamics if you get two or three people together to look at something altogether I may say well I would have dealt with it like this and someone else might give you a reason not to do it that way I think it should be a social setting* (Alan - mentor)

*I think that the most effective or what is my primary aim is to make
people like a team To make sure that people don't feel that they are on
their own so we can sit down together and ask questions and the more we
can sit down together as a team, the more likely that is to happen (Steve -
mentor)*

In summary, many of the coaches and mentors reported the importance of 'local' and
social networks in underpinning their learning Such networks allowed coaches to
consider their practice as they engaged in coaching conversations with other practitioners.
It was therefore not surprising that when volunteer coaches and mentors considered
development, it was development constructed within a social framework of interaction,
and frequently, those interactions occurred outside formal provision As Ed reflected
when asked about a particular workshop he had attended, "*the whole system was a bit
loose actually I picked up more by talking to the coach after the course*" *(Ed - coach)*

4.3 Identifying take home value

For the coaches, and mentors, reported in this study, the conditions for coach learning
were always tempered by previous encounters with coach education, both formal and
non-formal For many coaches, there was real concern about the quality of previously
experienced CPD activities and the perceived lack of 'take home' or 'value added' These
experiences then filtered the way they perceived future activities As one coach admitted,

*"So for example I went on one on Match Analysis and it happened that
there was a Grand Prix of Juniors on around the country and he* [course
tutor] *told us to go home, watch the tennis and then come back and tell
me what you think about it afterwards, but there was nothing to refer to,
to tell me how to analyse the match So I did that and came back three
hours later and picked up my certificate and went home but that wasn't
what I wanted off the course I got 6 credits but I haven't learnt
anything"* *(Ed - coach)*

Similarly, Ollie, a tennis coach, described one of his experiences from a coaching
workshop,

"I went on a course once and, you want constructive criticism, so the tutor said 'Well I think the course went really well this weekend but I think that your trainers are too muddy to be on the tennis court coaching'. I thought "well dirty trainers, that's all he had to say to me the whole weekend" (Ollie - coach).

Another example of where coach expectations were not matched by course content came from Alan (mentor), who described his experiences of attending a level 2 coaching qualification;

"I just expected it to be at a much higher level than it really was When it came down to it we were given a drill exercise to do and it was 3v1 in defence 2v1 in attack To me that is not really what I expected I had this conversation with the woman who was coaching it and she vehemently disagreed and claimed that you may think 2 on 1 is a relatively easy thing to coach but you've got to think about it at a higher level" (Alan - mentor)

Finally Ed, described how coach education was sometimes about getting through the course and maintaining the 'corporate' line in order to get your certificate,

"The big thing is that there are lot of things that they will tell us and some of the things that you may not agree with At the end of the day you are there to pass and if you want to pass you take it in and you relay it back to them in a way that seems as though you've agreed Whether you do or not is another matter" (Ed-coach)

Paul (coach) described attending a course so that his club could fulfil the coaching criteria when working towards applying for lottery funding In this example, CPD was about ticking the right box,

"And I'm thinking, sit here, say the right thing, and get the tick Did it add value, no Did you get the tick in the box, yes So do we get lottery funding, carry on" (Paul - coach)

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Matt (mentor) described an experience where he attended a development workshop because he needed the CPD points (he needed to accrue CPD points in order to keep his tennis licence active);

> *"But I was almost just going on the course to get the points I can see the point and I agree that people who want to coach should be committed to improving their standard of coaching and their knowledge. I found that the courses I was going on I wasn't learning a lot really, you just went to get the points to keep your licence. I can see the point of doing the licence scheme, but I think equally that you've got to put on the courses which will help people learn" (Matt - mentor)*

In summary, past encounters with professional development initiatives acted as implicit linkages with the mentoring programme described in this study These linkages acted as filters which shaped and determined engagement in subsequent CPD activities. Moreover, data collected suggested that for any CPD activity to have an impact on volunteer sports coaches, it was essential that it demonstrated clear relevance to professional needs Where this was not the case, the findings were stark,

> *"I may have gone to a course but I seriously don't remember it at all I must have done but I don't remember it" (Ali - coach)*

4.4 Coaching Identity

Within the data, the concept of a constructed coaching identity was a critical component in understanding volunteer coaches' orientation towards professional development Coaching identity, as a self-concept, had boundaries and content, and it was here that fundamental human traits such as choice, constraints, agency and structure were negotiated (Charmaz, 2006) The following accounts illustrate the role of perceived coaching identity in understanding how professional development was conceptualised

Ali was a level 2 hockey coach who coached at a local club which has a large number of teams She coached the girls' under 14 and 12 teams Ali felt she was fortunate because during the course of the coaching week (she was at the club 3 / 4 times a week for coaching sessions and committee meetings) she was able to observe and interact with

more experienced coaches However, these exchanges were not planned in advance and relied on opportune and timely occurrences where paths crossed Where interaction did take place, Ali felt they served her well in supporting coaching practice, and as a result she saw little relevance in pursuing *"courses"* (in order to develop practice) beyond the boundaries of the club Ali recognised that coach learning came from being *"exposed"* to a variety of coaching experiences and observational opportunities, but felt this was addressed by her experiences, alongside her role and position within the hockey club;

> *"I suppose if I wanted to be the National England Under 16 coach, I*
> *would want to do courses that gave me more tactical awareness of the*
> *game. At the moment in this type of area that I coach, I don't think I*
> *need to go any more courses. That sounds awful. I am very creative and I*
> *come from a huge range of backgrounds like teambuilding, outdoor*
> *pursuits, motivational type thing and chucking that into hockey I think*
> *that I have a big bag of tricks than most coaches I suppose I would like*
> *to be exposed to .well I don't know I think I am quite lucky because I'm*
> *exposed to John ****, who I think is fantastic when he coaches So I*
> *don't know I am unusual because I am exposed to a lot of different*
> *coaches" (Ali - coach)*

Coaching identity was an important concept because it helped coaches to decide on what they should focus, what they rejected and in what they participated Having a coaching identity was an essential facet of learning in professional development activities As Ed, a tennis coach, admitted,

> *"I'm conscious of my ability as a coach I can get paralysed if I see*
> *someone who has been working with National Performance Players and*
> *I turn around and I feel that I'm just a recreational tennis coach down*
> *the road" (Ed - coach)*

Ollie's constructed coaching identity manifested itself in the way he approached CPD workshops he had to attend in order to maintain his coaching licence He described how his perceived playing ability might hinder his attainment on the coaching courses

"I come away, sometimes, feeling my playing standard might not be high enough so I'm going to fail the course. I actually think that my ability to be able to coach, to motivate, to organise at the matches, a lot of coaching is not involved in hitting the balls I move around with the players I do think they take into account people's playing standards too much (Ollie – coach)

Hierarchical positioning, as Ollie perceived it, resulted in him withdrawing from a number of facilitated activities and resulted in a sense of coaching isolation Similar comments were expressed by Martin,

"Yes out here I do feel as though I'm cut off I don't feel as if I am part of a team I mean I've got two or three other coaches and I hope that I can help them with their coaching and that they can talk to me But its very much me here and they are over there" (Martin – mentor)

Even in situations where coaches operated collaboratively, identity influenced perceptions of and opportunities for learning In the following example, Nick (coach) described how his co-coaches were perceived as technically inferior and therefore learning was difficult

"I spent a long time in isolation This is where I come back to the thing about coaching in groups In real terms I was still in isolation, because the people I was coaching alongside with last year were not as experienced technically as myself So it's difficult to learn" (Nick – coach)

In conclusion, how coaches' perceived professional development was dependent on how they viewed their coaching practice, and a coach's view of coaching was shaped by a coaching identity The consequence of this was that a constructed coaching identity influenced professional development in terms of choice, direction and intensity of engagement

4.5 Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented data that supported the construction of the core category, Conditions for Coach Learning Findings illustrated how coaches' view of professional development was grounded in the context of volunteerism, and the perceived relevance of CPD in supporting and impacting practice These views were the foundations from which participants came to view mentoring The following is a summary of these findings·

- The ways in which these volunteer coaches framed their practice, and their role, impacted upon their understanding of formalised mentoring

- Coaches' conceptualisation of practice was shaped by individual interpretation, located within the practice of a coaching community

- Participants in this study entered the mentoring programme under two conditions either invited after being nominated by their external body, or they actively sought out mentoring as a consequence of uncertainty in their practice

- Professional development had to demonstrate relevance and value if these coaches were to fully engage

- Coaches identified that any development pathway should afford opportunities to interact with other coaches.

- 12 coaches and 4 mentors reported the importance of 'local' and social networks in underpinning their learning.

- Previous professional development experiences acted as a filter when evaluating forthcoming CPD opportunities

- Formalised professional development didn't assure coach learning in these examples

- Coaching identity influenced choice, constraints, agency and structure when negotiating professional development

Chapter Five: Finding 2 - Negotiated Boundaries

The category Conditions for Coach Learning described in the previous chapter, captured an accumulation of processes that shaped coaches' perceptions of coach learning These perceptions formed the pre-cursor from which decisions to engage or not engage with CPD activities were formed. This chapter now turns to consider the experiences and social interactions of those coaches who decided to participate in the mentoring programme Their actions were marked by the core category, Negotiated Boundaries. It is through negotiating boundaries of participation that volunteer coaches and mentors gave form to the mentoring relationship through a number of processes,

- framing mentoring
- clarifying role expectations
- negotiate meaningful social interactions

Although these processes were typically confined to the initial stages of the programme, they were sometimes revisited and re-negotiated The category Negotiated Boundaries, therefore, describes the continuous processes coaches and mentors engaged in as they framed, clarified, and negotiated meaningful mentoring experiences These findings are now considered in detail

5.1   Framing mentoring

For the majority of coaches and mentors in this study, the mentoring relationship was framed as having two dimensions 1) empathetic, and 2) facilitating The ways in which participants came to frame the mentoring relationship impacted upon the type and form of the interactions that were negotiated In the first dimension, participants described the function of a mentor in terms of *"friend"*, *"companion"*, *"advice-giver"*, and *"somebody to bounce ideas off"*, and *"someone who is easily approachable"* For Claire (coach), the mentor needed to possess good communications skills in understanding and relating to the coach Borne out of these interpersonal skills was an emerging respect for the mentor,

> *"They have to match you as an individual In the way they communicate*
> *Knowing how you react to things and how you like feedback to be given*
> *and then they do it in such a way not to blow your confidence out of the*

water Someone you respect How they put things across, they know more than you or pick up on things they need to.   that way you know you can respect them" (Claire - coach)

Similarly, Paul (coach) recognised the importance of matching participants in terms of their characteristics and interpersonal skills,

"I could destroy some people just by being myself and not really realising I had destroyed them   But likewise I could encourage people and right there you go and want to do something else about it   Some people would bore me to tears and I would be out of the sport within a week" (Paul-coach)

The story of volunteer coaching that emerged, was, at times, defined by a sense of isolation and fatigue during the course of a season. Not only was the practice of coaching generally conducted as a solitary affair, but both coaches and mentors felt physically and mentally fatigued at various points of their season as a consequence of balancing a myriad of occupational and recreational commitments Within this context, mentors sometimes provided a welcome shot of professional nourishment for the flagging coach For instance Paul labelled David as his *"red-bull mentor"* and described how,

"at certain times during the season you think "I'm stale" and you need somebody to stimulate you again and I know when actually David had a meeting, I came out of the meeting thinking "great, I know what I'm going to do for the next four or five weeks I know what my lesson plan is going to be, and that's up to me (pointing to himself) *I need that stimulation every now and again, you need someone not pat you on the back but say "yep, you're doing all right, you think you've dropped but actually these guys have improved and actually they are enjoying it"* *(Paul - coach)*

An important feature of the facilitating role of the mentor was the development of coaching confidence A number of coaches in the study (Joanne, Julie, Paul, Kate, Sarah-Jane, Claire and Louise) identified confidence as an aim for their participation (data taken

from mentoring agreements detailed on page 135 of this chapter) Joanne identified developing confidence when asked about her motivation to work with Steve (mentor),

> *"With me obviously there's the CCA (tennis coaching qualification) and then I think developing my confidence I've been coaching relatively young age groups and I think it'll just be leading on to coaching older children and perhaps even adult players which I don't have much experience of I think it's gaining as much experience as I can Maybe even watching Nick in his one-to-ones with some of his performance players and getting some experience of that" (Joanne - coach)*

The second dimension through which coaches framed mentoring was as a facilitating role In short, coaches saw the mentor as a guide, helping them to navigate practice For instance John (coach), suggested that his mentor had, *"pointed me in the right direction and that is basically all I wanted"* In agreement, John's mentor, Matt, also supported this directional theme within the relationship describing his role as one where he helped to *"find out what they would like to do and where they would like to be, and point them in the right direction (Matt – mentor: Focus Group)* A practical example of this guiding role was provided by David (mentor), who described his support of Kay (coach) in moving forward to complete her level 3 qualification,

> *"I spent all Sunday with Kay at the County Championships Athletics Having not spoken with her for certainly all over the winter, I have now hooked her up with a couple of other people who are going to help her finish her Level 3 and put her portfolio together" (David-mentor)*

In this example, although David wasn't able to 'directly' support Kay in the completion of her course (she needed to complete observational time with a number of other sports), he was able to identify other sources that could As David reasoned, his aim was to help Kay - *"plug the gap"* A further example of the guiding role of the mentor was provided by Steve (mentor), who explained his role as,

> *"Helping the coaches to achieve what they want to achieve and supporting them in the routes they want to go down I think one area I'm*

keen on is identifying where the coaches want to work, what areas they are most interested in and then trying to help them So for instance we've got somebody recently who wants to start doing some schools work, one of the coaches is more keen in the performance area of the sport So it's helping them to identify what they want to do and helping them to do that" (Steve-mentor)

In sum, the ways in which participants framed the mentoring process was revealing, because how they conceptualised mentoring impacted upon the intensity, focus and duration of their interactions within the programme. Data indicated that coaches and mentors were clear, informed and candid about what coach mentoring meant to them For the participants in this study, mentoring was framed as having two distinct dimensions empathetic and facilitating Specifically, coaches wanted their mentors to support, inspire, and motivate, and, as Sarah-Jane highlighted, the mentor was *"someone to watch over my development"* Furthermore, and in terms of development, coaches wanted their mentors to represent a readily accessible resource, offer alternative approaches to practice, and encourage and suggest appropriate courses of action The following extract captures many of the characteristics of mentoring identified in the data In the following account Sarah-Jane was asked how she thought the relationship might work in relation to her coaching,

"The actual process of working with a mentor can actually trigger so many issues within my coaching life that it is hard to say which ones have most validity or relevance I guess the process is more important than the outcomes in some respects There are however a number of things that a good mentor raises In my case I feel as though I have someone to confide in, someone watching over my development and someone to sound off any things that I think are worthy of conversation Secondly I really believe that a mentor forces you, in a positive and constructive way, to re-look at your own position as a coach It is too often that we, as coaches, don't follow the advice we give to others, a mentor can help you re-visit your own philosophy"

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5.2 Clarifying role expectations

At the start of the programme, the mentoring relationship was characterised by a period of clarification as participants mapped out the opportunities, challenges and possibilities of the relationship. Data were collected at the beginning of the programme by asking both coaches and mentors to record their aims, expectations and possible format of their relationship The following table lists data extracted from the mentoring agreement 'contracts' that were completed by 5 mentors and 13 coaches;

Table 5 0: Mentor-coach programme expectations

Participant	Aims	Expectations of mentor/coach	Format
David (mentor)	Support progress of coaching qualifications, Develop and support identified areas of strength and weakness	Take advantage of opportunities To provide information	Meetings on a weekly/monthly basis
Kay	Improve coaching skills	Support, advise and assist	1-1 meetings (min monthly), observation, general discussions (email, telephone)
Nick	General and sport specific coaching skills	Feedback from sessions/practices, Ideas and information	Weekly meetings at the hockey club
Paul	Improve knowledge of technical and tactical skills, Improve analytical skills, Develop general coaching skills	Guide and assist learning, Honest feedback, Be committed and professional	Monthly, Observation of practice (and obs of other coaches with mentor), Email and telephone as required
Neil	Develop 4 areas of perceived weakness	Provide knowledge and opportunities	Trimonthly
Alan (mentor)	Develop and support identified areas of strength and weakness	To see progress in identified aims	Observation of practice, Email and telephone as required
Sally	Improve goal setting, Evaluating training programmes, Dealing with difficult players	Responding to questions and queries	Observation of practice (and obs of other coaches with mentor), Feedback from practice, Email and telephone as needed
Ali	Improve technical and tactical knowledge, Improve knowledge of energy systems and nutrition	Responding to questions promptly	Observe mentor, Email and telephone as needed
Alex	Help develop 3, perceived weak areas strategy, mental and analysis, Support perceived area of	Provide opportunities to learn and develop, Be available to offer advice and guidance	Observation of practice (and obs of other coaches with mentor), Email and telephone as needed

Participant	Aims	Expectations of mentor/coach	Format
	strength defending		
Helen (mentor)	To support coaching development	To be available for giving out information	When needed
Sarah-Jane	To support core coaching skills, (planning, organisation and leadership), Gain greater knowledge of child protection, LTAD model	To be there when needed, Offer a mentoring package specific to coach	When needed
Participant	**Aims**	**Expectations of mentor/coach**	**Format**
Elizabeth (mentor)	Help coach achieve their goals	To put into practice discussions and ideas from meetings. To return correspondence promptly	When needed – coach driven
Guy	Improving technical skills, Develop coaching skills	Help achieve identified goals	Monthly, Signpost appropriate material available, Observe practice
Rob	Understand hockey coaching, Deliver quality sessions	Feedback from sessions, As a resource	Monthly, Signpost appropriate material available, Observe practice
Claire	Develop existing coaching knowledge to become a more confident coach	To provide information about courses/coaching pathway. To act as someone who can give advice and helpful criticism	Observation. Mentee to contact mentor when needs arise
Rebecca	To improve as an athletics coach, To look at the planning and delivery of coaching sessions	To give guidance, To look at coaching methods, To support coaching qualifications	Observation. Email/telephone. Mentee to contact mentor when needed
Matt (mentor)	To guide and direct the coach	To act on information provided, To keep updated on progress through regular communication	Telephone and email when needed
John	Help support the completion of level 3 coaching qualification, Complete SAQ course	To provide agreed information and support as and when required, To maintain regular contact to ensure progress towards aims	When needed

What is evident from the data is that coaches saw the main aims of participating in the mentoring programme as one in which to access sport specific knowledge. There was consensus among coaches that mentors would act as a resource who could provide knowledge about drills, tactics, technical skills, and organisation and performance analysis. For these coaches, mentoring was about supporting practice, as opposed to supporting career development, and hence there was an expectation that mentors would observe practice, where possible, and give critical feedback (9 out of 13 coaches identified observation as a primary form of interaction in their mentoring agreement).

Coaches recognised the importance of open lines of communication, also recognising that, at times, this would involve email and telephone What they really wanted however, was coaching conversations *in situ,* as opposed to abstract and projected interactions So, for example, Alan described the type of interaction in which he was involved in the first few months of his mentoring relationship with Sally,

> *"Sally asked me to watch her coach one of the county sessions, which I did, and then she asked me to do a coaching session for her to watch it because she felt that was what she needed was more to see the practical side of it" (Focus Group)*

Within the mentoring agreements, mentors also described their role in terms of *"supporting", "developing"* and *"guiding"* coaches However, whereas coaches talked about their hopes for interaction to take place at their club and around their practice, many of the mentors conceived a role that was more passive, seeing the mentor as an information giver (telephone or email exchange) For example, from the mentoring agreements, Elizabeth (mentor) described one of her roles as, *"to return correspondence promptly",* Helen (mentor) suggested her role was, *"to be available for giving out information",* similarly David (mentor) explained his role in terms of, *"To provide information",* and finally Matt (mentor), described what he thought would be coaches' expectations of his mentoring role, *"to act on information provided; to keep updated on progress through regular communication"* These data extracts conveyed a passive mentoring role by some mentors within the programme, which was clearly portrayed by Martin, who mentored 5 coaches working in the junior section of a local rugby club Martin was asked to explain what his mentoring role within the programme would entail,

> *"I just want to make them appreciate that I'm there to support them That I want them to not just look at themselves, but to look at the other coaches and the techniques of achieving the same aims Even to attend the mentoring evening can make them stop and think that there are different ways of doing things I think it will involve me asking them to go on different courses* (and workshops*) They might be seeing other sports, like swimming, and be able to bring those ideas into the club I want them to have broader mind that they can bring to the club"*

Data analysis of the mentoring agreements revealed a degree of divergence between coaches and mentors in the aims and expectations they had for formalised mentoring

5.3 Negotiated meaningful interactions

In the first part of this chapter, data were presented that illustrated how coaches and mentors came to frame the mentoring process Central to this process was an understanding that formalised mentoring allowed for social interaction with fellow practitioners (mentors and other coaches) Steve recognised that in his role as mentor to 4 coaches, his aims were to orchestrate a social environment in which coaches would feel free to question, engage and reflect on practice;

> *"I think that the most effective or what is my primary aim is to make people like a team To make sure that people don't feel that they are on their own so we can sit down together and ask questions and the more we can sit down together as a team, the more likely that is to happen"*
> *(Steve-mentor)*

The importance of the social setting of formalised mentoring was also described by Alan when he described his expectations of his role In this extract, Alan explains how he saw his role as a convenor within the group dynamics of the coaching group Significantly, he saw this function as existing outside and away from the coaching session,

> *"It will be interesting I don't think that they will want someone to watch them I think my expectations are that they will want somebody that they can bounce ideas off but not actually be there for every session Perhaps what they will need is more of a group thing and I'm hoping that they will need and want is a group because I think I'll get a lot out of it It's fine to have a one-on-one for a specific issue but there is so much more to the dynamics if you get two or three people together to look at something altogether. I may say "well I would have dealt with it like this" and someone else might give you a reason not to do it that way I think it should be a social setting (Alan)*

The theme of providing opportunities for coaches to interact socially was grasped and expanded upon by David who, within the programme, worked with coaches from hockey and athletics David recognised the importance of social coaching conversations and also saw strength in those conversations involving coaches from a range of sports In the following extract, David was asked what he would do differently next time as a consequence of his experiences of this mentoring programme,

> *"If I had it again I would like four separate sports, so maybe hockey, rugby, athletics and another individual sport, say tennis or something like In invasion games we tend to coach big numbers and it is hard to form those relationships with your players because you are dealing with 30 women on a pitch or 20 men, whereas athletics and tennis tend to work in much smaller numbers and its certainly about relationship building with your players Bring the four of them together for some sessions rather than working individually with them That would be quite interesting Let's get the four people to go and watch a hockey match Let's get the four people to go and watch a tennis match Let's go in the bar afterwards and let's talk about it and let's watch their questioning of each other and just guide that process"*

For many of the coaches in this study, the initial appeal of formal mentoring was that it afforded opportunities to observe other coaches in practice The following extracts offer descriptive accounts of the types of social interaction that coaches experienced and wanted,

> *"Last summer when I watched John coach every Wednesday, I got a lot out of it I could see things that I could use and that I couldn't I suppose it's a spark to think that I could do that or incorporate something That's what I find exciting about coaching but it is not going happen with everyone" (Kay-coach)*

> *"I've started to get more involved with what's going on in the club and I do feel more part of a team They are going to start a brunch club (Sunday mornings after junior games) We do that about every six to*

eight weeks and you just review what you are doing or they might get a guest speaker in from another club or a fitness coach who will talk to us about fitness It's only been running recently but I can really see the difference because you get to talk to everyone. It can be quite a lonely place when you haven't got any other coaches to talk to" (Chris-coach Focus Group)

It has been a bit of a standing joke but we have had the debrief after matches which is the euphemism for going down the pub and having a chat about it, which all our wives now understand what the debrief is about But actually they are very useful sessions, very, very useful sessions because the coaches start to talk about not just what they are doing but what are the other teams doing, " did you see how well they could hit the ball" " how did they get them to do that"? And suddenly they are thinking themselves how can I get my lot to do it like that And that's where I think the learning comes in as well because you are analysing a situation and saying" we can't do that"," why can't we","" how can we get there to do it" and that's the whole learning thing isn't it? Having a target and trying to reach it" (Alan-mentor Focus Group)

Data revealed that there was recognition that learning was shaped by social interaction, both formally and informally, and that such interaction needed to be local, embedding coaching conversations *in situ* The following example is a case in point In an email that was sent to the researcher, Alan (mentor) reflected on his frustrations of the formal mentoring programme at the heart of this study Alan had also been asked to contribute (mentoring role) to a short term (6 weeks) hockey coach development initiative and the following email reflects his thoughts on the two experiences,

Table 5 1· Personal correspondence evaluating formalised mentoring programme

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Subject Mentor Update

From Alan

To mgriffiths

Mark

Just a little feedback about mentoring

The three coaches I originally sat down with and went through the agreement etc in December have not had much contact with me I think this is because we are all doing stuff at weekends and then work during the week A few emails have been exchanged but because they are not based on observation I would classify them as information gathering rather than reflection on a situation I don't really feel I have contributed much to their development

Contrast this with my session last night with a coach at the hockey player development centre I was able to observe and then after the session had the time to engage in a reflective conversation (over a pint[1]) and exchange ideas about the session and how it might be improved etc This relationship I feel is a 'proper' mentor relationship which I think will last over and above the six weeks I am contracted Both of us got a lot out of the training session and reflecting on it afterwards

I think the lesson is it's easier to mentor someone when you are not occupied yourself coaching and in a more relaxed situation

Regards

Alan

In an end of programme evaluation, coaches and mentors were sent a questionnaire The aim of the questionnaire was to ask participants to evaluate their experiences of mentoring programme and to suggest ways the programme might be improved 14 out of 25 questionnaires were returned (56%) Question XX asked, 'What has been the most valuable aspect of your mentoring experience'? The following table summarises the number of mentions in responding to this question,

Fig 5 1. Summary of responses concerning most valuable aspects of participating in programme

Contacts/networking	13
Knowledge (drills/sessions)	13
Constructive criticism	10
Social interaction	9
Sharing ideas	8
Increasing confidence	7
Encouraging reflection	6
Encouraging enthusiasm towards coaching	3
Different perspective	3
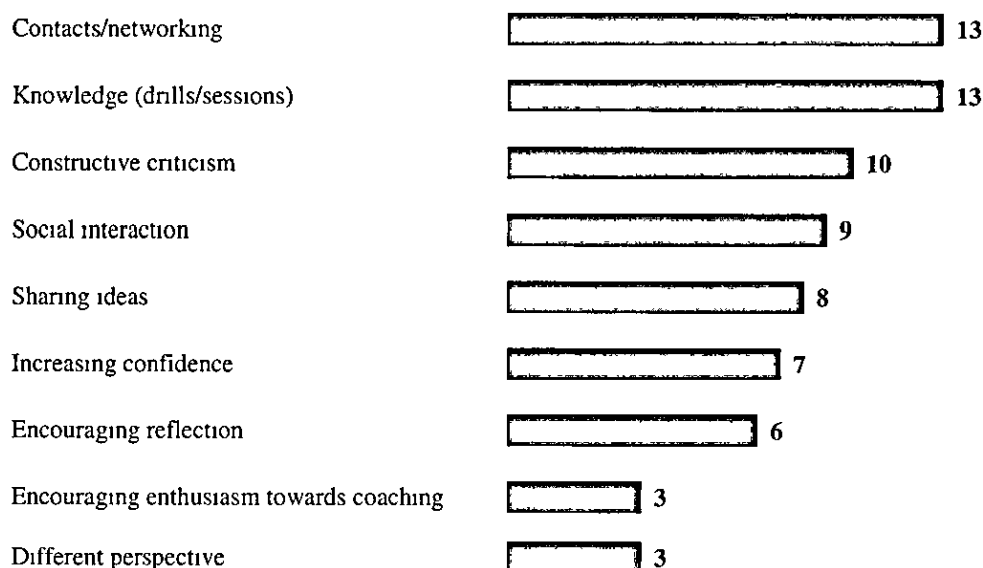
For those coaches and mentors who responded, meaningful coach/mentor interaction was characterised by increased coaching network and contacts made, new sport specific knowledge, constructive and direct feedback, opportunities to share ideas, self-efficacy, feelings of mutual support, and reflective thinking

5.4 Summary of Findings 2

In summary, data collected from interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and correspondence showed that volunteer sports coaches valued opportunities for their mentor to observe and reflect on their coaching practice The use of observation and constructive feedback was perceived as giving coach learning direction, focus and structure Moreover, coaches saw the mentor as a link to the 'outside' coaching world, providing circumstances in which to engage in the examination of practices through the observation and interaction with other coaches, observation was seen as an activity that could be used to ignite reflection The following is a summary of these findings

- Both coaches and mentors in this study recognised the empathetic and facilitating dimensions of the mentoring process

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- Volunteer coaching was recognised to be, at times, a solitary affair Formal mentoring offered opportunities not only for access to sports specific knowledge, but for reassurance in supporting coaching practice

- Seven coaches who participated in the programme wanted to develop their coaching confidence

- Analysis of the mentoring agreements revealed a degree of divergence between coaches and mentors in the aims and expectations they had for formalised mentoring.

- Nine coaches expected mentors to observe and give feedback on practice

- Five mentors defined their role primarily in terms of information giving

Chapter Six: Finding 3 – Barriers to formalised mentoring

This chapter presents data that were identified as barriers to formalised mentoring These included

- Mentoring competency
- Interpersonal
- Formal vs. Informal mentoring
- *"Mentoring as an expensive luxury"*
- Time
- Accessibility

These sub-categories are now illustrated

6.1 Mentoring competency

During the early planning stages of the study, discussions were held with key stakeholders (Sports partnership, NGB's) concerning the recruitment of suitably qualified mentors for the programme As described earlier in the study, mentors were selected based on experience and qualifications. The process of selecting and matching mentors with mentees was undertaken by the Active Sports coordinators, David and Elizabeth, who, through their professional roles, had developed numerous relationships and contacts with the local coaching community David's position, in particular, as mentor and overseer of many of the sports relationships within the study provided a unique perspective in identifying the myriad factors that impacted upon formalised mentoring In particular, David identified a lack of coaching awareness from both coaches and, critically, mentors as barriers to coach learning David described how some mentors demonstrated a poor understanding of the coaching process, little appreciation of a coaching skill set, and confusion around concepts of quality practice He explained;

> *"We need to do as much work if not more work with the mentors to get*
> *them to realise how poorly they coach and how little they know and then*
> *to start to really fill their knowledge gap because then they can impact*
> *massively on coaches Because we get hold of someone and say" oh yeah*

*this person has been recommended, great coach, soft skills", but actually
they are not a great coach because they don't understand the' how' to
skills, they don't understand the seven part model of drawing on different
skills and knowledge We need to look at that stage before we start a
project for example with these mentors And that's going to take time"
(David-mentor)*

In agreement, Elizabeth (hockey mentor) described how she felt that the biggest barrier to
coach mentoring was a lack of awareness of quality coaching,

*"Now you have got to give mentors and specialists, the coach managers,
the tools to recognise when coaching is taking place and when it isn't
taking place. It's just that level of awareness it's just so low, it really is
It's astounding really" (Elizabeth-mentor)*

As was noted earlier, some mentors within the study had been identified by their NGB
and selected because of experience and/or level of coaching qualifications achieved
(Level 3 +) However for David, the identification of a mentor based on accrued years of
coaching experience or level of coaching qualifications obtained was problematic For
him, the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy required a skilled mentor who not
only had sport specific knowledge, but was also sensitive to the pedagogical interactions
of the coaching process Consequently, David suggested that a degree of priming mentors
beyond the 3 hour mentoring workshop (attended by all mentors in this study) was
required for any formalised mentoring programme,

*We need to up skill the mentors so that they can go out there, observe
coaches and actually look at it from a craft knowledge point of view,
which at the moment the mentors haven't got those skills So there are
skill sets that we have to give the mentors so that the mentors can be a lot
more effective in the time that they have We know, that three hour
workshop is an introduction but without the follow up work from us to
get the mentors together to up-skill and give them a lot more knowledge
on observing coaches and say "look this is the sort of thing you should
be seeing, that's poor practice, that's good practice" (David-mentor)*

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Data also suggested that the ability to *"see"* with knowledge and understanding was a mentoring skill valued by coaches; in particular, the ability of mentors to guide coaches to focus on specific areas of their coaching practice. The following extracts are examples of perceived 'skilled mentors' from the programme, who challenged their coaches to re-examine their practice,

> *"I think it's also important as a mentor to know that you're not the fount of all knowledge David [mentor] understood that. He hadn't all the answers but he had all the questions That's a really good sign of any mentor" (Paul- coach).*

> *"She didn't force me to talk about anything I guess that's how someone who's so good at questioning is – they just ask you the right questions and before you know it you're talking about things you don't normally talk about. I just didn't know where we were going with it I thought to myself "Why did you need to know that?" (Claire - coach)*

> *"I think its worthwhile It made me stop and evaluate myself and think about what I was doing You just need somebody to say one thing to make you really look at yourself You know you do something for so long and you think 'I know this like the back of my hand' But having somebody else there makes you look in the direction you really want to do" (Sarah-Jane - coach)*

It also became evident from the data that priming for mentoring shouldn't be confined to the mentor, but that coaches need to learn to be mentored For example, Sara-Jane, whose mentoring relationship with Elizabeth extended beyond the duration of the formalised programme of this study, explained how she had prepared for the relationship,

> *"I learned how to be mentored I had time to internalise my own mentoring through books I've read and my experiences and that makes the sessions quite effective I also prepared for the sessions – I knew what the issues were I wanted to talk about so I guess I did a lot of the*

questioning beforehand If we got stuck on something, it'd take the full
session to unravel the stuckness but then the following week, I'd work on
that. It [mentoring] *definitely brings up a lot of feelings – there were*
times I was uncomfortable I was prepared to go where it was going to
take me" (Sarah-Jane-coach)

The concept of priming for mentoring was also identified by Paul who supported the idea that coaches need to prepare for the mentoring process by adopting a *'positive mindset'* towards mentoring as a learning strategy;

"But, and I don't mean sound big-headed or undermine David (mentor)
at all, because I was reading a lot about NLP at the time, I may have
made the process easier I was really into self-development and having a
positive mind set I think that really helped us" (Paul - coach)

In summary, mentoring competencies (of both coach and mentor) had the potential to act as barriers to coach mentoring Both mentors and coaches in this study required a skill and mind set to engage fully with mentoring Without this pre-requisite, it could be argued, the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy was not always realised by participants in this study

6.2 Interpersonal

At the heart of the mentoring process lies the interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee It was perhaps not surprising that in a formalised mentoring programme, the interactions between participants were identified as a determinant of mentoring engagement,

"It is definitely a difficult skill mentoring, I think You have got to get on
with the person as well If you don't get on with them, or if you are not
prepared to have an open and frank discussion, well if you are my
character that doesn't work" (Paul-coach)

For a number of coaches, interpersonal rapport had the potential to act as a barrier to mentoring engagement Joanne explained how it was important to try and move a

particular problem beyond issues of a personality dissonance in working with her mentor (Steve),

> *I think that depends on how he's going to react Also how valid your points are I think that if you have a problem with him personally you can still approach him and I have done in the past If he feels that it's constructive then he'll take it on board. I think it's more that if he thinks it's more a personality clash then there will be a problem. (Joanne - coach)*

Further evidence came from Ali, who in the previous year utilised David as her 'informal' mentor. In the following she described why the relationship was not sustainable,

> *"In the past we've exchanged ideas but now I don't think that I am that responsive to him because of certain issues I have with him on a personal rather than professional level" (Ali - coach)*

It became clear that lines of communication between participants, forged by an interpersonal skill set, were an important ingredient in the mentoring mix The following examples from Paul, Julie and Alex illustrated the importance of strong communication skills between mentor and coach,

> *"I don't know anybody that is more knowledgeable than David He is straight talking and I think I'm straight talking so in that respect   I can ask him a question and he'll give me a straight answer and the same thing if I ask him for feedback or something he'll butter it up a little bit and then give it me straight and then he'll see my reactions are okay. there's no misunderstanding" (Paul-coach)*

> *He wasn't a top player, he was an under 21 England player, but he still got respect because of the manner he coached   So I think he was a very good coach   They could be the best player in the world but they might*

not have any communication skills so they are not going to be the best coach I click with certain people" (Helen-mentor)

One thing is that David [referring to previous informal mentoring relationship] *can be a very abrasive character but one of the best things is that he can be a very good coach of coaches He's very good at getting points across, fairly succinctly and fairly easy to understand I think when you go and look at him coaching other people his personal skills and interaction with different personalities causes him more issues than one would hope (Alex-coach)*

In summary, the interpersonal relationship between mentor and coach was a key determinant of coach learning The compatibility between mentor and coach was a critical component for many coaches when seeking support and knowledge

6.3 Formal v Informal mentoring

As described earlier, the mentoring programme in this study was formalised through matched relationships and facilitated interactional opportunities (e g mentoring workshop, focus groups). Yet, some of the mentors and coaches readily identified existing networks of informal mentoring relationships These coaches and mentors were therefore well placed to comment on the differences between informal and formal contexts of mentoring with volunteer coaches Alan, for example, who was a mentor in the formalised mentoring programme and a mentor informally at his local hockey club, was asked to compare and contrast his two mentoring roles at a focus group session The following table was constructed by Alan, and captures his perceptions of the differences between formal and informal mentoring,

Table 6 0 Comparing formal and informal mentoring programmes

Formalised Mentoring Programme	Informal Mentoring
Not enough regular contact	Regular contact (every Sunday)
Often asked to "do a session" rather than discuss how "to do a session"	Part of a team, so more relaxed interaction and informal chats
Not "friends" enough to make it	"Friends" with most of the coaches

work

Some bad feelings that I had been appointed to the coaches rather than them choosing me	Coaches happy to exchange ideas
	Helping out with groups each week – observing and coaching
Some advice by email but mostly non- coaching issues	Gives me a lead-in to say when I think things are going wrong (or right!)
	Combined well with Head Coach role

In this comparison the formalised mentoring programme was characterised by irregular contact, the expectation of mentors to demonstrate good practice, a lack of familiarity, a lack of acceptance by coaches, and the mentoring process perceived as a general information resource Conversely, Alan's mentoring role at his local club was characterised by regular contact, a sense of affiliation, and an environment of mutual exchange Although critical of matched mentoring relationships, Alan did recognise that formalised mentoring, with opportunities for facilitated interactions (focus groups, workshops, presentations), did give participants the *"tools to realise and recognise"*, and went on to describe its usefulness in setting the mentoring landscape;

> *"I think from the point of view of getting it started it wasn't such a bad idea and certainly I felt there was a benefit going through the kind of formal training part of it if you like about profiling and goal setting and stuff I think that having certain tools and frameworks in place when you first start out is good and certainly I learnt stuff on that mentoring course* (workshop) *in terms of, you know, how you might judge a coach's performance or how you might measure people's improvement and a little bit about targets But what I would say is that you need that to start off with but you also need to say well you don't have to do all of them, pick the ones that work for you"* (Alan-mentor)

The existence of informal mentoring arrangements was evident with coaches in this study Alex, described how an existing relationship with Alan, established before the formal programme was conceived, helped with a particular coaching issue,

> *"Yes In terms of sessions, he has also done one session for me I'd also ring him up I had an issue, one of the girls is being a bit disruptive but she is probably one of the best players in our group So I rang him and*

asked him what he would do and we discussed it So I don't have an issue with that When I was asked to do the mentoring course and that Alan would be my mentor, I thought that I was kind of doing that anyway"
(Alex - coach)

In the end of programme evaluation (appendix 6), question 12 asked, 'What suggestions do you have for improving the mentoring programme? The following responses were collected, indicating the number of times a 'suggestion' was mentioned;

Fig 5 2. Suggestions for improving the mentoring programme?

Suggestion	Count
Increase network of contacts/mentors	12
Ask mentee to nominate mentors	12
Motivation to complete tasks	10
Group discussion	9
Better communication	8
More contact	7
Observe coach + feedback	6
Sports specific sessions	3
Clarification of expectations	3
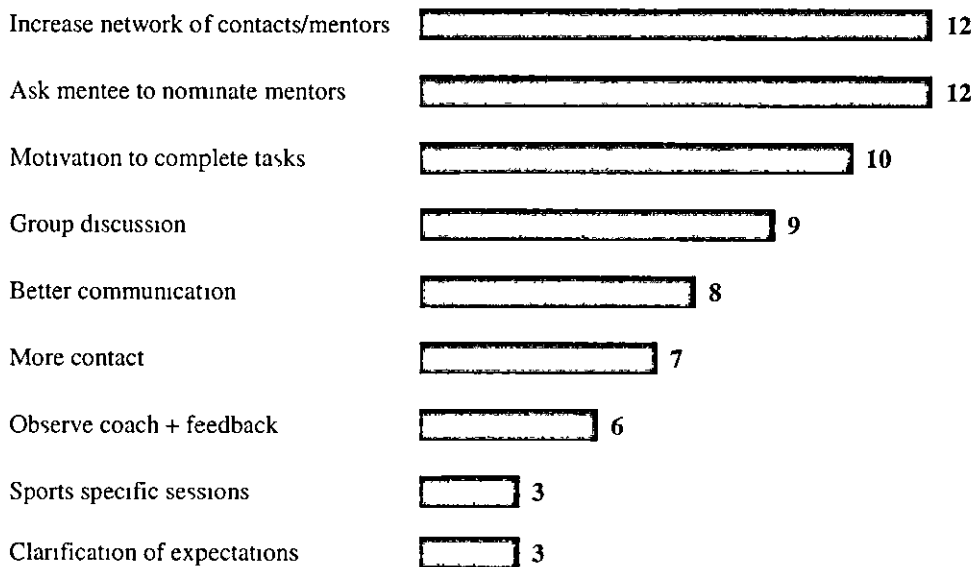
Coaches and mentors in the study already operated in informal communities of support and development, and where they were very much self-directed in choosing help when needed Subsequently, responses to this question identified the important role of accessing support networks, increasing opportunities to get together with other coaches, and a greater emphasise on the programme being mentee led

For many of the volunteer coaches and mentors in this study, a network of informal mentoring relationships that had evolved naturally through the everyday practices of coaching was very much evident Relationships were formed and sustained because both coach and mentor took something from these relationships Data indicated that the

formalised mentoring seemed to simply add another layer to an already crowded network of mutual support and coaching friendships

6.4 'Mentoring as an expensive luxury'

As already described, for the coaches in this study coaching was a voluntary endeavour, on the peripheral of an already crowed and over-extended mix of commitments Formalised mentoring was, therefore, perceived by some in this research as an *"expensive luxury"* (Martin - mentor· Focus Group), that was low down on their order of priorities. The following extracts illustrate responses from coaches and mentors when asked to describe contact with their mentor or coach,

> *"Yeah, the last phone call we had was basically "I'm conscious I haven't spoken to you for a bit, have you got any issues? Do you feel you need talk to me", and it's like "well, not at the moment, we're two or three games away from the end of the season let's wait until the beginning of the new season" (Paul - coach)*

In another example Martin (mentor) described the difficulty in getting coaches to engage with mentoring,

> *"You seem to have to persuade coaches to engage All for mentoring, but its taking a lot longer than I was expecting All for it but its taking time They want to go on courses first So the mentoring is taking a slower pace" (Martin-mentor: Focus Group)*

Formalised mentoring was, for some of the coaches, perceived as an expensive luxury It was expensive in terms of time, access, relevance and value With an already crowded volunteer coaching landscape, formalised mentoring was not always perceived as a priority Indicative of this is David (mentor), who described his experiences of working with his matched coaches, and the reality of these mentoring relationships,

> *"Now when we started this project my initial meetings with all four of those coaches were very formal and let us go through the process of T and A, and let's define some goals And we did it the once and the idea*

was that you re-visit those contracts if you like every six months We never re-visited any of it" (David-mentor)

6.5 Time

The reality for the coaches and mentors reported in this study was that time was a valuable commodity which had to be managed carefully Volunteer coaches and mentors therefore needed to weigh up the cost-benefit exchange in selecting and then participating in formalised mentoring

ᵥ In an end of programme questionnaire was sent out to participants (15 were returned) Question 1 asked. Has participating in the programme been a positive experience? The question gave three possible responses

1 Not at all
2 Limited
3 Very

Of the completed questionnaires, 8 ticked [Limited] (53%), describing lack of contact and time with their mentor as the reason why The following data extracts further illustrate why both coaches and mentors identified time as a barrier to mentoring engagement,

"I think that's happened, laziness not just on the coach part but on the mentor's part, my part, and time It's time Whereas if I had more time I would be working with them a lot more closely" (David – mentor)

"Time for the coach and the mentor Lack of skills or knowledge on the mentor Yes so they must be the two biggest barriers" (Alan - mentor)

"Accessibility and time are barriers, we need to look at the structures where the mentor's time is more of a barrier than the coach's time" (Nick - coach)

"Quality mentoring needs regulated time" (Coach - *Focus Group*)

"Well because my situation has changed at the club I would have more time which means I could actively mentor them more often, whereas because of the role I was in I just got caught up in everything on a Sunday morning and before I knew it was one o'clock and they had all finished, so we could only do anything in retrospective and I probably hadn't seen it anyway" (Elizabeth - mentor)

"I think there could be if I had more time Time is a big issue for me from September to June So the summer is the only time I get If I'm not writing something about hockey, I'm coaching it or playing it So as much as I would love to be able to sit down and think about what I should I doing, I just don't have the time" (Ali - coach)

These accounts capture the reality of volunteers' coaching practice As well as organising practice sessions and organising matches, mentors and coaches may also been involved in the administrative side of the sports clubs Volunteer coaches therefore needed to weigh up the cost-benefit exchange in selecting and then participating in any formalised CPD activities Although the importance of mentoring in supporting learning was recognised, barriers such as time were clearly evident It could be argued that the reality for the volunteer coach is that time is a potentially insurmountable barrier in formalising existing informal coaching mentoring relationships

6.6 Learning boundaries

For many volunteer coaches, feelings of isolation were compounded by a perceived lack of support from NGBs and other sports coaching organisations As Helen explained,

"What annoys me is that I've done four Level 1 courses and no one has ever contacted me to say 'How are you getting on ?You go on the course and then you've got something else to go on your CV but they don't encourage you into coaching" (Helen - mentor)

It is interesting to note that many coaches defined the mentoring role as, *"a sounding board"*, having *"access to a trouble shooter"*, offering *"a mirror to see practice"* and my mentor was *"my red bull"* (i e energy drink to re-energise the coach's enthusiasm and

motivation) In conceptualising sports coaching as, at times, complex and messy (Jones & Wallace, 2005), it is not surprising that volunteer coaches identified the supporting characteristic of the mentoring relationship as one of the most important mentoring roles Specifically, both coaches and mentors recognised the importance of 'local' and situated support networks in underpinning learning Where matched relationships were not local to participants, then mentoring interaction was disjointed and occasional Alan (mentor) explained that because he was matched with coaches at a distance from his club, geography acted as a barrier in fulfilling the promise of mentoring;

> *"There was a big practical problem which was that I was coaching on*
> *pretty much all days, and that takes up quite a lot of the day, a big chunk*
> *of the day, and to be honest I didn't really want to do anything much*
> *other than that And because I was coaching juniors for the club and/or*
> *county and depending on my availability it just meant I was never*
> *around to have anything other than conversations and emails with them"*
> *(Alan - mentor)*

Elizabeth (mentor) also argued that formalised mentoring, and mentors, were best placed within a club It was in the clubs that relationships already existed (informally) between experienced and novice coaches, contact could be maximised, support would be specific and contextual, and observation of practice (which coaches really coveted) became a realistic option Within such a community, mentoring and support needs could also be more easily evaluated and monitored However Elizabeth acknowledged that to implement club mentoring would require the support of NGBs Thus, through NGB support, 'local' club mentoring might be more valued, as opposed to sitting on the peripheral of the club when supported by external agencies (e g the formalised mentoring reported in this study which was implemented by the county sports partnership) However few NGBs were strong enough to have the reach that could ensure the appropriate mechanisms were in place,

> *"I think it probably definitely needs to be set up in a club environment*
> *unless the NGBs are strong enough to instigate it for us within their*
> *clubs Like rugby, there are probably about eight big rugby clubs in the*
> *county and I know that rugby have a mentoring programme anyway, but*

they are the type of NGB who could say, right guys this has to be done and they would get it done, whereas other NGBs just haven't got that sort of pull" (Elizabeth-mentor)

6.7   Summary of Findings 3

This chapter has presented data that recognises the reality of volunteer coaches' work, and the barriers that can influence the mentoring relationship within this context Findings include the importance of acknowledging mentoring competency in accessing the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy, the mentoring relationship is regulated by an interpersonal dimension between participants, coaches and mentors may already be part of an informal network of support; with ever increasing professional demands, mentoring might be perceived as an expensive luxury, the reality for volunteer coaches is that their time is a valuable commodity which must be managed carefully; and lastly, that context-based mentoring was more appropriate for volunteer coaches

The aim of this chapter is to report data vertically on two specific case studies in order to broaden and deepen the analysis Moreover, and following Bryman & Burgess (1994) recommendation for reporting case studies, *"to search the data set for comparisons which help not only to flesh out the theory, but also to sharpen and test it"* (p 103) The cases selected illustrate two distinct mentoring stories, yet both illustrate the processes, actions and interactions of formalised mentoring with these volunteer coaches. Cases are reported by first considering the mentors' experiences of formalised mentoring, followed by data on each dyad within the case.

Case Study 1: Mentor (David); Coaches (Paul, Kay, Neil, Nick)

The case study was made up of the following participants who completed or attended specific data collection phases as follows,

Table 7 0 Case Study 1 participants

Name	Inter	Focus Group	Quest	Int	Focus Group	Quest	Int
David M1	√		√	√			√
Paul C1	√	√	√		√	√	√
Neil C1	√	√	√			√	
Nick C1	√		√			√	
Kay C1	√		√			√	√

David (mentor): Pre programme – Interview

The coach mentor, David, was a dominant and commanding figure, not only within the boundaries of this case, but with the extended coaching community that participated in this study Such a presence was a result of his professional role as a coaching development officer for a national sports organisation, a role that allowed for extensive contact and influence with a multitude of coaches, sports and sports clubs However alongside this professional role, David's biographical experiences (RAF engineer for 15 years, his partner who was a head teacher of a local primary school and who has directed him towards pedagogical materials, coaching and playing hockey at county level for 20 years), had all blended to fuel his interest and enthusiasm for examining and developing 'quality' coaching practice through mentoring An interesting aspect of this case was that David, a hockey coach, was prepared to work with Kay, an athletics coach, a role he felt

comfortable with because he recognised the benefits of cross sport development In an interview he revealed a model for getting different sports coaches together,

> *"we should put in place forums during the year for the mentors and the coaches where we get all the invasion game coaches together and we look at penetrating the last third It's the same principles Basketball, I mean look running a zone defence, running a defence . rugby and hockey could learn so much from basketball So let's have a forum where we get them all together and explore the concepts of," well what do you do in your sport, how do you operate that mentor stuff" ?*

This progressive stance (only 2 mentors and 4 coaches identified cross sport interactions in interviews) was borne out of his previous occupational roles with the RAF, that had encouraged cross discipline monitoring and personnel exchange,

> *"I relate it to when I was in the Air Force Quality Control For internal quality control or quality co-ordination, the inspections, all the internal ones, were done by non-specialists, so as an electronics engineer I would go into mechanical engineering, and you ask fundamental questions about practice and challenge practice which has been going on for years I think I know obviously a lot about the how to coach and the methodology, and impart knowledge, and I can question and it is interesting the breakdown But you think how much experience and knowledge you really need to mentor effectively and ask the right questions"*

From the start, David was concerned that any professional development activities needed to have immediate and contextual impact As a result, any formalised mentoring initiative should be about *"providing the right learning opportunity for the coach at the right time"* Formalised mentoring for volunteer coaches therefore had a temporal dimension which needed to be recognised,

> *"I mean what is happening in the field at Level 1 is that coaches don't want to be sat down and said, well how do you think you could have done that better? They want telling what the bloody hell to do and want to do*

it   They want content knowledge delivered to them on a plate which
impacts   As they then put that into place then the mentor needs to start
thinking, well actually you have got all of this stuff now let's think about
the how to coach, let's think about are you thinking of this, is there
cognitive thought behind what you are doing   But to jump in and ask
that to a Level 1 coach who just wants.   ., they just get frustrated   Tell
them the bloody answer   They just want to know how to teach this girl
how to hit the ball"

David was also clear that the mentoring relationship needed to be driven by the coach, it was the coaches who took ownership and moved the conversation forward,

"I never sit down with somebody and say look you need knowledge here.
I wait for them to say well actually I think I need knowledge there and
it's that process and giving them opportunity to realise that there is a
weakness and they can do something about it, but they have got to realise
that you can't just tell them"

Throughout the study David was a vocal, cogent and candid commentator on sports coaching in the county His position on formalised coaching mentoring could be summed up in the following way

- Coaches needed to be made aware/educated around what is meant by 'quality practice'
- Barriers to coaches' engagement in mentoring included time and perceived value/relevance
- Mentoring needed to have immediate impact in order to capture attention
- Cross sport mentoring should be encouraged
- Mentoring had a temporal dimension
- Mentors needed to be appropriately skilled in optimising the potential of mentoring
- The mentoring agenda should be coach-driven

David mentoring Nick

Nick was 23 years old and a PE teacher in a local school He was newly qualified Prior to the formalised programme, David and Nick had an existing informal coaching relationship through their attendance at a local hockey club Both were at the club on a Wednesday night resulting in co-coaching activities, each taking a small part of the session with the men's teams (1st XI and 2nd XI). However, because of work commitments, David found it increasingly difficult to attend Wednesday night sessions and hence contact became irregular However, following the start up of the formalised programme, they proceeded to arrange a series of meetings During the first 6 months of the programme they met four times (initial one-to-one meeting exploring goal setting and profiling, followed by three meetings at the club to discuss progress) In the following account, Nick described how he found these interactions useful, but lamented the lack of practical opportunities which he felt were much more valuable,

> *"I think that the actual coaching sessions are more useful than sitting down and talking It is nice to sit down and see where I have progressed, and what I want to focus on next in a nice quiet environment I think that the majority of me developing as a coach though is through me doing it at a coaching session or watching him doing it at a coaching session"*

The opportunity to observe and interact with an experienced coach shaped Nick's expectations of the mentoring function For example, in a questionnaire that he completed at the start of the programme, and when asked what coach development activities he would like to have provided in the county he wrote, *"hockey drills that work, with a high quality coach with experience"* (C1/Q 8) Moreover, when asked to reflect on the strengths of previous mentoring experiences, Nick commented, *"reflecting on and discussing sessions, what went well? What to improve? Etc Different points of view about hockey specific issues and approaches"* (C1/Q 15) Central to Nick's expectations of formalised mentoring was contact with an experienced practitioner, with interactions anchored in his coaching practice

Throughout early conversations, it was interesting to note how Nick perceived his involvement in the mentoring programme He expected coach mentoring to address two distinct areas of his development coaching styles and coaching content Nick clearly identified that David's most valuable commodity was his content knowledge David

represented an accessible resource from which Nick could retrieve ready to go drills and practices However, Nick felt uncomfortable with David's coaching "personality", revealing perhaps a confidence, derived from his teaching background, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his matched mentor;

> *"Mostly just his kind of knowledge really because he has done it for so many years and he has some really good ideas I split it myself into the coaching styles and the content His coaching style, I really dislike so I'm not getting much from that at all The way he talks to players and the way he comes across, his communication So in terms of that that is not why I'm with him I'm more with him because of his knowledge, and content, and the details of skills and drills"*

Nick was asked to describe activities that he had undertaken with David during their first initial meeting He recounted completing a profiling activity in which they had discussed perceived coaching strengths and weaknesses, and an activity from which a timetable of future interactions and functions were to be planned In the following extract, Nick talks about the neutral stance that he took from his coach profiling, failing to identify perceived weakness on which he and his mentor might focus in developing future strategies It is also interesting to recall David's comments on this kind of activity and his frustrations with it,

> *"We did a circle diagram but again most of my levels in comparison to the importance of them I felt that I was relatively close to them anyway I've done it for quite a few years So I didn't feel that there was an area where I've really got to work on it So we kind of just said lets just kind of get on with some coaching sessions and see what comes out of it I'm sure this is different from some other coaches who, once they've done that, it would be really clear that they've got a real lack of knowledge in a certain area I didn't really feel like that, I was kind of reasonably well rounded anyway"*

At the end of our first meeting Nick expressed concern that David wasn't going to be coaching at his club For Nick, mentoring had potential where it was local and accessible

Significantly, after 6 months, Nick and David didn't have any contact It was an issue that David brought up in a post programme interview,

> *"Accessibility and time are barriers We need to look at the structures where the mentors' time is more of a barrier than the coaches' time Say we take Nick, who came to me at W . . . for the best part of a year (2004) because he stayed after school, he was a teacher and he assisted me with coaching, so he was operating in my environment and as a mentor, that was very very easy".*

At the end of the programme, Nick completed the exit questionnaire In questions 1-3, he was critical of a perceived lack of monitoring and follow-up meetings, though was quick to recognise the efforts of his mentor

Fig 7 0· Part example of coach evaluation questionnaire (a)

Mentoring Evaluation – Follow up

Name N·cL   **Please circle**

1) Has participating in the programme been a positive experience?   Not at all -> <(limited)> <-Very

If your answer was not at all / limited, what barriers/difficulties did you experience? Lack of follow-p . The meetings were very irregular, and there was no real requirement to complete any work/ not much monitoring.

2) Has the programme had an impact on your
Technical knowledge (sport specific)   (Not at all)   (Partial) <-Very
Professional effectiveness (generic coaching skills)   Not at all -> (Partial) <-Very

3) How satisfied have you been with:
Your one-on-one mentoring experience?   (Not at all)   <-Partial-> <-Very
(Not because of a lack of effort from the mentor necessarily!)

In the final question (Q 12), coaches were asked how the programme might be improved Nick responded by suggesting careful matching of participants (accessible mentors would improve contact time), utilising experienced coaches within the club, and some form of imposed attendance that would 'pressure' coaches to engage

Fig 7 1 Example of suggestions for improving programme

12) What suggestions do you have for improving the mentoring programme?

① Carefully matching mentor to mentee; I have had very little contact with my mentor due to a lack of time

... not coaching/playing at the same club
There are perfectly good coaches who are not mentors that should be recruited I think → Maybe ask coaches (mentees) to suggest more experienced coaches who would be suitable mentors.

② Slightly more structure so that mentor-mentee meetings occur more frequently and there is a bit of 'pressure' to meet up and discuss issues (I know this goes against the idea that coaches should be looking to improve/learn themselves, but it is very hard to meet up unless you are made/required to due to time restraints)

In summary, the relationship between Nick and David identified the following mentoring issues·

- Accessibility and time were barriers to mentoring engagement,

- Positive mentoring interactions involved contact with an experienced practitioner, with interactions anchored in coaching practice,

- The level 1 coach wanted sport specific knowledge (drills and practices) that would have immediate effect,

- There is a need to engage coaches with coaching pedagogy before asking them to reflect and profile their own practice Reflection was limited by experience

David mentoring Neil

Neil, in a similar situation to that of Nick, belonged to the same hockey club as David, and also engaged in informal and sporadic episodes of interaction with David prior to the formalised programme Neil, 31 years old and an IT consultant, like many of the coaches described here, entered coaching through his children's sports participation It is a familiar route into sports coaching,

> "I've got two kids and I've played for years, and David said why don't
> you take your kids up (to the local club) Then one of coaches suggested I
> helped Then I coached for two years without a coaching badge and then
> I just did the Level 1 and I enjoyed it so I'm doing Level 2"

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When Neil was contacted about participating in the mentoring programme he was in the process of completing his Level 2 qualification An element of the qualification involved mentored coaching, which he therefore tied in with his participation in the formalised mentored programme described here In the following extract he describes his experiences of level 1 & 2 qualifications, and then compares them to his mentored sessions with David,

> *"The Level 1 was good because a lot of these things are very obvious*
> *How you line people up. There were tips and ideas which were good I'll*
> *be honest I think the Level 2 was a bit disappointing, it was just the same*
> *stuff from Level 1. I can't say I learnt anymore from Level 2 than I had in*
> *Level 1. Having said that I have spent eight weeks with David, going*
> *back to the mentoring thing where he just wanders over and makes*
> *suggestions Then we have a beer afterwards and chat about a few points*
> *and that is far more useful than going and doing a Level 2 course".*

It was interesting to note that, like Nick, Neil felt that David's currency as a mentor lay in his considerable experience and sport specific knowledge Neil wasn't concerned with developing a close interpersonal relationship, instead the value of formalised mentoring was access to relevant and contextual knowledge.

> *"I don't know any other mentors He's* (David) *been coaching since his*
> *twenties, and without being too personal he is a bit of a rough diamond,*
> *but I think he knows his stuff"*

As a consequence of their early profiling sessions, Neil identified his communication skills as area of focus upon which to anchor mentoring interactions with David As Neil describes in the following excerpt, the mentor represented a *'short cut'* in supporting coach development,

> *"No I think its experience If you have a group of people who haven't*
> *necessarily played hockey before and you say something which you think*
> *is fairly basic which you expect them to understand and suddenly one*

person goes that way and another goes another way It is actually about how to put over, in a very concise way exactly what you want them to do That is the hard part but again it takes practice, suddenly you find when you use a few key words that it's crystal clear to them A lot of that is experience but the short cut way is for somebody who has been doing it a long time to actually say 'Try this"

At their first formalised meeting, David and Neil arranged a number of follow up 1-1 sessions. However this became their only meeting during the formalised mentoring programme. Drawing upon his IT language, Neil described the barriers to his experience of formalised mentoring as, *"not sufficient interface"*.

Fig 7 2· Part example of coach evaluation questionnaire (b)

Mentoring Evaluation – Follow up

Name _____   **Please circle**

1) Has participating in the programme been a positive experience?   Not at all -> (<-limited->) <-Very

If your answer was not at all / limited, what barriers/difficulties did you experience? _____

Not Sufficient Interface

In evaluating the programme, Neil identified the opportunity to interact with more experienced coaches as a valuable element to mentoring (Q11) In agreement with Nick however, he found that trying to arrange convenient times to meet, for both coach and mentor, had been difficult (Q12) Both Nick and Neil sought mentoring because of opportunities to exchange sports specific knowledge,

Fig7 3 Part example of coach evaluation questionnaire (c)

11) What has been the most valuable aspect of your mentoring experience?

Having the freedom of availability to chat with a experienced coach

12) What suggestions do you have for improving the mentoring programme?

More Contact. Organised Coaching
Get Togethers With Coaching Techniques
Specific To The Sport.
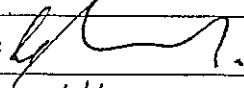
In summary, the relationship between Neil and David identified the following mentoring issues·

- Accessibility and time were barriers to mentoring engagement,
- Neil was willing to ignore incompatible coaching personalities, because value of the relationship lay with accessing sport specific knowledge
- Positive mentoring interactions involved contact with an experienced practitioner, with interactions anchored in coaching practice,
- Mentoring was perceived to be more useful than attending compulsory coaching qualifications
- Mentoring was perceived as a short cut in finding solutions to coaching problems

David mentoring Paul

From the outset, Paul was an enthusiastic and engaged participant in formalised mentoring Always willing to meet and talk about his mentoring experiences, he attended pre and post interviews, both focus groups, and completed all questionnaires. The following extract comes from his mentoring agreement, negotiated with David Not only did Paul want to develop his sport specific knowledge, and specifically game analysis, but he was also interested in expanding his coaching knowledge beyond the boundaries of his sport In return, Paul expected a professional and committed mentor,

Fig 7 4 Coach aims for mentoring programme

Mentor Name:		Signed:
Mentee Name:		Signed:

Identified aims of mentee (from TNA / Personal Development Plan):

To improve as a coach with better knowledge of technical skills & team styles

Be able to spot 'errors' in teams & work a way of making with that error still in place.

Learn about the other aspects of coaching

Mentees expectations of the Mentor:

Guide & assist in learning new skill, honest feedback at all times

Be committed & professional.

Paul was 42, married and had 2 children He had completed his Level 2 coaching qualification recently Like many of the volunteer coaches in this study, he entered coaching through the well trodden path of 'parent/child sport bonding': he started by observing games and practices; had a casual conversation with coach who hinted he was looking for help, he co-coaches with other coaches, sought out a coaching qualification to support growing interest, take on a team During his first interview, Paul explained his motivation for coaching,

> "I enjoy helping people You know if somebody says can you help me
> with my basic skills in computer engineering, I'm the sort of person who
> says "oh alright then" and I'll go and help you So I enjoy helping
> people I played hockey for a long time and got a lot out of it My son
> plays hockey as well so that's part of it Sometimes I coach sometimes I
> don't At this present moment I am but last year I didn't at all So that's
> probably part of it, a little bit of parent bonding with the child"

Paul was an experienced volunteer coach who had previously coached a range of teams and a variety of standards As already stated, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the potential of formalised mentoring During his first interview, he discussed his commitment towards mentoring and other forms of professional development In the following extract, Paul described the limitations of the Level 1 qualification but

recognised the catalytic effect it had in moving his interest in coach development forward,

"You come away from a level 1 course thinking I enjoyed that but all it really taught me was that I know nothing That's all it does. It gives you the confidence of actually standing in the right place but if I'm honest about what I achieved from level 1 is where to stand, and to project my voice and get attention. That's it. You don't use anything else But it gave me the appetite to go learn more I think".

This *"appetite"* for learning led Paul to sign up for the Level 2 qualification, during which he first experienced formalised mentoring which was part of the qualification It wasn't a particularly positive experience,

"With level 2 you have to do so many weeks mentoring where you have to write a lesson plan, and the mentor comes along and says "well you didn't deliver that very well, they didn't understand it or your demonstration was good on that, poor in that area"

Despite this negative experience, Paul's recognition of the potential of mentoring was based on existing networks of informal mentoring relationships Paul explained how through coaching at a number of clubs, he had developed close working relationships with a number of experienced coaches at these clubs It was through these informal relationships that Paul sought new knowledge in supporting his coaching development,

"I bounce ideas of both of them and sometimes I don't agree, but I don't say I've spoken to Tony and he says this I'll go to one and ask a question and then if I feel happy with that and I agree with it I'll run with it If I don't or not 100% happy I'll bounce ideas off the other

A noticeable attribute of Paul's relationship with David, was the compatibility of their personalities The rapport between the two allowed for clear and effective communication, as Paul explained,

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"I get on well with David We both tell each other when to get off We did the Belbin profile and those sorts of things, and I'd seen them before, and I knew what the results were and I gave it to him, I done them at work, and I said "so what does this say David", and he said "it means I can tell you to piss off and you tell me to piss off first He is straight talking and I think I'm straight talking There's no misunderstanding"

Paul was one of the more experienced and qualified coaches in the study (Level 2) It was interesting to note that at level 1, he wanted his mentor (s) to come to practice sessions and engage in coaching conversations, *in situ*. However, with his increasingly wide and varied coaching experiences, alongside his experiences of coaching CPD, Paul was comfortable to structure his formalised mentoring relationship with David around meetings away from the coaching environment In the first 6 months of the programme, they met twice, once at Paul's place of work, and talked twice over the phone The first meeting involved profiling and needs analysis, succeeded by a follow up meeting For instance, Paul identified mental skills training as an area he wanted to develop, so at their follow up meeting David gathered some relevant resources that he felt might help However, the passive strategy of the mentor passing on 'information' lacked value and impact for Paul,

"We talked about mental skill training He gave me a book on mental skills He's supposed to be giving me some more stuff but hasn't delivered it yet The book he gave me was obviously from when he did his level 3 and when you read it's obvious . "read this paragraph and discuss", and I'm like oh, he's not here to discuss it, or you read that and I don't understand that and its clear that its something that the lecturer has to put into He needed to be there to give value to it"

During his exit interview, Paul was asked to consider his experiences of the formalised programme and how it had, or had not, impacted upon his coaching Although recognising that his continuing coaching development was also an outcome of existing informal relationships, he identified an increasing level of confidence as a consequence of his interactions with David;

"A lot of people said like, they could see I had stepped up I just came back full of, like confidence, of what I was delivering and why I was delivering it Because I think I was mentored effectively by David"

Paul recognised that his developing coaching confidence had emerged from an increasingly robust knowledge base, supported and shaped by his interactions with David As Paul recounts, David represented "a safety net",

"Yes, I've learned things because I'll ask him (David) a direct question, but what I get out of mentoring is that I've got a safety net when I'm stuck because there are times you get asked a question and you don't know the answer. And the other thing I would say is that when I've finished talking to David face to face or on the phone, I actually feel more enthusiastic about my coaching than I did before the meeting so we always end on a high spot"

In summary, the relationship between Paul and David identified the following mentoring issues

- Accessibility and time were barriers to mentoring engagement
- Mentor was seen as a safety net in supporting the development of new coaching knowledge
- Mentoring can enhance coaching confidence
- Previous coaching experience impacts on how mentoring is received
- Interpersonal compatibility is an important ingredient in the mentoring matrix
- Mentoring activities need to be active and engaging if interactions are to be seen as having value and impact
- Mentoring can stimulate the flagging coach
- Volunteer coaches may have multiple mentors in supporting their practice

David mentoring Kay

As described earlier, the Kay-David relationship was distinct in the case study because they came from different sports, David from hockey and Kay from athletics For David,

the mentoring relationship with Kay represented a particular success of the mentoring programme;

"Kay is obviously not my sport, she was an ex-elite athlete, quiet, arrogant and defensive and it has taken time to break that barrier down and get her to really reflect and think But she has seen the results of the changes she has made and is now an awful lot more open and she really can't get enough of the mentoring and the support and she has started to pick up on that, and I would imagine that she will keep coming back, you know, maybe once or twice a year".

As described with the other relationships in the case study, Kay and David's mentoring interactions were marked by an initial profile meeting, but then followed by sporadic and infrequent contact Any interaction that took place tended to be confined to telephone and email conversations The barrier to any face-to-face meetings was time;

"We kind of touch base now and again Phone calls, emails, that kind of thing but not that regularly He'll sort of contact me and say how are things going, is there anything I need him for or whatever and obviously if there is anything in the meantime I'll contact him We haven't met that regularly merely because I think I've been really busy, he's been really busy, and those kind of things, but we do touch base And like I said he came to the championship, recently that was back in May Probably prior to that there was quite a big gap from us meeting but obviously when we first set up the process if you like we met reasonable regularly There was quite a lot to do at the beginning to get to know each other and understand what we were doing and how we do it and things"

Although meetings were difficult, David was able to attend one championship meet and an evening practice session during the duration of the mentoring programme It was here, at the heart of the coaching process, that David challenged Kay to examine long held beliefs and practices in her coaching; and it was these interactions that David held up as an example of what mentoring can achieve As David explained, mentoring has value if results from the mentoring interaction are observable,

"I mean I look at the work I have done with Kay this year Although the contact has been minimal the achievement, I think, has been very very high because it has changed how she coaches and it has got her to ask fundamental questions about the stuff that athletics has always done, which she is no longer doing, and results speak for themselves. Now whether that's because of the mentoring or because she would have got there anyway, I don't know But to me, that has been more effective than any of the other things we've done"

Likewise, Kay acknowledged that David, with his hockey specific knowledge but an understanding of the coaching process, had challenged her practice, offering a different and refreshing perspective;

"I think nothing specific, in terms of he told me this and it was good But I think for me and I think it is kind of reiterating what I said last time, its having a different perspective Because David's not from my sport it's kind of him saying well what about that and how does that work And he doesn't understand my sport either so he's sort of saying would that work and I'm saying actually no it wouldn't because whatever But it's just making you think about different things in a different way, which is what I've found really good"

In summary, the relationship between Kay and David identified the following mentoring issues

- Accessibility and time were barriers to mentoring engagement
- Mentor was seen as a sounding board in supporting the development of new coaching knowledge
- Utilising a mentor from a different sport can offer a different perspective
- The power of mentoring lies in its ability to encourage a questioning and reflective approach to coaches' practice
- Mentoring has value if results from interaction are observable

David (mentor): Post programme evaluation

At the end of the programme, David was asked to review the programme and examine his reflections of formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches He was asked what he had learnt from his involvement;

> *"I have learnt a lot about how people learn, now whether that is because of the mentoring programme, and I am sure that part of it is, I certainly question a lot more"*

In agreement with the coaches in the case study, David identified time as a significant barrier in delivering the potential of coach mentoring with volunteer coaches Building on this, he went on to describe how he would approach formalised mentoring in the future It was a mentoring process based around goal setting, observation, reflective and questioning conversations grounded in practice, and enhancing coach awareness beyond the boundaries of their practice,

> *"I would have a lot more contact time, if I could find it I would get the ball rolling by doing training inter-analysis and setting initial CPD electronically without having seen them I would then really just park that, get them into the habit of doing PDP* (Personal Development Plan) *Maybe if they had a long term goal we would set a long term goal but I would set a minimal short term or intermediate goals. I would then spend four or five times of watching the coach really looking at what stage they are at and how they coached and then revisit the PDP say a month later with a more objective view of what they really want and I could start to really question that, "you have not even mentioned this area You know out of 80 key words you have picked these 25 You are working with children but you don't think child psychology is important Why's that"?*

David also reflected on how his increasing exposure to educational and behavioural literature had encouraged him to revisit his former approaches to mentoring He was keen to stress how learning required individual ownership and engagement in optimising the potential of the learning situation,

> *"It's interesting because my partner's a primary school head and she is very progressive and big into brain compatible learning and I am starting to take a hell of a lot out of that and look at how we coach and how we teach I'm starting to bed that into my coach education, so when I say to coaches, look you have got to give your players ownership" why"? "I know what was wrong on Saturday and I am going to tell them what was wrong on Saturday and I am going to drill it on Wednesday" Well actually that's not going to work or you will get minimum effect of that because all you are doing is telling"*

David also argued that although aware of the difficulties in formalising existing informal relationships, formalised mentoring had the potential to give structure, focus and direction to the mentoring process Significantly, formalising the process, through workshops and support material, gave participants the skills to get the best out of coach mentoring

David's final reflection was centred on identifying and developing dedicated mentoring time. The nature of the voluntary domain meant that both coaches and mentors found time was a premium commodity, resulting in a process that lacked urgency David argued that mentoring required mentors whose time was dedicated to facilitating the mentoring process,

> *"Well that's the role of the mentor, isn't it? If the mentor has got more time and can build a relationship with four or five coaches he or she can then pull it together so that they want to do it and once they get the flavour, then they are going to want to do it more often But it is one learning opportunity because it is why I say with the role of the mentor of pulling together the right learning opportunities at the right time".*

In summary, David described what he had learnt from the mentoring programme;

- Mentoring requires participants to have the tools to realise and recognise in making the most of the process
- Mentoring requires individual ownership and engagement
- Mentoring in the voluntary domain requires individuals to give dedicated time and endeavour

Case Study 2: Mentor (Alan); coaches (Ali, Alex, Sally, Roy)

Participants in this case were matched by their sport (hockey) All participants coached a variety of levels (club and county), gender and adult/children teams Alan (mentor) was an experienced volunteer coach (level 3), who had attended numerous CPD initiatives and was also linked with local and national sports organisations (e g Active Sports) The case was made up of the following participants The table also indicates where participants completed or attended specific data collection phases.

Table 7 1 Case 2 and participants' involvement with data collection activities

Name	Int	Focus Group	Quest	Int	Focus Group	Quest	Int
Alan N2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ali C2	√	√	√				
Alex C2	√						
Sally C2	√		√				

Alan (mentor): Pre programme – Interview

Alan had been coaching for over 20 years and was in the process of completing his level 3 qualification His present coaching commitments included club secretary, club mentor, county coach, and Active Sports coach As described earlier in the chapter, Alan's route into coaching, as with many other coaches in the study, was through his children's sports participation

Alan was a wholehearted supporter of professional development activities, and in particular, opportunities for social exchange and the development of coaching networks It was here he felt, in the conversations with other coaches, that information was exchanged, and new knowledge constructed by applying to local practices Earlier in this chapter, Alan had described how he wished some of the CPD courses he had attended had been one long coffee break, because these social interludes represented real coach learning Although aware of practicalities, Alan valued interactions with other coaches,

> *"I know that is not realistic and that it is taking it to extreme but just to talk to people with the same issues I know that that is not realistic but guidance on how to select people of equal ability for a team What criteria do you use? Which ones do you drop, how do you tell them? Do you go for player rotation? Do you use a strict formation? Even if it doesn't change your own opinion it is just nice to know that others are in the same boat"*

It became evident from early conversations that Alan had a clear and robust philosophy concerning sports coaching, borne out of his wide and varied coaching experiences (adults/children, recreational/performance) It was a coaching approach grounded in the traditions of discovery and problem solving theories of learning,

> *"To me the whole idea with coaching was that you wouldn't necessarily be the expert at everything but that you could get people to question their own ideas and techniques, to try and to get them to improve themselves The Australian coach, Rick Charlesworth, his ambition was to get the women to coach themselves and I kind of agree with that If people can have an understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing and what they can do to improve, then you are getting somewhere"*

Alan's philosophy towards coaching and coach education shared much with another mentor in the programme, David It subsequently emerged that David had informally mentored Alan during his attendance on his level 2 qualification On recounting this experience, Alan indicated how he had valued being able to observe sports practices (and

competitive games) with a more experienced coach and then having opportunities to question and examine what they had both seen .

> *"David has been my unofficial mentor for the last year or two and I get on with him because he challenges me I think that is what you need as a coach You need someone standing at your shoulder asking you what you will do (about certain situations) or asking why you did certain things maybe after the game, it might be a bit pressured during the game. For example, I did a couple of sessions with him, one at West >>>> and one at the >>>>>>> game where we both did match analysis about how the game went. That was really useful because you pick up little things from another person's perspective For example with the warm up at one game, they hadn't really peaked for the beginning of the game and that it kind of tailed off at the end I think the idea about having someone who can watch your game, not all the time but a couple of times a season and give you ideas afterwards".*

In preparation for the mentoring programme described in this study, Alan examined existing resources around sports coach mentoring Although he found the material limiting in clarifying his role, he was clear that the value of formalised coach mentoring was the identification of an experienced coach to support the inexperienced coach,

> *"When I was asked to do it I just got a Sports Coach Mentoring Guide and read it but I didn't find it very helpful I do think that, from my own experience being a coach you kind of need a friend to bounce ideas off I would find it very difficult to approach a complete stranger and ask them to mentor me"*

In conceptualising his mentoring role, Alan also used his previous experiences as both a mentor and mentee to conceive the role Previous mentoring roles had assumed a judgemental and assessment type process, which went against Alan's understanding of the mentoring process

"With Active Sport you had to have a certain number of hours of mentored coaching That was interpreted to mean that the mentor had to be there and had to do some sort of analysis afterwards To my mind that was being a senior coach, not a mentor That is how it felt to me I felt that I was being judgemental by being there and watching them and making notes on their session plan I felt that didn't really work if you're thinking about mentoring as I understand it It would have been better if they had come to me with issues before the sessions Especially as many of the queries are about how to handle an individual, a difficult child or adult".

As a consequence of these experiences, Alan was clear that the mentoring process had to be coach driven;

I didn't think it worked me as a mentor watching a session and then asking them what they thought because I didn't want to point out what worked and what didn't work Only if they asked about a specific event then I'd give and some suggestions The temptation was to say what they should do and I don't think that is appropriate as a mentor

In summary, Alan's ambitions for his mentoring role were centred on creating a sense of a community whereby coaches would feel comfortable to exchange ideas and support each other's practice Such a climate of reciprocal support would then have a motivating and confidence building effect As Alan explained, formalised mentoring should be about the process, rather than the outcome

"I am hoping that we will meet to get the agreements done and the profiles done and then meet in a couple of month's time and see what has happened I think it is quite a Taoist experience where it is the pathway that is important rather than the end goal So I'm hoping that they will meet and get them fired up and then review it in a couple of month's time In the meantime they can ask me questions"

Alan's diversity of coaching experience, alongside attendance at a number of coach education courses, ideally positioned him to evaluate and examine critically the potential of mentoring in supporting and developing sports coaches. His position around formalised coaching mentoring could be summed up in the following way

- Coach development is best supported in a social environment of reciprocal exchange
- Coach learning comes from individual coaches understanding the 'why' and 'what' questions
- Mentors must seek to challenge coaches.
- Mentoring was conceptualised as a 'friend to bounce ideas off'
- Mentoring is not about judging or assessing
- The mentoring process should not be evaluated through its outcomes but as a continuous path of learning and development

Alan mentoring Alex

Alex first got into coaching whilst injured Convinced to take over the responsibility of the junior team at his local club, he then completed his level 1. Alex's motivation as a volunteer coach was derived from his enjoyment of the cohesive, social and cordial community of coaches he worked with.

> *"I get a lot of enjoyment out of it This weekend has been pretty depressing so when teams aren't playing the way you've coached them to play, you tear your hair out. Overall I get a lot a pleasure out of and I get a lot of feedback from the people The community within the club is very friendly and very open The community of coaches I know at the County setup are friendly open and don't argue too much We go out to try and win our games and at the end of the day we go out and analyse what we've done wrong in a pub"*

At the start of the programme Alex had one initial planning meeting with Alan, and also a practical session where he observed one of Alan's teams, with an opportunity afterwards to chat,

"We went through the contract between the mentor and the mentee Essentially and Alan is a volunteer and I know he is as committed if not more committed so we didn't specifically lay it out but I asked him to come and watch my team His team happened to be playing at home so I went to watch them and we had a chat about it afterwards I nit-picked a few things about his technique and his team"

After these initial meetings, no further meetings between Alan and Alex took place. Alex did not return any of the proceeding questionnaires, did not attend the focus groups, and failed to respond to requests for an end of programme interview Reasons for the possible breakdown in this mentoring relationship are discussed later

Alan mentoring Ali

Ali, 30 years old, and a level 1 hockey coach, worked part time for a local Sports development Unit (Active Sports) Additionally, she supplemented her income by coaching hockey at a number of local independent schools in the area Ali trained as a player on Tuesday and Thursday nights, played competitive games on a Saturday for a national league team, and then coached the U10's on a Sunday morning Time was a precious commodity for Ali In the following extract, Ali described how time and acted as barrier to her engagement in professional development activities

"I think there could be if I had more time Time is a big issue for me from September to June So the summer is the only time I get If I'm not writing something about hockey, I'm coaching it or playing it So as much as I would love to be able to sit down and think about what I should do today, I can't"

Ali completed her level 1 coaching award During the year prior' to the formalised mentoring programme, she had been working towards her level 2 but had not completed one of the required modules, practical coaching (adults) Coaching adults did not appeal to Ali as she described,

"Well I need to do a certain number of hours of adult coaching but I don't do adult coaching, and get that assessed with children and adults

The adult coaching is a big mental block I'm not interested in coaching adults because, it is not just about enjoyment of the sport, there are so many other issues in the way and the sport comes afterwards I'm not interested in being a counsellor, which is how I perceive it to be I might be completely wrong but that is how I see it"

In an interview Ali began to reflect on her perceptions of adult coaching, but also reflect on her own coaching abilities Ali perceived her coaching style as appropriate and specific for children and therefore was reluctant to pursue development activities that were not relevant to her aspirations,

"There is probably a fear that that I'm not good enough to coach adults It's not as though someone is asking me to coach the National side but I don't know if I'm good enough Or perhaps because of my style of coaching isn't suitable for adults I'm very enthusiastic which works well with kids but I'm not sure it would suit adults I'm sure it could be fine but it's just my attitude".

Ali's deep-rooted and fixed perceptions of her coaching strengths were grounded in her pedagogical perspectives on child development,

"I enjoy being a role model in their lives and a positive force in their lives It's not the fact that it's hockey because I've always enjoyed doing things with kids, whether it has been teaching them about some environmental issue or climbing up a tower I think kids need people providing guidance in their lives now more than with so much horrible stuff going on"

In examining Ali's experiences of informal and formal mentoring relationships, it was important to revisit her experiences of previous coach education It was notable to listen to Ali's recollection of her level 1 qualification,

"Funnily enough I don't remember attending a Level 1 course as such What I remember is doing a few sessions that David sent me to do and

me learning the skills of hockey and how to break those skills down I
may have gone to a course but I seriously don't remember it at all I must
have done but I don't remember it I do remember that the good thing
was that I didn't really have to be taught how to speak to children I
needed to learn the skills of breaking down activities for the kids to do
with hockey".

Similar to the mentoring experiences of Alex described earlier, after her initial mentoring meeting with Alan, Ali and Alan did not meet again Possible reasons are given later in this section

Alan mentoring Sally

Sally was a level 1 coach, who because of her work and playing commitments, was only able to coach the junior county hockey team two sessions each month (Sept-March) As their mentoring relationship was matched because of previous informal relationship (e g. through Active Sports), as opposed to geographical convenience, Sally and Alan found arranging meetings difficult They only met, face-to face, when paths crossed during county team administrative meetings;

"Not often because he's busy and I'm busy but I also meet him at
the<<<<<<<<< Hockey Association Committee meeting So there has
been a time when I asked if we could meet ten minutes earlier to go over
something with him When I was coaching with him as an assistant, we'd
meet and discuss coaching tips"

Although this arrangement seemed to suit Sally's expectations, Alan was frustrated with the relationship After the initial profiling meeting, they only met twice between during the first 6 months of the programme Possible reasons are examined in the next section of the chapter.

Alan (mentor): post programme evaluation

The mentoring relationships between Alan and Ali, Alex and Sally had been matched because they all were involved with the county junior teams and all would be coaching or co-coaching one of the county junior teams At his exit programme interview, Alan was

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asked to recount his mentoring experiences of the past year, and asked to describe the types of mentoring activities that had taken place;

> *"What happened was we went through the initial process of profiling and it was quite good having a chat about what people wanted out of it and what their aims and expectations were and that side was fine Alex came and watched one of the games I was coaching, or a couple actually, and then we had a bit of a session, a bit of a chat 10 or 15 minutes afterwards going through various aspects of how the match had gone and why I had done certain things in certain ways So that was Ok. Sally asked me to watch her coach one of the county sessions, which I did and then she asked me to do a coaching session for her to watch it because she felt that was what she needed was more to see the practical side of it"*

Alan went on to explain how the formalised mentoring relationships had come to an end after 6 months because of inactivity and lack of contact In the following extract, he accounted for the perceived barriers to the mentoring of his assigned coaches. He identified how his coaching commitments, time, availability, and geographical convenience acted as barriers to active engagement,

> *"There was a big practical problem which was that I was coaching on pretty much all the days, and that takes up quite a lot of the day, a big chunk of the day to be honest, and I didn't really want to do anything much other than that And because I was coaching juniors for the club and/or county and depending on my availability it just meant I was never around to have anything other than conversations and emails with them So it was really quite different to what my expectation of it was, but the big problem as I said was that I was busy when they wanted help really which was Saturdays and weekends and because I was coaching once a week in the evenings as well there was just no time to do anything"*

The barriers identified resulted in a confused mentoring role For instance, Alan had conceived a mentoring role grounded in the observation of coaching practice, but the

reality of the situation was that his role was confined to email queries and casual conversations when paths crossed Furthermore, there was a sense that two of the coaches came into the programme with a certain lack of clarity around what they wanted to achieve, resulting in a lack of application and motivation. As he explained·

> *"So back in, it must have been last September time, I spoke to all three of them and said look I really don't think this is working in its current form And because there is really no significant contact between us, because we are never in the same place at the same time, and although I can answer emails and take an odd phone call you know what they actually wanted was for somebody to be there watching and then having a conversation afterwards about how it went. I mean that's actually what they wanted And I think if I were a professional coach or professional mentor then yes it would be OK because I would be making time as part of my job to do but when we are all volunteers you kind of have to fit things around what your schedule is and it just didn't work to be honest with those three It didn't completely not work, we did do some stuff, but I didn't feel it was particularly beneficial and apart from maybe Sally who took it pretty seriously to start with in terms of trying to improve her coaching I don't think much learning took place with those relationships"*

To illustrate what could be accomplished, Alan then described how parallel to the formalised mentoring programme, informal mentoring relationships had evolved at his local club These relationships were more meaningful to Alan because the process became 'local', where mentoring conversations would take place in the context of practice,

> *"In our own club it made sense for me to take on a mentoring role with my own coaches on a Sunday morning when I am there anyway I can see what the coaches are doing, I can take sessions or they can take sessions and we can talk about it afterwards I started that from the beginning of this year, January, and it has been very good"*

Alan explained how mentoring that was club based, as opposed to county based, had greater potential because club relationships were more easily formed, opportunities for social exchange were numerous, and the processes of mentoring were continuous. In the formalised mentoring programme, relationships were forced, social exchanges were infrequent, and mentoring processes fragmented;

"I think that the trouble with the county coaches is that it was very sporadic and therefore there was no kind of continuity of relationship I mean I don't mix with those people socially anyway, so any interaction has to be because we are there doing hockey together and that just didn't happen very often because we all do things at the same time"

Alan described examples of club mentoring that he perceived had benefited both coach and mentor Importantly, value was derived from reciprocal learning, where mentor and coach worked together to overcome a problem In the following, Alan identified how coach and mentor came together in solving a coaching problem and which was therefore relevant and contextual to both·

"When you are talking about 7 or 8 year olds, you know there is only a certain amount of coaching that you can do, and so we would have these discussions " how can we make that fun"? I think that we both got quite a lot out of that because she being a mum of some young children, she is much more attuned to actually what they need, whereas I could point out some of the sort of fundamental coaching points which she really needed to draw out of them in order to improve things like hand/eye co-ordination".

"With Andy one of the examples that sticks out was that pre Christmas I was getting involved with his group and it was very obvious to me that the problem he had was that there were 35 children turning up on half a pitch and there was this group of friends over here and that group of friends over there and he was having a real problem getting them integrated And so after a couple of weeks we decided to split them initially into girls and boys because that seemed to be quite a natural

split Suddenly it was obvious that the girls liked that more The boys
liked that more And then we thought well actually some of the better
girls would probably get more out of it if they could play in the boys and
some of the not so good boys would probably get more out of it if they
played in the girls group so can we now think about how we would
introduce that So yes I think we both learned quite a lot from those sorts
of discussions and actually trying things out in practice"

In these examples Alan described an experience which was enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding. Demands on time and convenience were overcome because mentoring wasn't seen as an additional commitment, but was embedded in professional practice and the context of the coaches' practice Alan went onto describe how at the initial planning phase with his mentors in the formalised programme, he felt he was too ambitious for what was actually possible when working with volunteer coaches A more sustainable and achievable structure would be more specific, focusing on one objective within a realistic time frame

"I think maybe not trying to do too much If you are talking about
volunteers, this wheel of ten things you would like to improve on, no
make it three and so people can really focus on, or one even One per
term that they can really focus on and say right I am going to try and get
that right And that to me is realistic"

In his evaluation of the formalised programme, and comparing this with his experience of informal mentoring at his local club, Alan recognised how time and convenience were powerful barriers for volunteer coaches Moreover, a critical component of optimising mentoring was the interpersonal relationship between mentor and coach If mentor and coach were to give their free time over to mentoring, there had to be a social connection As Alan explained

"I think friendship is another thing I think you need to be friends or at
least colleagues, and I think for me it was quite difficult with Ali because
although I know her I wouldn't say that we are friends I definitely felt
there was a bit of a Well you get on with some people don't you and

you don't with others and it is nothing that she has done or that I have done, I don't think, but there was definitely a bit of a barrier there when we were talking. It was all a bit stilted, whereas with these guys (informal) because I have been with them for so long, not that we go out drinking in a social way, but because we have been together for some time we can talk very honestly and openly"

The social opportunities offered through volunteer coaching are a powerful construct in also understanding coaches' motivation to participate in professional development initiatives For many, the opportunity to chat about their coaching in an informal and congenial environment is a positive aspect of the time they commit to volunteer coaching Furthermore, through socialising with other coaches, individuals begin to examine theirs and other coaches practice. Practice is observed, questions asked, strategies considered Alan explained;

"It has been a bit of a standing joke but we have always had the debrief after matches which is the euphemism for going down the pub and having a chat about it, which all our wives now understand what the debrief is about But actually they are very useful sessions, very very useful sessions because the coaches start to talk about not just what they are doing, but what are the other teams doing, "did you see how well they could hit the ball"? "How did they get them to do that"? And suddenly they are thinking themselves, "how can I get my lot to do it like that"? And that's where I think the learning comes in as well because you are analysing a situation and saying" we can't do that"," why can't we"," how can we get there to do it", and that's the whole learning thing isn't it? Having a target and trying to reach it"

In summary Alan's evaluation of formalised mentoring could be summed up in the following way

- Mentoring needs to be local (club based)
- Valued mentoring takes place *in situ*
- Formalised and matched mentoring was fragmented and lacked continuity

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- Mentored learning took place through a sense of collegial problem solving
- Objectives when working with volunteer coaches need to be realistic, contextual and temporal.
- Volunteer coach mentoring must be realised through existing social networks

Summary of chapter

The aim of chapters 4 to 7 was to report findings from a formalised mentoring programme with volunteer coaches Findings were reported horizontally across the case study, and vertically in two selected cases. As discussed in chapter 3, these localised narratives of volunteer coach mentoring offers possibilities to connect with grand narratives (Hargreaves, 1999), where participants' social constructions can be understood in relation to social, political and national coaching discourse In addition, the selected mentoring cases offer detailed accounts from which the reader may wish to draw comparisons to their own experiences The findings from this study demonstrate how the concepts of agency, structure, identity, and informal learning are inextricably linked to mentoring experiences for volunteer coaches, and these connections are developed further in the following chapter

Chapter Eight: Discussion

The following chapter provides a discussion of the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven These preceding chapters reported findings from volunteer coaches' experiences of formalised mentoring, examined actions and processes of formalised mentoring participation, and acknowledged the barriers in accessing the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy In order to produce new theoretical insights to volunteer coaches experiences of formalised mentoring, these findings are now discussed in order to *"refine and extend extant concepts"* (Charmaz, 2006, p.169) Consequently, and for clarity, the first section of the chapter addresses the 'core' categories that were constructed from data They are presented according to the following sub-headings

8 1   Conditions of coach learning

8 2   Mentoring as negotiated boundaries

8 3   Barriers to engagement mentoring.

The second part of the chapter relates the core categories from the study to what Coffey & Atkinson (1996) have called, *"more general and fundamental disciplinary frameworks"* (p 153), in order to consider coach mentoring from a broader perspective So, for instance Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP) framework is used as a form of scaffolding from which to 'think' and 'write' about coach learning and mentoring Central to using CoP as a theoretical framework, and particularly drawing on Lave & Wenger's (1991) earlier work, was the notion that learning to coach was a process of 'becoming' in and through social practice (i e a situated perspective on learning) However, as data were analysed systematically, it became clear that the findings required explanation using a wider range of conceptual frameworks, essentially one view of learning was too narrow For example, as data analysis progressed, it became increasingly clear that the coach brought to bear on the mentoring process were in danger of being overlooked by the focus on social structures of learning (i e communities of practice) As Hodkinson, Biesta & James (2008) have commented, situated approaches to learning have, *"a tendency to marginalise individual learners and to overlook learner agency"* (p 37) Although initially cautious about engaging in what might appear to be an over-eclectic approach to explaining data, the data seemed to require it and, as Wolcott (2001) has argued,

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"We need to guard against the temptation to offer satisfying, simple, single-cause explanations that appear to solve too facilely. Human behaviour is complexly motivated Our interpretations should mirror that complexity rather than suggest that we are able to infer 'real' meanings"
(p 76)

With this in mind, the second part of the chapter draws from Wenger's (1998) conceptual framework on situated learning, but also Bourdieu's (1990) conceptual 'tool box' for examining social practice in understanding volunteer coaches' experiences of engagement mentoring

8.1 Conditions of the learning coach

The use of mentoring as a learning strategy has found support in a variety of contexts and its potential value within professional development in a range of fields is clearly recognised (Griffin & Ayers 2005; Colley, 2003, Kram 1985, Gibson, 2004, Gilbert & Trudel, 2005) Yet, in order to access the potential of mentoring, the coaches and mentors in this study needed to be in, what Huberman (1993, p 7) has previously described as, the *'experimentation and diversification'* phase of the professional life cycle That is, a sharpened level of coaching cognizance and personal inclination seemed to be required by the coaches in order for them to recognise the value of engaging with any professional development activity As Alan illustrated when commenting on the importance of accessing coach education that was relevant to the coach's needs, *"If people can have an understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing and what they can do to improve, then you are getting somewhere"* Certainly the stories of volunteer coaches' experiences of formalised mentoring and, more broadly, experiences of coach education generally, revealed that the ability to function as a 'learning professional' required a degree of occupational reflexivity

In chapter two of this thesis, the notion of a 'learning professional' was recognised as particularly useful in embracing positive approaches to professional development, hence 'learning professionals' actively seek out learning opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills (Cunningham, 2008) Yet the process of seeking out learning implies that the practitioner sees value in so doing For instance, in a coaching context,

the professional coach might see learning as a professional requirement because a coach would be expected to continuously develop skills and competencies in order to retain occupational currency in the job For the volunteer coach however, the circumstances are different Although it is noted that some sports (e g tennis) at both recreational and performance levels require evidence of CPD engagement in order to retain a coaching licence, motivation towards coach learning in a voluntary context is shaped, predominantly, by intrinsic constructs

The construction of the core category, Conditions of the Learning Coach, therefore represented the context from which volunteer coaches came to understand and engage with mentoring It was from this background that coaches decided to participate, or not, with coach mentoring The category was constructed from a number of processes that were identified in the data, namely rendering reflective practitioners; seeking out interaction; identifying 'take home' value; and coaching identity These are discussed in more detail in the following sections

8.1.1 Rendering reflection

From the findings of this study, an important process in 'becoming' a learning coach appeared to be ignited by moments of perceived coaching discomfort or 'critical incidents' in practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001), the outcome of which triggered reflective conversations resulting in a critical and evaluative approach to coaching practice. Conversely, reflections also influenced decisions not to participate in coach learning opportunities, for instance, Matt's observation that, *"if I could see that the kids just weren't getting it, I might consider asking someone for help At the moment I don't run into that"*. For many of the coaches in this study, initial engagement with formalised mentoring seemed to be an outcome of meaningful reflections on experience Critically, the role of reflection as a link between experience and knowledge has been identified in the wider literature, and in particular the seminal work of Schon (1983), where knowledge construction is derived from both the reflection *in* and *on* experience Schon has termed this, *'a reflective conversation with the situation'* (p 268) For coaches in this study, these reflective conversations were the catalyst that led some coaches to make explicit previously considered tacit aspects of their practice As Lizzio & Wilson (2007) have suggested, the *"guiding tenet* [in professional practice] *is that awareness is key to effectiveness"* (p 279) Reflection therefore can not only be seen as a mechanism through

which experiences can 'produce' learning (Ericsson *et al*, 2008), and this is dependent on the quality and depth of reflection (Lizzio & Wilson, 2007), but for coaches in this study, reflection on experience was also a trigger in seeking out new learning opportunities

Within the coaching literature the process of reflection in coach learning has been addressed through Gilbert & Trudel's (2001; 2006) work with youth sports coaches Within their model, reflection on experience was based on the coaches' interaction with six components coaching issues (trigger an impetus to engage with the experiential learning experience), role frames (approach to coaching), issue setting (the process of identifying an issue, and deciding why it is an issue), after which these 'reflective conversations' initiated new coaching strategies which were generated, applied and evaluated Importantly, Gilbert & Trudel (2006) also identified four conditions that influenced the reflective conversation; 1) access to trusted peers, 2) coach's stage of learning, 3) issue characteristics (complexity of the problem may encourage consultation and, 4) environment (supportive community) Given that reflection in coach learning has begun to be addressed in the coaching literature (Cassidy et al, 2004, Cushion, 2006), it is not surprising that Gilbert & Trudel (2006) have argued that both researchers and policy makers need to consider how reflection might be facilitated for coaches As Cushion (2006) has also argued, *"Ongoing reflection with others about the integration of professional knowledge and expertise is a key part of coaching practice"* (p 135)

The application of Gilbert & Trudel's model (2001) was particularly useful in understanding how coaches' role frames in this study shaped their perceptions of coaching practice and, subsequently, perceptions of formalised mentoring So, for instance, Paul (coach) commented how, *"the thing that motivates me to do it more* (mentoring) *is that I think I have seen the benefit of effective coaching"* , Kay (coach) observed, *"I suppose it's a spark to think that I could do that or incorporate something"*, Alan (mentor) argued, *"It's the pathway that is important rather than the end goal"*, and similarly David suggested that, *"If you get three of four of you together you'll see things differently"* These reflections lent themselves to an interpretation of relevance that saw these coaches value the potential of mentoring in supporting coach learning Conversely, there were coaches in the study whose reflections did not motivate them to participate in the programme; for example, and using Gilbert & Trudel's (2001) terminology, Jo's sense of her present and stable coaching identity (role frame), Julie's negative evaluation

of 'others' who could offer anything different (issue setting), and Matt's belief that mentoring was only required when a level of coaching discomfort was reached (coaching issue), were particularly insightful in understanding the reasons for failing to engage with mentoring It is interesting to speculate how for these coaches, supported reflections (scaffolding) by a coach facilitator might have created what Vygotsky (1978) called zones of proximal development (ZPD) ZPD have been described as the gap between unassisted reflection and guided or structured reflection (Cushion, 2006) Subsequently, it is possible to address Lizzio & Wilson's (2007) contention that professional effectiveness is an outcome of congruence between espoused theory (what we say we do) and theory in action (what we actually do) As Julie (coach) reflected,

There is nobody that I feel I need to speak too to get advice on   .. but maybe that's wrong because you're always learning and I think you should always be learning as a coach to get better"

It is possible that supported conversations for Julie within a community of like minded coaches might have produced perceptions of relevance to her practice of coach learning In this way, and through a process of creating ZPD, it could then be possible to address Lizzio & Wilson's (2007) claim that in supporting professional judgment, *"untested assumptions by definition, have a greater probability of contributing to ineffective outcomes"* (p 280)   It is perhaps by exploring and critically examining coaching assumptions that it is possible to illuminate a meaningful relationship between coach and coach learning opportunities

The importance of reflective conversations with practice, and their role in shaping and guiding decision making, has been addressed in the professional learning literature As described in Chapter Two, Fendler (2003) makes the point that reflection provides individuals with the ability to contextualise understanding and meaning, which then forms the foundation for the basis of rational, responsible choices and decisions Yet for the participants in this study, the transition from reflective conversations *in situ,* to formal mentoring was not necessarily a smooth process As data illustrated, coaches' reflections on practice did not always lead to mentoring engagement, as Jo (coach) observed,

"There isn't anybody This might sound really big headed and I don't want it to because I'm not that sort of person but I don't think there's anybody in my county that I can go to that's going to give me anything that I don't already know" .

In education, Fendler (2003) has addressed the problematic relationship between reflection and action, and concluded, *"reflective activities only serve to reinforce existing beliefs rather than challenging assumptions* [and] *may simply be exercises in reconfirming, justifying, or rationalising pre-conceived ideas"* (p 16) Indeed this observation resonates with the volunteer coaches in this study where unsupported reflections resulted in tacit assumptions and beliefs failing to lead to a conscious level of examination For instance, the point was made by David where he conceived his role as a pre-cursor to formalised mentoring; he felt needed to get to coaches and mentors in a process of supporting their reflections, and through these interactions, 'sell' the notion of quality and effective sports coaching before tackling issues of professional development and mentoring As he argued, *"I'll get people aware of what quality coaching is and until they realise that, it's not happening"* If, as data suggest, motivation to engage with learning is an outcome of critical reflection, it seems necessary to facilitate these reflections through what a number of researchers have suggested are supportive communities of like-minded practitioners (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Cassidy *et al*, 2004) The outcome of these social interactions is, as described by Gilbert & Trudel (2006), *"to create and nurture reflective practitioners"* (p 127)

8.1.2   Recognising the social learner

For the coaches in this study, coaching could be a lonely and isolated activity, and therefore opportunities to engage in 'coaching conversations' with other practitioners were warmly welcomed Such conversations were viewed both as professional learning and, at the same time, a form of social modelling As Joanne (coach) explained, professional development through social interaction also allowed coaches to measure themselves against others and, to this end, construct descriptive norms (Eysenck, 2004) that provided information concerning what was 'normal' in coaching situations;

"I enjoy the social aspects and socialise with people who work in the Same field and talking about what you're doing I think it's good to be

able to compare because you can realise that actually, you're doing
pretty well"

It became clear from analysis of data, that social interaction in the context of coach learning was conceived differently depending on the developmental stage of the coach Findings suggested that as coaches expanded their capital of coaching experiences, their coaching position located them in what Jones & Turner (2006) have called 'communicative space'. It was here that the nature of coach learning changed For example, 66% (12 out of 18 in the March 2005 questionnaire) of Level 1 coaches typically conceived interaction as a means of knowledge acquisition As Chris (coach) illustrated,

> *"All that I want to do is to go on a course, let's say it's about coaching*
> *10-12 year olds, and what I want that person to do is to tell me the best*
> *way that I can coach 10-12 year olds"*

Mentors in the programme also recognised the pragmatic nature of these coaching interactions for level 1 coach's. For example, David described how his level 1 coaches wanted accessible sport-specific knowledge that would have immediate impact,

> *"I mean what is happening in the field at Level 1 is that coaches don't*
> *want to be sat down and said, well how do you think you could have done*
> *that better? They want telling what the bloody hell to do and want to do*
> *it They want content knowledge delivered to them on a plate which*
> *impacts . they just get frustrated Tell them the bloody answer"*

In contrast however, level 2 and 3 coaches/mentors described interactions differently For these participants (David, Elizabeth, Alan and Paul), coaching interactions needed to be rich in social context where knowledge construction was an outcome of deeper cognitive coaching exchanges (e g mentoring, problem based learning) As Paul illustrated when describing a previous experience that involved observing and then talking with a more experienced coach, " *it was quite good to sort of go along with and say "what are you doing" and "how are you delivering It", and "why are you delivering it"* Indeed the relationship between a coach's stage of learning and professional development has been

acknowledged in the coaching literature where Gilbert & Trudel (2006) described how more experienced coaches tend to rely on *"creative thoughts and joint construction"* (p 119) in the construction of new coaching knowledge For the more experienced coaches in the study, evidence suggested that learning through social participation represented greater opportunities for developing meta cognition (learning to observe and critically examine one's own practices), or what King & Kitchner (2004) have called, developing *"reflective judgement"* (p 5) The significance of recognising the relationship between learning and the developmental stage of the coach has also been addressed in the coaching literature where Nelson *et al*, (2006) suggested that learning is made up of phases of learning skills, and these phases will change over time and experience. Data from this study certainly indicated that any social learning opportunities for volunteer coaches were a condition of both temporal and developmental factors

In attempting to conceptualise the different social learning interactions for the coaches in this study, and in adopting a broader view of learning beyond the formal structures of educational settings, it is possible to conceive coach learning through workplace, work-based activities (Wenger, 1998) Learning in and through the site of work has been described by some researchers as informal learning (Dale & Bell 1999) However, Billett (2002) has argued that labelling workplace learning environments and experiences as informal is problematic; sports coaches, for instance, may arrange to observe another coach, invite a more experienced coach to take a session, and actively seek out solutions to a coaching problem Such activities were valued by volunteer coaches in this study and, it could be argued, demonstrate intention, deliberation and goal-direction towards coach learning, characteristics that go beyond traditional and limiting definitions of informal learning Consequently, within this study, informal learning was seen within Stern & Sommerland's (1999) 'formal continuum of learning' That is, rather than conceive informal learning as diametric to formal learning, where formal learning is privileged over informal, it is more realistic to recognise the interrelationship of formal/informal learning along a continuum and where the attributes of both are appreciated (Colley *et al*, 2003) With this in mind, and acknowledging that the coach mentoring described in this study generally occurred in the 'informal' surroundings of the coaching 'site' (e g clubhouse), it is appropriate to understand volunteer coach learning through what Billet (2002) has termed, a 'workplace pedagogy' In this way it is both

accurate and valuable to recognise and acknowledge sports clubs as sites of coach learning

8.1.3   Identifying 'take home' value

Within the coaching literature, the identification of 'coach learning' as a broad term capturing the variety of ways coaches learn to coach has been well documented (Wright *et al*, 2007, Nelson & Cushion 2006, Culver & Trudel, 2006, Côté, 2006, Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Certainly from the data it was evident that coaches learned in different ways and from different sources Specifically, participants acknowledged, and drawing upon Coombs & Ahmed's (1974) framework, that their coaching knowledge was derived from formal, nonformal and informal situations. Although both coaches and mentors in this study recognised multiple sources of learning, they attached different values to each For instance, and in line with other research (e g Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Côté, 2006), formal and nonformal learning structures were perceived as low in impact and limited in relevance As reported in Chapter Four, opinions of formal coach education from participants in the study were often candid and vocal Critical comments on course relevance included those suggesting attendance was sometimes based on coercion *"And I'm thinking did it add value, no Did you get the tick in the box, yes So do we get lottery funding, carry on" (Paul - coach)*, or that the course content lacked perceived value,

> *"At the end of the day you are there to pass and if you want to pass you take it in and you relay it back to them in a way that seems as though you've agreed Whether you do or not is another matter" (Ed - coach)*

It is these types of responses which allude to a lack of application to practice, and resonate with Cushion's *et al*, (2003) observation that, *"a lack of perceived fit between coach education and practical needs, in turn, weakens the impact of coach education"* (p 221)

Participants were also critical of the apparent lack of pedagogical knowledge that tutors (normally coaches who had accrued a certain number of coaching years) brought with them to formal coach education It is a point made by Simon (coach), who described one of his experiences of a tennis workshop where the tutor's only feedback on his

performance throughout the weekend concerned his inappropriate footwear Similarly, David described how his perceptions of poorly qualified course tutors had stopped him from attending a number of formal and non- formal coach education activities The significance of these earlier encounters with coach education was the influence they had over volunteer coaches' views of future professional development opportunities As reported earlier, for many coaches there was a real concern about the quality of previous coach education activities and the perceived lack of 'take home' value from these interactions

These findings are not surprising Eraut (1994) has argued that professional learning is about change in practice, recognising that a substantial proportion of learning in relation to change occurs in the context of use. This view of professional learning highlights the problematic nature of formal coach education where knowledge is first acquired and then, if the circumstances permit, used in context A considerable body of literature has been critical of this approach where coaching knowledge is delivered in a de-contextualised, artificial and fragmented manner (Abraham & Collins, 1998, Saury & Durand, 1998; Potrac et al, 2000, Lyle 2002; Cushion *et al.,* 2003, McCulick *et al ,* 2005, Nelson & Cushion, 2006, Wright *et al ,* 2007; Erickson *et al ,* 2008)

Critical to understanding the value and relevance attached to any coach learning activity by volunteer coaches is an acknowledgment of the role of personal knowledge In her work on professional practice, Taylor (1997) has suggested that personal knowledge is pre-propositional and exists at the *"impression level"* (p 18), reflecting the assumptions and perspectives that an individual brings to a situation This expression of the role of personal knowledge impacting upon action can also be seen in Schon's (1989) 'theories in use' Schon reasoned that these implicit theories are constructed by attitudes, values and beliefs which then operate to filter, or magnify, an interpretation of propositional knowledge Accordingly 'theories in use' determine behaviour As Taylor (1997) has argued, and with reference to professional practice that clearly resonates with the literature on coach education (e g Abraham & Collins, 1998, Cushion *et al ,* 2003),

> *"Propositional knowledge cannot be characterised independently of how it is learned and used, it is constructed through experience and its nature depends on the selection and interpretation of the learner"* (p 38)

The notion of personal knowledge shaping and then guiding actions of interpretation are captured in Eraut's (1994) map of professional knowledge, in which he has identified three kinds of knowledge propositional, process and personal Propositional knowledge includes domain-specific knowledge, concepts, generalisations and practice principles Process knowledge is identified as *"knowing how to conduct the various processes that contribute to professional action"* (Eraut, 1992, p 105) The third kind of knowledge is defined as personal knowledge, which is constructed from the interpretation of experience The personal knowledge that learners brings with them to professional practice influences their understanding, interpretation and application of propositional knowledge

In relation to this study, two examples from the data are illustrative of the impact of personal knowledge on coaches' decision-making First, David described how previous encounters with coach education had constrained his interest in pursuing other courses Secondly, and in contrast, Paul (coach) described how his experience of a hockey coach education level 1 course, although narrow in its perceived relevance, had motivated him to pursue other courses,

> *"If I'm honest about what I achieved from level 1, it was where to stand, and to project my voice and get attention That's it You don't use anything else But it gave me the appetite to go learn more I think"*

With specific reference to learning, understanding how experiences influenced choice requires an understanding of cognitive learning theory, specifically, and in relation to the coaches and mentors in this study, how cognitive structures guided, selected and organised participants' actions and behaviours towards mentoring The concept of cognitive structure, within a constructivist view of learning, has been defined by Moon (1999) as, *"what is already known by the learner"* (p 108) It represents the accumulation of facts, concepts and propositions, theories and perceptual data that are available to the learner at any stage The recognition of this internal structure to the learning coach is important for two reasons firstly, cognitive structure provided a powerful filter through which coaches perceived coach learning, and secondly, cognitive structure was active in guiding coaches when confronted by new learning (i e situations, experiences) Whilst

appreciative of coach learning grounded in past experiences, the application of personal domains such as cognitive structure and personal knowledge, have not always been recognised or embraced by formal coach education (Cushion *et al*, 2003) Indeed this oversight is problematic, because recognition of the personal constructs of learners underpins an appreciation of what is perceived as valuable, relevant and meaningful when coaches engage with any form of coach education

In sum, for the volunteer coaches in this study, the primary motivation to take part in any professional learning initiative was the potential for impact on practice CPD activities needed to be relevant and contextual to their coaching environment Volunteer coaches were faced with a number of barriers when participating in coach education (e g. time), and therefore in order to fully engage with any learning provision, they needed to see it as having real 'take home value' Where this value was not apparent, coach educators may find they have little impact As one coach in the study put it; *"I may have gone to a course but I seriously don't remember it at all I must have done but I don't remember it"* (Ali, coach)

8.1.4   Coaching Identity
Findings from the study revealed how a constructed coaching identity was a critical component in directing volunteer coaches' actions towards coach learning situations Coaching identity had boundaries and content, and it was here that coaches' demonstrated traits such as choice, constraints, and where agency and structure were negotiated (Charmaz, 2006) For instance, Ali's (coach) observation that, *"I suppose if I wanted to be the National England Under 16 coach, I would want to do courses"*, shaped her perception of and engagement in coach learning Similarly, Chris's (coach) expression *"that I'm just a recreational tennis coach down the road"*, constrained his inclination to join a group of performance county coaches at their monthly breakfast meetings Coaching identity was an important concept because it helped coaches to organise what they focused on, what they rejected and in what they participated Having a sense of identity is an essential facet of learning in professional development activities (Winter & Maisch, 1996)

The work of Charmaz (1997, 2006) is particularly helpful in explaining how identity shaped coaches' choices and actions in this study For volunteer coaches and mentors,

coaching identity was constructed from an accumulation of identities· a retrospective view of their identity, a sense of present identity, and a prospective view of identity An illustrative case is that of Jo (coach), who explained why she hadn't participated in the mentoring programme She described her retrospective identity (extensive and varied background that gave her a *"big bag of tricks"*), her present identity (comfortable and *"creative"* in her present position) and prospective identity (only sees professional development as relevant to elite coaches) The outcome of these processes was the construction of a personal coaching identity which placed little value on formalised mentoring.

The implication of personal identity for coach mentoring is, and drawing from Charmaz (1997), to *"define a sense of location, differentiation, continuity, and direction by and in relation to the self"* (p 37) However, in observing the interactions of individuals in social practices, Charmaz (1997) also identifies social identities which are derived from *"cultural meanings and community membership and are conferred upon the person by others"* (p 37) By explicating both personal and social identity, it is therefore possible to understand how the selection and entry point of participants to the study influenced their mentoring experience That is, many of the coaches and mentors were invited into the mentoring programme because of what might be termed a 'bestowed' social coaching identity, i e an identity constructed and conferred by their community membership (i e. they had coached the county sports teams) Many of these coaches and mentors, who were perceived by programme administrators to be in a coaching position from which they could benefit from mentoring, failed to sustain meaningful participation in mentoring Conversely, personal identity gave some coaches and mentors 'a sense of location' and self 'direction' towards the potential of formalised mentoring Coaches and mentors who expressed a clear personal coaching identity (Paul, Alan, Kay, and David) were coherent in their reasons for participating in mentoring Evidence revealed how their participation went beyond the boundaries of the specific mentor programme under study Findings from this study support an argument for profiling coaches and mentors in some detail in order to identify those who are most likely to benefit from engagement As Elizabeth (mentor) suggested when reflecting on the programme, we need to ask some fundamental questions (i e *"Do you want to develop?"*), so that time and resources are not wasted in supporting coaches who aren't ready

The second point on coach identity was that volunteer coaches operated within various communities (e g occupation, family, sports club, NGB), all of which had a particular understanding and view of the social world Data suggested that it was important to recognise that volunteer coaches, and mentors, belonged to different communities and, as a result, assumed different identities within these different communities It could be suggested that coach learning is constrained and/or liberated by the movement of volunteer coaches between communities, and such movement is sometimes characterised by cognitive processes such as filtering, selecting and rejecting (Scott & Morrisson, 2008) These processes then had the power to constrain or extend the opportunities afforded by learning structures, such as formal mentoring, and thereby acted as conditions for volunteer coaches' participation. As Hodgen & Askew (2007) have observed, these various forms of participation represent a nexus of multi-membership; the implication being that,

> *"Confronted by tensions between the different aspects of their identities, individuals are compelled to negotiate and reconcile these different forms of participation and meaning in order to construct an identity that encompasses the membership of different communities"* (p 473)

Within the coaching literature, coaching identity as situated in communities of practice has been articulated clearly (Culver & Trudel, 2008) As described earlier, communities have an identity and this shapes the identities of its members Within a CoP learning is viewed as identity transformation because it is about transformation into someone we want to become (Shanahan, 2009) This can be observed in Wenger's (1998) recognition of five dimensions of identity,

1   Identity as negotiated experience – how we define ourselves, and others define us, through the experiences of participation and reification

2   Identity as community membership – where we define ourselves by the familiar and unfamiliar

3   Identity as a learning trajectory – where we define ourselves in reference to our past and future

4   Identity as nexus of multi membership – where we reconcile our multiple identities into a working identity

5   Identity as a relation between the local and the global – where we position ourselves between local and broader constellations and discourses

The utility of seeing identity in this way is to recognise that coach identity is an expression of multiple experiences, and these experiences mediate future experiences, as well as attributing meaning to these experiences The implication for coach educators is that in acknowledging coaching identity, and so recognising it as a condition of coach learning, there is a need to be familiar with all five dimensions because, as Day & Sachs (2004) has argued, they address the social, cultural and political aspects of identity formation

8.1.5   Summary of Conditions for the coach learning

The core category, Conditions for the Learning Coach, captured an accumulation of processes that shaped coaches' perceptions of coach learning. This category was the pre-cursor from which decisions to engage, or not, with formalised mentoring were formed The section has examined how coaches conceived professional development within the context of volunteerism, and the relevance of professional development activities in supporting and impacting practice These interpretive acts were the foundations upon which participants came to view formalised mentoring

8.2   Negotiated Boundaries

This chapter now turns to consider the experiences and social interactions of those coaches who participated in the engagement mentoring programme. Their actions were marked by the core category 'Negotiated Boundaries', reflecting the negotiated processes undertaken within the coach-mentor relationship The term 'boundaries' is used because it captures the point at which mentoring relationships failed to impact on practice This is important because impact on practice was used by coaches in this study as the measurement that justified engagement in mentoring Analysis of the data suggested that the process of negotiating the boundaries of participation resulted in the enactment of the mentoring relationship, and that the key processes involved were

- Framing mentoring

- Clarifying role expectation

- Negotiating meaningful interaction

The category Negotiated Boundaries describes the continuous and cyclical processes in which coaches and mentors engaged as they framed, clarified, and negotiated meaningful mentoring experiences. These are now considered in detail

8.2.1 Framing mentoring

The process of framing mentoring played a significant role in influencing coaches' intensity, focus and duration of interactions within the programme under study From the outset, coaches and mentors were clear and articulate in their descriptions of what mentoring meant to them, and what was perceived as critical for a successful relationship In the first instance, coaches talked about the empathetic role of the mentor *"friend"*, *"companion"*, *"advice-giver"*, and *"somebody to bounce ideas off"*, and a developer of *"coach confidence"* Yet coaches were also mindful of a facilitating role and so described a mentor's function in terms of guiding and helping coaches to navigate practice; as exemplified by Sarah-Jane, who suggested that volunteer coaches conceived the mentors' role as, *"someone to watch over my development"* For the coaches in this study, the dual mentoring roles of empathy and facilitation were key to their mentoring relationships These descriptions of mentoring functions support previous mentoring studies across a variety of professional domains (Cawyer *et al*, 2002, Griffin & Ayers 2005, Dodds 2005)

In the coaching literature, a number of coaching specific studies were reported that viewed the mentoring process in different ways For example, the volunteer youth coaches in a study by Wright *et al*, (2007) conceived mentoring in two distinct ways first, as a knowledgeable coach whose role involved assessing and monitoring during games and practices, and second, as coach development director, who would convene coach meetings and generally support coaches in the management of their teams The conclusion from these coaches was that formalised mentoring was valuable when the mentor assumed a facilitating role whereby coaches were encouraged to meet up and exchange ideas in an environment of reciprocal problem-setting and problem-solving

Additional support for this role is reflected in Gilbert & Trudel's (2004) study, where the mentor's role was also perceived as a facilitating one but with a specific brief to nurture coaching communities of practice Although these studies demonstrate congruence with the data collected in this study, historically mentoring has been conceptualised in multiple ways For instance, in Gilbert & Trudel's (2006) review of coaching and coach education they identified a variety of mentoring functions such as "information specialist (Woodman, 1993), "supervisor-mentor" (Knowles *et al*, 2001), and "model-mentor" (Weiss *et al*, 1991) These examples demonstrate something of the range of mentor definitions, roles and functions. It could be argued that in sports coaching, historically, a lack of operational mentoring constructs has limited an in-depth understanding of mentoring interaction, and has mitigated against a critical analysis of mentoring processes and behaviours (Lyle, 2002) However, data from this study, alongside recent coach mentoring research, points to a consensus in that for volunteer coaches, mentoring assumes a facilitating role Recognition of the mentor role as facilitating coach learning therefore suggests a learning process that is dynamic and nurturing

As described earlier in this section, data from this study also indicated the ways in which coaches framed mentoring as having an empathetic dimension, that is, a positive mentoring relationship was identified by an environment of trust, and a degree of familiarity and closeness As Claire (coach) observed, mentors needed to, "*match you as an individual*" Resonating with previous mentoring research, at the heart of this function lay the interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee (Dodds, 2005) Evidence of existing informal relationships was very much apparent from the coaches in this study These relationships were described by participants as informal mentoring, and had been constructed through personal relationships or social networks As described in Chapter Two, informal mentoring has been identified as a key feature of many sports coaching environments but it is agued that in such a form, it is uncritical, unstructured and unhelpful in developing a robust professional knowledge base from which both organisational and individual learning can be facilitated (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004) For volunteer coaches in this study however, and in accordance with mentoring in the education literature, the strength of informal mentoring was that it adapted to individual needs (Allen & Elby, 2003, Dodds, 2005)

Interestingly, research has shown that coaches value both formal and informal conversations with other coaches, and place both above the knowledge to be gained from the theoretical instructional courses that characterise coach education (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006) Further, Cassidy & Rossi have suggested that such conversations are grounded in the everyday reality of coaching practice and therefore offer real solutions to real problems Although data from this study pointed to the importance of recognising both formal and informal forms of mentoring, the ramifications of the unique features of the volunteer coach environment meant that any form of formalised professional development (i e. formal mentoring) needed to find a 'space' that would justify time and effort given to it The professional development landscape for volunteer coaches in this study could be described as a very crowded environment

8.2.2   Clarifying expectations

All of the mentoring relationships reported in this study were characterised by an initial period of clarification where coach and mentor mapped out the opportunities, challenges and possibilities of the relationship However, an important finding from the data was the identification of a clear divergence between coach and mentor role expectations.

As described in Chapter Four, for the majority of coaches in this study, the appeal of mentoring lay in its potential to access sport-specific knowledge There was consensus among coaches that their mentors would act as a central resource who would provide knowledge about drills, tactics, technical skills, and organisation and performance analysis Moreover, mentoring also had the potential to support the coach by nurturing coaching confidence For volunteer coaches, mentoring was about supporting practice, as opposed to supporting career development As a result, and drawing from Kram & Hall's (1995) mentoring model, coaches perceived mentoring as a way of developing their 'psychosocial development' (competence, identity and professional effectiveness)

In order to meet these expectations, coaches wanted mentors to observe their practice and, where possible, to give critical feedback in context (9 out of 13 coaches identified observation as a primary form of interaction in their mentoring agreements) Coaches recognised the importance of open lines of communication and knew that this could involve email and telephone contact, but what they really wanted was coaching conversations with their mentor *in situ* As Nick described,

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"As far as I can see, what I would expect as a mentor is someone I can turn to for advice Also while I'm coaching, if he can see I'm doing something incorrect he can come to me and tell that that is not the way I ought to be doing it"

Mentors in this study also described their role in terms of *"supporting"*, *"developing"* and *"guiding"* coaches However, whereas coaches described mentoring interactions that were ideally embedded in context (i e at the club and in practice), many of the mentors conceptualised a role that was rather more passive and distant, essentially as an information source As described in an earlier chapter, Sfard (1998) has characterised this approach to learning as an 'acquisition' approach, where knowledge is transferred from mentor to coach However, it appeared that coaches viewed the relationship between coach and mentor as being about 'participation' in shared learning This divergence between perceived coach-mentoring roles was problematic in the mentoring relationships described in this study. Passive mentoring interactions were often unable to satisfy coaches' expectations of the mentoring process which were more about professional interactions in and through coaching practice The mentoring dissonance experienced by some in the study is illustrated by the premature end of Alan's mentoring dyads that were reported in Chapter Seven

The notion of mentoring dissonance between mentee and mentor is not uncommon In education, Edwards & Protheroe (2004) suggested that typical interactions in mentoring relationships were characterised by one-dimensional support and descriptive reiterations, resulting in conversations that failed to, *"encourage student teachers to engage in responsive pedagogic acts"* (p 194) Similarly, Jones (2001) described the mentors in her study as advice-givers and, as a result, limited students' abilities to *"respond appropriately to the complex and unpredictable mechanisms underlying human interaction"* (p 92). These studies suggest that tensions and disappointments between mentees and mentors are sometimes a result of incompatible expectations as well as a possible divergence of 'fit' As Bullough, Young, Hall & Draper (2008) have suggested, in teacher education, there is a requirement that mentors possess the cognitive maturity that best serves their mentees

One way of understanding the divergence in mentoring expectations between mentor and coach is to draw upon role theory. The term 'role' can be defined as the expected behaviour of an individual within a social situation, and the social role that an individual assumes is constituted by shared expectations of behaviour (Jones *et al*, 2004) Thus, the mentoring role adopted in this study reflected the behaviour expected of the mentor; i e behaviour both held by the mentor and expected by their coaches While recognising 'traditional' definitions of role as bounded by behaviour within specific context, Lynch (2007) has suggested that such a fixed and static approach to social roles fails to appreciate the multiplicity of roles that individuals assume in their daily lives. As Lynch (2007) has argued,

> *"when we assume that roles are bounded by behavior, it becomes difficult to account for instances of role overlap or the constant role shuffling and role switching necessary to perform a number of roles in a single context (such as the home)"* (p 379)

As opposed to a structural-functionalist understanding that views roles as *"separated into self-contained gestalts"* (Lynch, 2007p 379), Lynch posit that a socio-cognitive lens is more useful in understanding role behaviour because it captures the ways in which individuals and context mutually affect one another To adopt such a perspective is to focus on how individuals affect situations, and situations affect individuals, in a process that is dynamic, flexible and continuous. As a result, role behaviour is a condition of the relationship between decision making (agency) and the influence of social factors (structures) (Jones *et al*, 2004)

This was certainly the case with the coaches and mentors in this study where multiple memberships of multiple communities came together to influence behaviour within the mentoring programme For instance, David's (mentor) interpretation of his mentoring role was constructed from social factors such as his personal, biographical, and occupational roles These came to influence his role interpretation

> *"I think that one of my biggest roles is raising people's awareness of what to look for in quality coaching So I'll get people aware of what quality coaching is until they realise that it is not happening I'm going*

to make everyone aware from being unconsciously incompetent and make them consciously incompetent Then, when I can get them to consciously incompetent stage, they will want to learn That is one of the reasons that people don't value something is because they think that it doesn't have anything to do with them Once you can demonstrate that then they are more likely to take the opportunity".

The story of David's constructed role interpretation is interesting because it clearly guided his actions in the mentoring process This was pertinent to the study because, as Jones *et al*, (2004) have argued, appreciation of how structure and agency create and develop social roles offers an illuminating and possibly more complete understanding of role theory and human behaviour For David, the mentoring role was about challenging, questioning, and increasing coach awareness, a process that could be conducted away from practice (i e Paul and David conducted one mentoring session at Paul's place of work) Yet David's coaches conceived the mentoring role differently For Neil (*"More contact .getting together with coaching techniques and sport specific knowledge"*) and Nick (*"I think that the actual coaching sessions are more useful than sitting down and talking"*) mentoring interaction had to be situated in the coaching environment For both coach and mentor in this study, incoherent and diametric role expectations resulted in interactions that were unsatisfying, unfulfilling and unsustainable for all parties

8.2.3 Negotiated meaningful interactions

For the coaches in this study, mentoring afforded opportunities for social interaction with fellow practitioners (mentors and other coaches), possibilities for exchanging coaching knowledge underpinned reasons given for participation in the mentoring programme Practical examples given included mentors observing and giving feedback on practice, mentors facilitating cross-sport exchanges and opportunities 'to swap 'tricks of the trade', and mentors organising the observation of an 'expert' coach with a chance to then talk with that coach after the game/practice session As a result of some of these interactions, coaches in this study reported the following positive outcomes,

1) **The promotion of learner empowerment,** (Paul - coach *"a lot of people said like, they could see I had stepped up I just came back full of, like confidence, of what I was delivering and why I was delivering It"*)

2) **The development of higher order knowledge,** (Alan - mentor. *"and suddenly they are thinking themselves how can I get my lot to do it like that And that's where I think the learning comes in as well because you are analysing a situation and saying" we can't do that"," why can't we"," how can we get there to do it" and that's the whole learning thing isn't it?")*

3) **Enhanced quality of the coach learning experience,** (Kay - coach *"I could see things that I could use and that I couldn't I suppose it's a spark to think that I could do that or incorporate something)*

4) **development of coaching self-efficacy,** (David - mentor, *"I have learnt a lot about how people learn, now whether that is because of the mentoring programme, and I am sure that part of it is, I certainly question a lot more")*

For many of the coaches in this study, meaningful mentoring was interpreted as involving mediated and structured interactions that were anchored in practice For example, in a personal correspondence reported in Chapter Five, Alan (mentor) compared the perceived limitations of one mentoring relationship (interaction was confined to email and telephone) to another where interaction was based on observation and reflections of coaching practice As Alan remarked, this latter relationship was *'proper'* mentoring

In reference to modes of coach learning, and as described earlier in this chapter, a frequently adopted way of representing the cognitive-situated debate towards learning is Sfard's (1998) metaphors of 'acquisition' and 'participation'. Acquisition captures the cognitive processes in knowledge accumulation, and the metaphor 'participation' reflects learning as a process of social practice This is particularly useful in capturing the different approaches to coach learning that were reported by the participants in this study In agreement with other studies that have addressed coach learning (Wright *et al*, 2007, Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), both 'acquisition' and 'participation' modes of learning in developing coaching knowledge were recognised and valued by coaches However, what was important to volunteer coaches was that learning activities were structured and mediated, such that professional and relevant knowledge could be constructed As Nick illustrated,

"A lot of the things I do are a bit wishy-washy There are a lot of workshops, a lot of 'what do you think' and actually I'd like to go to a course where they tell me what they do and then I can choose what is applicable to me".

Data from this study would appear to echo much of the adult learning theory that identifies the centrality of terms such as relevance, self-direction and experience (Knowles *et al*, 2005)

One way of interpreting coaches' expressions of something being 'meaningful' is to draw upon Wenger's (1998) CoP, where meaning is perceived as central to any design for learning Within this model, 'meaning' is the ultimate product of learning

"Learning is first and foremost the ability to negotiate new meanings· it involves our whole person in a dynamic interplay of participation and reification It is not reducible to its mechanics (information, skills, behaviour), and focusing on the mechanics at the expense of meaning tends to render learning problematic" (Wenger, 1998 p 226)

Within a CoP, practice is defined as 'doing' (within a historical and social context), and the process by which individuals give structure and meaning to what they do Through practice, meaning is constructed as a consequence of the negotiation between history and context The consequence of this process, as Moon (1999) has observed, is that meaning organizes and guides the cognitive structure of the learner by acting as a gate-keeper to learning, and as a way of selecting what is learnt Accordingly, the negotiation of meaning through participation of practice, *"characterises the process by which we experience the world and our engagement in it as meaningful"* (Wenger, 1998 p 53) Critical to understanding the negotiation of meaning that individuals undergo when experiencing their world, is to embrace two constituent processes participation and reification

In negotiating meaning from engagement in practice, Wenger (1998) refers to the duality of participation and reification as fundamental to this process Participation is defined as the *"social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social*

communities and active involvement in social enterprises" (p 55) Participation is more than just engagement in specific activities, it is participation in the practices of social communities, and the construction of identities in relation to these communities. Wenger (1998) defines reification as;

> *"The process of giving form to our experiences by producing objects that congeal this experience into "thingness". In doing so we create points of focus around which the negotiation of meaning becomes organised"* (p. 58)

Examples from the data suggested that attempts were made in creating coaching CoP to reify constructed knowledge from the practices of that group of coaches In Chapter 8, Alan (mentor) described attempts to write a coaching manual that would help support and guide the practices of a group of coaches at his local hockey club

Opportunities for coaches and mentors to engage in meaningful conversations and practices highlight the role of social interaction as a means of constructing learning through dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration (Bonk *et al*, 1995) In guiding learners, social constructivists highlight the role of 'scaffolded instruction' (Vygotsky, 1978), that is, the assistance and support provided by a perceived expert, competent peer or mentor in allowing the learner to complete a task or solve a problem by creating zones of proximal development (ZPD) Scaffolded learning is characterised by the use of prompts, comments, explanations, questions and suggestions, a form of support that fades or evolves as the learners assumes an increasingly autonomous level of performance Such an understanding is significant in shaping the content, process and evaluation of mentoring relationships as part of any professional development provision

8.2.4 Summary of Negotiated Boundaries

In summary, coaches' participation in mentoring in this study was a condition of what Day & Sachs (2004) have called *"situatedness in time"* (p 224) Coach mentoring was career-stage sensitive and required time and space as well as functional conditions that also changed with time At the Same time, the coach learner operated within an environment that created a context that impacted upon learning Coach mentoring therefore needs to be situated in an individual's personal biography, because the learning

process is charactensed by individual interpretation, and the act of interpretation is embodied by the learner's background Thus, in creating the conditions for developing coach learning through formalized mentoring, the findings of this research suggest that the design of any formalized programme should take into account the mentoring relationship (empathetic, facilitator); functions of mentoring (teaching/coaching, role model, encouraging), and the mentoring process (observing, giving feedback, demonstrations and facilitating social support)

8.3 Barriers to formalised mentoring

As stated by Paul (coach), mentoring is, *"definitely a difficult skill"*. As a learning strategy, findings from the study revealed how formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches was impacted by myriad factors in both function and process The aim of the following section is to present data that were identified as potential barriers to the coach mentoring process These barriers included mentoring competency, interpersonal dimension, informal vs formal; time, and accessibility. Each of these themes is now considered

8.3.1 Mentoring Competency

Data suggested that both mentors and coaches required a certain level of intellectual proficiency in order to optimise the possibilities within formalised mentoring In other words, without a requisite degree of mentoring competency, the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy was limited Specific examples from the data include Sarah-Jane's reflection that she had, *"learnt to be mentored"*, Paul's suggestion that he made the process easier because he *"was really into self-development and having a positive mind set"*, Elizabeth's description of how mentors needed to have the *"tools to recognise" and*, in an illustration of the mentoring skills valued by coaches, Matt's observation that his mentor *"didn't have all the answers, but he had all the questions"* Data indicated that coaches and mentors both needed to be receptive and inclined to engage with mentoring yet, at the same time, have the necessary cognitive skills in order to maximise the learning opportunities within these interactions

In keeping with the wider literature (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Werthner *et al*, 2007, Ericsson *et al*, 2008), the findings from this study suggested that mentoring as a social space for volunteer coach learning required the focus of a dedicated coach facilitator or

coach mentor Where coaching is conceptualised as having ambiguous ends, and located in shifting contexts of practice (Jones & Wallace, 2005), the role of the mentor in scaffolding meaning and understanding would appear to be vital in supporting coach learning Indeed the literature recognises the potential of the mentor to facilitate learning by assisting the novice in identifying, negotiating and optimising learning opportunities from what might appear, at times, to be a perplexing array of work place and personal experiences (Parsloe & Wray, 2000, Cassidy *et al*, 2004; Jones, 2006). It could be argued, therefore, that such requirements are more likely to be met from a salaried professional position In this study, the scenario of a volunteer coach interacting with a volunteer mentor in a formal mentoring framework, did not lead to sustained learning interactions, for both coach and mentor, mentoring was not a top priority. As Dave, a rugby mentor to seven volunteer coaches put it, mentoring is, *"but of an expensive luxury actually"*

Learning to coach in a community of practice requires opportunities to work with experienced practitioners (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Culver & Trudel, 2008) in supporting the inexperienced coach to "internalise" (Eraut, 2001) new coaching knowledge. Evidence from Culver & Trudel's (2006, 2008) work with coaches found that the role of the coach facilitator was critical in sustaining coach learning through these communities However, the learning relationship with a mentor is problematic As discussed earlier, the learning opportunities within the mentoring process require that both coach and mentor have the requisite knowledges, consciousness and inclination to make it work For Young & Wright (2001), it is not enough to just be a mentor, there is a need to be a 'good' mentor In this instance 'good', is defined as committed, skilled in providing support, and an effective communicator As Young & Wright (2001) pointed out, *"what makes a successful relationship is what the mentor and protégé bring to and do in the relationship"* (p 205)

8.3.2 Interpersonal Skills

Although the mentoring literature is characterised by wide-ranging terms of reference and definitions, what is unequivocal is that both informal and formal mentoring relationships are potentially characterised by an intense 'caring' and 'guiding' quality Stroot *et al*, (1993) found that effective mentors possessed strong listening and communication skills, and an ability to engage emotionally with the novice practitioner. Both Singh *et al*,

(2002) and McMahon (2005) suggested that good mentors were loyal and nurturing, social supporters and possessed excellent communication skills Subsequently, good mentoring relationships are characterised by a personal and emotionally committed relationship It was not surprising, therefore, to find that in coach mentoring reported in this study, the quality of the relationship between participants was identified both as a barrier to learning and, in other cases, as an enabling factor For instance, Ali (coach) described how a fractured interpersonal relationship with David had acted as a barrier to her development; *"In the past we've exchanged ideas but I don't think that I am that responsive to him because of certain issues I have with him on a personal rather than professional level"* Conversely, mentoring relationships based on interpersonal compatibility were characterised by clear communication so that, as Paul observed, *"there's no misunderstanding"* In the end of programme evaluation questionnaire, 7 out of 14 coaches described good communications skills as the most important characteristic of any mentor

Within the mentoring literature, it has been argued that compatibility matching has the potential to support substantial professional growth (Wycherley & Cox, 2008) Moreover, mentoring facilitators when organising formal mentoring are aware that if they can get matching right, it is then possible to compensate for the loss of spontaneity, serendipity and subsequent rapport that naturally occurs through existing informal mentoring relationships (Cox, 2005) However as Cox (2005) points out, this 'spark' is not always achieved by matching, instead it can rest on appropriate levels of training and supporting for the mentor This is not easy to deliver, yet it points to the critical importance of preparing, supporting and developing mentors for their role in the mentoring process

8.3.3   Formal v Informal

The debate between formal and informal modes of mentoring has been addressed in other domains, where evidence suggests that individuals perceive formal mentoring arrangements to be particularly beneficial to their career development (Godshalk & Sosik, 2003) In a complex working environment, mentoring offers a secure and supportive framework for dealing with coaching situations which can be, at times, ambiguous, unstable and intimidating (Jones & Wallace, 2005) In the coaching literature, a number of researchers recognise the existence of informal mentoring, but comment that it lacks structure and conceptual underpinning which can lead to poor

quality mentoring and poor coach development (Cushion et al, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004, Cushion, 2006)

In a focus group conducted at the end of the study, one of the mentors (Alan), compared his mentoring experiences within formal and informal settings As described in Chapter Seven, Alan described how formalised mentoring was characterised by irregular contact, role dissonance, a lack of interpersonal familiarity, and lack of perceived acceptance by coaches of his 'imposed' role Conversely, 'informal' mentoring role in his local club was characterised by regular contact, a sense of affiliation, and a perceived environment of mutual support and exchange There was a sense from Alan that formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches lacked learning impact and, at a personal level, was professionally unfulfilling

These perceptions of formalised mentoring have also been documented in Allen & Eby's (2003) work, which suggested that formal mentoring, where an individual feels pressurised to mentor others, may result in a decrease in intrinsic motivation, *"behaviour that is intrinsically motivated is behaviour that is formed out of enjoyment and engaged interest, rather than obligation or fulfilment"* (p 471) Even mentors who have volunteered to take part in formal structures may feel they are 'going through the motions' or 'just doing their job', which may detract from enjoying the relationship Thus Allen & Elby (2003) concluded that mentors taking part in formal mentoring may not accumulate the same psychological benefits as those engaged in informal mentoring It is an argument that has found support with Singh *et al*, (2002) who suggest that whilst supportive in its intent, formal mentoring can stifle the development of constructive, secure and personal relationships, formal programs are typically focused on the mentee, whereas informal relationships are established because of some form of mutual attraction for both parties

In a comprehensive review of coaching and coach education, and in light of global enthusiasm for coach mentoring, Gilbert & Trudel (2006) have asked, *"can a formalized and structured mentoring program, where mentors are selected, accredited and to a certain extent imposed on coaches, be effective?"* (p 532) As reported in Chapter Five, formalising coach mentoring relationships proved to be a challenge in terms of participants' roles, preparation and impact Data indicated how formalised mentoring

only seemed to add another layer to an already crowded network of mutual support and coaching friendships For instance, many of the coaches and mentors had existing networks of informal mentoring relationships that had evolved through the everyday practices of sports coaching Relationships were formed and sustained because both coach and mentor took something from these relationships Yet in the coaching literature, informal mentoring is conceived as unhelpful and unsustainable in developing coach learning within a professional development framework (Cushion, 2001, Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cassidy *et al*, 2004) There would appear to be some conflict in these two viewpoints

From the findings of this study, it was possible to perceive the ways in which formal mentoring relationships represented a restricted learning opportunity in comparison to some existing and more informal relationships The cumulative effect of commitments beyond coaching meant that formal mentoring was unsustainable with these volunteer coaches However, data did reveal that coaches were cognizant of the need for a degree of formality in professional learning As one mentor stated, coaches and mentors still need, *"the tools to realise and recognise"* (Alan) It is interesting to note that the coaching literature acknowledges the mentoring structure debate, and suggests that coach education should attempt to 'formalise the informal' by realising the benefit of informal and decreasing its negative attributes (Jones, 2006) Data from the study suggest this is likely to represent a difficult challenge in the case of volunteer coaches

8.3.4 Time

Time was clearly identified in this study as a formidable barrier to successful engagement mentoring For volunteer coaches, time was a valuable commodity which had to be managed carefully Alongside occupational and family responsibilities, during the evenings and at the weekends volunteer coaches were expected to organise practice sessions and matches, coordinate transport of players, manage sports equipment, attend league meetings, and conduct countless telephone calls to parents, players, coaches and administrators Furthermore, some of the coaches in this study were also involved in the administrative aspects of the sports clubs Volunteer coaches therefore needed to weigh up the cost-benefit exchange in selecting and then participating in any formalised professional development activity

Within this study, data suggested time as a barrier to formalised mentoring had two dimensions In the first instance, a number of coaches declined to participate in the mentoring programme from the outset because they didn't have the inclination to give up their time beyond existing voluntary coaching commitments (Julie, Jo, Matt) Secondly, for those who did engage in the programme, when asked to identify the barriers to their formalised mentoring relationship, time and contact were mentioned in 8 out of 15 end of programme questionnaire responses The notion of time as a barrier to professional development has been identified in the educational literature. For example, in a study of PE teachers' CPD, Armour & Yelling (2004) recognised that time (e g lack of time, and a dislike of giving up personal time) was a key concern for these teachers. In one of the few studies of volunteer coaches' perspectives of coach education, Wiersma & Sherman (2005) acknowledged that existing time demands on volunteers were prohibitive of their participation in professional development activities As one of the coaches in their study observed, *"everybody agrees that* (coaching education) *is important But it takes time It is enough of a demand getting coaches to volunteer to coach anyway So it's tough"* (p 331). What both these studies point to, is that any professional development activity requires dedicated time and space It could be argued that the reality of the volunteer coach structure is that time is potentially an insurmountable barrier in formalising existing informal coaching mentoring relationships

8.3.5 Learning boundaries

As described in the previous section, time was identified as a constraint in accessing the learning potential of mentoring Yet time was further compounded by mentoring relationships that were matched beyond the immediate coaching arena of the coach and mentor So, typically, relationships were arranged based on mentor availability and sport compatibility Where matched relationships were not local to participants (i e same club), mentoring interactions were disjointed and occasional As Alan admitted, mentors in the programme had their own coaching commitments, which meant that beyond this commitment, *"I didn't really want to do anything much other than that"* Moreover, Elizabeth reflected that the club environment was a more powerful and convenient location for mentoring to operate in because interaction and support were more easily accessible

In an environment where time was a precious commodity for the volunteer coaches in this study, it is perhaps not surprising that coaches identified accessibility as an important characteristic of the mentoring relationship Indeed, accessibility was conceived by participants as meaning face-to face interaction Coaches wanted their mentors to be physically present at their practice in order to observe and offer feedback and guidance. Where coaching is, at times, ambiguous and 'messy' (Jones & Wallace, 2005); the close supporting characteristic of the mentoring relationship was seen as something important Specifically, both coaches and mentors recognised the importance of 'local' and situated support networks in supporting their practice Where matched relationships were not local to participants, mentoring interaction tended to be disjointed and occasional Indeed, it was in clubs where relationships already existed (informally) between experienced and novice coaches, that contact could be maximised, support would be specific and contextual, and observation of practice (which coaches really coveted) a realistic option

These findings are echoed in the coaching literature where the importance of 'local' and situated support networks in underpinning learning is acknowledged (Gilbert & Trudel, 2005, Lemyre et al, 2007). In recognising the powerful impact of learning through reflective experience and 'on the job' coaching for volunteer coaches, Gilbert & Trudel's (2005) work with Canadian coaches identified the limitations of existing coach education programmes that were typically structured around a 'few distant weekends' Within their study, these authors have argued that future coach education strategies must recognise the inherently 'local' nature of coach learning, so that access to learning networks might be embedded within coaching communities (e g discussion groups, peer or coaching consultants/mentoring, local resource centres) As Cushion (2006) has argued, the mentoring process is dependent on the accessibility of a mentor

8.3.6 Summary of Part 1

The data from this study suggested that it was important to understand volunteer coaches' engagement in mentoring as a process of personal, as opposed to career advancement, learning For the majority of coaches in this study learning had a personal dimension, where learning represented personal growth and a deepening understanding of their context It was very much a self directed and active process whereby mentoring engagement was evaluated as worthy of intellectual and emotional investment Learning for volunteer coaches and mentors was, in these cases, based on the dynamic processes of

interpretive need and context, which for some participants in this study (Alan, Paul, David, Kay), lead to them assuming the role of the learning coach, or what Cervero (1988) has termed, the *"active practitioner"* (p 68)

It also became evident from the data that understanding coach learning through formalised mentoring was to appreciate the embodied process characterising the interactions between coach and mentor Embodiment reflects learning as the integration of the mental, emotional, physical and practical (Hodkinson *et al*, 2008) So, for instance, volunteer coaches in this study sometimes described the ways in which knowledge was constructed from conversations with mentors which had then triggered an inclination to consider change in practice For both Kay (coach) and Alan (mentor), there were elements of their coaching actions that appeared to be an embodiment of their mentoring interactions, resulting in the development of coaching praxis For Hodkinson *et al*, (2008), and drawing on the work of Dewey (1963), the mind is not separate from the body, but a function of intelligent action where action is characterised by anticipation, foresight and judgement So Hodkinson *et al*, (2008) have suggested that,

> *"When the focus is upon learning at work, the significance of this embodied view of learning is especially clear, for much of what is learned at work entails practical activity and intelligent action"* (p 38).

The recognition of the embodied process within mentoring brought into focus the significance of the interaction between the individual and the many and various social structures to which they belonged Volunteer coaches interacted and belonged to multiple social settings, each one culturally constituted, and which impacted (subconsciously and consciously) on coaches' perceptions, behaviours, dispositions and actions towards mentoring Critically, these social settings represented sites of (cultural) learning through the social practices of that group Formalised mentoring for volunteer coaches operated within this multidimensional context In order to begin to make sense of this context of volunteer coach mentoring, a social theory of learning, and specifically Communities of Practice (as described earlier) seeks to integrate many of these constructs into a framework from which to understand learning in practice community (learning as belonging), practice (learning as doing), meaning (learning as experience) and identity

(learning as becoming) The following section utilizes a CoP framework within which to examine the coach mentoring programme analysed in this study.

8.4 Mentoring through Communities of Practice

From the outset of this study, coaches and mentors extolled opportunities for developing their coaching knowledge through 'coaching conversations' *in situ* Specifically, coaches' knowledge was constructed through the interaction and observation of other coaches. These findings support a considerable body of literature that has recognised the importance of constructing and sharing coaching knowledge through social interaction (Jones *et al*, 2004, Jones 2006, Cushion *et al*, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Cassidy *et al*, 2004) Specifically, these authors have focused on the interrelationship between knowledge, context and practice, emphasizing the social nature of knowledge construction From such a perspective, individuals are considered part of a holistic learning fabric rather than acting or participating in isolation Hence learning is recognised as a process of social and situated participation (Wenger, 1998)

In an analysis of PE teachers' professional practice, Patton *et al*, (2005) offer an example of the way in which mentoring can be framed through a situated learning perspective Patton *et al*, contend that central to understanding mentoring is an appreciation of the integrated relationship between the individual, activity and environment, knowledge construction is therefore inseparable from the relevant contexts and activities Consequently, in examining mentoring from a situated learning perspective, there is a need to consider the coach/mentor (individual), mentoring process (activity) and coaching context (environment) The value of using situated learning to examine mentoring, and as described in Chapter Two, is that researchers are presented with a triad of relationships in examining the process of mentoring, as opposed to the traditional and restricted notions of a dyad mentoring relationship Such a model is accommodated within the notion of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) Coach mentoring is therefore realistically conceived as the act of co-participation (between coach and mentor) in a "relationship constellation" (Kram, 1985) in order to meet personal and professional needs

The critically important role of the skilled 'facilitator' in a number of situated and social learning systems has been addressed in sports coaching (Culver & Trudel, 2006, Culver

& Trudel, 2008) Within these studies, a particular way of understanding mentoring is within a social and situated perspective, therefore drawing upon Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice framework (CoP) CoP has been defined as, *"a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis"* (Wenger *et al*, 2002, p 4) Essentially, a community of practice exists because it generates a shared practice as members engage in a collective process of learning (Kirk & Kinchin, 2003) Members act as a resource for each other, exchanging information, sharing new ideas and making sense of situations Importantly, the success of a vibrant and purposeful CoP is determined by a knowledgeable 'facilitator' who has the skills to "cultivate CoPs" (Culver & Trudel, 2006 p 110). As Wenger (1998) has observed, *"as instruments of alignment, leadership, authority, and policies all have the potential to become resources for negotiating meaning – as much as they can thwart the process"* (p. 262) Although mentoring in this study was not designed to be a model CoP, the characteristics that illuminate the workings of CoP as described in previous chapters offer a framework within which to understand and possibly facilitate the mentoring experience For instance, the learning potential of mentoring in a CoP is dependent on the skills, aptitude and inclination of the mentor The selection and engagement of appropriately qualified coach mentors therefore becomes critical in acknowledging the role they play in facilitating the potential of mentoring as a learning strategy As Cushion (2006) has concluded, *"The mentor, to be effective, must not only command the appropriate knowledge and skills but must be a full participant themselves in the cultural practices of the community"* (p 134)

As described earlier, in one particular mentoring case, Alan described how the formalised network of mentoring relationships to which he was assigned failed because of a lack of meaningful interaction Mentors and coaches were never at the same place at the same time and interactions were confined to virtual coaching conversations (e g email) In understanding this case, Wenger's (1998) observation that, *"practice does not exist in the abstract It exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another"* (p 72) identifies the reciprocal relationship between mentor and coach The value of mentoring, for both coach and mentor, requires what Loughran (2002) has called 'contextual anchors', where participants are able to identify needs, context, problem recognition and acknowledged value In the case of Alan, recognition of context

(e g time, distance) in relation to mentoring interactions was never acknowledged and, as a consequence, mentoring dyads were dissolved after 6 months of perceived inactivity

In stark contrast to his experiences of formalised mentoring, Alan described how a network of informal mentoring relationships had flourished at his local sports club These interactions were meaningful because interactions were 'local' (accessible), contextualised, and importantly for Alan, based on close interpersonal characteristics For volunteer coaches, time committed to activities beyond the immediate responsibilities of coaching needed to have both knowledge value and social value Alan's description of informal mentoring through social interactions at his local club support both Cushion's (2006) contention that the mentoring process was best served by an accessible mentor, and Eraut's (2004) suggestion that any framework that promotes professional learning needs to address availability of suitable learning resources and people who are prepared to give appropriate support

The findings from this study and the wider literature support and validate the potential of CoP in the learning and sharing of coaching knowledge through mentoring (Cushion, 2006, Culver & Trudel, 2006) A community of coaches has an identity that shapes the identities of its members, as a community, they have a way of talking about coaching, and through this process, coach learning is defined as worth pursuing and participation recognized as a way of developing competence For the volunteer coaches in this study, CoP was found to be valuable as a language through which to articulate the characteristics of social learning, and as a guide to understanding social learning

Although I have argued that CoP was a useful tool from which to begin to understand formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches, that is not to say that the framework is unproblematic in its application to practice While Lave and Wenger (1991) acknowledge that power relations characterise community engagement, they still present CoP as benign, cohesive and stable structures, and in doing so, it could be argued, fail to explicitly address the unequal power relations and inequality that inevitable exist For instance, the concept of legitimate peripheral is characterised by disparate power relationships as old timers and neophyte practitioners (re)position themselves in their working relations with each other Indeed old timers may in fact be intimidated by the presence of a newcomer within the dynamics of the community, and as a result, the

power exercised between participants within a CoP can be either empowering (individual proceeds to full participation) or disempowering (prevented from engaging with full participation) This is a critical point, because understanding power and social relations within any community engagement is important in understanding the opportunities and barriers to learning, and particularly where within organisations control is held and used to organise the learning environment, and can therefore be used to facilitate or obstruct opportunities for individual learning

It is also important to acknowledge how a situated learning perspective tends to minimize the significance of formal education in the development of newcomers However, where Lave & Wenger (1991) have underplayed its role, other writers, such as Fuller et al. (2005), have argued that it might be more useful to view formal provision as another form of participatory learning, and in doing so, formal education is then valued (legitimized) by the community and integrated into a myriad of learning opportunities. This certainly resonates with the experiences of the participants in this study, who, although critical of some forms of delivery and tutor quality when reflecting on their formal and informal experiences, nevertheless acknowledged an important role for formal education in both delivering sport specific knowledge and complimenting other learning situations (e g non-formal)

As reported in Chapter Four, pressures of time and access to resources led volunteer coaches to place great value on learning how to coach at the site of their practice In line with many other occupations, recognition of the 'workplace' as sources of learning has been extensively identified in the literature (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004) As Wenger (1998) has argued, learning takes place through the process of actively engaging with and becoming a 'full' member of the community, hence learning occurs *through* and *in* communal and organisational membership However, Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004) have also argued that in adopting a social perspective to learning, there is a danger of losing sight of the individual in the learning process because the individual is subsumed under the researcher's gaze of social structures (i e Communities of Practice) As Cushion (2008) similarly comments, the formation of a coaches' identity as a product of participating and engaging with a CoP is problematic, coaches come to any social practice with dispositions that influence their learning Critically, learning is always conceived through the active relationship between

individual (agency) and the social world (structure) and therefore, in order to examine and understand mentoring as a learning strategy, there is a requirement to capture the relationships between cognitive, emotional and situated constructs. In trying to explain these findings and the subsequent analysis further, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field were found to be useful in illuminating the interaction between all three elements.

8.5 Rendering the learning coach: An interpretation of relevance

The cultural socialisation that a coach brings with them to any professional development activities can be further analysed and explained by using the social theories proposed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). The appeal of Bourdieu's theory lies in his focus on the interactions between agency and structure, and how these interactions are acted upon in the social arena. Of particular interest is the way in which Bourdieu identifies a number of interdependent concepts, or 'thinking tools' (Brown, 2005) from which to explain the intersection of agency and structure, specifically, notions of 'field' and 'habitus' are of value to this study.

In Bourdieu's work, field may be considered as a set of social relations that characterise particular learning sites (e g formal, non-formal, informal) Jenkins (2002) helps define Bourdieu's understanding of the concept of field as a, *"structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for the occupants" (p 85)* Significantly, fields are defined by shifting and imprecise boundaries (the point at which the field fails to impact on practice), inequality, and are structured in terms of power relations (Jenkins, 2002) Within this social space, individuals perceive the field differently, and interpret capital and value within the field differently In relation to coach learning, it is important to appreciate that fields are dynamic and overlap, that formal and informal fields interact with each other and, in turn, are influenced by wider social structures (i e UK Coaching Task Force) The significance of this point is, as Hodkinson *et al,* (2008) has argued, that *"any learning culture functions and is constructed through the forces of one or more fields"* (p 36) As a result, Hodkinson *et al,* (2008) have suggested that seeing fields through the metaphor of a 'force field' captures the imprecise and overlapping boundaries of fields This is helpful in seeing coach learning as a consequence of the coaches' interaction with multiple fields of learning

In Bourdieu's work, habitus is seen as product of cultural socialisation through which individuals perceive, produce and evaluate social practice. Habitus represents the absorptions of certain actions, knowledge and feelings within a social setting (field) and, as described previously, actors (coaches, mentors, athletes) may belong to a myriad of fields, each one influencing an individual's habitus. In an attempt to clarify any confusion between habitus and identity, Colley at al (2003) has observed that;

> *"Habitus is a concept that expresses complexities that are not perhaps so well conveyed by the notion of 'identity' It incorporates both the subjective, personal dispositions and the collective, structural predispositions shaped by class, race and gender that are combined in each individual" (p 477)*

Significantly, because habitus is acquired through occupational and personal experiences within social contexts, habitus is unique to individuals. For the coaches and mentors in this study, habitus is a way of expressing the reciprocal learning relationships developed between the coach and the mentoring process

It is important to recognise that habitus represents past relationships between the individual and social structures, and therefore can be conceived as located at the subconscious level of cognitive impression (Callaghan 2005) As Bourdieu described, habitus captures the, *'embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as – history"* (Bourdieu, 1990, p 56) A coach's habitus in this study was, therefore, critical in shaping how the coach perceived their involvement in mentoring An example is the case of David (mentor) and how his habitus was an expression of tacit beliefs, conceived through multiple fields, representing multiple sites of learning, and with each one distinctly different in structure and function vocational (Active Sports facilitator), coaching (club) and personal biography The significance for coach education in applying this understanding is to, *"see the person behind the student"* (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000), or as Cushion *et al*, (2003) have suggested, *"to provide coaches with a mirror in which they can see their own programs and practices"* (p 223) In so doing, coach education could begin to identify learner agency in optimising the possibilities, and constraints, of formalised mentoring

The application of the concept of habitus to this study is valuable because it offers a way of analysing the subjective experiences of coaches and mentors in relation to the objective structures and contexts in which the mentoring process operated. As Reay (1995) has observed, *"habitus is a way of looking at data which renders the `taken-for-granted' problematic (p. 369)*. With this in mind, Reay (1995) has identified a range of questions which could be adapted to examine the coach mentoring experiences reported in this study, for example. How well is the coach/mentor adapted to the context of mentoring? How does their personal biography shape their responses to the mentoring? What learning cultures (fields) do they bring to mentoring and how are they manifested? What is the meaning of non-verbal behaviour as well as individuals' use of language? Such questions then begin to raise issues of gender, race and power alongside those of social class in using habitus to further examine the mentoring relationship.

In their review of coach development practices, Cushion *et al*, (2003) have argued that, *"Coaches' knowledge and action, therefore, can be viewed as both the product and manifestation of a personally experienced involvement with the coaching process"* (p. 219). However in adding to this observation, data from the volunteer coaches in this study indicated that their coaching habitus was a product of their occupancy with multiple and intersecting fields, each one contributing to their habitus. The outcome is that a coaches' habitus orientated a disposition to learn and to seek out learning opportunities. As Bourdieu has argued, learning is a process of membership and identity,

> *"Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's practice"* (Bourdieu, quoted in Wacquant, 1989, p. 44)

In summary, this section has attempted to recognise and identify the coach learner in interactions with formalised mentoring as sites of social learning. It has shown how coaches' conceptualisations of mentoring were shaped by individual interpretation, and located within wider fields' of social practice. It has identified the habitus of coaches in determining ways in which they construct and reconstruct opportunities for learning at 'work'. It has recognised that coaches' dispositions are contributors in the construction of communities of practice and/or informal knowledge networks. It has also attempted to

demonstrate the reciprocal relationship in the construction of habitus and identity between the coach and their coaching community

8.6 Summary of Part 2

Within this study, mentoring as a learning process was complex, ambiguous, career-stage sensitive, and operated in an environment that was underpinned by volunteerism Findings revealed that the majority of coaches and mentors failed to perceive value in formalised mentoring processes and, as a result, mentoring in this study was unsustainable as a learning strategy Mentoring relationships broke down because coaches' and mentors' perceptions of mentoring were defined by the need for them to be meaningful and relevant to each situation For volunteer coaches, engagement with any formalised coach learning initiative needed to demonstrate clear relevance to individual professional needs Towards the end of the chapter it has been suggested that coaches' interpretations of coach learning and formalised mentoring can be analysed and understood by adopting Bordieu's (1990) concept of habitus, which highlights the ways in which the relationship between coaches' subjective experiences in relation to the objective structures and contexts in which the mentoring process operated guided, focused and engaged professional learning actions As a result, data suggested that coach mentoring needed to be situated in the individual coaches' personal biography

Examining the unique context of volunteer coaching, and the relationship between this workforce and professional development, highlighted considerable pressures on time and space For volunteer coaches, existing learning opportunities were very much evident in informal provision (e g mentoring, networking) These relationships were valued because they were perceived as easily accessible and contextually relevant sources of knowledge Critically, these relationships provided a short transition time between problem identification (coaching issue) and problem solution The transition time between problem identification and solution was a particularly important consideration for the coaches in this study For instance, knowledge that was not used in practice (i e coaches typically related this to formal education) was quickly consigned to what Eraut (1994, p 120) has called "cold storage" To justify engagement with any professional development activities, volunteer coaches needed to walk away from any mode of coach education with their coaching "tool box" stocked with new ideas, drills, and organisational markers that could have an immediate impact on practice Although this

'gold standard' (Abraham & Collins, 1998) or "tool box" approach to professional knowledge has been criticised for its lack of transferability (Nelson & Cushion 2006), time is a precious commodity for volunteer coaches, and therefore the transfer time or interplay between any professional development activity and practice was a critical condition of coach learning Although coaches and mentors recognised the value of both formal and informal learning provisions, data suggested that formalised mentoring needed to find a 'space' that would justify any time and effort given to it in an already crowded environment.

As described in this chapter earlier, for both coaches and mentors in this study, incoherent and diametric role expectations resulted in learning interactions that were unsatisfying, unfulfilling and unsustainable Tensions were evident between coaches' expectations of an active and participatory learning process, and mentors' understandings of a rather more passive information transfer role. Although participants were articulate in identifying the role of mentoring and its strengths in developing coach learning, the divergence between preferred and the actual learning trajectories were considerable For volunteer coaches and mentors, the reality of their learning environment revealed that opportunities to share knowledge with other coaches were restricted by time, costs, access and geographical boundaries Interestingly, these barriers were not confined to coaches Mentors too were volunteers and, similar to the coaches, found their time was constrained by context and inclination

Chapter 9: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

This final chapter is comprised of three sections Section 10 1 provides a summary of the aims of the study and the methodology used to address these aims Section 10 2 outlines the study's original contribution to knowledge by addressing the study's research questions Finally, section 10 3 considers implications and recommendations for practice and research

9.1   Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine coach learning through the interactions between volunteer mentors and coaches within a formalised mentoring framework, and to consider the potential of coach mentoring to enhance the professional learning of coaches. The main research questions of this study were,

> What can be learnt about coach learning from the interaction
> between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured
> mentoring framework, and what is the potential for mentoring to
> enhance the professional learning of coaches?

In order to achieve this aim, the following procedural questions were constructed

- What do participants understand about mentoring as situated within the context of sports coach learning?
- What are the social interactions that underpin meaningful participation within a formalised coach mentoring programme?
- What contextual and intervening conditions influence the mentoring relationship in a sports coaching context?
- What actions or outcomes resulted from the mentoring relationships under study?
- What theories help to explain an individual's experience of participating in facilitated mentoring?
- What is the role of mentoring in developing coach learning?
- How do the findings inform views about the potential for mentoring to underpin coach professional development?

In order to address these research questions, 7 volunteer mentors and 18 coaches from a county based Sports Partnership organisation were recruited A formalised mentoring programme was initiated and the impact of programme was examined over a 12 month period A semi-structured interview framework was constructed, and while this was the main data collection method, other data sources included focus groups and questionnaires were utilised Interview questions were based around eliciting the "meaning" of mentoring to participants and the processes and actions that shaped its development, and pursued throughout the study. The study was situated within a social constructivist paradigm, and used a case study approach to guide the sampling process. Data collection and data analysis were undertaken using a constructivist revision of the Grounded Theory Method (Charmaz, 2006), recognizing that themes, issues and categories are constructed from data and are mutually negotiated 'Core' conceptual categories were identified, depicting actions that embodied mentoring processes Data generated through these methods were collated to construct individual databases, case study profiles, and analyses of key themes

9.2 Original contribution to knowledge

Despite the frequency of mentoring as a learning strategy across many professional domains, there has been comparatively little research on structured mentoring programmes in coaching, and there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to illustrate any long-term impact of coach mentoring initiatives (Jones *et al*, 2009) The rationale for this study was, therefore, to examine formalised mentoring as a learning strategy for volunteer sports coaches This thesis claims to make an original contribution to knowledge by extending knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon It does so by employing a longitudinal case study approach, examining in-depth the formalised mentoring programme of a County Sports Partnership, and adopting an analytical framework based on a situated learning perspective, whereby researchers are presented with a triad of relationships in examining mentoring the coach/mentor (individual), mentoring process (activity) and coaching context (environment) Such a model is accommodated within the notion of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) Further, by using Bourdieu's theory of social learning, the study has shown how coaches' conceptualisations of mentoring were shaped by individual interpretation, and located within wider fields' of social practice

The following section addresses the study's contribution to knowledge by reference to the study's research questions

- **What do participants understand about mentoring as situated within the context of sports coach learning?**

This study found that volunteer coaches were clear and lucid in using the language of mentoring within the context of coach learning Coaches were confident in describing mentoring functions (e g role model), mentoring processes (e g observation and feedback) and in acknowledging the interpersonal characteristics of the mentoring relationship (e g facilitating and empathetic) Similar to the coaches in Erickson *et al*, (2008) research, the coaches in this study were highly supportive of, and to a degree enthusiastic, about the potential of mentoring to provide close learning support That these coaches were able to articulate a clear knowledge and understanding of mentoring is perhaps not surprising The use of mentoring as a learning and support mechanism can be found across multiple professional domains, and the notion of a mentoring (i e where a novice is guided by a more experienced individual) permeates many spheres of human interaction Moreover, sports' coaching, in its pursuit of professional recognition, has embraced mentoring enthusiastically for its potential role in 'learning' professional practice and to become part of organisational culture (Cushion *et al*, 2003, Cushion, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) It would appear that a broad exposure to mentoring meant that the coaches in this study were able to articulate a role for mentoring in relation to coach learning

- **What are the social interactions that underpin meaningful participation within a formalised coach mentoring programme?**

For the coaches in this study, mentoring afforded opportunities for social interaction with fellow practitioners (mentors and other coaches) Indeed, opportunities for the exchange of sport specific knowledge underpinned many of the coaches' reasons for participating in the mentoring programme Examples of the types of social interaction that were perceived as meaningful included face-to-face, observation and feedback, swapping 'tricks of the trade', observing 'expert' coaches, and problem setting and problem solving within the context of practice The use of observation and constructive feedback was perceived as giving coach learning direction, focus and structure Moreover, coaches saw the mentor as a link to the 'outside' coaching world, providing circumstances in

which to engage in the examination of practices through the observation and interaction with other coaches; thus observation was seen as an activity that could be used to ignite reflection For the volunteer coaches in this study, the important role of guided learning by working with a more experienced coach was clearly acknowledged.

These findings support the work of Gilbert & Trudel (2005) who identified the role of a coach facilitator or peer mentor to foster coach development Assuming the role of a research-practice facilitator, the mentor operates in the 'gap' between coaching science and coaching practice, so the mentor might provide coaches with the latest coaching research in order to modify coaching strategies Gilbert & Trudel (2005) have also identified volunteer coach mentoring to be better situated at club level and within the context of a community of coaches

Critically, opportunities for social interactions with mentors and other coaches were highly valued by the coaches in this study, but these interactions needed to be accessible and convenient For both coach and mentor, this meant that mentoring was ideally located within the boundaries of their local club i e local interactions led to a relatively 'short' transfer time from information source (mentor) to application in practice So, for the volunteer coaches in this study, and as reported in a variety of other professional domains (Eraut, 1994), meaningful interaction (mentoring) was defined by the transition time between problem identification and solution

- **What contextual and intervening conditions influence the mentoring relationship in a sports coaching context?**

Although all coaches in the study acknowledged the potential of mentoring as a means of constructing and supporting coach development, mentoring interactions were tempered by conditions of context and intervening barriers Thus, for these volunteer coaches, coach learning through mentoring had boundaries With regard to context, data revealed the ways in which volunteer coaches operated within a variety of communities (e g professional occupation, sports club), each one creating a context for learning These communities had an identity that shaped the identities of its members, and, as a community, members shared ways of talking about coaching and coach learning For example, it became apparent that the hockey coaches in the study were comfortable reflecting upon and analyzing personal coaching performance, and were open to

extending and developing their learning As a result, these coaches demonstrated a degree of occupational reflexivity Furthermore, coaches and mentors in this study approached the mentoring relationship from a personal biography that guided, focused and engaged their professional learning actions Data suggested that coaches' interpretations of coach learning and formalised mentoring were a condition of these experiences As a result, findings revealed that formalised coach mentoring needed to be located and grounded in the individual's personal biography, and so acknowledging that coach learning was career/development stage sensitive.

Findings also suggested that mentoring competence, role expectation, interpersonal skills, existing informal mentoring relationships, time and access, mediated the formalised mentoring relationship For instance, both coaches and mentors recognised that the intellectual proficiency of participants was critical in optimising the possibilities of formalised mentoring Moreover, data suggested that the reality of the volunteer coach context is that money and time are potentially insurmountable barriers in formalising existing informal coaching mentoring relationships Although coaches and mentors recognised the value of both formal and informal learning provisions, data suggested that formalised mentoring needed to find a 'space' that would justify any time and effort given to it in an already crowded environment

- **What actions or outcomes resulted from the mentoring relationships under study?**

One of the clearest findings from the study was the fragmented nature of any meaningful interaction between mentors and coaches Despite an initial set-up phase which was characterised by a flurry of negotiation in formalising the relationship, mentoring interactions were subsequently sporadic and infrequent For the majority of coaches and mentors in the study, formalised mentoring relationships came to a premature end either because they were found to be unfulfilling, or because they simply faded out of consciousness as a result of a period of inactivity Similar to the coaches in Culver & Trudel's (2006) study, social co-participation (e g mentoring) was acknowledged as a way of enriching learning situation, but required, and drawing from Wenger (2000), the 'vitality' of participants within that community Findings from this study reported the vitality of participants at the beginning of the programme, but this dissipated as the programme became sidelined as volunteer coaches juggled multiple commitments

Conversely, where mentoring relationships were maintained, or informal mentoring relationships took their place (as in the case of Alan), outcomes were perceived as significant and powerful For instance, coaches in this study (Paul, Kay, Joanne) reported increases in coach self-efficacy, feelings of mutual support, access to new sport specific knowledge, and refined reflective thinking Data from these coaches reflected the ways in which meaningful mentoring was interpreted as involving mediated interactions that were anchored in the context of their practice

- **What theories help to explain an individual's experience of participating in formalised mentoring?**

Findings from the study suggested that in examining mentoring from a situated learning perspective, researchers need to consider the coach/mentor (individual), mentoring process (activity) and coaching context (environment) The value of using a situated framework is that researchers are presented with a triad of relationships in examining the process of mentoring, as opposed to the traditional and restricted notions of a dyad mentoring relationship Such a model is accommodated within the notion of communities of practice (Wenger & Lave, 1991) Through this conceptual lens, data suggested that formalised coach mentoring might be realistically conceived as the act of co-participation (between coach and mentor) in a relationship network in order to meet personal and professional needs. Critically, within a CoP model, the important role of a facilitator (mentor) in guiding and nurturing learning is highlighted (Cushion, 2006, Culver & Trudel's, 2006)

Although helpful, the application of a CoP model in this study was inadequate for acknowledging the impact of individual biography on learning because of its emphases on social structures Consequently, the use of Bourdieu's social theory that focuses on the agency-structure relationship offers another way of examining the findings on formalised coach mentoring The value of using the concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' can be seen where volunteer coaching habitus constituted the link between social structures, and social practices For example, volunteer coaches' habitus represented the 'internalisation' of social practices from within the local coaching community (club), but also membership of their occupational communities (fields), which Colley *et al*, (2003) have called 'vocational habitus' It is argued here, therefore, that both individual and

vocational habitus evoked volunteer coaches' disposition towards the extent and quality of their development in the formalised mentoring programme described in this study

It has also been helpful to adopt a broader view of learning beyond the formal structures of coach education, and to consider mentoring through informal and workplace settings Indeed data from the study revealed that it was more appropriate to conceive coach learning on a formal/informal learning continuum where the attributes of both are appreciated Findings also suggest that it is more useful to acknowledge that coach mentoring generally occurred in the 'informal' surroundings of the coaching 'site' (e g clubhouse), and therefore it is appropriate to understand volunteer coach learning through what Billet (2002) has termed, a 'workplace pedagogy' In this way it is both accurate and enlightening to recognise and acknowledge sports clubs as sites of coach learning

- **What is the role of mentoring in developing coach learning?**

Like all adult learners the coaches in this study described how any learning activity needed to demonstrate clear relevance, context and specificity to their practice (Knowles *et al*, 2005b) For volunteer coaches, time was a valuable commodity and therefore formalised mentoring needed to demonstrate clear 'take home' value For those coaches who perceived mentoring as meaningful and of value to their practice, 'good' mentoring nurtured the learning process The mentors in these relationships (e g Alan and David) challenged, questioned, guided and energised their coaches Furthermore, evidence suggested that informal learning networks were already evident in the lives of volunteer coaches, and that these provided rich sources of coaching knowledge Yet learning in this context was described as improvised, spontaneous and unsophisticated Findings from the study suggested that a more expansive definition of the mentoring process, and beyond the traditional interpretation of mentoring as a dyad, would conceptualise mentoring as embedded in learning networks Within these networks, the critical role of a dedicated mentor/coach facilitator has been recognised in identifying, negotiating and optimising coach learning opportunities (Culver & Trudel, 2006) Although cognizant of the weaknesses of formalised mentoring (i e time, motivation, commitment), volunteer coaches acknowledged that mentoring required a degree of formality so that participants could acquire the 'tools to realise and recognise', before then embarking on the mentoring process

- **How do the findings inform views about the potential for mentoring to underpin coach professional development?**

This study found that coaches' participation in mentoring was a condition of what Day & Sachs (2004) have called *"situatedness in time"* (p 224) Coach mentoring was career-stage sensitive and required time and space as well as functional conditions that also changed with time At the same time, the coach learner operated within an environment that created a context that impacted upon learning. Critically, volunteer coaches belonged to multiple social environments, each one culturally constituted, and which impacted on coaches' disposition towards mentoring. Coach mentoring therefore needs to be situated in an individual's personal biography, because the learning process is characterised by individual interpretation, and the act of interpretation is embodied by the learner's background

In Chapter Two of this thesis, professional practice was described as the process of changing existing situations into preferred ones (Glaser, 1999) However, for the individual practitioner, the ability to undergo this process sometimes requires some form of assisted guidance from which to guide enquiry, establish context and meaning, and promote the advancement professional practice It was interesting to note that volunteer coaches identified both formal and informal, mediated sites as sources of coach development Where professional learning and professional knowledge construction are acknowledged as complex, intimidating and consuming, evidence from this study suggests a central role for a competent and dedicated mentor in supporting coach professional development

In summary, this study claims to have made an original contribution to knowledge by examining in-depth the formalised mentoring programme of a County Sports Partnership The study used a longitudinal case study approach, and adopted a situated learning perspective in addressing mentoring relationships (i e. coach/mentor, mentoring process, and environment) Moreover, the study added another dimension to its analytical framework by drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of social learning, and re-focusing on how coaches' conceptualisations of mentoring were shaped by individual interpretation, and located within wider fields' of social practice

Despite the call from researchers (Cassidy & Rossi, 2004; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006, Jones *et al*, 2009), there would still appear to be a lack of empirical evidence on interventions *in* and evaluations *of* mentoring as a learning strategy in coach learning Finally, by analysing data using a constructivist version of Ground Theory Method, the study claims to have made a distinctive and original contribution to the existing literature in coaching The subsequent section outlines the implications and recommendations this study has for practice and future research

9.3 Implications and Recommendations

As described in Chapter One, the findings from this study cannot be generalised Indeed, to do so would go against the epistemological tenets of the interpretive paradigm which cites the validity of 'local interpretation' (Thomas, 2002). Nevertheless, it is hoped that the study offers possibilities for coaches in similar contexts relate to the findings and to examine their own actions and situations Further, the study presents findings that might help coach educators and policy makers understand the challenges, and opportunities, afforded by formalised mentoring as a learning strategy with volunteer coaches

Implications for practice

The main implication from this study is linked to programme design and outcomes Formalised mentoring with volunteer coaches needs to be clear about the assumptions around learning that inform it, and what the objectives of any formalised programme might be For instance, an indication of a healthy and productive mentoring relationship is one in which learning progression is palpable, impact on practice is evident, and the novice moves from high dependence to autonomy and self-reliance (Gilles & Wilson, 2004, Knowles *et al*, 2006) Indeed, it could be argued that a key function of mentoring in coach learning is to help coaches develop their cognitive skills in progressing towards an increasingly autonomous/expert position For instance, support and develop the novice coach's ability to contextualise problems, underpin their actions by reference to theoretical concepts and professional knowledge, and have rich and well-organised mental networks Subsequently, it might be more valuable to conceptualise the mentor as a 'cognitive coach', where the mentor is a catalyst for developing knowledge in reflective thinking, cognitive development, and problem solving As a result, the mentor is a reflective practitioner who is an expert problem-solver capable of helping novices to

develop the same capacities, and, in doing so, help the novice become an autonomous and independent problem solver (Barnett, 1995)

The use of a cognitive approach to mentoring programmes also yields the possibility of identifying learning outcomes, which would be helpful in measuring the impact of mentoring It would seem important that both researchers and policy makers identify how coaches proceed to use their personal agency in interpreting and internalizing communication from their mentors An example of a diagnostic tool that could be used to capture the learning outcomes of the mentoring relationship is derived from the works of Costa & Garmston's (1994), who suggest the following 'checklist' in evaluating how participants proceed to use their new knowledge.

- Increased self -efficacy in imposing themselves on the situation
- Flexibility in addressing a multiplicity of challenges
- Increasing an empowering approach to self improvement
- Awakening or clarifying ones consciousness in relation to beliefs, values and actions
- Adopting an interdependent approach in working with others in seeking solutions and achieving common goals

The second implication refers to findings reported in Chapter Four which described incoherent and diametric role expectations, resulting in learning interactions that were unsatisfying, unfulfilling and unsustainable, both mentors and coaches were unsure of what was expected of them, and what they were trying to achieve It could be suggested that a formal mentoring programme requires a lead-in phase in preparation for the mentoring process Put another way, both mentors and coaches needed to be primed for mentoring In the literature, Moon (1999) has addressed this through what she has termed, 'pre-work' in relation to professional development activities The function of pre-work is twofold first, encourages reflection in advance of the programme, and secondly, pre-work, serves to *"bring to mind what is already known"* (p 184) Data from the study acknowledged how coaches' conceptualisations of mentoring were shaped by individual interpretation, and located within wider fields' of social practice This act of interpretation shaped, directed and brought in to focus was important to coaches as they engaged with mentoring As described in other studies (Cushion *et al ,* 2003), these

experiences need to be elevated and considered before engaging with any learning activity

Thirdly, findings pointed to the requisite skill set needed by both mentor and coach in optimising the learning potential of mentoring Actions, such as managing transitions (i e knowledge from occupational workplace to coaching) and decision making, which may be familiar to the mentor, will need to be made explicit to the mentee (Gilles & Wilson, 2004) Such lucidity and transparency in communicating a reflexive account (a form of social knowledge production) of personal practice may not come easily to the mentor At the very least, it would seem that such aptitude requires practice because as Knowles *et al*, (2006) have argued, *"the quality of the mentor will often determine the quality of the experience"* (p 175) Interestingly both Edwards & Protheroe (2004) and Jones (2001) point out that mentors in their studies were doing what they thought their role required, i e helping the mentee specifically to manage pupil performance and cover the curriculum rather than to facilitate mentees more broadly as learners Subsequently, researchers and policy makers need to recognise that mentoring is developmental, it evolves Therefore mentors need dedicated time and resources Further, if mentoring is a co-learning activity, then both mentors and mentees must be part of the planning process Typically, each group is prepared and supported initially in separate preparation programmes, it might be suggested that when appropriate, both groups are combined to negotiate and support mentoring, and therefore create the start of a community of practice

Finally, findings from the study suggest that there is a need to re-conceptualise coach mentoring in ways that differ from 'borrowed' formal models with quantifiable cost-benefit outcomes (Singh, 2002) Instead of traditional coach mentoring schemes that conceive mentoring through a dyadic relationship between mentor and novice, the findings from this study suggest that coach mentoring should be located within a community model that can maximise professional learning in a shared and sustained social network A community of practice framework recognises a community identity that, in turn, shapes the identities of its members, and such community exists because participation has value to its members Such a community and its 'core values' are shaped by organisational culture and are perceived to be a more sustainable model (Singh *et al*, 2002) It is, perhaps, this latter model that has potential in conceptualising

mentoring programmes in sports coaching because of the isolated and voluntary nature of the vast majority of coaches in the UK

Future Research

There are four main areas for future research. The first is to investigate volunteer coach mentoring across a range of other sports partnerships to see if mentoring experiences are indicative across different coaching populations In this way it would be possible to compare and contrast mentoring experiences between different sports and different contexts. Second, and in terms of mentoring processes, to further investigate the pedagogy between mentor and coach For example, drawing on the work of Coombes & Fletcher (2004), to examine the use of critical thinking scaffolds, integrated into mentoring, in developing coaching skills such as creativity and reflective learning A third area of research might investigate the application of different conceptual approaches to learning (e g Adult Learning Theory) that might underpin mentoring training and design A fourth area of research is to build on this study's contribution to knowledge by further examining the potential of network and community mentoring to further engage volunteer coaches in coach learning Finally, there is a need to examine how formalised mentoring impacts upon coaching practice, and specifically, the development and learning of athletes

Concluding Thoughts

The use of formalised mentoring as a learning strategy with the volunteer coaches has potential Yet, where the programme design was conceived through traditional mentoring dyads, mentoring relationships became unsustainable However, where mentoring relationship were grounded in the practice and relationship of coaches as situated in their clubs, mentoring offered potentially rich source of collegial coach development The place of social reflective conversations with a skilled mentor or mentors in a supportive community of practice went some way towards bridging the perceived limitations of formalised mentoring Utilising context based mentoring, and numerous opportunities for reflection, offers the possibility for national governing bodies to transform coach education from *"merely learning in situ, to learning in practice"* (Williams et al, 2004, p 59) The challenge for coach educators is to capture the essence of communities of practice in pursuit of a dynamic and developing coaching pedagogy for coach education programmes.

Appendices

Appendix 1

ETHICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Loughborough University

Ethical Clearance Checklist
(TO BE COMPLETED FOR *ALL* INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS)

All staff wishing to conduct an investigation involving human participants in order to collect new data in either their research or teaching activities, and supervisors of students who wish to employ such techniques are required to complete this checklist before commencement It may be necessary upon completion of this checklist for investigators to submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee. Where necessary, official approval from the Ethical Advisory Committee should be obtained *before* the research is commenced This should take no longer than one month

IF YOUR RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED OFF CAMPUS AND ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR YOUR STUDY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY AN EXTERNAL ETHICS COMMITTEE, YOU MAY NOT NEED TO SEEK FULL APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY ETHICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE. HOWEVER YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL FROM THE EXTERNAL ETHICS COMMITTEE AND THE TERMS ON WHICH THIS APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED.

If you believe this statement applies to your research, please contact the Secretary of the Ethical Advisory Committee for confirmation.

IF YOUR RESEARCH IS TRANSFERRING INTO LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY AND APPROVAL WAS OBTAINED FROM YOUR ORIGINATING INSTITUTION, THERE IS A REQUIREMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE APPROVALS ARE IN PLACE.

If you believe this statement applies to your research, please contact the Secretary of the Ethical Advisory Committee with evidence of former approval and the terms on which this approval has been granted

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATORS TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS APPROPRIATE INSURANCE COVER FOR THEIR INVESTIGATION.

If you are at all unsure about whether or not your study is covered, please contact the Finance Office to check.

Name and Status of Senior Investigators (Research Grade II and above):
(Please underline responsible investigator where appropriate)

Kathleen Armour   .   .   .   .

                       ....

Department: Sport and Exercise Science

Name and Status of Other Investigators:

Mark Griffiths (part time PhD student) .. . .
. . . .

Department

Title of Investigation

Formalised Mentoring as a Professional Learning Strategy for Volunteer Sports Coaches

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Section A· Investigators

	Yes/No	
Do investigators have previous experience of, and/or adequate training in, the methods employed?	Yes	No**
Will junior researchers/students be under the direct supervision of an experienced member of staff?	Yes	No**
Will junior researchers/students be expected to undertake physically invasive procedures (not covered by a generic protocol) during the course of the research?	Yes**	No
Are researchers in a position of direct authority with regard to participants (eg academic staff using student participants, sports coaches using his/her athletes in training)?	Yes**	No

** If you ONLY select answers marked **, please submit your completed Ethical Advisory Checklist accompanied by a statement covering how you intend to manage the issues (indicated by selecting a ** answer) to the Ethical Advisory Committee

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Section B Participants

Vulnerable Groups
Will participants be knowingly recruited from one or more of the following vulnerable groups?

	Yes	No
Children under 18 years of age (please refer to <u>published guidelines</u>)	Yes*	No
People over 65 years of age	Yes*	No
Pregnant women	Yes*	No
People with mental illness	Yes*	No
Prisoners/Detained persons	Yes*	No
Other vulnerable group (please specify _____)	Yes*	No

Chaperoning Participants

If appropriate, eg studies which involve vulnerable participants, taking physical measures or intrusion of participants' privacy

Will participants be chaperoned by more than one investigator at all times?	Yes	No ᵏ	N/A
Will at least one investigator of the same sex as the participant(s) be present throughout the investigation?	Yes	No*	N/A
Will participants be visited at home?	Yes*	No	N/A

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee.
If you have selected N/A please provide a statement in the space below explaining why the chaperoning arrangements are not applicable to your research proposal. **Participants are adult sports coaches that have volunteered to participate in the study.**

Advice to Participants following the investigation

Investigators have a duty of care to participants   When planning research, investigators should consider what, if any, arrangements are needed to inform participants (or those legally responsible for the participants) of any health related (or other) problems previously unrecognised in the participant. This is particularly important if it is believed that by not doing so the participants well being is endangered   Investigators should consider whether or not it is appropriate to recommend that participants (or those legally responsible for the participants) seek qualified professional advice, but should not offer this advice personally   Investigators should familiarise themselves with the guidelines of professional bodies associated with their research

Section C   Methodology/Procedures

To the best of your knowledge, please indicate whether the proposed study·

Involves taking bodily samples (please refer to published guidelines)	Yes †	No
Involves procedures which are likely to cause physical, psychological, social or emotional distress to participants	Yes †	No
Is designed to be challenging physically or psychologically in any way (includes any study involving physical exercise)	Yes †	No
Exposes participants to risks or distress greater than those encountered in their normal lifestyle	Yes*	No
Involves collection of body secretions by invasive methods	Yes*	No
Prescribes intake of compounds additional to daily diet or other dietary manipulation/supplementation	Yes*	No
Involves testing new equipment	Yes*	No
Involves pharmaceutical drugs (please refer to published guidelines)	Yes*	No

Involves use of radiation (please refer to <u>published guidelines</u> Investigators should contact the University's Radiological Protection Officer before commencing any research which exposes participants to ionising radiation – e g x-rays)	Yes †	No
Involves use of hazardous materials (please refer to <u>published guidelines</u>)	Yes*	No
Assists/alters the process of conception in any way	Yes*	No
Involves methods of contraception	Yes*	No
Involves genetic engineering	Yes*	No

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee
† If the procedure is covered by an existing generic protocol, please insert reference number here __   If the procedure is not covered by an existing generic protocol, please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

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Section D Observation/Recording

| Does the study involve observation and/or recording of participants? If yes please complete the rest of section D | Yes | No |
| Will those being observed and/or recorded be informed that the observation and/or recording will take place? | Yes | No * |

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

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Section E Consent and Deception

| Will participants give informed consent‡ freely? | Yes | No* |

If yes please complete the *Informed Consent* section below
*If no, please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee
‡Note where it is impractical to gain individual consent from every participant, it is acceptable to allow individual participants to "opt out" rather than "opt in"

Informed Consent

| Will participants be fully informed of the objectives of the investigation and all details disclosed (preferably at the start of the study but where this would interfere with the study, at the end)? | Yes | No* |
| Will participants be fully informed of the use of the data collected (including, where applicable, any intellectual property arising from the research)? | Yes | No* |

For children under the age of 18 or participants who have impairment of understanding or communication·

- will consent be obtained (either in writing or by some other means)?	Yes	No*	N/A
- will consent be obtained from parents or other suitable person?	Yes	No×	N/A
- will they be informed that they have the right to withdraw regardless of parental/ guardian consent?	Yes	No*	N/A
For investigations conducted in schools, will approval be gained in advance from the Head-teacher and/or the Director of Education of the appropriate Local Education Authority?	Yes	No*	N/A
For detained persons, members of the armed forces, employees, students and other persons judged to be under duress, will care be taken over gaining freely informed consent?	Yes	No*	N/A

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

Does the study involve deception of participants (ie withholding of information or the misleading of participants) which could potentially harm or exploit participants?	Yes	No

If yes please complete the *Deception* section below

Deception

Is deception an unavoidable part of the study?	Yes	No*
Will participants be de-briefed and the true object of the research revealed at the earliest stage upon completion of the study?	Yes	No*
Has consideration been given on the way that participants will react to the withholding of information or deliberate deception?	Yes	No*

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

Section F· Withdrawal

Will participants be informed of their right to withdraw from the investigation at any time and to require their own data to be destroyed?	Yes	No*

* Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

Section G Storage of Data and Confidentiality

Please see University guidance on <u>Data Collection and Storage</u>

Will all information on participants be treated as confidential and not identifiable unless agreed otherwise in advance, and subject to the requirements of law?	Yes	No*

Will storage of data comply with the Data Protection Act 1998? (Please refer to <u>published guidelines</u>)	Yes / No*
Will any video/audio recording of participants be kept in a secure place and not released for use by third parties?	Yes / No†
Will video/audio recordings be destroyed within six years of the completion of the investigation?	Yes / No*

> * Please submit a full application to the Ethical Advisory Committee

---

Section H Incentives

Have incentives (other than those contractually agreed, salaries or basic expenses) been offered to the investigator to conduct the investigation?	Yes** / No
Will incentives (other than basic expenses) be offered to potential participants as an inducement to participate in the investigation?	Yes** / No

> ** If you ONLY select answers marked **, please submit your completed Ethical Advisory Checklist accompanied by a statement covering how you intend to manage the issues (indicated by selecting a ** answer) to the Ethical Advisory Committee

---

Compliance with Ethical Principles
If you have completed the checklist to the best of your knowledge without selecting an answer marked with * or † your investigation is deemed to conform with the ethical checkpoints and you do not need to seek formal approval from the University's Ethical Advisory Committee

Please sign the declaration below, and lodge the completed checklist with your Head of Department or his/her nominee

Declaration
I have read the University's Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Participants.
I confirm that the above named investigation complies with published codes of conduct, ethical principles and guidelines of professional bodies associated with my research discipline.

Signature of Responsible Investigator   . .   . .

Signature of Student (if appropriate)   .   .

Signature of Head of Department or his/her nominee ..   ..

                                                    .   .. .

Date   .   .. .   .

If the provision for Compliance with Ethical Principles does not apply, please proceed to the *Guidance from Ethical Advisory Committee* section below

Guidance from Ethical Advisory Committee

If, upon completion of the checklist you have ONLY selected answers marked **, please submit your completed Ethical Advisory Checklist accompanied by a statement covering how you intend to manage the issues (indicated by selecting a ** answer) to the Ethical Advisory Committee

If, upon completion of the checklist, you have selected an answer marked with * or † it is possible that an aspect of the proposed investigation does not conform to the ethical principles adopted by the University   Therefore you are requested to complete a full submission to the Ethical Advisory Committee   You should aim to complete the entire form in brief but need only provide specific detail on the questions which relate directly to the issues for which you have selected an answer marked * or † on the checklist   A copy of this checklist, signed by your Head of Department should accompany the full submission to the Ethical Advisory Committee   Please contact the Secretary if you have any queries about completion of the form   The relevant application form can be downloaded from the Committee's web page

Signature of Responsible Investigator

Signature of Student (if appropriate)

Signature of Head of Department or his/her nominee   .   .

Date   .   .

Appendix 2

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title. **Formalised Mentoring as a Professional Learning Strategy for Volunteer Sports Coaches**

_____

You are invited to take part in a research study Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to investigate coach learning from the interaction between volunteer mentors and coaches within a structured mentoring framework, and what is the potential for mentoring to enhance the professional learning of coaches?

2. Why have I been chosen ?

Your name has been put forward by key personnel from both your governing body and Sportcoach UK representatives It is felt that your contribution will add to our understanding and knowledge of the role of mentoring in improving coaching practice

3. Do I have to take part ?

The decision to take part in this study is entirely yours Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time You can also withdraw your data from any future analysis and/or publication, if you wish

4. What will happen to me if I take part ?

You will be asked to take part in a series of interviews, focus groups and conference days over the next 12/18 months Your decision of whether to participate or not in some/all of the activities is yours and yours only Likewise, interviews will only be tape-recorded with your permission, and you will have the choice of being taped or not

5. What are the possible benefits of taking part ?

The study is designed to promote a better understanding of the role of a structured mentoring programme in enhancing coaching practice It may have implications for coach education and continuous professional development in supporting sports coaches

6. Will what I say in the study be kept confidential ?

Whatever you say to the principal researcher will stay confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study. For this reason all data collected will remain under lock and key in his secured office at the university and will only accessed by the researcher

7. Will the data I provide stay anonymous ?

Every possible effort is made to ensure the participants are not identified The principal researcher will not use names or identification text in the reporting and analysis of data

8. What will happen to the results of the research study ?

The results of the study will go towards the work of the principal researchers doctoral thesis Data from this will be included in research papers that will be submitted for publication to education and sports coaching journals

9 Who has reviewed the study ?

The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Loughborough University.

Appendix 3

<u>**Consent Form**</u>

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge

Have you:

		Yes	No
1	Read the information explaining the study ?	☐	☐
2	Had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study ?	☐	☐
3.	Received satisfactory answers to all your questions ?	☐	☐
4	Received enough information about the study ?	☐	☐

To whom have you spoken ?

_____

Do you understand:

That you are free to withdraw from the study and free to withdraw your data
from any future analysis and/or publication

	Yes	No
• At any time	☐	☐
• Without having to give a reason for withdrawing		

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in a study entitled

An analysis of mentoring within coach education as found in theory and practice.

- I understand the nature and purpose of the research
- I understand and acknowledge that the data I provide will remain **confidential** to
  the principal researcher who will use them for no other purpose other than
  research
- I understand that **anonymous** quotes from interviews may be used in a final
  report and/or publications related to this study
- I understand that the information I provide will only be used for the purpose set
  out in the information sheet, and my consent is conditional upon the principal
  investigator complying with his duties and obligations under the Data Protection
  Act (1998)

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Appendix 4. Mentoring Agreement
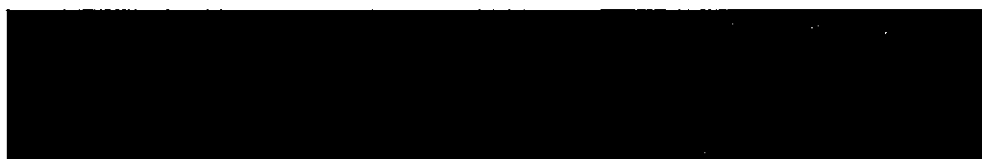
ACTIVE SPORTS

Mentoring Agreement

The mentor's task is to make each experience a learning experience   It is to help coaches discover how new experiences and knowledge relates to their current practice as coaches, an understanding of which can help to improve the coach

Experience → Experience

Description
Describe the experience

Action Plan
What will you do next time?

Conclusion
What are your options addressing this?

Evaluation/Analysis
What was good/bad about the experience and why?
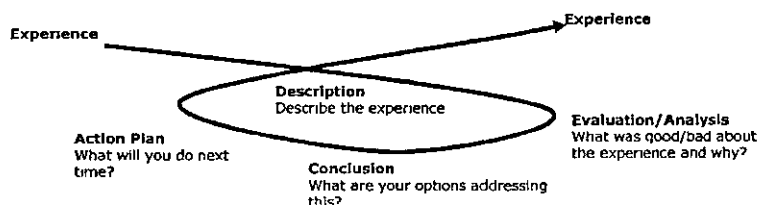
Please use consideration of the factors below to develop a mentoring agreement

| Mentor Name | ███████ | Signed | ██████ |
| Mentee Name | ███████ | Signed | *[signature]* |

Identified aims of mentee (from TNA / Personal Development Plan)

Improve goal setting in both training and games
Monitoring the progress of training programme /aims & objectives
Dealing with difficult players - to improve attitude

Mentees expectations of the Mentor

Responding to questions / queries

Mentors expectations on the Mentee

To see progress in identified aims

Date of Agreement   Date of Review *[handwritten]*

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Format of mentoring		
1-1 meetings	Y /(N)	Details (when, where, duration, etc)
Mentor observes Mentee	(Y)/ N	Details Observe session in Feb re' motivation
Mentee observes Mentor	(Y)/ N	Details Observe a match and discuss afterwards - ST to identify a date
Mentee & Mentor observe another coach or competition	(Y)/ N	Details Watch & analyse leading match - to be arranged by Mark Scott.
Additional Mentee training requirements identified	(Y)/ N	Detail Area of coaching model Dealing with difficult players.
General discussions i e to discuss issues that may arise	(Y)/ N	State format i e telephone / email, and guide rules I e convenient times, frequency, etc Telephone & email as required.

Appendix 5

<u>Coach mentoring – Phase 1 Questionnaire</u>

Name:_____   **Gender:** _____

DoB: _____   **Occupation:**_____

1   What sports are you presently coaching? (*please highlight*)

a   Football
b   Rugby
c   Hockey
d   Basketball
e   Tennis
f   Athletics
g   Gymnastics
h   Rugby
i   Other (please state)_____

2   Who are you presently coaching? (*team, club, organisation*)

3   At what level are you coaching? (*county U12, school team, club, recreational*)?

4   Highest coaching level qualification presently held and sport?

Leaders Award sport _____

Level 1   sport _____

Level 2   sport _____

Level 3   sport _____

Level 4   sport _____

List any coaching courses/workshops/seminars you have attended during the past 3 years?

Title of course   _____ Date attended _____

Title of course   _____ Date attended _____

Title of course   _____ Date attended _____

Title of course   _____ Date attended _____

Title of course   _____ Date attended _____

Title of course _____Date attended _____

Title of course _____Date attended _____

5   In attending these courses/workshops/seminars, where there any particular activities you thought were useful for your coaching? (*using case studies, observing with an experienced coach*)

_____

_____

_____

6   In attending these courses, any particular activities you didn't enjoy? (*eg paperwork*)

_____

_____

_____

7   Can you give any examples where you used information/knowledge from the course/s to help in your coaching?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8   What types of courses or workshops would you like to see being offered in the future?

_____

_____

_____

Mentoring

9   Have you met with your mentor? (*please highlight*)   Yes (*go to question 10*)

                                                                      No (*go to question 14*)

10   How many times have you met? (*please highlight*)

Face-to-face   telephone   email

1   1   1

2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4

11   Has contact with your mentor helped your coaching? (*please highlight*)

Yes (*go to question 12*)

No   (*go to question 13*)

12   If yes, what in particular have you found useful? (*activities, interpersonal communications*)

_____

_____

_____

_____

13   If no, why not?

_____

_____

_____

14   If you haven't met with your mentor, why not?

_____

_____

_____

15   If applicable, what goals or outcomes have you and your mentor set for the next 6 months?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Mark Griffiths

Appendix 6

<u>Mentoring Evaluation – Phase 3 Exit Questionnaire</u>

<u>Name</u> [   ]

<u>**Please highlight**</u>

1) Has participating in the programme been a positive experience?   Not at all   Limited   Very

If your answer was **not at all / limited**, what barriers/difficulties did you experience?

[   ]

2) Has the programme had an impact on your   <u>**Please circle**</u>

Technical knowledge (sport specific)   Not at all   Partial   Very

Professional effectiveness (generic coaching skills)   Not at all   Partial   Very

3) How satisfied have you been with:

Your one-on-one mentoring experience?   Not at all   Partial   Very

4) How comfortable have you been:

Asking your mentor/mentee questions?   Not at all   Partial   Very

Responding to questions from your mentor/mentee?   Not at all   Partial   Very

5) Please rate:
The quality of the "match" between you and your   Poor   Good
mentor/mentee?

6) Has your Coach/mentor experience affected your:

Self-confidence to coach in your sport?   Decreased   Partial   Increased

7) *Mentors only* – increased your self-perception of your ability   Decreased   Partial Increased
to help your mentee

What extra training would you need to enhance your
effectiveness as a mentor?

[   ]

8) What have you and your mentor/mentee discussed?

In the middle column, check each topic you have discussed In the right column, check the five topics that you have found most useful

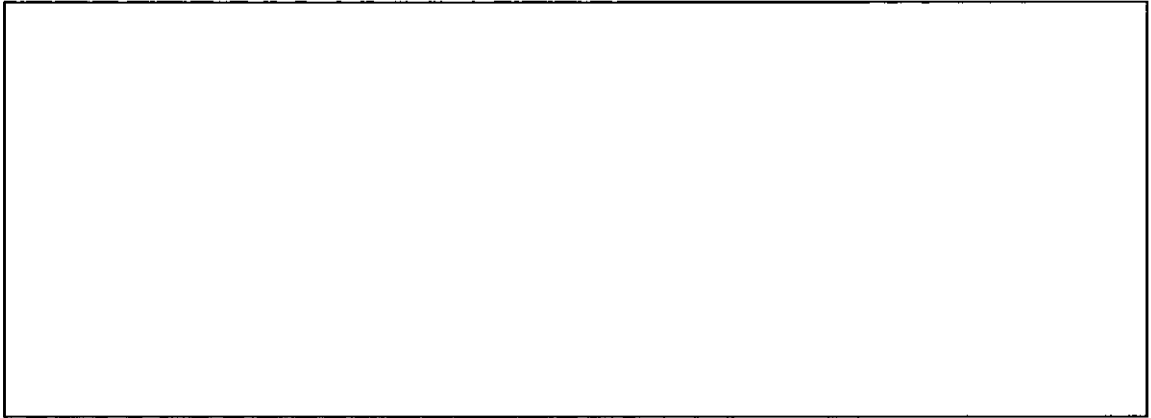|		Topics disc	Five most useful
1	Your backgrounds (education, interests, etc)		
2	Balancing coaching with other interests, family,etc		
3	Managing time, stress, or coaching demands (eg parents)		
4	Coaching qualifications		
5	Coaching environment, culture, values, environment		
6	Your future coaching plans (both mentor and mentee)		
7	Differences between coach education (courses attended) and practice		
8	Your reasons for participating in the mentoring programme		
9	Social stuff jokes, stories, personal news		
10	Sport specific (drills/game strategies)		
11	Other ???????		

9) Which of the following positive outcomes have you experienced?
(please check all that apply)

Encouragement and/or moral support from my mentor/mentee	
Networking, making contacts in coaching	
Better understanding of skills used by sports coaches	
Help in clarifying coaching plans	
Perspective on balancing coaching, career and family	
Advice about future coach education courses	
Increased self-confidence	
Increased enthusiasm for coaching	
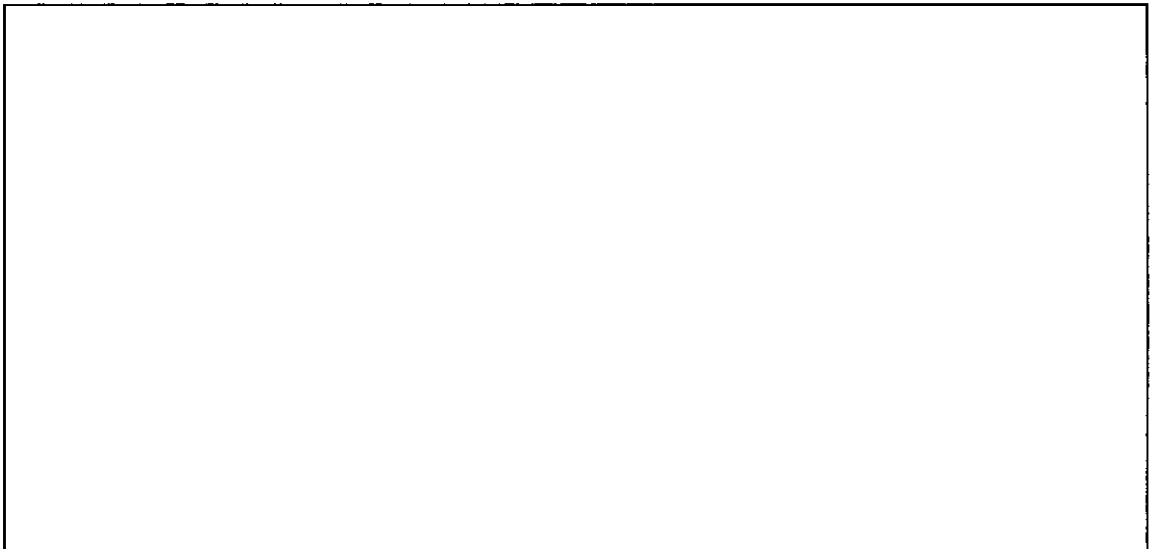
10) What are the most important characteristics of a good mentor
(please check the five most important with 1 being the most important and 5 the least important).

Good communication skills	
Strong sport specific knowledge (e g drills/techniques)	
Strong generic coaching knowledge	
Strong listening skills	
Respect	
Extensive background from your sport	
High level coaching qualifications from your governing body	
Good social skills	
Similar personality	
Other ? (please list)	

11) What has been the most valuable aspect of your mentoring experience?

12) What suggestions do you have for improving the mentoring programme?

Many thanks for your help and cooperation

Mark Griffiths

Appendix 7. Constructed Conceptual Categories

Conditions for coach learning				
Focused Codes	**Rendering reflection**	**Recognising the social learner**	**identifying take home value**	**Coaching identity**
Open Codes	Considering development trajectory, re-examining, exposed to different ideas and practices, developing self efficacy, reflecting on practice, seeing with new eyes, offering short cuts, identifying needs, recognising needs	Seeking out interactional opportunities, recognising learning by doing, explaining need for social exchanges, recognising different information sources, seeking out a welcoming environment, seeking out value added, one stop resource	Acting as a resource, bouncing ideas around, advice giver, recognising existing informal mentoring relationships, identifying mentoring role, identifying the interpersonal relationship, recognising the process, characterising the mentor as role model, acknowledging the prerequisites demanded of the role, helping to fill gaps in knowledge, temporal dimension, reciprocal benefits, accounting for motivation behind participation, learning, focus, commitment, clarity, elevated 'coaching' status, accounting for courses to have impact	accounting for motivation, challenging practice, deciding on cost-benefit, defining quality coaching, explaining feelings of enthusiasm, seeing the game differently, reasons for coaching, coaching personality, understanding role, having the confidence to go outside practice, appetitive for more

Specific dimensions Focus   greater effort
                             Clarity   reasons for participation
                             Commitment balancing work/personal/coaching
                             Duration: ongoing - fragmented
                             Engagement passive - active

Context : Under conditions where coaches commit to mentoring as a strategy for supporting and developing coach learning, and where they see relevance and impact to their practice, then

Action/Interaction strategies for seeing development
Coaches look for mentors who offer a "one stop resource" in supporting practice
Coaches actively seek out resources in supporting and developing practice
Coaches seek out interactional opportunities with other coaches

Negotiated Boundaries			
Focused Codes	Framing	Negotiating	Clarifying role expectations
Open Codes	Inspiring/guiding, hooking up, identifying the gaps, kick up the arse, inspiring to 'buy', red bull mentoring, guiding the process, using the mentor as a resource, conversations forged in practice, offering a different perspective, seeing the game differently, seeing mentor as a "safety net, offering alternative view	Negotiating opportunities in time, Negotiating observation, conveniently accessible content knowledge, negotiating opportunities, 'one stop' resource, lacking conceptualisation, "inspiring to buy", right opportunities at the right time	coach driven process, capturing impact, measuring impact, moving beyond the dyad, moving within CPD, opportunities where action follows interaction, building confidence, seeing the process differently

Specific dimensions: Intensity
Engagement
Focus

Context: Under circumstances whereby coaches agree to engage with a formalised mentoring programme, then their participation is characterised by a cognitive process framing, negotiating, clarifying

Action/Interaction strategies when negotiating boundaries of participation:
Boundaries of participation are continually negotiated throughout the duration of the mentoring relationship
Coaches look for a mentor who has the potential to inspire and guide
Both coaches and mentors actively evaluate the relationship in order to measure its impact on practice
If no transfer value is seen by either mentor or coach, then they will withdraw from the relationship

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Barriers to formalised mentoring						
Focused Codes	regarding mentoring as an "expensive luxury	Mentoring competency	Interpersonal	Formal v informal	Time	Learning boundaries
Open Codes	explaining for workload, regarding mentoring as an "expensive luxury", making mentoring relevant, seeing the value, action through guilt, focusing resources	recalling negative experience of previous CPD activities, describing cultural differences, where expectations were not met, lacking appropriately qualified mentors	Finding similar personality, describing cultural differences, recognising comparable personalities	Seeking accessible resources, recognising local coaching network, sharing practice	explaining lack of time, balancing commitments, inclination to make time,	identifying practical barriers, keeping mentoring local, transition from player to coach

Specific dimensions: engagement

Context: Where coaches and mentors participated in a formalised mentoring programme, they were faced with number of barriers that need to be navigated

Action/Interaction strategies:
Coaches and mentors conceptualise the role of mentoring in relation to their coaching practice
Coaches and mentors reconcile between previous experiences of CPD experiences
Coaches and mentors seek out 'local' mentoring in overcoming barriers such as time and money

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