<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title and Abstract (5%)</strong></td>
<td>Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and literature review (25%)</strong></td>
<td>To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods and Research Design (15%)</strong></td>
<td>To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results and Analysis (15%)</strong></td>
<td>To include: description and justification of data treatment/data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion and Conclusions (30%)</strong></td>
<td>To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation (10%)</strong></td>
<td>To include: academic writing style; depth, scope and accuracy of referencing in the text and final reference list; clarity in organisation, formatting and visual presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This form should be used for both quantitative and qualitative dissertations. The descriptors associated with both quantitative and qualitative dissertations should be referred to by both students and markers.

2 There is scope within qualitative dissertations for the RESULTS and DISCUSSION sections to be presented as a combined section followed by an appropriate CONCLUSION. The mark distribution and criteria across these two sections should be aggregated in those circumstances.
COACH EDUCATION IN FIELD HOCKEY: A CRITIQUE

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Sports Coaching)

SAMUEL D MORRIS

st20000468
COACH EDUCATION IN FIELD HOCKEY: A CRITIQUE
Certificate of student
By submitting this document, I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, that all quotations from books and journals have been acknowledged, and that the word count given below is a true and accurate record of the words contained (omitting contents pages, acknowledgements, indices, tables, figures, plates, reference list and appendices).

Word count: 11,369
Name: Samuel D Morris
Date: 2014/03/20

Certificate of Dissertation Supervisor responsible
I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's own effort.
I have received dissertation verification information from this student

Name: 
Date: 

Notes:
The University owns the right to reprint all or part of this document.
Table of Contents

Table of Contents i
Acknowledgements iii
Abstract iv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction 2
1.2 Background of Coaching and Coach Education 2
1.3 Rationale 3
1.4 Aims and Objectives 4
1.5 Outline of Thesis 5
  1.5.1 Chapter One: Introduction 5
  1.5.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review 5
  1.5.3 Chapter Three: Methodology 5
  1.5.4 Chapter Four: Results and Discussion 6
  1.5.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion 6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction 8
2.2 What is learning? 8
2.3 Importance of Coaching in Hockey 8
2.4 Coach Specific Education 9
2.5 Coach Education in Hockey 11
2.6 Informal and Formal Coach Education 12
2.7 Existing Critique into Coach Education 14
2.8 Need for Improved Coaching in Hockey 14
2.9 Justification for the Study 15
2.10 Summary of Existing Research 17

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants 19
3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods 19
3.3 Qualitative Research Methods 20
3.4 Justification for Qualitative Research 21
3.5 Research Structure 21
3.6 Interview Guide 22
3.7 Procedure 23
3.8 Data Analysis 23
3.9 Reliability and Validity 24
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction 26
4.2 Impact of Coach Education Programmes upon the Coach 27
   4.2.1 Course Structure 27
   4.2.2 Theoretical and Practical Learning 28
   4.2.3 The Importance of Coach Educators 33
   4.2.4 Summary of the Impact of Coach Education Programmes upon the Coach 35
4.3 Improving and Developing the Current Programmes 35
   4.3.1 Improving the Course Structure and Delivery 35
   4.3.2 Improving the Course Content 37
   4.3.3 Summary of Improvements and Developments to Coach Education 38
4.4 Strengths, Limitations and Further Research 39

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion 41
References 44

APPENDICES

A. Interview Questions A-1
B. Informed Consent Form A-2
C. Participant Information Form A-3
D. Ethical Approval Letter A-5
Acknowledgements

I would like to express thanks to my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Neil Hennessey, for his support throughout this process and making this research project possible. I have great appreciation and respect for his academic knowledge and amiable nature; I thank him for all of his help.

I would also like to express my utmost gratitude to my friends and family for their continued support throughout my university career.

Finally, I would like to thank the coaches’ who gave up their time to take part in this study.
Abstract

The aims of the study were to provide an insight into coach education programmes in hockey. Previous research had highlighted strengths and weaknesses of formal and informal coach education practices, the literature outlined the requirements of successful coaching, emphasising the high level of understanding and competency required to be an efficient coach. The study consisted of five semi structured interviews with coaches who had been through NGB coach education qualification in hockey, and who were currently active hockey coaches at the time of the study. Participants exposed positive and negative experiences of coach education and their justification for these opinions. Key findings suggest that (i) coach education courses were lacking relevant information; they were seen as being generic and unspecific, there was a calling from the coaches for a more hockey specific coach education experience, (ii) that the coach educators play a crucially important role in the coach education delivery and as a direct result of this, the success of the course, (iii) coach education courses in hockey are seen as an integral and necessary part of a coaches development. Findings establish that significant changes should be made to the course content and course delivery, eradicating the existing issues to enable a more hockey specific, reality relevant coach education experience, ultimately resulting in improved coaching effectiveness throughout the game leading to consistently increased levels of performance.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter is set out to provide the reader with an outline of the thesis of the study. It shall provide background information on the importance of coach education and its role in hockey. It shall then discuss the research aims and objectives for the study.

1.2 Background of Coaching and Coach Education

‘The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts.’

(Côté and Gilbert, 2009, p. 316)

Côté and Gilbert (2009) define the role of a coach and the requirements that a coach is obliged to fulfil if they are to be successful in their craft. Coaching is seen as vitally important in modern sport, throughout all levels of the sporting spectrum, from grass-roots to elite level. The role of a coach is to inspire and develop athletes on a technical and tactical level (Potrac., Gilbert. and Denison, 2013). The role of a coach can vary greatly depending on a range of factors; level of performance, sport in question, community of practice, coach-athlete relationship. (Cassidy., Jones and Potrac, 2009; Côté and Gilbert, 2009; Cushion and Jones, 2001; Cushion., Armour and Jones, 2003; Jones., Armour and Potrac, 2004). Coaching as an academic culture has until recently, been the focus of very little research and remains ill-defined (Day, 2010; Jones, 2006; Phillips, 2000; Taylor and Garratt, 2013).

As established, the concept of the coaching process is now seen as crucial for sport at all levels. Lyle (2002) suggests how coaching is a ‘process’ and henceforth must follow a systematically logical route if a sought after outcome is to be reached. However, Jones and Wallace (2005) propose that for this systematically logical route to be established and followed then the coaching process requires modelling, they
argue that this modelling is unable to take place due to the complex and ambiguous nature of the coaching process.

The coaching process has become attracted to oversimplified and unrealistic models (Jones and Kingston, 2013; Jones et al., 2004). These oversimplified models fail to fully encompass the complexity and ambiguity of the coaching process; hence these models are unable to educate coaches on the real life nature of coaching practice, and aid coaches’ preparations for coaching situations effectively and efficiently. Coaches who attempt to use these models in their coaching practice are left unprepared as their education has become decontextualised, leaving the coach unable to deal with the whole coaching situation they are confronted with, therefore they are left unable to fulfil their obligatory roles as suggested by Potrac et al. (2013) and Côté and Gilbert (2009).

It has been argued that yet to be developed is a coach education conceptual framework which fully encompasses the complex reality of the coaching process in which coaches work. This has largely contributed to the dissatisfaction of coaches with current professional coach education programmes (Jones, 2000; Jones, 2006; Gilbert and Trudel, 2006). Generally, existing research suggests that coach education programmes should reduce focus on generic teaching and replicating existing coaching practice of successful others, instead it is suggested that these programmes of formal coach education should place greater impetus on the coach individually, providing them with the tools to increase and improve their own methods and coaching philosophies (Jones, 2006; Cassidy., Jones and Potrac, 2004).

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this study comes from the demand for increased and improved understanding of the coach education process, specifically its relevance to the hockey environment. The contentious and varied issues, as mentioned above,
with the current coach education system lead to the current study. The increasing demands for improved playing standards in hockey have provided a basis for this study. The study is a critique of coach education in hockey, drawing on the experiences of coaches currently working within the sport, focussing on their perceptions of the coach education programme, looking at the strengths and weaknesses, developing these into the advancements and improvements required to establish and increase understanding of how these programs can improve a coach in the sport of hockey.

The study does not set out to answer a specific research question; its exploratory nature is guided and directed by a desire and appreciation for increased and improved understanding of a coach’s roles and responsibilities in hockey.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

Coach education programmes are constantly changing and adapting to the demands of the sporting environment, it is important to look discover and acknowledge the specific elements to improve to allow hockey coaches to maximise their learning potential. The aim of this critical analysis is to gain a greater understanding of the complexity of coach learning and how it can most efficiently be adapted to the sport of hockey to meet the ever changing demands of hockey performance.

It is important to assess the current development pathway for hockey coaches, its relevance to the sport and suitability to learner coaches. The following aims and objectives have been realised through problematising the existing issues of coach education apparent through current research, there is a need to understand:

- The experiences of a hockey coach through coach education programmes
- The strengths and weaknesses of these coaches from the coaches’ point of view
• The effect coach education programmes have on the development of a hockey coach
• Areas of improvement for the coach education pathway in hockey

1.5 Outline of Thesis

1.5.1 Chapter 1: Introduction
In this chapter the background of coach education has been examined. The need for high quality coach education in hockey has been introduced alongside the importance of understanding the need for an appreciation for the game and the requirements for a hockey specific programme. A background to coach education in hockey has been presented; it outlines the importance of a solid coach education framework to enable coaches to develop along with the modern game.

The aims and objectives of the study have been developed from the results of existing research and presented clearly. An outline of the studies structure has been presented and shall be followed throughout this research project.

1.5.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review
In this chapter an in depth discussion into the findings of existing research shall be presented. The theories and developments of the coaching process and the role of coach education shall be presented and discussed. The key theorists and researchers shall be introduced and their work will be used to build a picture portraying the justification for the research project. The issues within coach learning shall be articulated and related to the ambiguous and complex nature of the coaching process.

1.5.3 Chapter 3: Methodology
This chapter shall portray the methodological outline of the study. The methodology chapter shall take into account possible research methods that can be used in the study; it will present reasoning and justification for the chosen methods.
The chapter shall justify participant sampling and data collection methods chosen. It shall then discuss the issues associated within the chosen methods to be used for the research project, addressing these issues with valid and suitable solutions, outlining the research process from start to finish.

1.5.4 Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter shall present an overview of the interviews; it shall be supported with appropriate literature to justify the findings of the study. The chapter shall take on an exploratory narrative where findings shall be presented and then discussed and displayed alongside justifying evidence. Participants share their views on their experiences, their opinions on the course strengths and weaknesses and their own suggestions on how the coach education can be improved.

The chapter culminates by discussing the limitations of the study; this includes strengths, weaknesses of and unforeseen occurrences which affected the research process.

1.5.5 Conclusion

This concluding chapter draws together the findings of the study and displaying a summary of the findings. It then looks towards future research potential for the study to increase knowledge in the subject area of coach education in hockey. Culminating in an overview of the results of the study, it brings together the shared ideas and discoveries from the study, the conclusion draws together the findings to summarise the action potential for coach education in hockey.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Introduction

Coach education has been seen as a vital area of research over the last half century, in recent years many researchers have begun to provide work on learning theory in the sporting environment. It is important to look at this existing literature to understand how coaches learn and develop.

2.2 What is Learning?

Learning is defined as a process that leads to a change in a learner's disposition and capabilities that can be reflected in behaviour (Gagne, 1985). Learning as a sports coach can be formal or informal. Formal learning is a term used to describe certified learning; this is normally seen to occur in the form of an official coaching course run by the sport's governing body. Informal learning is the term used to describe a coach’s learning through experience, observation and practice. (Cushion et al., 2003). This practice may be coaching itself or reflecting on their own or another coach's performance, methods and actions. Coach development is seen as an all-encompassing term that refers to the process leading towards enhanced expertise. This learning occurs from accessing a range of opportunities (informal to formal) (Mallett., Trudel., Lyle and Rynne, 2009). The effectiveness of formal and informal coach education and their place in the coach education system is something that is constantly at the forefront of the coaching world, it is of vital importance and must be shown great interest for it to be able to move forward, hence there is a necessity for coach education to be analysed and any improvements possible taken on board and amended.

2.3 Importance of Coaching in Hockey

Field hockey or hockey is a sport played by men and women, young and old. A speedy, technical team sport governed by the Federation of International Hockey (FIH). Hockey is played in over 120 countries (Anders and Myers, 2008). Hockey is a
hugely popular sport across the world; hence it is gaining ever increasing media attention. As the profile of the sport increases it becomes ever more important to look at the coach education. This process is at the heart of the sport, this importance further embeds the necessity to gain a greater understanding of how further improvements can be made to further facilitate the growth and success of hockey. The 21st century, with its 24-hour television sport channels and mass media sporting events (such as the Olympics and the World Cup of Association Football) staged in vast sports arenas before global audiences, it is difficult to imagine that professional sport is in historical terms a comparatively new phenomenon (Rowe, 2008).

2.4 Coach Specific Education

Coach education is achieved primarily through the form of coaching qualifications. These are gained by undertaking a specific course in the given sport. Mallett et al. (2009) state that in the modern era nations are expected to establish large-scale national coach education programs in order to contribute to the development of coaching as a profession and to certify or accredit coaches. Coaching courses in the United Kingdom are mainly controlled under the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC). The UKCC is a development framework that supports the development, endorsement and continuous improvement of governing body of sport coach education programmes (Sports Coach UK, 2013). Sports Coach UK is a government scheme aiming to improve coaching in the UK and its platform for the future.

Coach education can be considered a specific sub-set of a broader process of coach learning, which is likely to encompass a range of learning experiences (Mallett et al., 2009). Cushion (2007) states that coaching is not something that is merely delivered, but is a dynamic social activity that vigorously engages coach and athlete. The coaching process has been found to be complex and ambiguous (Jones, 2006;
Jones & Wallace, 2005; Cushion, 2007; and Cushion et al., 2003). Cushion (2007) states how the complexity of the coaching process has not been acknowledged or sufficiently understood before attempting to produce models and consequently, “oversimplification of the phenomenon and over precision of prescriptions is the unfortunate price paid” (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 123). He describes how the outcome is that models have been too simplistic and fails to fully encompass coaching practice; hence their contribution to coaching has been useful though limited. These models, often used in formal coach education, are seen by Cushion to be of limited use due to their inability to fully encompass the complexity and ambiguous nature of the coaching process.

It is important to understand the importance of the role of the coach in hockey, henceforth, the importance of the coach education system and providing the coach with the required knowledge. Jones and Wallace (2005) discuss the concept of modelling the coaching process, they display a lack of faith in the idea due to the complications caused trying to model a practice which in reality is so greatly ambiguous and ever changing. They state that “no comprehensive framework currently exists which represents the complex reality within which coaches work and indicates how they can operate better within it” (p. 123). Within coach education research there is reoccurring patterns which focuses on how the ambiguity and complexity factors which are so inherently present in the coaching process being ‘lost to view’ to coaching educators. The way that this reoccurs throughout existing research raises potential problematic areas within the research area. Jones and Wallace (2005) discuss how the time has come when researchers should seek to engage in knowledge-for-understanding to enable a more sophisticated grasp on the many complexities and problems within the ever changing nature of the coaching process. They discuss how this knowledge would allow for foundations from which
knowledge-for-action and instrumentalist projects would enable for greater guidance, through practical coaching and through this, enabling greater sporting success to be achieved.

Cropley, Hanton, Miles and Niven (2010) point toward reflection and a coaches’ experience of informal coach education, being a key factor in the development of a coaches knowledge. They characterise reflective practice as being made up of complex and skilled cognitive processes which are fundamentally determined and lead by the individual involved. A process which should be instigated through the use of deliberate questioning of actions as well as the questioning of the individuals beliefs and values which are associated with the individual’s experience. These questions should be asked and answered with a view to develop existing knowledge in a way which should lead to change and development. The practice of reflection as a tool for learning in coaching is also discussed by Cropley et al. (2010), as a tool which must be used with care, the coach must understand the importance of reflecting upon both negative and positive experiences and understand how they must change to improve the coach throughout their career. Reflection is a tool which a coach must learn via an educator if they are going to use it as part of their coaching. The complexities raised by the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, reflecting during or outside of a coaching situation, are difficult skills and a coach must be educated in how to use them effectively and appropriately.

2.5 Coach Education in Hockey

Piggott (2012) stated how as a coach it is vital to understand the concepts of governmentality and power/knowledge in an attempt to understand the ways in which governing bodies attempt to shape the conduct of sports coaches. England Hockey run a tiered coaching system, run by the UKCC. Tier/Level One is the ‘Coaching
Assistant’ Award. This aims to teach the coach the basic techniques and principles of play. It is based on underpinning theory knowledge and aims to educate coaches to create a safe, enjoyable and effective environment for hockey to be played. Level Two is for a coach looking to become more independent, taking the skills past the introductory level and applying them to tactical play. Level Three is for experienced coaches leading clubs or teams and looking to progress their coaching to regional and national league level. Level Four is the highest level of qualification a hockey coach can gain from the UKCC and is for those looking to coach on an international, elite performance level (England Hockey, 2013).

Gilbert and Trudel (1999) stated that a well-designed coach education program for coaches can result in improvements in various areas of coaching. Their study looked to evaluate the effectiveness of coach education, although now somewhat dated, as the results were gathered 14 years ago, the results of this study are still useful. Gilbert and Trudel used participant observation, semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews and systematic observation to determine whether the coaching course was delivered as designed, whether the coach acquired any new knowledge and whether there was any change in the use of course concepts in the individuals coaching fields. Results showed small changes at most, but nothing significant, suggesting at that time, a coach’s education was formed through experience.

2.6 Formal and Informal Coach Education

It is important to differentiate between formal and informal coach education. Mallett et al. (2009, p. 326) suggest that there are three different forms of coach education: formal, non-formal and informal. They define them as:

- **Formal**: formal education, formal educational institutions, formal learning, formal coach learning programs, formal learning institutions;
- **Nonformal**: nonformal education, nonformal environmental educational programs, nonformal learning settings, nonformal learning situations;
- **Informal**: informal learning, informal learning activities, informal learning experiences.

These definitions allow for a broader picture to be developed of the different forms of coach education and what they consist of. Mallett *et al.* (2009) also discuss how the balance between formal and informal learning in coach education is provided. They state that, although the programme developers of coach education dictate the delivery of content, style, tasks and grading of the curriculum, research has shown that coach education/accreditation is less valued than experiential learning and other less formal opportunities. From the education program developers’ perspective, learning is intended to occur in formal situations within coach education programs. In this formal situation, learning is mediated or guided by some knowledgeable other. They also state that learners in these formal situations have less control over what information is delivered which, in turn, influences what can be learned. Current coach education is officially provided through formal education, taking place in an “institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system” (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).

Jones *et al.* (2004) state that coach education provides a basic curriculum for coaches. Once again, this existing research, 5 years on from that of Gilbert and Trudel (1999) suggest that coach education plays a relatively minor part in the role of coach learning and development. Formal coach education, by comparison, plays only a minor role in the wider process of coach development (Gilbert., Côté and Mallett, 2006). This is further emphasised by the work of Mallett *et al.* (2009), who state that the existing studies on coaches’ learning have highlighted the significant contributions of informal learning experiences. They also stated that formal coach
education programs have been shown to make varying but often limited contributions to a coach’s learning.

2.7 Existing Critique into Coach Education

Piggott (2012) conducted a study into formal coach education. He looked to determine the extent to which formal coach education, coaching courses, are considered ‘useless’. Piggott states how there is a lack of fit between course content and coaches’ experiences, therefore leading to poor motivation as coaches struggle to see the relevance of the course material to the complex and messy reality of their everyday practice. He reached this research question through existing research finding that rarely coaching courses were considered important or useful events in a broader coach learning process. During the process of a formal education course Piggott found that a learner coach is often unlikely to challenge the status quo in fear of failing the course. Instead they present an ‘outward appearance of acceptance’ whilst harbouring disagreement with the ‘official coaching orientation’. The findings of the study were that, when courses were governed by prescriptive and rigid rationalities, coaches found themselves useless; whereas, open and discursive courses, though in the minority, were considered more useful.

2.8 Need for Improved Coaching in Hockey

Morgan (1981) discusses how the media has transformed and developed the experience for the viewing, stating “what had previously been words on the printed page was now a reality and alive and moving” (p. 24). It is clear that media has played a large role in the commercialisation, development and establishment of our understanding and beliefs on modern sport. Sport has largely become a professional occupation, and although hockey still largely remains a non-professional sport, there is an increase in sponsorship and more funding available in the sport than there has been in the past. With the media attraction of the Olympics, of which hockey is a
participating and somewhat major sport, the Commonwealth Games and the introduction of major televised leagues such as the World League and European Hockey League. These high profile events, alongside increased participation and observation of the sport taking place, the question raised is; what is the need for coaches in hockey? Here, we are provided with a clear answer pointing at the employment of coaches being crucial to the development of the sport. This view is supported by Douglas and Carless (2008) who suggest that it is well accepted that coaches play a unique and central role in improving and developing the sports skills and performances of elite and professional athletes. From here we are left with a situation where to qualify to teach as an academic educator it requires at least four years of academic study, with three to gain a degree and one on a teacher specific training program such as a PGCE (post graduate certificate in education) or equivalent qualification. To gain a level one UKCC coaching qualification in hockey there is a three-day course, this qualification can enable a coach to lead a group of individuals through their hockey learning and supervise them, being their source of information and one of their role models. Is this qualification enough to justify a hockey coach or should there be better provision and greater requirements for the education of coaches? Jones (2006) discusses the role of the sports coach as an educator, how the coach has an all-encompassing role of responsibility for the athletes learning. A coach requires a certain level of pedagogical skill to mentor their athletes appropriately, using the consistent application of interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge and to allow them to fulfil their role as an educator (Jones, 2006; Côté and Gilbert, 2009).

2.9 Justification for the Study

The question proposed for the purpose of this study is based on experience. The coach education experiences of the participant shall be questioned and related
to the coaches individual coaching methods and techniques. From here there will be a possibility to look at how the formal coach education process has aided or hindered the coach through their career to date. It will give the coach a chance to look back on their coach education and coaching practices and make sense of how they formed their habitus that they have taken into their coaching field. It is important to investigate and interpret the experiences of the coach during the coach education process. The reasons behind this are to gain a more assured understanding of these experiences from active hockey coaches working in competitive hockey. Throughout the existing literature there are a number of key factors which reoccur, the main of these being the debate regarding formal vs informal coach education. Cropley et al. (2010), emphasise their discussion on the importance of reflection and this informal method of coach education being the most influential tool which a coach can use during their development. Mallett et al. (2009), make a highly valuable point regarding how formal and certificated coach education holds great potential to educate and facilitate the learning of a coach through the content, style and curriculum of the course, however, is it down to the delivery and the coach educators that has led to research suggesting that it is seen as far less valuable than experiential learning.

Jones et al. (2004); Gilbert and Trudel (1999); Gilbert et al. (2006) support Mallett et al. (2009), with the matter of formal coach education underachieving on its potential as an educational tool and playing a somewhat minor role in the process in comparison with informal practices, research suggesting how these informal practices have played highly significant roles in the education of sports coaches throughout their careers. It is of great importance to look at this education process with modern coaches who are currently working in competitive coaching roles.
Narrowing the research down into a specific area such as hockey will enable greater understanding to be developed.

2.10 Summary of Existing Research

The existing research exposes a weakness with the content and delivery of coach education courses. It highlights a need for coaches in hockey to be educated in ways which will allow them to pursue their own methods of coaching. The research suggests the difficulties faced in modelling the coaching process, how coach education should steer away from following set parameters and allow coaches’ to learn from each other and themselves, through sharing experiences and engaging in reflective practice (Cropley et al., 2010; Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert et al., 2006).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODODOLOGY
3.1 Participants

Participants for the study were selected from a pool of coaches who meet the pre-defined criteria and who are willing to take part in the study. Five coaches were contacted and all agreed to take part in the study after being informed of the nature of the research taking place and questioned regarding their suitability to matching the criteria of the study. Participants in the study were of the same gender, this was not part of the predetermined criteria for the participants, however included coaches of men’s and women’s hockey which is beneficial to the study, due to the equal profile of both men’s and women’s hockey. The predefined criteria for the coaches was that they were all over the age of 18, all had passed the NGB level one in coaching hockey and all were currently in active coaching roles at the time of the study.

3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are terms used to refer to the characteristics of the data that the researcher has collected. Gratton and Jones (2010) define qualitative research as aiming to capture meanings or qualities that are not quantifiable, such as feelings, thoughts, and experiences and so on; this is those concepts associated with interpretative approaches. Qualitative research is generally based upon a long time period of experiences within the area of research. Gratton and Jones (2010) also define quantitative research as involving measurable ‘quantities’. It often involves the use of numerical measurement, quantitative research can be observed and objectively measured and analysed. An example of quantitative research would be the recording of academic scores in test results, the scores can easily be compared to each other. Barbour (2008) suggested an analogy where children watched leaves falling from a tree. The children use different methods to attempt to suggest and predict when the tree will become bare. One child counts the leaf fall and the rate of fall; from there they attempt to calculate when it will become
bare. The other child looks at the diversity of the shapes and sizes of the leaves, looking at the broader picture. Although simplified, Barbour (2008) offers a view which enables the reader to simply grasp the basic fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

### 3.3 Qualitative Research Methods

Traditionally quantitative research methods have been widely used and highly popular, recently however, the use of qualitative research methods has become more prevalent and used more frequently during research. It raises the question of whether qualitative or quantitative research methods are better. It is important to not see this as a competition between the two research methods; it should be seen as a comparison to see which research method is more effective and suitable to different contexts. Walsh and Koelsch (2012) label ‘qualitative research’ as an umbrella term describing the many small communities which in turn all have distinct traditions and languages. Gratton and Jones (2010) discuss how it is important that the research method used, whether qualitative or quantitative should be dependent on the nature of the research question, this is because they offer far contrasting outcomes, one of which will be far more suited to the research question than the other. As stated previously, qualitative research methods offer a greater depth and allow for increased levels of detail than quantitative research as it allows for more personal responses drawing upon an individual’s experiences rather than purely numerical or statistical data. It is important to recognise, that if using qualitative research methods great care must be taken to ensure it is used to its maximum effect. Shoshanna (2002) states that when qualitative research is badly designed or executed poorly, the results are neither credible nor useful. It is important to realize that these methods probably to a greater degree than quantitative approaches are highly dependent on the knowledge and skills of all members of the research team.
3.4 Justification for Qualitative Research

Qualitative methodology was considered appropriate for this study as it allowed for maximal depth of results, in comparison to quantitative methods qualitative research methods allow for a postmodern, post structural, phonological, interpretive and critical analysis of results (Lincoln, 2010, p. 8). Qualitative research methods shall always be judged and seen as controversial due to its seemingly intrusive approach in comparison to quantitative methods when working in an ethnological environment (Avis, 2005, p. 3).

The study is focussed on the experiences of the coach in their coaching environment and their experiences of the coach education process in hockey, the comparison between coach education and real life practice and how the education experiences of the coach have been benefited. The reflections of the coaches’ in this study are not seen as quantifiably justifiable resulting in the selection of the qualitative research model.

3.5 Research Structure

The participants were chosen to be fitting with the required criteria for the study. They were then subjected to take part in the research process. Sampling was achieved through gaining access to a pool of hockey coaches in a local area, the five coaches approached all agreed to take part in the study and all fulfilled the required criteria. Before data collection began for this study a pilot study was conducted. This consisted of interviews with non-participants to allow for the researcher to establish a greater understanding of research technique, it also allowed for the researcher to assess the questions which had been developed before developing a semi structured interview guide for the study. The simple process of interview was all that was required to gain the necessary insight into their individual experiences of the coach education process and their thoughts and opinions surrounding it reflecting upon their
own coaching epistemology. The participants were required to partake in an interview process, during which the answers given to the questions asked would inform the researcher of the required information. The interview method allows for participants to talk about their own experiences and elaborate on particular areas of relevance and importance.

3.6 Interview Guide

A semi structured interview guide was developed to allow for the exploratory nature of the study. It is important to use a semi structured interview guide as it allows for probing and exploration into deeper areas of experience and opinion whilst still maintaining a spine of questions and relevant theory. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) state how the effectiveness of individual face-to-face in-depth interviews, allow the researcher to foster learning about individual experiences and perspectives on a given set of issues.

The interview framework was developed around a core theory which the interview would follow. This theory incorporated the coaches’ experiences and perceptions of coach education in hockey, their perceived strengths and weaknesses of the coach education programme, their ideas of how the programme could be developed/improved from their experiences and how the coach education system has affected their coaching epistemology. It was important to develop questions that were open and would allow for deep and meaningful responses, however, equally important that these questions related closely to the core theory that the interview intended to follow. This was to ensure that the results were truthful and meaningful to the participants whilst still maintaining relevance to the research question. It was important for the questions to be non-leading however still maintaining an openness which would allow the participant to speak freely about their experiences. A number of potential probing questions were also developed to ensure the interview ran
smoothly and also allowing for a greater depth of answer to be given if required or felt by the researcher that the answers could aid the study further.

Prior to the study a pilot interview was completed. This was to test the efficiency and accuracy of the interview guide that had been developed. From this the researcher was able to judge any refinements and adjustments that were required when moving into the final interview process. The pilot study is also important as it allows for the structure of the guide to be adapted and adjusted maximising its effectiveness in meeting the aims of the study.

3.7 Procedure

The coaches were initially contacted to inform them of the study, the rationale and the purpose. During this initial contact period the issues being explored were explained. All participants were informed of their confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was received from all participants who stated willingness to participate in the study. A preparation booklet was prepared and sent to the participants in advance of the interview, this was to allow the participants a chance to familiarise themselves with the content of the interview and further informing them of their rights to confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interview was then transcribed and returned to the participant for conformation of its reliability and accuracy.

3.8 Data Analysis

Gratton and Jones (2010) inform the process of inductive research. To collect and analyse data, then from this data a theory, model or explanation can be generated. The choice of inductive data analysis as opposed to deductive is due to the research methods used. The use of qualitative research methods in this study allow for theory to be developed and explained. Gratton and Jones (2010) explain
that although it has a higher risk factor due to the wide range of responses associated with qualitative research, inductive data analysis is a more effective analysis to use in comparison to deductive analysis when qualitative research methods were used. The researcher repeatedly read through the interview transcriptions, this allowed for a greater sense of familiarity with the content of the interviews. The process of analysis was to correlate and organise raw data units, such as sentences which were relevant and contained complete meaning. These were then congregated into main labels/categories fitting with the research aims (i.e. experiences, strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement). The themes were supported and discussed through the inclusion of raw quotes.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Methodological guidelines from Neil, Hanton, Fleming and Wilson (2014) and Gratton and Jones (2010) were followed to ensure credibility and transferability. For example, throughout the study, only one interviewer was used, this allowed for enhanced credibility, this interviewer had a basic understanding of qualitative research methods, as well as studying advanced coaching sciences within higher education. The interviewer was also highly experienced within the hockey environment, themselves a qualified and active hockey coach. This greatly enhanced the credibility of the research. All participants received transcribed copies of their individual interviews; they were given the chance to check the content of the transcription to establish an agreement with their opinions and the researchers’ interpretation of the interviews’ data. The participants all confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions, agreeing that the transcript accurately represented their views and opinions. The participants all received a summary of the results; this ensured they had the chance to check the validity of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Introduction

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, its accompaniment with the complex and ambiguous nature of the coaching process and coach education, the results shall be presented alongside an accompanying discussion. This is an approach often used by researchers in a similar field (Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; Nash and Sproule, 2009) for the reason that the presentation of results in this manner make for more accessible and interpretable findings. Hence enabling connections and correlations between these findings to be made and allow for the establishment of discussion, linking the existing literature to the experiences of the coaches in this study. This combination of results and discussion is seen as highly beneficial and suited to this complex nature of coaching study. All five coaches that took part in the study had been through and completed at least the level one course in coaching hockey, as coaches themselves they were ranging in coaching experience, all however were currently in an active coaching role in hockey, this allowed for discussion into how their coach education experiences had affected their current coaching practices and their coaching development. Some of the coaches spoke about their experiences and the influence of informal coach education, this made for excellent comparisons between formal and informal education and shall be looked at in this results section.

The findings of this section shall be presented in two main sections: a) Impact of coach education programmes upon the coach and b) Improving and developing the current coach education programmes. These sections have been carefully selected due to their repeated mentions throughout the participant’s interviews, as well as being previously outlined as key areas of interest in the critique of coach education in hockey.
The results shall be presented throughout this section; they shall be compared and related to existing literature correlating with the aims of the study.

4.2 Impact of coach education programmes upon the coach

Existing research into the field of coach education is sporadic, it is increasing in popularity as coaches and researchers are starting to understand the importance of the area in coach development. However, research into the actual experiences and views of the coaches on coach education is relatively unexplored. This section will explore the responses of the coaches who took part in the study, looking at their opinions and experiences.

4.2.1 Course structure

The findings of the study showed a strong belief, through correlating statements by a high proportion of participants, that the structure of the course was a weakness of the programme. All participants picked up on the length of the level one course being three days, to some it seemed that they found this frustrating as it was too long.

“It lasted far too long, it was drawn out and over the top for what they actually taught us. If we had come out of the course having been taught more then I feel it would have been justified.”

“It was very long. It was a three day course and the days were not even consecutive. This meant a lot of travelling for me on the train by myself because the nearest course was around 2 hours from home, this was far from ideal.”

“The course itself was spread out over 3 days; to me this seemed like a very long time. The days seemed to drag and we weren't even on the course for many hours in each day. I think this could easily be condensed, it really didn't have to last so long.”

These statements exemplify an initial problem felt by the coaches on their experiences of coach education. The three day structure of the level one course presented time issues as well as logistical issues for multiple participants who had to travel a great deal to take part in the course. Participant 2 presented an opposing opinion, stating:
“The course had good structure, set over 3 days it gave me time to learn.” However, this participant also shared the opinion that the course could have been shortened.

“You did need all the brief stuff, but you didn’t need it to last all day, I feel it could have been done a lot faster.”

This presents a challenge which questioning the length of the course and whether it is fully necessary to be three days long. The governing body overseeing the coach education qualifications state how their objectives for the level one course are to, provide a course with a minimum of 17 hours contact time, and to provide a course which is run over a minimum of three separate occasions. All participants in this study recall taking part in a three day (each day equating to a separate occasion) course, here it is seen that it is to be a minimum of three occasions, suggesting that the course is sometimes ran over a greater period of time. These contradicting views from the same participant suggest that it may be the content of the course that provided the apparent frustration for the coaches, suggesting that the course structure over three days, although logistically an issue for some, was not the problem, perhaps it indicates that the content of the course over these three days is what has led to this shared opinion of vexation and discontent.

4.2.2 Theoretical vs Practical Learning

The course was divided between theoretical and practical learning. This was commented upon by all of the participants, they spoke of how the learning was “split” and “divided” between mornings and afternoons, where theoretical and practical learning took place respectively.

“We did a lot of classroom based learning but also a lot of practical learning.”

“The course was split between theory work inside and practical work outside on the astroturf.”

“The first two days were split 50/50 between theoretical work and practical work. The theoretical element was done in the mornings.”
The theoretical outline set by the governing body is to provide coaches with an understanding of the rules of the game, underpinning theory knowledge relevant to the game and the skills to create a safe, enjoyable and effective learning environment.

The aspect of creating a safe, enjoyable and effective learning environment is something that was highlighted by the participants.

“It went through what you had to do during a coaching session, mainly focussing on a coaches positioning when coaching, where to stand etc”

“It focussed mainly on things like, when coaching a session you should never be in a position when you are talking and the people you are addressing are all facing into the sun, a simple and effective tip, alongside tips such as ways to make sure the group are focussing their attention on you as the coach”

“It was set very much in the traditional view of coach education. Focussing on demonstrating, observing and analysing.”

The statements on this aspect of the course imply that there was a focus on ‘basic’ coaching elements, coaching positioning and observations, tools which all coaches require and pick up very early in their coaching careers. The theoretical element is a large part of coach education, it is seen as important and as has already been stated, is a key area of the course, the underpinning theory of hockey is regarded as a necessity for all coaches at any level of coaching experience. Lemyre, Trudel and Durand-Bush (2007) found that during the coach education process in sport, much of the theoretical material covered is considered too abstract from everyday coaching practice and is therefore very difficult to be considered worthwhile. This correlates with the findings of Jones and Wallace (2005) who found such difficulties correlating coaching theory and the modelling of coaching with real life coaching practice due to its complex and ambiguous nature. Cushion and Nelson (2013) found that coaches have developed a tendency to attach less importance to formal coach education for acquiring theoretical knowledge. Coaches have found that courses gave little more than a very basic understanding of coaching knowledge,
however they do acknowledge that they provide a starting point, allowing a coach to build upon existing knowledge and put this knowledge into practice. Due to this existing knowledge being present and the difficulties found by Lemyre et al. (2007) in establishing new relevant knowledge through coach education it has been suggested that as coaches develop through their careers they come to question the theoretical learning and information acquired through formal coach education (Abraham et al., 2006; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; Gould et al., 1990; Irwin et al., 2004; Schempp et al., 1998).

“It was very much based on simple coaching techniques and didn’t really help at all with teaching me how to coach. I don’t think it at all taught me how to progress a team or individuals or how to make these people succeed in their hockey”

“The lack of depth throughout the course, so therefore I would say that the extent to which the experience has improved my coaching is limited.”

“I did not feel it particularly related very much to coaching itself, it all seemed somewhat superficial and was just a process of ticking boxes to get through the course.”

These statements from the participants of the study correlate with the findings of the existing research; they replicate the opinions regarding the simplicity and lack of realism in theoretical learning throughout the coach education programme. Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) found that coaches going through the coach education process were more motivated to learn and enjoyed more successful coach education when the course content was ‘interesting’ and ‘up to date’ with the most important aspect being ‘relevance’. The participants in this study suggest the theoretical aspects of coach education in hockey, from their experiences, to have been ‘useful’. There was great focus on health and safety with participants explaining how this was an important and focussed upon area of the course. Participant 5 explained how the equipment and speed of the game creates a naturally dangerous environment to operate in, justifying the inclusion of health and safety as a fundamental area of the course.
“It was very much delivered on a health and safety level as opposed to teaching how to deliver in a hockey specific sense.”
“It is vital that it is done safely, as a coach I feel that this is my job and I try my best to plan and deliver safe coaching sessions.”
“It mainly focussed on the health and safety of coaching and the environment you work in.”
“I think about the health and safety of my players a lot, it’s my job, they have to be safe and so do I. I have particularly taken on board what they told me about protecting myself and being careful about how I set up drills to minimise risk of injury.”

Gummerson (1992) explains the importance of being aware of the health and safety of yourself and all participants during the coaching process. There is a responsibility to provide competent and safe instruction to all participants. This humanistic approach to coaching is something which is of great importance and relevance to a coach. Hogg (1995) provides an application of humanistic approaches and principles to coaching practice. Decision making in coaching is important, Chelladurai, Malloy, Imamura and Yamaguchi (1987) establish how team sport athletes must accept shared responsibility for decision making with the coach, team sports must accept a more autocratic approach to coaching methods. This humanistic approach to coaching allows for a greater degree of humility and security, it is found that the athletes are more comfortable with this style (Cross and Lyle, 1999). The course requirements for a focus on health and safety justify this practice and suggest a level of care, for which coach educators and coaches should follow. “A good coach will recognise the value of the affirming properties of an activity, note the athletes rational will to engage in the activity, and provide the best risk management environment possible.” Hardman and Jones (2011, P. 189).

Participant 4 explained how it “taught me about coaching, not how to coach” however the participant did find that the theory had ‘served a purpose’. Participant 2 shared this opinion, explaining how the course was based on a simple level and didn’t focus on ‘what’ to coach.
“You could have delivered the same course to nearly any sport and it still would have been effective and worked, there were a couple of things to do with hockey but if you were to change them slightly to something to do with a different sport, it would have been exactly the same and still worked and been successful. It was very generic as a course.”

This closely relates to the findings of Nelson et al. (2013) and Cushion and Nelson (2013) requesting a need for ‘relevance’ in the information delivered in formal coach education before a coach begins to attach reduced importance upon theoretical learning in the coach education programme.

The practical elements of the course were set out with an aim to introduce the basic techniques and the principles. The course aims to achieve this through the implementation and use of small-sided games. The participants recall the practical sessions being ran in the afternoon, after the theoretical learning has taken place.

“The only real hockey things we went over on the course were little drills, however, these were only there to enable us to practice the tips and techniques we had been taught, putting them into a practical environment.”

“The afternoons were spent out on the hockey pitch looking at more practical elements of coaching. This included a lot of demonstrating from the two coach educators.”

“In the practical we were out on the pitch, we were in small groups, roughly 5 or 6 per group delivering small sessions.”

Participants had far less to say regarding the practical elements of the course than they did the theoretical, even when probed towards the answers participants struggled to explain and relate to this part of the course. This could be due to various reasons; already understanding the elements, as hockey players themselves, so not regarding learning as anything new, resulting to a decreased ability to recall information. Athlete learning aims to improve athlete performance to a greater level, the skills are learned with intent to become habitual, once this has occurred then learning may be seen as complete. (Kolb, 1984; Riding and Rayner, 1998; Jones, 2006). Poor content during the practical sessions, no lasting impression made upon
the coaches. Participant 5 begins to explain why they found it difficult to recall information regarding the practical element of the course.

“The theory was not very fun but looking back on it, its where I learned the most, I remember lots more from this than I do from the practical.”

Once again this relates back to the findings of Cushion and Nelson (2013) and the importance of building ‘upon existing knowledge’ and putting it into practice. It suggests that participants were not provided a level of content above anything they already knew, resulting in what they were taught becoming insignificant and therefore difficult to recall. Also the link between theoretical learning to practical application informs how coaches may not be learning anything different during the practical elements than they did in the theoretical, merely changing the context and circumstances in which the content is delivered, this would equate to the content having been previously discussed when conversing the theoretical elements. This would propose a difference between the outline of the governing body of the course, and the experiences of the majority of the coaches participating in the study. Cushion and Nelson (2013) argue that coaching theory is somewhat unrelated to real life coaching due to its many complexities and diversities. They also explain how the blame for this can be justifiably aimed towards a lack of high quality theoretical learning literature; a developed theoretical position must be gained.

4.2.3 The Importance of Coach Educators

The participants in the study spoke of the influence of the coach educators on the course they attended. Coach educators have a very important role to play through the education of coaches. A definition of the role of a coach educator is seen as ‘Facilitating candidate learning by creating an environment which helps that individual increase their level of competence in pre-determined, specific areas.’ (Cross., Robbins and Hogarth, 1999, p. 2). The coach educator has a large impact on the success of a coach education course. The participants’ comments confirm
these views, suggesting that a coach educator can have a large effect over the learning and enjoyment experienced by an attendee on a course.

"Due to their repertoire they were respected throughout the course, however, I felt that their personality was somewhat dominant and overwhelming and did not help the learning element of the course."  
"I remember they were good though, I was the youngest on the course and they made an effort to get me involved, so did a couple of members of the group, they really helped my development through the course by getting me involved and allowing me to speak my opinions"  
"They delivered the course well and made it very easy to understand...the course wasn't their creation, sometimes they would...put it into a hockey specific context and relate it to an experience which would make it much easier to understand, they would share their own coaching experiences which not only made the course more relevant but it also made it more enjoyable."

The coach education experienced by the participants have been prescriptive and lead by the coach educators. Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) found coaches’ wanted to urge coach educators to value the existing coaches’ knowledge and experience which they have each bought to the course. The individual coaches’ wanted to learn through sharing experiences within the group. The coach educators dictate the way the course is run, they have the power to adjust the course to incorporate participant centred learning, rather than the prescriptive learning undertaken and experienced by the participants.

The coach educators as individuals have a responsibility to facilitate the learning of the participants. Participants in this study felt that the educators had the ability to positively or negatively impact the learning. Participant 5 found that they were nurtured through the course as the youngest there, a positive experience, whereas participant 4 found the coach educators were self-centred in their personality which retracted from the learning environment.

"It just seemed a chance for them to brag about what they have done in the past. I understood that it was about learning from them but in the case of my coaching course, I think they got the balance wrong at times as coach educators, we didn't really have enough of a chance to speak amongst the group, sharing our own ideas and experiences"
This opinion correlates strongly with the findings of the existing research. (Cassidy., Jones, and Potrac, 2004; Jones and Turner, 2006; Nelson et al., 2013).

4.2.4 Summary of the impact of coach education programmes upon the coach

Findings of the study show that participants are highly influenced by the course structure, and content, as well as those involved in the coach education process. Theoretical and practical learning are vastly difficult and participants found it hard to successfully link between the two during the course. The course educators have huge responsibility in the success of the course; coaches’ refer to their coach educators when reflecting upon their experiences. It is found that the coach educator can have a significant effect, positively or negatively upon the coaches, they have a duty of care towards those they educate and must take care to make the coach learning experience effective and enjoyable.

4.3 Improving and developing the current programmes

It is important to look at the findings of the personal coach education experiences of the participants and to develop their personal thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and opinions. The participants were all given a chance to voice the changes they would make to the programme. For the purpose of the study it can be said that the negative experiences they spoke about during the interviews can be seen as weaknesses of the course and it is important to look at ways these can be improved.

4.3.1 Improving the course structure and delivery

Throughout the participants there was frustration regarding the length of the course. With the course outline specifying a minimum of 17 hours contact time, a question proposed is: should the course be spread over 3 days as the participants experienced, or is there plausibility to reduce the course to 2 days? Participant 5 found this a particular issue, this coach found logistical issues problematic adding to
the question regarding the length of the course; should there be provision for courses to take place in a wider range of areas to prevent these issues?

"Without doubt the first thing I would change is the layout, the three days that are separated was a nightmare. It involved so much travelling, everyone on the course kept saying about it, it was a bit of a running joke but I could tell for some people such as myself it was a bit of a nightmare as we had to travel so far. I think it could be condensed down from the three days, it all seemed very drawn out and quite slow paced."

With the first two days of the course being “split 50/50 between theoretical work and practical work.” Could the answer to the above proposed question be renegotiating the balance between theory and practical on based upon how the participants believe they learned? Some of the participants explained how they regarded experiences outside of formal coach education to have provided them with a large percentage of their coaching knowledge.

“My experiences…have provided me with the largest impact on the way I coach. The way I have learned, in my opinion, is through actually coaching and looking back on it. Reflection for me is vital.”

“I would say that I tend to copy those who I have been coached by or have seen coach, especially those that to me seem to be successful.”

“I use ideas and styles from how I have been coached as a player in the past. I feel this way I am able to gain a greater understanding of what I think works well and not so well which is ideal in coaching.”

“I think I have learned a lot about coaching through being coached. I was extremely fortunate at school to have played under an outstanding international coach. He was so highly respected, as an ex Olympian when playing and coaching international teams, he was someone that I really looked up to.”

The complexity of coaching is established through existing research (e.g. Côté and Gilbert, 2009; Cushion and Lyle, 2010) and the ambiguity of the coaching role over a short period of time is something not always deemed sufficient in the education of a coach (Côté and Gilbert, 2009; Trudel., Culver and Werthner, 2013; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). Participants have spoken here about learning their coaching through personal experiences. Coaches have explained how they have learned through being coached by other people, learning from the way they respond to
different coaching techniques and methods then replicating the coach by implementing what worked in their own coaching. One coach speaks about the importance of a particular coach, their school coach who was widely respected and had worked at the elite level, the addition of another who’s biographical importance is renowned and respected, can greatly increase the facilitation of learning in a sporting environment (Trudel, Culver and Werthner, 2013).

4.3.2 Improving the course content

The content of the coach education course is vitally important as it is the link between the coach educator and the learner coach. Moon (2001) established how the early stages of a coach education programme are the most important; a learner coach will quickly make up their mind on their new conceptions and understandings, depending on what they are and how they are delivered. Coaches’ felt that the course content could have been adapted to be help facilitate learning, the phrases ‘hockey specific’ and ‘participant lead’ were mentioned by multiple participants, suggesting a lack of specificity in the coach education programme.

“You could have gone on to learn how you coach hockey and maybe instead of the educators just prescribing drills at a basic level, the drills taught and discussed could have covered a greater variety of ages and abilities.”

“It should be led by the learners, there is sure to be personalities in the group who love to lead, the people are there to coach, they are there to develop their skills working with others, lead the learners lead it while the coach educators facilitate the learning, intervening where necessary and or appropriate.”

“I think that the practical sessions could have been much more hockey relevant and actually looked at how and what to coach, this would have been better than the simple things they were teaching us. I know I really benefited from these things but many on the course seemed disinterested and didn’t seem like they were being pushed at all.”

The participants voice their opinions on how they would make the course more ‘hockey relevant’ and ‘learner centred’. There is a reoccurring theme throughout all participants’ interviews, which leads to a conclusion that the course delivered does not focus on specific skills to coaching hockey. This links back with a point made by
participant 2 previously who explained how they felt that the course could have been replicated with many sports without significant changes and still been relevant. This generic course content could be modified and made more specific, in accordance with the apparent requirements of the governing body to make for a more hockey orientated learning experience.

The learner centred experience was also noted by participants during the theoretical element of the course. Participant 3 felt strongly that greater levels of discussion and sharing of experiences could lead to an increased level of learning throughout the course.

“Coach educators must look at ways to stir the pot they are provided with, there is such a wealth of information in one room, with one common goal, to improve as coaches, share the experiences and enable them to gain insight into coaching situations they may never have encountered, mix this with experience and you are starting to build upon the right things.”

Once again the coach educators and their importance in facilitating the learning environment are seen. Kerka (1998) further established the work of Coakley (1978) regarding the integration and sharing of coaching experience, the research highlights the importance of learning through interactions and accepting this style of coach learning as an on-going process.

4.3.3 Summary of improvements and developments of coach education

Findings of the participants’ opinions on improving and developing the coach education program show that coaches desire a focus on hockey relevant and specific content. From the coaches statements involved in this study there are seen weaknesses with the practical element of the program; coaches are calling for greater links between theoretical learning and practical learning, a way of linking the two more efficiently may result in increased coach satisfaction and improved learning. The coach educator has a vitally important role, acting as the ‘messenger’, the delivery of information comes through the messenger, Moon (2001) found the
importance of the messenger ‘facilitating’ the learning, and this is called for by the participants in their coaching education. There is a reoccurring theme requesting for coach led learning, a desire to share experiences with other coaches and share knowledge which is currently not being catered for in the coach education program.

4.4 Strengths, Limitations and Further Research

A strength of the study is that all participants met the pre-determined criteria set, this allowed for suitable raw data to be collected through the interview process, in turn allowing for greater analysis of results. The participants were all at a similar level of their coaching careers, some slightly more experienced but all were learning their craft and had recently been through the coach education program. A suggestion from this would be to increase the sample size, although five is a relatively common number of participants in qualitative research studies, increasing this would have allowed for a broader range of data to be collected and analysed. If a broader range of participants were used, it would be wisely suggested to use coaches of varying levels, from perceived novice to expert, this would allow for more specific data to be collected for different perceived levels of coaching.

Using interviews was a positive aspect of this study as it allowed in depth data to be collected, resulting in the researcher having a broad range of data to gather results from. Future research should look to incorporate the coaches perceived level, experience and understanding prior to partaking in the coach education course, this would once again allow the researcher to differentiate between perceived coaching ability relating to the effectiveness of the course.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION
5.1 Conclusion

The aims of the study were to provide a critique of coach education programmes in hockey; the study looked to provide an insight into coaches’ experiences of coach education programs, how these programmes contributed to a coaches knowledge and what influences these contributions.

To achieve this the study sought to determine which individual elements of the coach education experience had the greatest effect on the coach, the use of semi-structured interviews allowed the coaches to recall an in depth account into these experiences.

The structure and framework of this coach education process was something that was found to be important to the coaches’. There were calls to condense the course and to make it more specific, a theme which reoccurred throughout the research.

The study found that the content of the programme is something which greatly influences the learning potential of a coach, as initially established by Gilbert and Trudel (1999). The coaches sought after hockey specific and relevant information, something they felt they were not receiving enough of throughout the course, the participants did not feel that they were provided with sufficient information to prepare them for coaching in the ‘real world’, it was found that the coaches’ in this study looked towards a desire to access this ‘real world’ environment throughout the course, idealistically providing the coaches with the chance to share past experiences and techniques amongst the group. This agrees with the findings of Mallett et al. (2009).

It was found that the ‘coach educator’ had a vitally important role on the course, coaches required a more substantial link between the theoretical and practical learning, the coach educator had the potential to facilitate this learning and
the sharing of experiences, however, often neglected this power and focussed on teacher led learning as opposed to the coach led that the coaches’ required.

Overall the study met the aims set out in the introductory chapter, it explored the experiences of a coach in coach education and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of these experiences, resulting in an analysis of these experiences which were developed into a discussion evaluating the improvements required for successful coach education in hockey and assessing scope for future research in the area. The study contributed to furthering knowledge by bringing together these shared experiences of coach education, creating a platform where these shared experiences can be explored and as a result finding trends relating to the strengths and weaknesses of the experiences, allowing for an increased understanding of the coach education programme in hockey.

The implications of this study will, therefore, allow coach educators to develop the way in which coach education is delivered, and as a result, improving the experiences of the coaches’, and in turn improving the effectiveness of the coach education programme in hockey, helping to prepare coaches for the real world.
REFERENCES


Lincoln, Y. (2010). What a long, strange trip it’s been; Twenty-five years of qualitative and new paradigm research. Qualitative Inquiry, 16: 3-9.


Smythe, L. & Giddings, L. (2007). From experience to definition: addressing the question ‘what is qualitative research?’. *School of Nursing, Faculty of Health & Environmental Sciences*, 23(1), 37-57.


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Can you share your experiences of coach education in hockey?
2. In what ways do you feel the coach education process has improved your coaching?
   - Do you consciously use skills learned during your coach education experiences in your own coaching?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the course?
   - Structure? Content? Educators? Delivery?
4. Which aspect, if any, of your coach education experiences has had the greatest impact upon your coaching?
5. What aspects of the coach education course would you change?
   - Structure? Content? Educators? Delivery?
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Coach Education In Hockey: A Critique

Name of Researcher: Sam Morris

Participant to complete the following section: Please initial in each box.

1. I hereby confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated…………..for this study. I have had full opportunity to consider the information, ask any questions I may have and have had all questions answered satisfactorily.

2. I hereby understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time I wish, without giving a reason.

3. I hereby understand that my relationship with the study, Cardiff Metropolitan University, the researcher and my legal rights will in no way be affected.

4. I understand that information from the study may be used for research purposes, but that I will not be identified.

5. I agree to take part in this study.

_______________________________
Name of Participant

_______________________________
Signature of Participant Date

_______________________________
Name of person taking consent Date

_______________________________
Signature of person taking consent

*When completed one copy will be kept by participant and one copy by the researcher
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Title of Project: Coach Education In Field Hockey: A Critique

Participant Information Sheet

Background
This study is to look at and attempt to understand the experiences of a coach during coach education in the sport of Field Hockey (Hockey). The study will use participants who are at least qualified to UKCC Level One Award in coaching hockey. The project is being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University, the Cardiff School of Sport.

The project will use interviews to gain information regarding your experiences through the coach education programme. From this there will be the opportunity for the researcher to gather together the experiences of you and other coaches to determine a more general and accurate set of results, drawing upon what Hockey coaches experience in coach education.

This evaluation may be presented to UKCC and/or England Hockey as well as the possibility of it being published.

Your participation in the research project

Why you have been asked?
You have been invited to take part in the investigation into coaches’ experiences of coach education in Hockey because of your current coaching role, coaching experience and qualifications. As a qualified UKCC Hockey Coach you have experienced coach education in Hockey. It is thought that the chance to reflect on your coach education and coaching role may help you to develop as a coach as well as gaining experience looking at the role from a different point of view.

What would happen is you agree to join the project?
If you agree to join the study, this is what you may expect to happen. You will be invited to take part in an interview process where you shall be asked about your experiences of coach education in Hockey. You will be fully aware of all questions and the interview layout before the interview.

Are there any risks?
We do not feel that there are any significant risks to you during the interview process of evaluation study. If there is anything you do not wish to do/be asked then feel free to tell us. We will not make you do anything you feel at all hesitant about.

Your Rights
Taking part in the study looking at a Hockey coaches experience in coach education does not mean you give up any legal rights. In the very unlikely event of anything going wrong during the project Cardiff Metropolitan University will fully identify its staff, and all participants are covered by its insurance.

What happens to the results of the evaluation?
The results that are gathered during the interview process will be recorded using a Dictaphone, the recordings will then be written into an interview transcript and saved
anonymously. The recordings will then be deleted to protect the participant. All transcripts will be coded so that the removal of names can take place, however, there will be a record of the codes so that feedback can be given to the coaches if requested. The results will be presented in full with group and individual results available; however, there will be no descriptions that would enable identification of individuals. You will not be identifiable in any of the work.

**Are there any benefits to you from taking part?**
Yes. Your participation will allow for you to discuss and relate your own coaching to coach education in Hockey. This will give you the opportunity to reflect upon your coaching and your experiences.

**What happens next?**
With this information sheet you will find a participant consent form. If you are willing to give consent then please fill out the form, which has been made easy to follow and simple to complete.

**How we protect your privacy:**
As expected and as you can see, everyone working on the project will be putting your rights and privacy as the number one priority. We have taken very careful steps to ensure that you cannot be identified from any of the information we will receive from you.
All the information about you will be stored away from your consent forms to protect your identity. All information will be kept under lock and key to protect you and your privacy. At the end of the evaluation all information which can be linked to you will be destroyed to protect you. We will only keep the consent form with your name and address. This will be kept for 10 years as this is a requirement of the Cardiff School of Sport here at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

**Further Information**
If you have any questions about the research or how we intend to conduct the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sam Morris

☐ 07949256286
☐ st20000468@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
APPENDIX D: ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 2014/03/19

To: Samuel D Morris

Project reference number: 13/05/263U

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 26th May 2013.

Yours sincerely

NJH

Supervisor