Cardiff School of Sport
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:
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Student name: Sophie Garton	***Student ID:*** St20002210
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Dissertation title:	An Investigation into the Effects of Extra-Curricular Activity on The Social Developments of Children with Special Educational Needs
Supervisor:	Dr Lucy Wheatley

Comments	Section
	Title and Abstract (5%) Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.
	Introduction and literature review (25%) 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).
	Methods and Research Design (15%)

	To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.
	Results and Analysis (15%) [2] 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.
	Discussion and Conclusions (30%) [2] 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.
	Presentation (10%) 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

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[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.

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

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An Investigation into the Effects of Extra-Curricular Activity on The Social Developments of Children with Special Educational Needs

(Management and Development)

Sophie Garton

20002210

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACITVITY ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

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Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my dissertation supervisor Dr Lucy Wheatley for all of the time she has invested in me, both throughout this research process and throughout the course of my University journey.

I would also like to thank each participant of the study, for their cooperation and open responses within interviews.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which extra-curricular activity can aid the social capabilities of children with special educational needs (SEN). Currently in the UK, 985,000 people have a learning difficulty (EFDS,2012), of this statistic, only 18.5% participate in regular physical activity. Increasing this percentage is a key objective of the Government due to the benefits which can be gained through sport (Hylton, 2013). Although previous literature identifies many ways in which sport can benefit an individual, the evidence relating to SEN and social development is limited. Therefore, the significance of the study relates to increasing understanding of the social developments that children with SEN can make through extra-curricular activity.

The study followed a qualitative research framework, using interviews as the method of information collection and the participants comprised of the parents and carers of children of the Cardiff Metropolitan Basketball Academy (special needs group). Seven parents and carers were used for the research, an appropriate figure given the time scale and availability of participants. The interviewees had a great depth of knowledge relating to the research, and were able to give a detailed insight into the personal development paths of the young people. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using a thematic approach, revealing the following topics, Special Educational Needs: The Impact; Parents and Networks; School and Physical Education and Sport and Special Educational Needs: The Significance.

The key finding of the study was the sheer significance of the benefits the children with SEN gained from the social environment that sport creates. Although the concept of each benefit is the same for those with SEN as for those without, the impact these have on the lives of the children with SEN is significantly greater. An important element of the findings was that each benefit gained by the children with SEN, even if not directly related to social developments, had an overall effect on their personal capabilities. The process of social development is cyclical; through each benefit, personal competences are improved, contributing to the social advancements that are vital for the young people with SEN. The significance of this study in practicality revolves around the findings related to the impact that the children's needs have on their lives. The main finding was that opportunities for those with SEN are currently scarce, leading to a need for Sport Development Officers (SDO's) to increase the range of extra-curricular activities available for young people with SEN.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the Research

Of the UK's population, 18% live with an impairment or disability, of this percentage, 985,000 people have learning difficulties (EFDS, 2012). It is an overriding aim of the government to increase participation amongst these target groups, to improve such factors as health objectives, crime statistics and social inclusion (Hylton, 2013). In 1997, a change in Government forced an additional focus for sport development. The new Government recognised how sport can be used to improve social issues and from this new policies and initiatives were created. What's more, Coatler (2007) suggests that the Government's interest in sport has a positive impact on the development of social objectives. This is a notion supported by Spaaij (2009), who states that the improvement of social inclusion is imperative to a positive community. Moreover, he adds that the Government's involvement in sport can aid this development greatly, making them a key driver in the force for change. Subsequently, it is of particular interest to the Government to reach what are seen as disadvantaged groups, such as those from deprived backgrounds, and it is viewed that sport is a perfect platform on which to do so (Roberts, 2009; COI, 2011).

Kelly (2011) suggests that Government policy argues great social benefits can come from participating in sport and physical activity. From the more recent Governmental development, the coalition has created further ideas of how social objectives can be reached. Although the improvement of social inclusion is still a fundamental focus, the means of doing so have adapted. The Government is now concerned with the development of competitive sport and talent development as a platform for encouraging mass participation (Grix and Carmichael, 2011). It is important to note that despite the new emphasis on elite development, the improvement of social objectives is still a high priority focus area.

The history of disability sport dates back to the Second World War. A neurologist working with war veterans used physical activity as part of a rehabilitation programme, particularly for those with spinal injuries. From this, the Paralympic games were introduced in 1948, initially as an inter-hospital competition (BBC, 2004). From then, disability sport has been growing rapidly; in the current climate, disability sport has seen a large rise in participation rates. 18.5% of people with a disability participate weekly in sport. However, these statistics are still too low, and vary according to the severity and type of disability. For example, people with sensory impairments have a lower participation rate, with only 13.4% taking part in regular physical activity (Sport England, 2013). The Government guidelines

for sport are consistent throughout able-bodied and disabled children (Department of Health, 2010). That said, due to the restrictions which can hinder participation, those with a disability are less likely to fulfil the government guidelines (Murphy and Carbone, 2004).

1.1 Rationale

The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which extra-curricular activity can aid the social capabilities of children with special educational needs (SEN). Previous research has shown that the benefits gained through sporting participation are the same for those with special educational needs (SEN) as they are for mainstream individuals (Swedan, 2001). However, the significance of these benefits are far greater for those with SEN, specifically with regards to social integration.

Although there is evidence to suggest that there are social benefits to gain from sport, literature that explores this within the SEN spectrum is limited. Consequently, the importance of this study is to increase the understanding of the social developments that sport can encourage for children with SEN and recognise the significance behind this.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Sport's Contribution to Social Inclusion

The Government's overall aim in relation to sport is strongly linked to the well-being of communities and individuals. Health does not just concern the physical well-being of an individual. Total well-being concerns the social, physical and psychological wellness of an individual. Consequently, it is important to explore the benefits sport has on these components. All three elements of health are closely linked, but it is important to distinguish the particular benefits physical activity can have on each.

Firstly, there is irrefutable evidence to suggest that physical activity has a direct impact on the improvement of physical health for all ages (Blair *et al.* 2001; Vuori, 2001; Vogel *et al.* 2009; Janssen and Blanc, 2010). Furthermore, Warburton *et al.* (2006) highlight the important role sport can play in the improvement of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and obesity, as well as aid the prevention of premature death.

Additionally, there are some noted personal benefits of participating in sport; Bailey (2006) discusses the generic psychological benefits that can emerge when one is part of a physical activity regime, as well as the generic cognitive developments that can take place with participation. Belnap (2009) furthers this notion, stating that sport participation can have a positive impact on cognitive development. Participation in physical activity promotes the development of skills such as creativity, improvisation and organisation, all of which can contribute to strengthening cognitive function.

Fraser-Thomas *et al.* (2007) provide a clear list of social characteristics which can be developed through sporting participation, including competence, character and confidence.

Furthermore, confidence is a factor which is discussed by many practitioners, due to the significant difference sport can have upon it (Gratton and Henry, 2002; Coatler, 2005). There is evidence to suggest that through participating in physical activity, self-esteem can be enhanced tenfold due to social integration and acceptance (Gratton and Henry, 2002). Enjoyment is a component of sport, which links to psychological well-being. Physical activity has a strong association with the improvement of confidence and motivation and the elimination of depression, all of which can come from enjoyment (Wankel, 1993). Schwery Consulting (2007) discuss the importance of self-esteem improvements regarding social acceptance and the strong influence that sporting participation has on this subject. Saxena *et al.* (2005) suggest that social acceptance can be a by-product of co-operation

and willingness to collaborate. Campbell and Simmonds (2003) state that this is a great advantage of participating in physical activity and explores the leadership skills that can be gained through collaborative practice; important for social interactions.

The psychological and social elements of health are closely linked. Many of the developments made psychologically can aid the social aspects in an individual's life. Mullholland (2008) discusses the development of interpersonal skills that can come from participation within sport and the importance that this can have on creating positive social relations. Additionally, sport creates social contexts in which personal identities can be developed and a sense of belonging can be established (Schroeder, 2005). Wann (2006) enhances this notion, suggesting that team sports in particular aid social well-being; being part of a team can encourage self-identity formation and provide a social culture in which participants can find their social individuality.

From participation in physical activity, characteristics relating to social competencies can be developed from childhood through to adult life. These characteristics involve interpersonal communications and citizenship, both of which can be imperative for social inclusion. Moreover, through community sport, individuals develop a sense of individual identity and values, which leads to the natural development of collaborative values within a community setting (Donnelly and Coakley, 2002). Involvement in a socially inclusive environment also contributes to the development of skills associated with community cohesion (Gratton and Henry, 2002). This is a cyclical process, which suggests that through personal competencies, social inclusion can improve and in turn, through the involvement in socially cohesive practice, social characteristics can be further developed.

It is important to recognise the link between developed social competencies and the improvement of social inclusion. Ewing (1997) suggests that awareness of appropriate social behaviour can be enhanced through participation in physical activity. Social competencies can be developed through the application of social characteristics, which have been learnt, in this context, through sport. Furthermore, developing social competencies through sporting activity can aid those who are likely to be excluded from communities to integrate into society. Improving social skills also develops community connections and networks, contributing to building Social Capital (DCMS, 2002). Building on this, Gatz *et al.* (2002) suggest sporting situations promote the opportunity to develop social competency by providing connections with peers and determining friendship

patterns. "Sports participation is unique in its potential to accomplish integrative interaction" (Humphrey, 2012, p.92), this demonstrates the significance of sport as a tool for the development of social capabilities.

Humphrey (2012) suggests that integration within social contexts (in this case, sport), encourages the development of interpersonal skills, an element which can also develop community social capital through extending networks and encouraging social integration (Bailey, 2008). Furthermore, Skinner *et al.* (2008) provide a strong link from participation in physical activity, to increased social capital in the context of crime reduction. These authors explore the link between the idea of developed community identity and social capital. It is suggested, "Social controls within the community contribute towards counterbalancing criminal activities." (p.10). In essence, the development of community identity that physical activity can encourage, can vastly aid the reduction of anti-social behaviour. Collective goals, cohesive skils, extended social networking and community identity are all collaborative, community characteristics which can be developed through physical activity, and improve social inclusion (Long *et al.* 2002). Finally, sporting, recreational activity allows and encourages communities to build individual and collective identities. It supports collaborative activity, which develops a sense of community cohesion (PAT 10, 2000).

There are a number of ways in which the Government set about creating opportunities to improve participation and reach social inclusion targets. There are a number of initiatives, which have direct involvement in encouraging sports participation. The School Games is a program designed to encourage young people from all over England to participate in sport and physical activity. Although there is a competitive element to the initiative, it is open to all, non-exclusive and allows young people to feel part of a national event (Sport England, 2012). However, there are also initiatives, which encourage engagement in sports volunteering as opposed to participation. These initiatives provide opportunities to be involved in sporting events and activities without necessarily participating. The importance of this is that there is still the fulfilment of social objectives through alternative means.

An example of this is the Games Makers scheme; a programme devised to provide volunteering opportunities at the Olympic Games (DCMS, 2010). Sport England (2013), reflecting on the effectiveness of Games Makers, state that the program provided those who have not previously been involved in sport, the opportunity to be a part of the largest sporting event the UK would see. Furthermore, Sport England (2013) found that as well as

gaining extensive sporting knowledge, those involved in volunteering at The Games, created social bonds which would last throughout and beyond the event. Additionally, it was found that a sense of national pride was felt within those who were directly involved with the running of The Games, providing further means of social development and inclusion.

Another means of creating opportunities and meeting government social objectives is by improving the link between clubs and schools (Colins, 2010; DCMS, 2012). Furthermore, Fahey (2005) discusses the link with regards to integration, stating that a pathway from school into a community club aids the integration into environments that can sometimes be unfamiliar for young people. The DCMS (2012) concludes this notion, stating that connecting schools and community clubs namely concerns developing a life-long interest in participation which, subsequently helps to fulfil the social aims set by the Government.

2.2 Key Target Groups for Sport Development: Disability and Special Educational Needs

The Equality Act (2010) describes disability as an impairment either physical or psychological, which significantly affects an individual's way of life. SEN is a type of disability, which concerns a person's educational and cognitive capabilities and development. Westwood (2007) states that in the UK, one in five school aged children have SEN. Warnock and Norwich (2010) suggest that the term SEN covers a large range of cognitive disabilities, all of which have different capabilities and needs. Additionally, Garner (2009) discusses the differing categories of SEN, noting four particular groups, communication and integration; cognition and learning; behaviour; social and emotional development and sensory needs. Furthermore, Warnock and Norwich (2010), note that current education provision aims to accommodate for all types of SEN, including specialist schools, which support the educational development of those with SEN. However, for the purpose of social development, current policy favours the integration of children with SEN into 'mainstream' schools.

In a sporting context, there are some specific policies and initiatives, set by the Government, which also facilitate the involvement of those with disabilities and SEN. Everyone, regardless of ability or disability is entitled to sporting opportunities (United Nations, 2006, cited in Hylton 2013). This unanimous statement is universally agreed and accepted, and is the first step to creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in physical activity. It highlights the importance of providing equal opportunities

for participation throughout varying abilities and is one which is taken seriously by the Government. National organisations are responsible for the facilitation of these sporting opportunities and organisations such as National Governing Bodies and National Disability Sports will be responsible for the fulfilment of specific objectives (Hylton, 2013). UK Sport (2010) state that in line with the Disability Act 2005, they are bound to take positive steps to ensure the inclusion of disability groups in sporting activities at all levels. In essence, the provision of sport and physical activity from grassroots, through to elite performance is overseen by UK Sport to ensure people with disabilities are given equal opportunities to participate. Subsequently, Black (2011) produced documentation to support the inclusion of those with disabilities, suggesting ways in which teachers and coaches can adapt activities to be more inclusive.

Disability sports can be adapted versions of sports created for abled bodies as well as activities designed specifically for those with disabilities (DePauw and Gavron, 2005). Delaney and Madigan (2009) state that sporting opportunities for those with disabilities have increased tenfold due to technological advances. It is also noted that the Special Olympics is the best known disability sports organisation, devoted to providing opportunities for those with disabilities with a safe environment in which to participate.

2.3 Special Educational Needs: The Significance of Sport

Swedan (2001) states that those with a disability generally gain the same benefits from participation as non-disabled individuals. That said, although the benefits accrued are the same, the significance of these benefits are far greater for those with SEN. This is also suggested by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) (2012), who provide a list of benefits that come from sports participation. The list represents the generic benefits that can be gained from participation in physical activity. Moore (2009) specifies in the benefits that can be gained by those with SEN and suggests that any challenge (including physical activity), is positive to the health development of a child with SEN. Moreover, Murphy and Carbone (2008) discuss the importance of physical activity, particularly for those with SEN in relation to health. It is stated that participation aids and optimizes physical functioning and contributes to overall wellbeing.

The psychological health benefits for disabled persons can also be significant. Levine (2002) states that the problem-solving nature of sport enhances psychological capabilities and it is noted that those with SEN in particular benefit greatly from this. An overriding psychological benefit is the increase of self-esteem that can be developed through the

interactive and social environments, provided by sport. Handicap International (2011) support this, suggesting that through participation in physical activity, those with disabilities can gain a sense of empowerment, allowing them to recognise their own potential and therefore increasing their sense of self-belonging. Furthermore, Meyer and Broocks (2000) studied the psychological improvement of those with SEN within sporting programs. They found that physical activity aids the reduction of depression symptoms as well as improve anxiety issues that SEN children can be faced with. Safran *et al.* (1998) state that the psychological benefits gained from participation for disabled persons can be vast and include improved self-esteem and confidence. It also develops an individual's ability to set goals and meet challenges.

All of the developments noted, both mental and physical, can aid the social development of individuals. EFDS (2012) suggest that the developments made through sporting activity can aid employment performance; the social skills learned through physical activity in particular, helps those with SEN to enter the employment world. Additionally, Parnes (2010) states that the skills learned through sports participation improves functioning in daily activities, leading to improved independence. This author also notes that sport provides a social context in which those with SEN can learn interaction and communication skills.

Finally, Handicap International (2011) notes the external benefits that can accompany physical activity. Sport aids and changes community perceptions of those with disabilities, focusing on their abilities and shadowing their disabilities.

2.4 Special Educational Needs: Barriers to Participation

Although the factors previously discussed indicate great success for social development through sport, the evidence provided largely comes from a generic outlook as opposed to the perspective of children with special needs. This noted, it is important to explore the research, which provides an insight into the many barriers that can hinder young people with disabilities from participating in sport and physical activity. Statistics show that participation in sport is noticeably lower for children with SEN than those who are deemed mainstream (Finch, 2001). Based on this statement, it is important to understand the factors that can affect these young people and the barriers that hinder their participation in physical activity. Murphy and Carbone (2008) contextualise this topic, stating that societal barriers can be linked directly to those who live with special needs and can be a significant detriment to participation. Likewise, Westwood (2007) states that young people with

special needs can struggle to uphold social relationships with their peers, their perception of appropriate social behavior is often misconstrued and this can negatively affect their social development.

Sheilds *et al.* (2011) identify two predominant barriers to participation for this particular group; social and personal hurdles. The first factor to be explored is the social difficulties that can prevent young people with special needs participating in physical activity. "Studies have shown that people, in general, harbor negative and paternalistic attitudes towards persons with special needs." (Dalal, 2006, p.374). Expanding on this statement, Hutzler *et al.* (2005) suggest that the attitude of others can be a huge restriction on participation within mainstream settings. Some find it difficult to accept what is deemed to be unusual or different behaviour, and for young people with disabilities, this can be the main reason for their absence from physical activity. Alternatively, the SEN individual's perception of being different can be equally as disadvantageous within social contexts and can have a detrimental effect on their social development (Menear, 2007). Likewise, Law *et al.* (2002) discuss the disadvantage that accompanies an individual's negative attitude towards social situations, namely socialising through sport. It is also suggested that environmental factors such as large open spaces can be intimidating to children with SEN. Adapting to these environments can be extremely difficult for many participants and this can discourage children from participating in social activities (Rous *et al.* 2007). Furthermore, Alexander (2008) carried out a study to analyse the integration of children with special needs into mainstream situations. It was found that students with intellectual difficulties struggle to integrate into mainstream environments and from this, the student's self-confidence is lowered and they can become lonely.

The second factor that Sheilds *et al.* (2011) discuss is the personal barriers that individuals can face, preventing them from participating in physical activity. Confidence can be a considerable issue for children with special needs and is, in fact, an additional barrier to participation (Coates and Vickerman, 2008). Porter (2001) adds that confidence is a highly influential factor in participation and suggested that a lack in confidence leaves children with SEN feeling different and unable to fit into a sporting environment. Porter (2001) adds that a fear of failure is another factor which can hinder participation and stems from low-esteem issues. Rankin (2012) explored the confidence barrier from a different angle. He believed that confidence could prevent young people from initially seeking ways to become socialised. Rankin (2012) suggested that often, young people with special needs are

unaware of the sporting opportunities that are available to them, and that they may not have the confidence needed in order to seek opportunities to participate in physical activity.

There are many environmental barriers to participation for young persons with SEN. French and Hainsworth (2001) found a number of factors responsible for the restriction of participation within this target group. The list comprises of transport; staffing; facilities and programmes. Hemmingson and Borell (2002) explore the barriers that face those with SEN, stating that the most predominant barrier can be a lacking in appropriate organisation within sport. This was linked to facilitating those with special needs. It was noted that inadequate facilities and failure to adapt the environment, can cause exclusion from participation, more for older youths than the younger children. Heah *et al.* (2007), support this notion, stating that facilities can be detrimental to the participation of young people with special needs, if they are not adequately equipped. Similarly, the availability of programmes designed specifically for those with special needs are often scarce, which can hinder access to quality physical activity (Eddy, 2013). Furthermore, transport to appropriate facilities can be difficult to access due to cost and availability and is therefore a further barrier to extra-curricular participation for young people with SEN (Coates and Vickerman, 2008).

Green (2010) discusses a different barrier, stating that young peoples' families play a significant part in their participation in sport and physical activity. Green (2010) noted that the majority of young people with SEN rely on their family for access and transport to sporting opportunities and often participation can suffer due to an inability to gain family support. Furthering this, Sit *et al.* (2007) discuss the importance of collaboration needed between home and community clubs or agencies, stating that a downfall in the communication between these can hinder participation for the youths. It is apparent that family support and the communication with the programmes and clubs can be imperative to creating opportunities for the children to participate in social activities.

Overall, it is evident that there are many barriers that can have a negative influence upon the participation of young people with special needs. These vary from fiscal matters, environmental issues and social barriers. However, the most predominant barrier explored is the social factors that can effect participation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Framework

Existing frameworks for research sit under two umbrella terms, quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research involves statistical data collection and analysis. Whereas qualitative research is harder to define; it still involves the collection and analysis of data, however it is not based upon statistical evidence (Creswell, 2003). Merriam (2009) explores the complexity of qualitative research, stating that due to its complex nature, theorists have found it difficult to conclude a definition of this method. However, it is known that qualitative research has specific relevance to social relations, and contextualises social theory to develop a depth of understanding (Flick, 2009). The focus of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of extra-curricular physical activity on the social development of children with SEN. Qualitative research helps develop the understanding of human experiences (Hammersley, 2012), thus making it an appropriate method for this study, as the data being collected was of a social nature and could not be quantified statistically (Punch, 2006).

3.2 Data Collection

For qualitative studies, there are a number of methods in which to question people. Focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, or observations are all reliable means of collecting primary information (Gratton and Henry, 2010). Focus groups are most commonly, a type of interview carried out in the presence of more than one participant at one time (Stewart, 2007). Focus groups are an exploratory data collection method and allow for a conversational style setting. For the purpose of gaining more depth and greater understanding however, interviews are a suitable means of research for social studies in particular. For this particular project, individual interviews are more appropriate than focus groups due to the possible sensitivity of the topic. As a primary source of data collection, interviews are a reliable means of accessing information, as well as the most common and effective means of understanding and interpreting individual's ideas and opinions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Hatch, 2002). Arskey and Knight (1999), state that the exploratory nature of interviews creates an open atmosphere in which both parties can gain a greater understanding of the study area through structured social interaction.

There are three types of interview, unstructured, semi structured and structured. Structured interviews rely on a set list of questions which barely alter throughout the interview. Semi-structured is more flexible; it is likely that the interviewer will have

prepared a number of questions prior to the interview. However, additional, follow up questions may be required depending on the responses of the interviewee. Unstructured interviews involve the interviewer knowing the general topic area, but questions being formed throughout the interview, in a more conversational manner (Gratton and Jones, 2010). This study followed the semi-structured interview approach. Using this method ensured that the interview questions were consistent, but with a semi-formal setting, encouraging a relaxed atmosphere, in which the interviewee could speak openly and freely about their views. This is an appropriate method for accessing participants' attitudes and values as it is a more conversational than formal format (Silverman, 2006). For the purpose of data collection, interviews are an excellent way of gathering information within possible sensitive subjects, and can collect such information without needing extensive numbers of participants (Zikmund and Babin, 2009). This was particularly relevant to this topic as there could have been sensitivity issues around the depth of information needed with relation to the children's special needs.

3.3 Pilot Studies

Pilot studies are a useful means of assessment and development. The time spent on the pilot process, although sometimes lengthy, is worth it for the improvement of the method (Maxwell, 2012). In the context of interviewing, the purpose of a pilot study is to test and potentially alter questions to improve the script and increase the quality of data collected (Yin, 2011). The pilot should be carried out with enough time to make any necessary alterations before the full version of the study is to take place (Hall, 2008) With the use of pilots, a research project can be greatly improved and the method in which the study is to be carried out can be adapted to improve effectiveness (American Diabetic Association, 2008).

For this study, one pilot interview took place a week before the full interviews were to commence (See appendix A). The interviewee was a carer of one of the children within the club. The pilot allowed the researcher to assess whether the questions were both logical and appropriate to the context of the study. It was found that the main flow of the questioning worked well, and that none of the questions were misinterpreted or inappropriate. However, some additional questions were later added to the script (see appendix B), namely related to whether the interviewee is the parent or carer of the child and how much time is spent with said child. Although this was only a small change, the researcher felt this was an important question as it gave an insight into how well the

participant knew the child. Overall, the pilot process was successful and an effective means of method development.

3.4 Participants

Seven participants were asked to be involved in the research. These participants were the parents and carers of the children and young people who attend the Cardiff Met Basketball Academy session for children with SEN, whose ages range from ten to twenty two. The researcher felt that these individuals would give the most in depth perception of the lives of the children with regards to the context of the study. This is due to the fact that they have an insight of the children's development before joining the basketball club and therefore a sound understanding of the ways in which sport has affected the development of their child.

Not gathering enough participants could lead to difficulty in theming data, presenting the issue of a poor discussion (Seidman, 2012). That said, the researcher found that seven was the ideal number of interviews to undertake, given the time frame in which they had to work. One extra-curricular club was used and the parents and carers chosen for the study were those who regularly attended, allowing for a detailed discussion of what the children had gained from the basketball club.

The interviews were carried out within the children's basketball sessions, making the process more convenient for the participants and allowing for the interviews to be conducted in the same vicinity as the children.

3.5 Data Analysis

Interpretation of information collected from interviews can be a difficult task. Thematic analysis is the most commonly used process to interpret the data collected in qualitative studies (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The process involves identifying and analysis common themes from the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) state that a benefit of the use of thematic analysis is the flexibility of the process; it accommodates the changing nature of qualitative data, allowing for detailed interpretation. Lacey and Luff (2009) suggest that the most effective way of analysing data is through visual mapping, creating a table which aids the visualisation of correlations between interview responses. For this study, the transcripts were carefully highlighted, and the common themes presented in table format to allow for an easier interpretation of information.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Social studies involve the exploration of an individual's thoughts and feelings and often ethical issues can arise throughout every step of the research process (Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, 2010). To ensure compliance with ethical guidelines throughout the study, the participants were fully informed of the intentions and process of the research (see appendix C). An information sheet was provided for the participants to ensure that they fully understood both their involvement in the project and the aim and rationale for the research itself (See Appendix C). The participants were informed that although the information collected would be used in the write-up of the project, their data would remain anonymous throughout, the names of both the participant and child were not used by the researcher for confidentiality purposes. The participants also have the right to access their data whenever they wish during the research project. Finally, considerations were made to ensure the participants were comfortable with the questions. Before the interviews commenced, interviewees were made aware that they were not obligated to answer any questions if they did not wish to do so and that they could stop the interview at any point.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of research refers to "the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population" (Golashani, 2003, p.598). In order to improve the reliability of a study, the area in which the interviews are carried out and the recording equipment should remain consistent (Gratton and Jones, 2004). For this study, a Dictaphone Application on a laptop was used for recording the interviews. The interviews were also carried out in the same office, in the same time slot every week. A detailed transcript was then produced to enable the researcher to highlight themes and conduct the discussion. Finally, the validity of the study is to be visited. The validity of a study refers to whether the research "truly measures that which it was intended to measure" (Golafhsani, 2003, p.598). The pilot interview aids the validity process; pilot interviews check that there is no misinterpretation of questions, ensuring the purpose of the study is fulfilled. Within qualitative research there is a chance that the participant will not answer all questions honestly, in order to shape the outcome differently (Kuzmanić, 2009). Ensuring that the participants are aware of their anonymity is an important component in improving the validity of the study. If the participant thought that their personal information was to be on display within the research, they may withdraw from full, honest participation in the questions. Furthermore, there are ways to encourage the truth to be told in the sensitivity

of the questioning and manner of the interviewer. The semi-structured interview method aided this, allowing for adaptation of question content and order throughout the interview. This is also known as steering and can be an effective means of creating opportunities within the interview to gain deeper answers (Flick, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which extra-curricular activity can aid the social capabilities of children with SEN. From the data collection, the following themes emerged, Special Educational Needs: The Impact; Parents and Network; School and Physical Education (P.E) and Sport and Special Educational Needs: The Significance.

The following will provide a detailed analysis of the data collected, with relevance to existing literature. This chapter will also consider what the implications of the study may have, particularly on the Sport Development sector.

4.2 Special Educational Needs: The Impact

The first noted issue related to the SEN children was the pure range of complexities that accompany their needs. When asked what impact the child's SEN had on their lives, the participants' responses were mostly varied. The children's' needs differ both in type and severity, and even matching diagnosis' can differ hugely. However, one reoccurring word linked most of the children in their needs; routine. One interviewee stated "it does affect his everyday life because he's quite set in a routine" a comment which most other participants agreed with. Tilton (2004) discusses this topic with specific relevance to children with autism, stating that the need for routine is an obsessive-compulsive behaviour, typical of a child with autism. Furthermore, he suggests that any change in routine can negatively alter the child's behaviour drastically. The need for routine can present an obstacle for participation, the researcher found that the children with the biggest need for routine struggled to accept basketball as a new part of their schedule and their behaviour altered accordingly. An example of which was noted within one interview, with the participant commenting on the impact the change in routine from joining the basketball club had on her child "he was like screaming in the first two weeks". The impact of this could lead to possible dropout from the activity if the child does not become settled. However, one way to avoid this situation would be to positively introduce the activities as part of the schedule. Bondy and Frost (2012) suggest that the important component of introduction to a new activity is to make it as enjoyable as possible. This could include the initial introduction of the idea, the journey to the activity and then the activity itself.

The interviews also revealed that a lot of the children are quite self-involved: "children with autism are quite insular anyway and they are usually only involved in themselves". If opportunities are not pushed upon them, they would happily stay in their homes and not socialise "they would just choose to go on their iPads at home". The issue related to this is that some of the participants are not aware of extra-curricular activity opportunities for children with needs. One participant in particular discussed this, stating "there's a lot for wheelchair based, but not a lot for needs". Eddy (2013) states that there are not enough programmes that accommodate specifically for those with needs and that programmes are rarely designed with a variety of needs in mind. This related well to the discoveries in the data collection, which revealed that finding activities that suit a child's specific needs is difficult, particularly when taking both the needs of the child and their interests into account.

One interviewee stated that other than basketball, nothing was found that was of particular interest to the child, which also both challenged and supported her enough, the parent stated that there was difficulty "finding something that's more appropriate for her specifically". This was echoed within another interview, in which the participant stressed the difficulty of accommodating for both of her children who have varying levels of needs, also noting that "you're very limited on what is out there for special needs". The overall consensus relating to this topic is that there are not enough opportunities to fulfil the needs of these children. However, the number of children who did have a week full of activity suggests that the opportunities are there, but perhaps the clubs' advertising is lacking.

Therefore, the need for development is evident and an area in which Sport Development Officers (SDO's) would be interested. Communication between SDO's, clubs and parents would be a key area to invest time in, increasing the awareness of clubs and activities for children with SEN. The power of better provision of extra-curricular activity could be inordinate, encouraging a greater level of participation and leading to further benefits gained.

Although the process of data collection did not expose a huge array of obstacles, the above suggests that the child's personal needs are the main barrier to their full participation in extra-curricular activity. However, it was also discovered through the interviews that the external perceptions of others towards children with SEN could be a hindrance to participation. An interviewee stated that "they've got enough on their plate without them realising…without people taking the mick or being mean towards them

because they're a little bit different". Dalal (2006) supports this, stating that some in society hold negative views of those with disabilities, particularly people with SEN. However, through sporting collaboration, these views can be altered and the negative views reduced. Through improving others' perceptions of those with disabilities, those with the SEN can feel more confident in their participation in social situations, and in turn, their social competencies can develop.

4.3 Parents and Networks

This theme emerged through the data collection, it was not a topic which was apparent through the review of literature. Nonetheless, it was a theme that the researcher felt was vital to the study due to the dependence of the basketball players on their families.

Parent networks can be vital to the integration of their child into social situations. Kerns *et al.* (2000) discuss the importance of parent networks in facilitating a child's social activity. The parent-parent bond not only aids their own support network, but also improves opportunities for the child to engage in social activities. Within the interview process, it was discovered that these social bonds between the parents, provided an invaluable resource base into discovering alternative and additional extra-curricular activities. An interviewee revealed "through meeting other parents with older children who are already involved in sporting activities…clubs and things, you know sort of encouraging us", highlighting the importance of parent networks in creating opportunities for the children.

Furthermore, the general response of the participants, relating to this topic, was that through the child's absence during activity, they could gain a social experience for themselves, "I get benefits too…because I see some of my friends, so it's a two way street really". This is an important element of social networking, not only do strong social ties provide an instrumental source of information sharing, the social context of these networks provide parents with the opportunity to take a step back from the caring role, and enjoy a social gathering (Ashan, 2007).

Viewing this from another angle, one participant explained that social networks are difficult to gain unless actively sought out. The interviewee felt that, due to the nature of the SEN School system of a taxi service to and from school, the parents miss out on the social interaction between one another at the school gates. This leads to the necessity of actively seeking social environments, which would be of benefit for both the parent and child. Forthun *et al.* (2011), suggest that without extensive social networks, parents with complex

home lives could become isolated, an issue which could have an adverse effect on the social integration of their child. On the other hand, the beneficial nature of parent networks make the process of developing social bonds a worthwhile experience. Furthermore, Matthews and Menna (2003) suggest that through parent and community collaboration, the development of the child learning process can excel, an element which is beneficial for both parent and child.

The support of parent bonds has power beyond social importance. Parent to parent support provides the comfort of mutual situational understanding and a sense of community identity (Ainbinder *et al.* 1998). Through networking with parents in a similar situation, the participants have access to a large pool of information and support, something which can be of great value to those caring for children with SEN (Family network on Disabilities, 2014).

Notwithstanding, the individual young people and parents are not the only beneficiaries of these social bonds, the impact of parent networks reaches the wider community, improving social capital. The support network created through the basketball connections contribute to bridging capital, a form of social capital that refers to extending beyond immediate social environment. Social bridging concerns the facilitation of engagement with a broader range of resources and opportunities, something which the participants of the study utilise effectively (Jordan, 2006).

Social capital is a vital component in social development; a key driver in the Government's strive for improving social inclusion (Coatler, 2007). The above evidence demonstrates a liner process through which social inclusion can be developed. Through networking and extending connections, individuals not only reap personal gain, but also contribute towards social capital, fulfilling government aims. Sport provides the perfect opportunity to start this process, meeting parents in similar situations, gaining information about other extra-curricular activities and gaining some personal social time.

4.4 School and P.E

The majority of the children at the basketball club attend specialist schools, due to their specific needs. Many of the interviewees claim that their child would not cope if introduced into a mainstream setting, something which could be due to their inability to fulfil the standards of, and gain full benefits from, a mainstream curriculum (Poon-McBrayer and Lian, 2002). That said, the benefit of attending a special school includes the alteration of the curriculum to meet the specific needs of the children. The interviews revealed that through the special school, the children gain life skills and are taught, through practice, appropriate social behaviours, "the way they teach them, they use a lot of social aspects they take them out a lot…it's more about being able to live independently". This is something which can be vital to integration in the wider community and enhances their ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. On the other hand, there can be issues related to the special school environment. This is something that was noticed by one parent who explained that her child's school, although appropriate for his needs in most ways, is not in others, stating "whether he's challenged enough, well that's another story, I don't know". This issue would be something to be addressed within the education sector, however through extra-curricular activity, the child does face challenges, which they may not within the classroom.

Although specialist education accommodates for the specific needs of children with SEN, current education policy supports integration into mainstream schools (Warnock and Norwich 2010). The small selection of children from the basketball club who do attend a mainstream school, follow a mixed curriculum combining similar activities to those delivered in a special school, along with opportunities to access mainstream lessons in particular subjects. The benefit of this mainstream access is namely that of a social matter, through social integration with mainstream students, social maturity is encouraged and positive social relations facilitated (Dew-Hughes, 2006; Armstrong and Squires, 2012). However, one of the parents did note that this integration is not always positive, her child was made very aware of their unique situation when surrounded with mainstream children, "in a mainstream school, he knew he was different". This had a detrimental effect on the child's confidence, and it was noted that since joining a secondary school specifically for children with SEN, the child's confidence has improved tenfold, the participant stated that "he can breathe a little more and be himself" in the SEN school.

With regards to the type of school and school physical education (P.E), there was no direct correlation connecting the quality of P.E to the type of school attended. The quality of P.E varied within all schools and some participants explained how poor their child's P.E was within their school, "I haven't been impressed with the P.E lessons in his school", whereas others had nothing but positivity towards the subject. Notwithstanding, it was noted that the children who attended the mainstream schools did have access to mainstream P.E lessons, integrating with the other students, something that helps their social development. One child in particular, rather than accessing usual sporting activities during P.E lessons, had occupational therapy sessions, something which has worked well for her physical development.

Despite the diversity of schools attended and level of P.E delivered, there was one predominant factor which was evident throughout the interviews; the absence of participation in extra-curricular activity provided by the schools. One participant stated that there were activities available after school at the child's school, but none that would be appropriate to their abilities. The absence of these activities also pose an issue related to school-club links. Developing a link between schools and community clubs would increase opportunities for participation, which in turn, improves chances of social advances, an objective of government policy (Collins, 2010; DCMS, 2012). This is an area in which could have a direct impact on a large number of young people, who are simply unaware of opportunities.

4.5 Sport and SEN: The Significance

Many of the participants listed a number of extra-curricular activities that their children take part in. Often varied, each of the children's schedules proved beneficial in a number of ways. The first, and perhaps most vital benefit revealed was the enjoyment that the children experience from participating in the basketball club. Each interviewee emphasised the enjoyment that their child achieves from playing basketball, being part of a social group and interacting with others. This is something that can be essential for cognitive development (Wankel, 1993). A concept that links to the enjoyment gained from participation is the sense of belonging the children feel to the club. One parent in particular stated that their child labels himself a "basketball player now" and thrives off of the independence he has within the club. Through social, community environments, individuals can develop a feeling of belonging and identify themselves with the activity (Shroeder, 2005). This is a concept which can aid the development of collaborative values

and community identity, something important for social integration (Donnelly and Coakley, 2002). Identifying oneself to a social group has additional benefits along with the sense of belonging gained; confidence can be enhanced through mutual social acceptance (Gratton and Henry, 2002). The progress of confidence is not only improved through social integration, positive self-perception can be a huge aid to confidence development. Within the basketball club, some of the participants excel, and are rewarded accordingly, increasing their self-esteem. Through practical improvement, players can realise their own potential, increasing their self-esteem and enjoyment of the activity (Handicap International, 2011).

The practical aspect of the activity also aids the SEN children with their physical development. A number of the interviews revealed that the children with more severe learning difficulties benefit greatly from the application of fine motor skills, their coordination improves and their general fitness enhances. The fitness element is something which applies to all of the participants of the club. For the children who frequently take part in a range of activities, the health benefits are more obvious. However, the active nature of the basketball alone encourages health improvement (Vogel *et al.* 2009; Janssen and Blanc, 2010). One interviewee in particular explained the significance sports participation has had on their children's health, stating that " they have slimmed down" and are healthier for their exposure to physical activity.

Additionally, the skills and attributes gained through sports participation all contribute to a transferable skill set; something which can be vital to the personal and social development of a young person. An attribute that emerged throughout the analysis was the independence that the basketball club can provide. One child has developed the ability to approach the head coach and pay for their own session, something which is a small step in practicality, but a huge one with regards to the development of life skills. The participant noted that a vital step for this child is "learning that you know he can go and pay and he looks after his own things". This relates to Parnes' (2010) idea that skills developed within a sporting context, can be applied in daily activities, improving both functional ability and independence. This concept relates explicitly to the improvement of communication skills of the children; through the club, some of the children have developed the ability to converse with one another, something which is imperative in day-to-day life.

Another life skill that was apparent within the interviews was obedience, many of the children started the club with a tendency to misbehave and run away from the basketball court. More than one of the participants noticed that this has been improved throughout the course of the club and stated that this has aided their obedience in general. One child was frequently running away from the parent in all environments, but since joining the club this has altered, "it has taught her to stay within the confines of basketball". She has also learnt the importance this and it is something which has transferred to her daily life.

An additional advantage to having basketball as part of their routine is that it greatly aids the children's ability to deal with change. Introducing enjoyable and varied activities into an SEN child's schedule aids their understanding of change acceptance (Mueller, 2008). One parent stated that the ever changing nature of the club, with the frequent additions to coaches and children, has helped their child to control their anxiety related to changing routines, she noted "he's meeting new people…'cause we've had change, he's had to adapt to it". Developing acceptance of change is a vital element to improving the children's life; it will aid their understanding when inevitable change occurs (Richman, 2006). The importance of this relates to another matter which arose within the interviews; school transitions. The data analysis revealed that having friends within the club who attend the same school, helps their understanding of different environments and aids the transition between activities and schools. Through familiarising themselves with other participants from their school within the club, the children create a link which can help them to settle when moving schools. One interview summarised this notion well, stating that it is good for her child, "going where he's seeing people from school every week and then he's going to go to high school". Essentially, when moving from primary to secondary school, their child settled in quickly due to their connections with children in the club. These relations, although encouraged subconsciously through the sport, could be actively reinforced through the planning of the sessions.

The analysis enlightened the researcher on the topic, revealing a host of factors which link extra-curricular sport to social developments. Firstly, the data analysis demonstrated that making friends through sport is a simple concept but one which is vital to the social development of children with SEN. Sporting environments, particularly team sports encourage relationships to develop and facilitates interaction (Gatz *et al.* 2002;Nicholson and Hoye, 2008; Humphrey 2012). Largely, the consensus was that the teamwork element of basketball greatly aids the interaction of the children. Through team work, the children grasp the concept of individuals and groups and the important difference between the two.

This is a notion which links closely to the development of social awareness and understanding of appropriate social behaviours. Sport is a context in which social behaviours are easily taught and developed (Ewing, 1997). The interviewees commented on how the interaction within the club encourages the social awareness of the children; they are able to recognise their peers and communicate accordingly. This process was discussed by one participant in particular, "to know who he is, that's a huge improvement", this emphasises the significance social situations can have on the children's lives, simply recognising another child is a big step for some of these children.

Effective communication can also have a direct impact on the confidence of a child, something which was noted within the analysis. Having an environment in which the children feel safe both physically and emotionally, facilitates their confidence to converse and interact Delaney and Madigan (2009). One interviewee summarised this stating that the basketball club provides a safe environment in which their child can interact, noting that "he's not having to go into the big wild world for social interaction." Confident interaction leads to improvement of integration, within the analysis it was found that integration is an advantage which is aided greatly by participation in extra-curricular activity. One parent in particular mentioned the importance of integration into mainstream society, stating that "they are part of our society after all" and related it back to the perception of others. Integration of children through a sporting context aids the perception of others as their abilities rather are recognised than their disabilities. Through integration, social competencies are learnt, contributing to interpersonal skills, which then relate back to social integration (Bailey, 2008; Humphrey, 2012).

This cyclical process is vital in the bigger picture of social importance; improved social inclusion is developed through individual's competencies collaborating to create a community identity (Skinner *et al.* 2008). This then contributes to the individual's sense of identity, something which aids their personal development. The implications of this heavily relates to the role of a Sport Development Officer. Understanding the impact that sporting activity can have upon the social skills of young people with SEN encourages the facilitation of extended opportunities, specifically designed to develop social interaction, a concept which contributes to the social aims set by the Government (DCMS, 2002).

The pure diversity of benefits is proof of the significance sport can have on an individual's life, particularly for those with SEN. This is an area which is not extensively covered by existing literature and the researcher's findings expose the integral role sport can play in the social development of those with needs. Each benefit can relate back to their personal development, something which links to social improvements. The findings also prove that the benefits gained from extra-curricular activity, although the same, are more significant for those with SEN than for individuals without needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Final thoughts

The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which extra-curricular activity can aid the social capabilities of children with SEN. The research explored the topical thoughts and opinions of the parents and carers associated with the children at the basketball club. Through interviews, the researcher was able to find an extended source of information related to the study question.

This study contributed to the research, exposing a number of themes which, although not necessarily directly related to social development, definitely had an effect on the personal development of the young people at the basketball club. These contributions to development include transferrable skills, life skills which teach the children common values and appropriate behaviours, something which can be transferred into social environments. The key finding within the themes was the significance of each benefit of participation. Sport can encourage social skills often taken for granted by those to whom communication comes naturally. However, for children with SEN, tasks such as addressing another child with their name is something which was noted as an incredible social development for the severity of needs that the children deal with.

A benefit not recognised within the literature review relates to the parents as opposed to the players directly. The social groupings made within the parents of the club can be crucial to an extended range of participation activities for the children. Through parent-to-parent support, the awareness of other extra-curricular activity is increased, improving opportunities for the children. Another angle of this theme is the benefits that the parents gain themselves. Through the time gained whilst the children are playing basketball, the parents have an opportunity to socialise, creating networks and friendships, something which is important for the development of social inclusion and social capital (DCMS, 2002; Gatz *et al.* 2002; Humphrey, 2012).

A number of the participants of the study also revealed that the basketball club was only one component of a personal development journey for their children. The children with a full schedule of extra-curricular activity gained the most from combined social opportunities; each activity was noted to have an isolated set of benefits, as well as some

which contribute to the larger picture.

Finally, a key finding from the discussion is the improvements that could be made through and within the Sport Development industry. This is with particular regards to the improvement of school-club links within schools that cater for young people with SEN. The evidence strongly suggests that extra-curricular sporting activity provides a range of benefits for those with needs. Therefore increasing opportunities to participate could be vital to personal development, something which could contribute to the social objectives set by the Government.

5.2 Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the number of participants that were interviewed. With more participants, the study could have been strengthened and more data would have been collected. Another limitation was the use of only one club, through using participants who access other clubs, a wider range of data could have been collected related to a broader picture of extra-curricular activity.

5.3 Future Recommendations

The researcher feels that from the data collected, future research could relate to the application of findings. Assessing the practicality of improving the provision of sporting opportunities for those with SEN is an area which is imperative to Sport Development. An area for developing research, which is related to this, concerns evaluating the barriers to participation for those with SEN, and exploring the ways in which these can be overcome.

The provision of physical activity would also be an area for future development. Creating opportunities, specifically designed for children and young people with SEN is a key area for improvement. The research project revealed a lack of appropriate activities for young people with SEN, suggesting that within Sport Development, further investigations into how this can be improved are imperative.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hi, this interview is based around the children of the basketball and the ways in which extra-curricular sport can aid their social development. Therefore I'm really interested in the child and finding a bit more out about them in terms of their background

1) How socially capable is your child?

2) How does the child's special need affect their life?

3) Does the child attend a mainstream or special school?

4) How does this help their progress in social terms? (Mainstream)

5) So, how long has your child been participating in the basketball club?

6) Why did you choose the basketball club?

7) Do they enjoy the sessions?

8) How do you think your child benefits from the basketball club?

-(social mentioned- brilliant, I'm more interested in talking about the social side…)

-(If not mentioned- have you noticed any social benefits?)

9) Can you list any noticeable social developments/ changes that your child has made since joining this club?

10) Do the skills and characteristics mentioned help with social integration into the wider community?

11) Basketball is a competitive, team sport. Do you think there are any added benefits to personal development from participating in such a sport as opposed to a sport such as badminton which is more individual?

-Any reason for this?

12)Does/has your child participated in any other extra-curricular activity?

-If yes: what are they?

-If no- is there any particular reason as to why they do not?

13) How does/did this other activity contribute towards the development of your child?

14) Does this differ from what the basketball sessions provide?

15) Talk to me about their experiences of P.E in school.

16) Have you noticed any alterations in your child's behaviour since participating in physical activity as opposed to just P.E?

17) Overall, could you summarise how extra-curricular sport contributes to the social development of children with special educational needs?

APPENDIX B: FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hi, this interview is based around the children of the basketball and the ways in which extra-curricular sport can aid their social development. Therefore I'm really interested in the child and finding a bit more out about them in terms of their background

1) Are you the parent or carer of the child?

2) So how much time do you spend with them?

3) How socially capable is your child?

4) How does the child's special need affect their life?

5) Does the child attend a mainstream or special school?

6) How does this help their progress in social terms? (Mainstream)

7) So, how long has your child been participating in the basketball club?

8) Why did you choose the basketball club?

9) Do they enjoy the sessions?

10) How do you think your child benefits from the basketball club?

-(social mentioned- brilliant, I'm more interested in talking about the social side…)

-(If not mentioned- have you noticed any social benefits?)

11) Can you list any noticeable social developments/ changes that your child has made since joining this club?

12) Which of these do you think are most vital? Why?

13) Do the skills and characteristics mentioned help with social integration into the wider community?

14) Basketball is a competitive, team sport. Do you think there are any added benefits to personal development from participating in such a sport as opposed to a sport such as badminton which is more individual?

-Any reason for this?

15)Does/has your child participated in any other extra-curricular activity?

-If yes: what are they?

-If no- is there any particular reason as to why they do not?

16) How does/did this other activity contribute towards the development of your child?

17) Does this differ from what the basketball sessions provide?

18) Talk to me about their experiences of P.E in school.

19) Have you noticed any alterations in your child's behaviour since participating in physical activity as opposed to just P.E?

20) Overall, could you summarise how extra-curricular sport contributes to the social development of children with special educational needs?

Title of Project: An Investigation into the Effects of Extra-Curricular Activity on The Social Developments of Children with Special Educational Needs

Participant Information Sheet

Background

My Name is Sophie Garton, I am a 3rd year student here at Cardiff Met and I am currently writing my dissertation. This project is aimed to gain an understanding of the social benefits of participating in extra-curricular activity for children with Special Educational Needs, in particular, those children who participate in the Cardiff Met Archers Academy basketball club.

Your participation in the research project

Why you have been asked

You have been invited to take part in this project because it is thought that you will be able to give a realistic insight into the development of the social skills of your child throughout their physical activity history.

What would happen if you agree to participate in the study?

If you agree to join the study, there are two main things that will happen.

1. You will be asked to join me for an interview whilst your child is participating in their basketball session. This will be in a room within NIAC so you are not taken out of the vicinity. The interview should take no longer than 60minutes, to ensure that you are there to collect your child at the end of the session.
2. I will then collate the information provided to best display the results within the study. If you wish to view the research, you are more than welcome to on request.

Are there any risks?

We do not think there are any significant risks to you from taking part in the evaluation study. If there is anything that you do not want to answer any questions, or if you no longer wish to participate, you can just request to stop the interview process.

Your rights

Being part of this research not mean that you give up any legal rights. In the very unlikely event of something going wrong during the evaluation, UWIC fully indemnifies its staff, and participants are covered by its insurance

What will happen with the results evaluated?

The recorded interviews will be put into a transcript, and the results of the study will simply be interpreted into themed categories. Once this has happed, the results will be presented within a dissertation research project. Although the information provided will be displayed, there will be no identification of individuals throughout the dissertation.

How we protect your privacy:

As you can see, I am the only member working on the study and will fully respect your privacy. I have taken very careful steps to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the information that I gain about you or your child.

All the information about you and your child will be stored securely away from the consent forms. At the end of the evaluation study I will destroy the information I have gathered about you and your child. I will only keep the consent forms with your name and address. I keep these for ten years because I am required to do so by UWIC.

Further information

If you have any questions about the research or how we intend to conduct the study, please contact us.

Sophie Garton

Tel: 07753471066

Email: st20002210@outlook.uwic.ac.uk

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency such as the NHS or MoD, you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your NHS application in order that your School is aware of the project.

The document *Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval* will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to your School Research Ethics Committee.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection must not commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

Name of applicant:	Sophie Garton
Supervisor (if student project):	Lucy Wheatley
School:	School of Sport
Student number (if applicable):	St20002210
Programme enrolled on (if applicable):	Sport Development
Project Title:	The effect of participation in extra-curricular activity on the social skills of children with special educational needs.
Expected Start Date:	01/09/2013
Approximate Duration:	6months
Funding Body (if applicable):	n/a
Other researcher(s) working on the project:	n/a
Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?	If yes, attach a copy of your NHS application to this form
Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?	Choose an item.

In no more than 150 words, give a non technical summary of the project
The project entails a sociological review of the effects of participation on the social skills on children with special needs. It is of the Government's interest to increase participation within all ages, genders and social groups (DCMS, 2012). It is widely known that participation can improve social inclusion and social behaviour (Gratton and Henry, 2002; Simmonds, 2003; Coatler, 2005).However, there is ample evidence to suggest that there are far too many social barriers to participation for children with special needs (Law et al, 2002; Rous et al, 2008; Shields et al 2011). The evidence which provides a positive social context for participation is not specific to particular groups. Therefore, this study will explore whether social developments can occur in children with special needs if and when these barriers are overcome.

Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:	
Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain	No
Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples	No
Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)	No
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)	No
If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required. If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form	

DECLARATION: **I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework**	
Signature of the applicant:	Date:
FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY	
Name of supervisor: Lucy Wheatley	Date: 28/10/13
Signature of supervisor:	

Research Ethics Committee use only		
Decision reached:	Project approved	x ☐
	Project approved in principle	☐
	Decision deferred	☐
	Project not approved	☐
	Project rejected	☐
Project reference number: Click here to enter text.		
Name: Click here to enter text.	Date: Click here to enter a date.	
Signature:		
Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant: Click here to enter text.		

PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN	
A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?	Choose an item.
A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used[3]	
n/a	

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

Qualitative research will be the chosen method for this project. Qualitative research is the study of social happenings and cannot be quantified statistically (Punch, 2006). It is most relevant to this research question as it aids the understanding of the interactions between social variables (Black, 1994). Qualitative research has specific relevance to social relations, and conceptualizes social theory to develop a depth of understanding (Flich, 2009).

The data will be collected through open interviews. Interviewing is a primary source of data collection and a reliable means of accessing information (Hatch, 2002). Using a semi-structured interview will ensure that the interview questions are consistent, but with a semi-formal setting to encourage a relaxed atmosphere, which allows for the interviewee to speak openly and freely about their views and is an appropriate method for accessing one's attitudes and values (Silverman, 2006). For the purpose of data collection, interviews are an excellent way of gathering a depth of information within possible sensitive subjects, and can collect such information without needing extensive numbers of participants (Zikmund and Babin, 2009). The participants will be informed of the context of the interview prior to the study, as well as the duration.

The data will be analysed through theming the findings. This allows for an exploration of the potential correlations between variables and displays findings in a logical manner (Huberman and Miles, 2002). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) echo this notion, stating that thematic categorisations are an appropriate way to analyse data due to the nature of pattern recognition.

Nine participants will be asked to be involved in the research. These participants will be the parents of children who participate in the Cardiff Met Basketball Academy session for children with special educational needs. Using five participants is an appropriate number in order to collect a range of views and opinions related to the participation in extra-curricular activity of the children. The interviews will be carried out during the children's basketball session, in order to make it as practically convenient for the participants as possible.

There can be some potential ethical issues that accompany collecting data through interviews. Therefore, before the interview process can begin, an Informed Consent should be discussed (Kvale, 2007). The participants are to be informed of the purpose of the research, the context of the interviews and the extent of the information needed. Due to confidentiality issues, it is important that the participants are made aware of the fact that they will remain anonymous throughout the data presentation, but the information given will be displayed.

To improve the reliability of the study, the scripts of the interviews are to be kept the same (Kvale, 2002). As well as this, the method of record and collection is also to remain constant. For this research, a dictaphone will be used to record interviews, followed by a detailed transcript. Finally, the validity of the study is to be visited, there is a chance that the participant will not answer all questions honestly, in order to shape the outcome differently (Kuzmanić, 2009). Nonetheless, there are ways to encourage the truth to be told in the sensitivity of the questioning and manner of the interviewer.

A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?	No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research	
Click here to enter text.	

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?
What I've covered in research process- my understanding of the research process.
B2 **Student project only**   What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?
Click here to enter text.

C POTENTIAL RISKS
C1 What potential risks do you foresee?
1) Due to the nature of the study, there may be some sensitive subjects which could be an issue for the participants. 2) In terms of the outcome of my study, the participants could falsely answer some questions in order to keep some information private 3) A loss of time can be of detriment to some participants; they may not wish to engage with a study which would take up their time.
C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?
1) To tackle sensitivity, the participants will first be made aware of the content and context of the interview and that any information given will be kept confidential throughout the study, i.e their names will not be used for the study. I will also carry out a pilot interview session before I start the real interviews, to ensure that the questions are worded with sensitivity in mind and to check that there are no issues regarding the content of the questions. 2) Again, the wording of the questions can aid the avoidance of this, as well as my own manner during the interviews, if I create a relaxed atmosphere, the participants are more likely to share information. 3) To deal with the issue of time, I will use the pilot study to indicate how much time the interviews will take and ensure the participants that the session will take no longer than the time in which they spend waiting for their children at the basketball club.