Cardiff School of Sport
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:
Empirical [1]

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Dissertation title: An autoethnographical account of the impact of a coach education programme in preparing a newly qualified football coach.

Supervisor: Dr B Cropley

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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[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.

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

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An autoethnographical account of the impact of a coach education programme in preparing a newly qualified football coach.

SPORTS COACHING

REBECCA EXWORTH

ST10000948

An autoethnographical account of the impact of a coach education programme in preparing a newly qualified football coach.

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Abstract

The primary aim of this research study was to report and investigate how a coach education programme impacted my preparation as a newly qualified football coach. An autoethnographical approach was adopted to present personalised accounts of my actual lived experiences of a Football Association Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. The short personal stories in this paper are based around three main themes and experiences that occurred whilst I completed the programme. The first sets of short stories are based on experiences on the coach education programme that had an impact upon my preparation as a coach. The second set of stories are based around experiences where the programme attempted to prepare me, as a coach, for the complex and dynamic nature of the coaching process. The final set of stories are based on my experiences where I felt I was being encouraged to be an original and imaginative new coach. The discussion chapter highlights how the programme had a limited impact on my development and preparation as a football coach. One of the main reasons for this limited impact on me as a coach was the emphasis on technical knowledge rather than on information that related to coaching. The effects of the power relationships that existed on the programme also had a negative impact on my development and preparation as a coach. My experiences also highlighted that the programme did not sufficiently prepare me, as a coach, to be able to work within the complex and dynamic environment that coaching exists within. Finally, through a general indoctrination approach to teaching, coach education is not encouraging the production of coaches who are "imaginative, dynamic and thoughtful" (Cushion *et al.,* 2003, p. 216).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Much of the recent coaching literature has criticised previous research for its simplistic and rationalistic assumptions made about the nature of coaching as an activity and process (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Many now recognise and understand that the coaching process exists in a complex social and ever changing ambiguous environment (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Fletcher & Scott, 2010). One issue that has emerged due to the conceptual development of the coaching process is the value of coach education programmes. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the provision and participation of coach education programmes across the United Kingdom (Cassidy, Potrac, & McKenzie, 2006; Lyle, 2002). While the growth in participation and increase in interest into coach education has been deemed positive, there is a lack of empirical research that has investigated how traditional coach education programmes are being taught and received amongst coaches (Cushion & Nelson, 2013).

Whilst some research has provided scholars and practitioners with useful knowledge about the impact, nature and role of coach education, little research has investigated how sport coaches experience these programmes (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). In an attempt to address this neglect, this study will utilise an autoethnography to provide an insight into a Football Association Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. For the purpose of this paper, the researcher will draw on their personal experiences of a coach education programme, firstly to report on any experience that had an impact upon their preparation as a football coach. Secondly, the researcher will attempt to provide an insight into how coach education is presenting the coaching process in relation to the recent conceptual development. Finally, the researcher will report on any experiences where the coach education programme encouraged the production of coaches who are original and creative. By adopting an autoethnographical approach for this study, the researcher will be able to present a more accurate and truer portrayal of a coach education programme, compared to prior research (Denison, 2002; Jones, 2000).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last two decades there has been an increase in research focusing on coaching and how it relates to sports pedagogy and sport psychology. A large proportion of the previous literature relating to coaching has attempted to describe, characterise and model the coaching process (Cushion *et al.,* 2006). Despite the efforts of many academics, current research relating to the art of coaching and the coaching process still lacks a complete definition or universal model. The clarification of the coaching process is crucial to ensure that effective coaching methods and approaches to coach education can be established (Lyle, 2002). This clarification is especially important when considering the various domains that effective coaching influences, for example: school sport, recreational sport, and professional elite sport. Furthermore, coaching is rapidly becoming an evolving profession and a popular career choice for many, therefore without a clear conceptual base or definition a vast amount of coaches are basing their practices on feelings, events and previous experiences (Jones *et al.*, 2004).

Traditionally, the coaching process has been modelled from a rationalistic perspective as a sequential model or as a "knowable sequence" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 120). The rationalistic understanding of the coaching process tends to be attributed to a positivistic paradigm. Lyle (1996, 1998, 1999, & 2002) has been a strong advocate for a positivistic understanding of the coaching process. His research has proposed numerous sequential models and definitions. Lyle (1996) stated that to attain an improvement in an athlete's competitive performance a coach must follow a planned, co-ordinated, progressive process. Finally, Lyle (1999) has discussed the difference between models for, and of, the coaching process.

Models *for* the coaching process are founded on representations that arise from a set of assumptions about coaching (Lyle, 1999). Four of the most common models for the coaching process are: Franks *et al.* (1986), Fairs (1987), Sherman *et al.* (1997), and Lyle (2002). Models for the coaching process have added to our understanding of coaching, however, it is important to note that the knowledge they

have added is still limited. The majority of models for the coaching process are too simplistic and do not represent and explain essential elements of effective sports coaching (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Models *of* the coaching process are produced using empirical research from successful or expert coaching practice (Cushion *et al.,* 2006). Three key models of the coaching process are: the coaching performance model (McClean & Chelladuaria, 1995); the coaching practice model (Cote *et al.,* 1995); and the conceptualization of the coach-athlete interaction (d'Arrippe-Longueville *et al.*, 1998). A key problem with models of the coaching process is the vast amount of different practices they attempt to represent. For example, Cote *et al.*'s (1995) model was designed and based on information from a set of gymnastic coaches. Therefore, it seems impossible to produce an all-embracing model that can be applied to many different practices involved in a variety of sports (Lyle, 2002).

Rationalistic models help to guide coaches logically when working to improve a sporting performance. Jones and Wallace (2005), amongst others, appreciate that rationalistic models are helpful when making plans and goals to develop and improve a sporting performance. However, rationalistic models fail to demonstrate the complex reality of the coaching process (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Furthermore, these models are often presented as episodic, cyclical, or sequential models which highlight the 'parts' rather than encapsulating the complete process (Lyle, 2007). Jones and Wallace (2005) contend that the models discussed in this section will never grasp the functional complexities, ambiguity and unique settings that coaches face every day.

Within the last decade, literature has made a conscious effort to move away from attempting to model the coaching process. A growing amount of work has focused on, and attempted to, illustrate the complexity inherent within coaching. Consequently, coaching has been considered as a practical, social activity that involves characteristics such as "multidimensionality, simultaneously, uncertainty, publicity and historicity" (Cote *et al.*, 1995, p. 255). Saury and Durand's (1998) research has also argued that coaching is primarily complex, uncertain, dynamic and often involves conflicting values and ideas. One of the key developers of this

interpretation of the coaching process, is Robyn Jones. Jones' work has highlighted the complexity and ambiguity of, and in, the coaching process (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). The empirical research Jones' has produced has attempted to reach further than the complexity of coaching, through advocating that the coaching process is in fact uncontrollable, incomprehensible and embedded with a vast amount of opposing values (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Coaching therefore, has come to be recognised as a non-linear, complex activity which often exists at the "edge of chaos" (Jones *et al.*, 2013, p. 272).

One area of coaching that has been affected by the conceptual development of the coaching process is, coach education. In the past few years there has been a large increase in the provision and availability of coach education across all sports (Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). The education of sports coaches in Great Britain is traditionally delivered through National Governing Body coaching qualifications (NGB) (e.g., Football Association 1st4sport Level 1 Award in Coaching Football). These programmes are taught over short periods of time, usually a number of months or years apart (Galvin, 1998). The NGB qualifications are taught and tested through modules. However, it has been suggested that by splitting coach education programmes into modules or sections, it results in a fragmented understanding and view of coaching (Jones, 2000). Additionally, the coaches' learning on these programmes often becomes decontextualized (Jones, 2000). The module topics on these programmes often include: coaching and training concepts, laws, safety and sport specific theory (Knowles *et al.,* 2001). The "professional knowledge" (Schon, 1983) gained through coach education is predominately delivered through seminar and classroom formats, with a large focus on practical demonstrations. The assessment criterion requires coaches to plan sessions, present information and deliver feedback as well as completing information packs. When a coach finishes their qualification they receive certification which confirms that they have satisfied the governing body's criteria, by reaching a certain level of competency (Nelson *et al.*, 2006). Often these criteria are largely focused on the technical elements of coaching, rather than on individual needs of athletes or athletes' learning (Cushion, 2011). Therefore, it is assumed that these coaches enter the world of coaching with the necessary information needed to operate effectively at the particular level they have been educated at (Cushion *et al.,* 2010).

The conceptual development of the coaching process has affected the legitimacy of the current rationalistic approaches to coach education (Cushion, 2011). Hence, it has been argued that the rationalistic approach to coach education is currently failing to develop what Jones (2000) describes as crucial intellectual and practical qualities, namely independent and creative thinking and problem solving skills. The literature suggests that coach education subjects new coaches to a standardized curriculum (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cushion *et al.,* 2010). The curriculum provides coaches with a "tool box" of professional knowledge which is founded on the gold standard approach to coaching (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cushion *et al.,* 2003). Research has also reported that the course content on these coach education programmes is also limiting the production of "imaginative, dynamic and thoughtful coaches" (Cushion *et al.,* 2003, p. 216). Finally, coach education is producing very similar two dimensional coaches who are largely driven by mechanical and technical considerations, which often limits coach's abilities to adapt to the dynamic human context that coaching notoriously operates within (Jones, 2000). Chesterfield *et al.'s* (2010) research study on a group of coaches completing their UEFA A License football qualification highlighted some of the key problems with coach education. The coaches from this study described how they were subjected to, and expected to abide by, a certain set of prescribed values, attitudes and practices throughout the programme. A rationalistic interpretation of coach learning presents the coach instructors as the knowledgeable experts but it also fails to capture the dynamic and complex realities that are essential within coach learning (Nelson *et al.,* 2006).

When considering these problems with coach education in relation to the conceptualisation of the coaching process, research has turned its attention to how coaches most effectively learn. A rationalistic approach to coach education suggests that coaches learn in a generic way. Whereas, research has revealed that coaches learn in many different ways (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). One of the key themes arising from the literature is that coaches learn through practical coaching, observations and talking with others (Cushion *et al.,* 2003; Irwin *et al.,* 2004). Research has reported the idea of experiential learning as a key method for developing coaches (Abraham *et al.,* 2006; Erickson *et al.,* 2008). However,

experiential learning is much more than just coaching (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Coaches need to know how to evaluate and develop strategies from issues that arise when coaching (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). One tool suggested in coaching literature to help coaches when attempting to evaluate and understand problems is, *reflective practice*. Reflective practice is a complex, skilled, cognitive process, which involves the whole person (Cropley & Hanton, 2011). The process is instigated by a coach deliberately questioning their own actions, values and beliefs associated with an experience. The process of questioning should lead to a better understanding of the experience, which in turn results in 'change' (to practice, understanding, beliefs, and/or values) (Cropley & Hanton, 2011). Reflective practice is suggested to help coaches to link together knowledge they have gained from experiences, observations, theory and education. Reflective practice has therefore been recommended as an important tool to enhance the development and education of sport coaches (Borrie & Knowles, 1998; Cassidy *et al.,* 2009).

One model that has attempted to understand how coaches learn experientially using reflective practice was offered by Trudel and Gilbert (2001). Their model highlighted six key elements of this process : coaching issues, role frames, issue settings, strategy generation, experimentation and evaluation. Even though Trudel and Gilbert's (2001) model has offered some insight into how coaches can utilise reflection, there is still some questions about how reflective practice and coaching effectiveness are related (Cushion *et al.,* 2010). Literature has questioned how reflective practice can be introduced, implemented and developed within coach education. The key to developing reflective practice skills with coaches is, to ensure that they fully understand the skill and are allowed time for it to be developed (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Those involved in coach education cannot, therefore, assume that the development of skills required for reflective practice will naturally occur within coaches as their experience levels increase (Knowles, 2001). Reflective practice can be utilised in coach learning, but it must be recognised that these approaches require a large amount of time and commitment from all involved (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). There is a lack of empirical research that has directly explored these claims.

Another avenue in which to aid the development of coach education programmes is the introduction of mentoring. Mentoring offers new coaches structured and unstructured support (Cushion *et al.,* 2010). Across a variety of professional fields, mentoring is understood as a non-familial and non-romantic relationship normally between an experienced person and less experienced person within their field (Bloom, 2013). Throughout the relationship the more experienced individual has direct influence in the development of the inexperienced individual (Bloom, 2013). It is important to point out that a mentoring relationship is a two way process, where both parties should contribute throughout. A number of authors have suggested the benefits of mentoring in coaching and within coach education (e.g., Bloom *et al.,* 1998; Cushion, 2006; Galvin, 2003). Mentoring provides an effective tool for new coaches to apply and understand information that they have gained from coach education (Robinson, 2010). Research has also shown that the knowledge that coaches acquire from mentors often goes beyond technical, tactical and physical information and involves the acquisition of knowledge that has aided coaches in discovering their coaching style and philosophy (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). Taking into account the benefits of mentoring to aid coach development it would seem rational for coach education to adopt such an approach. However, numerous researchers have found that mentoring is already in full operation in regards to coach development (Trudel & Gilbert, 2001). Mentoring within sports coaching seems to be currently: unstructured, informal, and unpredictable in the terms of quality and positive outcomes, uncritical in style and is reproducing coaches with identical coaching beliefs (Cushion, 2001). However, as Jones *et al.* (2009) described, a large proportion of these claims about mentoring lack empirical evidence.

One method that has attempted to improve coach education is the, United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC, 2003). The UKCC is an endorsement of the NGB of Sport Coach Education Certificate (Lynn & Lyle, 2010, p. 194). The UKCC have produced programmes against a set of standardised UK wide criteria for sport-specific coach education programmes. Numerous criteria are judged against these standards, including: learning programmes, how coach educators are trained and other coach education structures. The UKCC programmes have been implemented for numerous reasons including to help professionalise the role of the sports coach

(Bolton & Smith, 2008). Some of the UKCC key principles are: coach and participant centred courses, programmes based on national standards, flexible courses, quality assurance, stakeholder ownership and building on good practice. To start with, thirty one NGBs bought into the reconceptualization of coach education (Bolton & Smith, 2013). One of the key benefits of this endorsement has been the push towards an industry wide approach to development and the sharing of successful practice (Bolton & Smith, 2008). However, problems have started to arise with the UKCC due to increased demand for lead officers, delay in guidance materials and poor networking opportunities, among others (Bolton & Smith, 2013). These issues have led to a number of sports backing out of the agreement and returning to the NGB qualifications.

Considering the discussion presented in this chapter, a number of issues appear in need of further research. Recent literature on coach education has only focused on coach learning and development (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999), coach effectiveness in relation to children's sport (Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995; Smoll *et al.*, 1993) and the limitation of focusing on technical information throughout coach education (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Jones, 2000). Even though this body of literature has provided valuable knowledge about the role, nature and impact of coach education, very little has been researched about how coaches experience these programmes (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). Most notably there is a lack of research based on the effects of the conceptual development of the coaching process and the impact it is having on coach education. The lack of empirical research that has explored and evaluated coach education is problematic (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cushion *et al.,* 2009). If there is no research to evaluate current programmes, a lack of conclusions can be made on how effective these programmes are and whether they are presenting the coaching process as complex.

As a result of this discussion, the aims of this research study are: (a) to investigate the impact of a coach education in preparing a newly qualified football coach; (b) to investigate how a coach education presents the complex nature of the coaching process; (c) to investigate how a coach education prepares a new coach to deal with the messy complex reality that coaching notoriously is; and (d) to investigate how a coach education encourages and produces dynamic and imaginative coaches.

Each of the aims of this study holds equal importance and interlinks accordingly. One of the key factors that determined the aims of this study is the growing popularity of coach education across the United Kingdom. With this growing interest, the reputation of coach education could not be any more important at this time. The importance of preparing our coaches correctly for the unpredictable and dynamic nature of coaching has never been so well documented. The recent conceptualisation of the coaching process has also had a substantial effect on many aspects of coaching, including coach education. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the approach that will be adopted to help achieve the aims of this study will aid the researcher in gaining an in-depth understanding of coach education. The insider's approach, associated with writing autoethnographies, will allow the researcher to experience a coach education programme identically to many others without any impact on the results from their presence (Sparkes, 2000).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

3.0 METHODS

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative research approach was adopted to collect data throughout this study. Qualitative research attempts to capture qualities that are not measurable or quantifiable such as: feelings, emotions, inner thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, intensions and experiences (Gratton & Jones, 2004; O'Donoghue, 2010). An interpretive approach was chosen to conduct this research as the researcher aimed to gain an understanding of coach education "from within" (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p.19). An interpretive approach is also fundamentally concerned with understanding how individuals construct social reality, given their chosen beliefs and values (Sparkes, 1992). These decisions were underpinned by ontological decisions based on the interpretation that there are no definite or universal answers in a particular area (Atkinson, 2012) due to the complex reality of the world in which we live in. The epistemology for this study, therefore, was a subjective approach as it attempted to display an insider's perspective of the social issues within coach education. Furthermore, autoethnography, which is one approach that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011), was adopted in this study in order to construct an account that could be evocative, personal and highly reflective that also aimed at providing an analytical account of the researcher's autobiographical experience (Collinson, 2005).

3.2 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is an innovative variation of the ethnographic approach to research, and it has challenged the epistemological foundations of much of the current social scientific research (Sparkes, 2000). In recent years the use of autoethnographies has also been recognised as a productive method to help understand human behaviour within a sporting environment (Dension, 1996; Tsang, 2000). Autoethnographies are associated with the increasing acceptance of the use of the self within research which is also a feature of the postmodern era (Muncey, 2010). As a method of inquiry autoethnographies require the researcher to draw upon personalised accounts of actual lived experiences for the purpose of extending

others sociological understanding of a particular phenomenon for example coach education (Richardson, 2000; Sparkes, 2000).

Autoethnographies are usually written in the first-person which helps to display the many layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the larger cultural and social factors (Ellis, 2004). The stories told in autoethnographies often also link to cultural contexts, nations and institutions (Dension & Markula, 2003; Reed-Danahay, 1997). As a reflective method of research an autoethnography offers the researcher a way of critically investigating the discursive practices and social factors that have shaped an individual experience (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Furthermore, writing about the self through stories of sporting experiences allows the relationships between language, gender issues and the norms of sporting values to be made apparent to all (Weedon, 1987). Additionally, as Ellis and Bochner (2000) have advocated, through utilising an autoethnography as a form of research it consequently converts the researchers experience into a topic of investigation in its own right. Many agree that it is important to share and tell stories that based around individual's experiences as they will eventually become a means of knowing for others in the future as well as a means of disclosing the social world in which we exist in (Bochner *et al.,* 1997).

Finally, autoethnographies have been recognised as an ideal approach in which to explore and uncover the cultural, social, and emotional elements that notoriously exist within coaching (Jones *et al.,* 2006). Any situation that involves human beings is complex, and the opportunities offered through the use of autoethnographies allow the researcher to engage productively within this complexity (Wijayatilake, 2012). Additionally, scholars believe by adopting an "insiders" perspective on the social and emotional worlds of individual coaches, a more comprehensive understanding of the holistic and complex nature of the coaching process is likely to be resulted (Purdy, *et al.,* 2008). Furthermore, such approach allows both the researcher and reader to engage with the ambiguous and unique nature of the coaching process, through illuminating issues that are undiscovered and undisrupted within the depths of sports coaching (Jones, 2009).

3.3 Personal Rationale

From a young age sport has been a major passion in my life. I feel this was due to the exhilaration and joy I experienced playing in my first football match when I was seven years old. You could say since that moment sport has become something that has consumed much of my thought process and time. Something I would not like to live without. My youth was continuously punctuated with sporting achievements and diverse sporting experiences. With special highlights for me including: captaining my team in a national football final at the renowned Bisham Abbey National Centre, spending an insightful day being coached by Dame Kelly Homes and representing my county in football for five consecutive years. Whilst completing my educational journey I found that physical education was the only subject I enjoyed and excelled in. This naturally led me to choose a Sport and Physical Education degree programme.

When I began university my brother had slowly been recovering from a common blood cancer called, Non-Hodgins Lymphoma. Even though my brother's original diagnosis had rocked our world as family, we were certain he would recover from this terrible time. His health problems were never far from my thoughts but I never anticipated what would happen next. Late on a bright spring afternoon we were delivered the worse news that any family could face. My brother's cancer had relapsed, but it had not just returned: it had returned aggressively and his life was now in serious danger. I immediately returned home to be with my family leaving my studies behind. Instantly my brother moved back into hospital to receive further ghastly treatment. The doctors made it very clear that there were no "definitises" in this very unpredictable situation we found ourselves in, but we had to hope and pray that the intense treatment my brother was receiving would push him into remission, which would allow for a lifesaving bone marrow transplant. I soon realised that I desperately needed to be with my family while together we faced our toughest challenge yet. Without a second thought I deferred my second year of studies, it just didn't seem important anymore. I needed to with my brother.

After five long and painful months of sickening chemotherapy and dangerous radiotherapy my brother was deemed to be in remission. A big relief. After a desperate worldwide search for a tissue type match, my brother successfully received a bone marrow transplant. The day my brother received his transplant I had mixed emotions as it was a very dangerous procedure but at the same time I was so happy to see him finally take a momentous step towards his well-deserved recovery.

As I observed my brother take baby steps towards his old self, I finally felt comfortable to leave him and return to my studies. It was massive step for me and for the first few weeks I seemed to phone home a million times. Once I returned to university I found that I had a new attitude towards my studies and my life. After witnessing my brother's courageous fight for his life I had been enlightened about how precious every day was and how I had to appreciate everything I had and the opportunities that lay in front of me. Everything changed for me. I threw myself head first in to my studies making it my new number one priority, of course behind my brother. I became ridiculously excited and engaged with my modules. I found myself spending endless hours in the library reading and writing about sports ethics and sports coaching. My passion for sport was reborn.

Throughout my second year I found one module in particular fascinating, Sports Coaching. I was like a child on Christmas Eve before a sports coaching lecture. I found the knowledge and information I gained completely reconceptualised my understanding of coaching. I felt inspired. I started to question how I had been previously coached as an athlete and how now I was coaching. Everything started to make sense. I was learning something new every day but I was also conscious of the thought that there was much more to learn. When the dreaded topic of a dissertation arose I knew I wanted my research project to evolve around sports coaching. What else would it be on? One area within sports coaching that especially captivated me was coach education. For me it felt like a crucial aspect of sports coaching. I believe we should aim to educate our coaches to the best standard possible. When engaging with literature on coach education I couldn't understand why so many issues were being reported regarding these programmes but a very limited amount of research involved actual first-hand experience. Surely it was a

hurdle for future improvements to these programmes. I personally had also never completed any coach education programmes at university unlike many of my peers due to naturally spending any spare time I had with my brother. I saw it as a perfect opportunity.

When contemplating which approach to utilise to carry out a study on coach education, one approach in particular kept being brought to my attention; an autoethnography. Whilst completing my "favourite" module we had been exposed to this relatively new personal method of reporting research. I was firstly intrigued by autoethnographies when reading Purdy *et al.*'s (2008) autoethnography on power, consent and resistance that she had experienced when performing as a part of a rowing team. The aim of Purdy *et al.*'s study was to investigate the power relationship that existed between her and her coach. I had found amongst other theories that we had been introduced to, power was my nemesis. I could not grasp and understand how as a coach my "power" affected my athletes. Surely as I was the coach with the knowledge, I had ultimate power. I was finding it extremely difficult to understand theories such as Bourdieu's (1986) work on capital and Foucault's (1977) work on power, discipline and punishment. However, after reading Purdy's personal account on the power relationships she had experienced with her coach, I had a moment of realisation and clarity. I could accurately relate to her story from my previous experiences and I felt it demonstrated clearly to me the importance of power within a coach athlete relationship. It made some sense.

Based on my moment of clarity, and considering the aims of this study, I chose to utilise an autoethnography to construct a meaningful tale that is reflective of a coach's experiences of a coach education programmes across the United Kingdom. Although these are my stories from my experiences, I have also written it for others to encourage them to reflect upon their experiences of coach education as Purdy's story encouraged me to do. In considering the work of Richardson (2000), I hope my story binds together any readers who have had similar experiences.

I hope that through this short extract regarding my academic journey and personal life I have provided a clear insight into the events that have shaped my motives for completing this research. Even though my life has taken some difficult turns it has helped me understand what is important in life. Sport and coaching continues to be a large passion for me and something I enjoy but also care strongly about.

3.4 Collecting Data

The stories I tell in this thesis stem from an experience as a coach on a Football Association Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. For the purpose of this paper I have constructed my critical incidents from a reflective diary and observational notes that were collected throughout the programme. The reflective diary was kept over a six month period (see appendix B). After every session I completed a reflective entry. The stories generated in this autoethnography are inevitably shaped and inherently limited by both the willingness and ability to provide detail and in-depth insight into my personal experience (McMahon & Penney, 2013).

After I gained university ethical approval I enrolled on to a coach education programme. I then completed a six month Football Association Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. While I completed the coach education programme I attended: seven practical days, two theories based days and three assessment days. I collected the data through my observations throughout the programme and participating in the programme.

3.5 Data Representation

Autoethnographies have been presented in lots of different ways, depending where the author is positioned (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The data from this project is presented similarly to Purdy *et al.* (2008) autoethnography. The data is presented in short stories which stem from "critical incidents" (Purdy *et al.,* 2008) or epiphanies that occurred whilst I completed the programme. Epiphanies can be described as remembered moments in an individual's life or experience that have had significant impact on the trajectory of that person's experience (Bocher & Ellis, 1992; Couser,

1997; Denzin, 1989; Measor, 1985). The stories in this paper are split into three key areas that relate to the aims of this study. The first set of stories relate to the experiences from the coach education programme that had the most impact on me as a coach. The second sets of stories have attempted to encompass any experiences where the programme attempted to present coaching as a complex process. The last set of stories has focused on any experience where the coach education instructors encouraged me to be a creative and imaginative individual coach (Cushion *et al.,* 2003).

Jones (2009) has argued that many autoethnographic authors have let their stories "stand alone" and "speak for themselves" without being framed within theory. However, many have argued that the personal stories should be embed within the theory when research is presented in this manner (McMahon & Penney, 2013). Whilst formatting this paper I have attempted to achieve something of a balance, between the authentic stores and the key theoretical concepts that have underpinned the research and have been explored in and through the generation of these stories (McMahon & Penney, 2013). I have attempted to frame the stories within theory through the discussion chapter of this paper. My stories are based on actual events that occurred but some of the elements have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved (Ellis, 2004).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have advocated that qualitative research should be judged on its trustworthiness, which is judged on four criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. Throughout the data collection and analysis procedure, a number of measures were taken to account for these criteria. Firstly, throughout the study frequent debriefing sessions took place with a dissertation tutor to enhance credibility. To maintain dependability this research used a similar methodology adopted in studies that have also utilised autoethnographies. Furthermore, a copy of the reflective diary that was used to inform the data analysis was made available to the dissertation tutor. The transferability of the data was increased through the provision of a thick description regarding the participant in this study. Finally, conformability was enhanced through sharing the original reflective journal with the dissertation tutor and an in depth description of the methodology.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.0 RESULTS: Autoethnography

4.1 The Impact of Coach Education on 'me' the Coach

4.11 Opening Experiences

On my journey to the first day of the programme I was so excited and eager to begin. Having spent long periods of time studying coaching on my degree I wanted to take any opportunity I could to develop my understanding of coaching further.

On the first day, the coach education instructors explained that the programme was going to be split into practical and theoretical sessions. I knew I would learn more doing practical activities than just sitting down and writing. The first practical session was based on "short passing". As there were so many people on the course you could either participate in the sessions or watch from the side. I opted to participate as I thought I would gain more from playing.

The exercise began and it was clear everyone was out to impress with their footballing skills. However, the instructor got straight on with the drill taking little notice of how we were performing. As the session progressed I was immediately shocked at how much detail the instructor was covering. The exercise never got going as the instructor kept stopping it to add in even more information. The instructor seemed to talk constantly throughout and it seemed like he wasn't even going to stop to take a breath. I felt I was receiving a lot of information, almost too much, at once. I frantically tried to take it all in. As the instructor continued to talk my eyes desperately tried to picture the session as a whole. There was also little time for questions or contributions. All the information the instructor was providing focussed on technical aspects of short passing, with no information regarding 'coaching' itself. My brain was quickly becoming overloaded with too much technical information. The large amount of technical information worried me as I had hoped the programme would develop me as a coach, rather than as a better technician of the sport I had

played and loved for many years. Even though there was a lot of information to take in, the session had an impact on me. I had never come across the drill before and considered it something I would utilise in my own coaching. The instructor's demonstration clearly presented opportunities for the main technical coaching points regarding short passing to be covered. I had not gained any new technical information regarding short passing but I had gained a different drill to present short passing. A variety of drills is important to me when attempting to engage my athletes; therefore I welcomed this new approach to short passing.

4.12 Mock Assessment

I was third in line for my mock assessment, which gave me the advantage of seeing a few sessions before my coaching was going to be assessed. It also meant that I wasn't one of the last to go, as I knew everyone would eventually flag. The first few sessions got under way. I felt incredibly sorry for the first coach because he was clearly really nervous, which was visibly heightened by being the first 'on show'. Throughout the first two sessions the instructors stepped in a number of times to add in further points to the sessions. When the sessions finished the instructors always brought the whole group in. We offered each other peer feedback and then the instructor told the coaches their areas for improvement. The first two coaches received a large amount of information and many areas for improvement. The negativity from the instructors was quite shocking for everyone to see. Then again, surely the aim of the course was to improve. As a developing coach I respected the instructor's opinions and feedback and I hoped that when my assessment took place they would impact my coaching as much as possible. If anything I was hoping for lots of areas of improvement. I was also surprised at how much the feedback from the instructors related to coaching techniques, rather than on the technical information that had been covered so far on the programme. It felt like the instructors had assumed that, as coaches, we should have already known this information regarding the technique of coaching itself. The instructors feedback to the other coaches made me consider my coaching techniques in more detail prior to my assessment. I felt my previous education gave me a head start on everyone else as I had already been exposed to lots of knowledge regarding effective coaching skills and techniques.

It was now my turn. I organised my session beforehand and was ready to go. As the group gathered around me I felt my hands become a little sweaty and mouth rather dry. This was very unlike me. As my first words stumbled out of my mouth I felt much more relaxed. I can do this. After a quick explanation and demonstration I sent the players off to start the activity. I took a step back as we were instructed to and watched the play for a few seconds. The players responded really well and seemed to understand the drill from my instructions. Then again, the majority of the group had completed the session the day before, when the instructors had demonstrated it. This point was where I began to regret the decision to replicate the instructor's session. I had decided to copy it to ensure that the assessment went smoothly and to please the instructors. However, I felt that due to my replication of the instructor's session, the impact on my development as a coach was limited. I wasn't taking the opportunity to show the instructors the real me as a coach through just copying.

As I stood at the side, I found myself searching for something to go in and coach. In the back of my mind I knew that I needed to coach as much as possible as that was what I was being assessed on. It felt unnatural to be desperately looking for something to intervene on. Luckily one of the players then made a mistake when receiving the ball. I was pleased to finally see an error to coach so I jumped straight in. At this point the instructor hadn't stepped into my session or made any comments. I wasn't sure if this was good or bad. I checked my watch and I only had four minutes left. I decided I would look for one more opportunity to go in and coach. Conveniently a player made an error just in front of me and I stopped the play for my final intervention. Just as I was about to start the activity again the instructor stepped in. Instead of telling me the problem, he proposed a question, "Yes I totally agree with this intervention but how else could you have affected this period of play?" A feeling of complete panic came over me. What is he talking about? I stared at him for a few seconds as I was trying to rack my brains for the answer. As I wasn't forthcoming with a response the instructor then explained what he would have added. As I listened attentively to the instructor answer his own question I understood immediately why he would have added to my original point. However, it was a coaching point that hadn't come up when the session had been demonstrated. Nor was it in the coaching manual we had been given. I was annoyed that I hadn't

thought of it. I let the players continue for a minute longer and then the instructor waved at me to bring them in to summarise the session and to receive my feedback. I wasn't sure what to expect.

The instructor started by asking the group, "How do you think that session went?" As with the two previous sessions everyone was very complementary about my session. I think as a group we didn't know each other well enough yet to be negative to each other's faces. The instructor then added, "Yes, I agree it was well organised with clear coaching points." I couldn't believe my luck… "I think that you had good knowledge on the topic but obviously make sure that when you explain every intervention, it's always in full detail. But overall that was great, who's next?" The instructor passed me my assessment sheet and then moved on to the next person. I was so surprised that was the only feedback I was going to receive, especially considering the long discussions he had with the previous coaches. I looked down at the sheet and scanned for my areas for improvement. I only had one! "Provide players with correct technical information." To begin with I was really pleased that I had done well and that the instructor was positive about my coaching. However, as I watched the next person start their assessment these feelings of happiness started to subside and be replaced with frustration. Why didn't I receive more feedback? I came here to improve and I haven't learnt anything from the feedback I received, apart from one rather insignificant point. If anything I felt slightly cheated compared to the other coaches.

4.13 Information Pack.

After every theoretical task we always transferred the information we had discussed into our information packs. Each question corresponded to a small box in the pack. The first time we transferred answers into the pack I found myself trying to write as neatly as possible with as much information as I could possibly fit into the tiny boxes. After being told how important these packs were and that we wouldn't pass the programme without an acceptable completion of the packs, I wanted to give the best impression possible. After twenty minutes or so the instructors stopped us from writing, "Guys you really don't need to write an essay just a few examples in the

boxes and then we can move on. It's not too important. We want to get outside soon as."

I almost couldn't believe what the instructor had said and it took few moments to try and process it. I started to question why we were doing it if it wasn't important. Plus, I couldn't understand why the instructors had just drummed into us the importance of these packs, when really they wanted to spend as little time as possible on them. I felt a little disillusioned. I really wanted the course to develop me as a football coach however, I found myself spending valuable time completing tasks that clearly were not important in the eyes of the instructors. I was now completely confused at whether the information packs were important or not? Even though I was extremely frustrated, I felt I had to follow the instructor's instructions as they were clearly in charge and had the final decision on whether I passed the programme.

4.2 Presentation of the Coaching Process.

Having been exposed to the conceptualisation of the coaching process through my degree programme, I was really interested to see how coach education would enhance my understanding.

4.21 Long Term Player Development Model, Effective Communication and   Coaching Styles.

Whilst undertaking the coach education programme we completed two theoretical based tasks that, for me, related to the coaching process. The first task was based on the: "Long Term Player Development Model" (LTAD) and the second task was based on "Effective Communication and Coaching Styles". When completing these tasks I felt that the information the instructors offered had little impact on my development. One experience that sticks out for me was, when I questioned the instructor on what the psychological section was within the LTAD model, the instructor replied, "It's to do with your head. How players think." The instructors reply shocked me. Having spent only a small amount of time of my degree studying sports psychology I was nowhere near an expert in this field. However, I was pretty sure it was more than what the he had described! I had to question at this point why the instructors were introducing us to this model, even

though they clearly had a lack of understanding of it themselves. I was also frustrated that the instructors didn't explain or demonstrate to us how we could utilise the LTAD model within our own coaching practice. I felt I knew some but not all there was to know about the LTAD model, which limited its practical and theoretical impact on me.

The same feelings and experiences were echoed as I completed the task relating to "Coaching Styles" and "Effective Communication". When we began the task the instructor explained, "We would like you to complete the questions on page thirty two. I will put some examples on the board to help you answer the questions. Please don't copy the answers out word for word but you can use them to help you." I was really surprised that the instructors were giving us the answers that easily. I wasn't learning anything about effective communication or coaching styles; I was just replicating and copying out information that was being provided to me. Furthermore, I felt the different coaching styles and different ways of communicating were just identified by the instructors, not explained. Even though I had a good understanding of both of these elements of coaching from my education, I felt the information I had received from the instructors would have little impact on my coaching practice. Additionally, these tasks also failed to effectively demonstrate the whole of the coaching process. The instructor's explanations suggested that these elements would encourage effective and successful coaching in practice. However, my previous education and understanding of the coaching process made it difficult for me to buy in to this understanding. I strongly believe that the coaching exists within a complex, dynamic and often ambiguous environment that cannot be controlled by a set of standardised coaching techniques and methods.

4.3 How Coach Education Encouraged "me" to be Dynamic and Imaginative Coach.

4.31 Opening Task

One of the first tasks was to answer a set of ice breaker questions about ourselves. Everyone completed the task with a partner and then we each took turns to stand up and introduce ourselves to the group. I found it quite awkward speaking about myself to a group of people that I had just met. Luckily it was over quickly. As the last person finally finished introducing himself, the instructors stood up. The main instructor started to talk, "This starter activity proves that even though many of you have come on this course to develop as coaches you already hold a vast amount of experience and knowledge. We all should aim (including the instructors) to try and learn from each other throughout this course. Please share your experiences and when you feel you can add to the discussion please do. Also please make sure you ask lots of questions." These comment immediately made me feel at ease. I hoped that the instructors would be approachable and listen to us throughout as this was something that I had become accustom to whilst completing my degree. I knew this sort of environment would help me learn more effectively.

4.32 Defending Session

One of the last practical sessions of the day was defending. I had always been a defender when I played football so naturally I was looking forward to this section. Defending was also a topic I hadn't coached much with my athletes due to their low ability. I was looking for new ideas. The instructor started the session off by explaining, "You may have heard of many ways in which to coach defending. I am about to show you one way in which to coach defending, it is the best way and the only way. Trust me." I found this comment rather aggressive in tone and it also made me feel like I couldn't ask any questions throughout the session. I reluctantly completed the defending session but found my engagement and interest in the session was considerably lowered due to the instructors starting comments. The instructor's comments seemed to also contradict what we had previously been told at the start of the course about sharing experiences and ideas and the importance of individual interpretation when coaching.

4.33 Assessment Planning

Before each assessment we had to complete a session plan in our packs. The topic for my assessment was "running with the ball". Prior to the mocks the instructors spent two days demonstrating a session relating to each topic. I had enjoyed the session relating to running with the ball. I thought it demonstrated the coaching points for running with the ball well, therefore I decided to replicate it. I wasn't the only one with this idea as the majority of my group were doing the same thing. However, then one instructor said, "Try and use your imagination when planning these sessions. Try and build on what we have shown you. We can all become robots if we are not careful through reproducing the same sessions over and over again. If this happens we are in danger of reproducing not just the same coaches but also identical players. Use your imagination where you can". I totally agreed with the instructors as I know how important it is to coach using a variety of activities. However, changing the activity there on the spot seemed rather challenging, especially without any guidance. I was also cautious as to whether I should change the session from what I had seen the previous day, as the instructors had made it clear that the sessions they had demonstrated would achieve a pass on the assessment. That was my aim.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 DISCUSSION

The aims of this research study were: (a) to investigate the impact of a coach education programme in preparing a newly qualified football coach; (b) to investigate how coach education presents the complex nature of the coaching process; and (c) to investigate how a coach education programme encouraged the production of dynamic and original coaches. I will now discuss how my experiences connect to the theoretical, practical and cultural issues associated with coach education.

5.1 Power Relationships

Whilst completing the programme I often felt the need to alter my behaviour, due to the power relationship that existed between me and the instructors (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). Throughout the programme I was very aware of the powerful "hierarchical observations" or "surveillance" of the instructors, assessing me and the subsequent need to appear to conform to their instructions (Foucault, 1979). I felt the instructor' surveying me and the need to conform the most when completing elements of the programme that I knew had a significant effect on whether I received certification (e.g., the information pack). My need to conform can be understood through Bourdieu's (1986) work on power and capital. Bourdieu has described capital as possessing the capacity to exercise control over one's own future and the future of others and is, in effect a type of power (Ritzer, 1996). Within coaching practice and coach education, capital is dynamic and is often unequally distributed (Cushion & Kitchen, 2011). Through the instructor's previous experiences, coaching qualifications and social and hierarchical position within the group, they held a greater cultural, social and symbolic capital compared to me and the other coaches. As I perceived the instructors to have greater capital, I felt the need to conform as I was actively aware that they had the ultimate hierarchical influence and power on what determined my success on the programme. When considering the greater capital the instructors possessed, it is not surprising that I didn't challenge the instructor's beliefs or instructions (Graber, 1991) as I wanted to achieve certification (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, my experiences highlight how the power relationships within coach education are causing a limited impact on

the coaches completing them, due to coaches feeling the constant need to conform to ensure they eventually receive certification.

5.11 Impact of Indoctrination

My experiences highlighted a number of occasions where the instructors attempted to educate me to believe that there was a "right" way of thinking when coaching (Rodgers, 2002). The behaviour and manner of the instructors could even be described as indoctrination. Through this method of teaching, the instructor denied me choice and instead exposed me to a single set of values and attitudes (Chesterfield *et al.,* 2010). By exposing coaches to a single set of ideas and beliefs in this way, coach education is limiting the ability of coaches to be creative and imaginative when coaching (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Additionally, my experiences support the notion that coach education is producing very similar two dimensional coaches who lack the ability to adapt to the dynamic human context that coaching exists within (Jones, 2000).

The impact of this method of teaching can also be understood through Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1986). Habitus is described as a set of durable ideas and dispositions through which each individual sees, judges and acts in the world (Wacquant, 1998). Every coach possesses a certain set of ideas that have been formed through experiences, education and other sources, prior to the start of the programme (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). My habitus prior to the programme consisted of information and experiences from playing football at various levels, coaching and knowledge that I had gained from my university studies. I felt my habitus was most notably different to the other coaches on this programme when discussing what contributes to effective coaching and how the coaching process is viewed. Therefore, coach education need to take into account the various different types of habitus working within their programmes and consider how their teaching may need to be altered on an individual basis.

Coach education instructors should not only understand the power they have in manipulating an individual's ideas on coaching , but they should engage coaches in a form of critical analysis of how their individual habitus might influence their ideas on coaching (Cushion *et al* .,2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). If the instructor had worked on deconstructing my existing knowledge, it may have become possible to highlight the areas that needed further developing, rather than telling me the "right" way of thinking (Anderson, 1997; Weinstein, 1989). Furthermore, this method of teaching would have allowed the opportunity for each coach to be impacted upon appropriately, depending on their current understanding. These experiences also build on the notion that coach education programmes often assume that coaches are empty vessels waiting to be filled with the standard theory and knowledge relating to coaching (Schempp & Graber, 1992), rather than coaches with existing knowledge and individual habitus that coach education should be developing and adding too.

5.2 Presentation of Self

Throughout the programme I felt that the learning and coaching took place in an unrealistic constructed environment, which had a negative impact on my learning. The instructors may have impacted my learning more effectively, if they had demonstrated how the approaches they were promoting could have been contextually applied in "live" coaching situations (Guskey, 2002; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). I also felt that throughout the programme I had to change my behaviour and coaching to fit into the environment I found myself within. The mock assessment, in particular, demonstrated how I felt what I was attempting to do was completely different to the daily realities of my coaching (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the impact of coach education is often decreased due to a perceived gap between the content and methods on these programmes and the practical needs of the coaches completing them (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones, 2000).

My change in behaviour can also be understood through Goffman's (1959) work on the presentation of self. According to Goffman (1959) a "front" refers "to that part of an individual's performance which regularly functions in a general or fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe the performance" (p. 22). My creation of a "front" was most noticeable in the assessment when I searched for something to coach, as I was actively aware that it was a crucial part of the

assessment criteria. I put on a performance for the benefit of the audience, the instructors, irrespective of its realism, to ensure I achieve the main goal of being successful on the programme and pleasing the instructors (Grabber, 1991). Some of my changes in behaviour can also be understood through Graber's (1991) work on "studentship". Graber (1991) described "studentship" as a group of behaviours that coaches often adopt to move through coach education with a greater ease, more success and less effort. For example, I worked extra hard when completing my information pack to ensure I met the instructor's expectations and ultimately passed the programme. Therefore, my experiences highlighted that the impact of coach education is often decreased due to coaches feeling compelled to change their normal behaviours to conform to the environment they are working in, to once again ensure they receive certification. I felt having to present myself in this particular way throughout the programme had a negative impact on my learning as I was just conforming to instructions, instead of having my own thoughts and ideas about the information we were being exposed to. Once I passed the programme, I reverted back to using my preferred coaching methods rather than continuing to play this adopted role. If the programme had taken into account my beliefs and views on coaching and attempted to understand my coaching environment then maybe I would not have found it necessary to engage in this superficial way.

5.3 Knowledge Gained

Whilst completing the programme I experienced the instructors providing me with a large "tool box" of practical knowledge, relating to technical aspects of football (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cushion *et al.,* 2003). However, once I received certification, I realised that I had gained little or no information regarding coaching. The main reason for this was the instructor's demonstrations and explanations lacked information regarding the art of coaching, such as skills relating to communication, feedback and pedagogy (Dickson, 2001). Through only educating coaches to be knowledgeable technicians of the sport they coach (Lawson, 1993; Cushion *et al.*, 2003), coach education is producing coaches who many deem to be unskilled workers (Howley & Howley, 1995). When considering my experiences, it is not surprising that many believe that course content offered by coach education is largely accountable for the current inadequacy in coach preparation (Cushion *et al.*,

2003). Even though it is difficult to judge what knowledge is essential for coaches to practice successfully, the content of coach education must address some elements of coaching (Tinning, 1997). One of the key problems with not offering coach's information regarding coaching is that they are unprepared for the complex, social and often ambiguous environment in which they are operating within (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Having spent long periods of time studying this concept of coaching through my university studies, I feel I am now more prepared for the realities of my practice. If coach education began to educate coaches on concepts and ideas as I was through my university studies, more coaches may also gain a better understanding of their own practices.

5.31 Impact of Experience Levels.

My knowledge gained from the programme was also impacted through the instructors not recognising my prior experiences and level of development (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). I perceived the instructor as the knowledgeable expert and consequently expected to receive lots of new knowledge from them (Nelson *et al.*, 2006). However, I found that I was able to arrive at the programme already knowing about and putting into practice much of what the programme covered (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Therefore, once I completed the programme I left with little new knowledge. To ensure coaches are able to apply the knowledge they have gained from coach education, the content of these programmes must take into consideration the variety of experience each coach possesses before a programme begins (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Coach education should be prepared for a coach with no experience, a coach with vast amounts of experience and anything between these extremes, to ensure coach education impacts everyone individuals knowledge and learning appropriately and effectively (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Erickson *et al.,* 2008). Even though this was a dilemma I faced throughout the programme, I chose not to question the programmes content or the instructors, due to the element of compulsion and my desire for certification (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010).

5. 32 Coaching Process

Throughout the programme the instructors did not directly discuss any knowledge that related to the coaching process. These findings seem rather alarming when it has been advocated that developments to coach education depends on a clear understanding of the coaching process (Lyle, 1999). However, as discussed previously large proportions of the programme were taken up by technical knowledge, which left little time for information regarding the coaching process (Abraham & Collins, 1998).

The instructors, however, did cover some important elements of the coaching process through a number of theoretical tasks. Nevertheless, I found the tasks were often covered in only a small amount of detail, which only offered a basic understanding of these concepts (Abraham *et al.,* 2006). I also felt that the instructors were trying to squeeze as much knowledge as possible into a short period of time (Lemyre *et al.*, 2007). Finally, some of the tasks, especially the task on the LTAD model, were focussed heavenly on bio scientific knowledge that at times was difficult to understand (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Jones *et al.,* 2004). These problems were heightened by the instructor's incomplete explanations. All of these negative approaches to the theoretical tasks need urgent attention, if coach education is going to start to impact coaches understanding regarding the coaching process and its implications relating to practice.

5.5 Strengths and Limitations of Research

One of the main strengths of this research was the chosen method in which to investigate coach education. By utilising autoethnography I was able to construct an engaging, authentic and personal account on how coach education impacted me (Sparkes, 2000). The chosen approach allowed me to highlight how my experiences were connected to the cultural, theoretical and practical issues associated with coach education. Additionally, if I had utilised an alternative method of research, such as the use of interviews or questionnaires, I would have not been able to make these connections. A further strength of this research was my immersion into the

subject of the study over a longitudinal period of time which provided a detailed and full picture of the institution being researched.

The main limitation to this study was the restrictive word count. Through my reflective diary I reported many different experiences that could have been deemed beneficial to report. However, when considering the word limit I had to carefully choose which parts were most insightful for the reader. The second limitation for this study was that I did not utilise a reflective model to structure my diary, which at times made it difficult to create a detailed account of each experience. If this study was repeated I would use a reflective model, such as Gibbs (1988) model, to structure my reflections.

5.6 Future Research Recommendations

Future studies may use participants who are at alternative developmental stages and who have had different experiences compared to my background prior to this research. For example, a future study may use a participant who is not a university academic and has not been previously educated in any areas of coaching. By using a non-academic, a future study would allow the participant to report on the impact of the programme, without using literature and knowledge that they have already gained to frame their experiences. Furthermore, a future study of this nature would demonstrate more sufficiently how a coach education programme of this level, impacted the development of a novice and inexperienced coach, unlike myself prior to the beginning of this study. A future study of this nature is important for the field of coaching, as it will reveal how different type of coaches are being impacted by completing these types of programmes. Finally, a similar study could investigate how programmes further up the coaching pathway have impacted coaches' development. This particular study investigated a coach education programme at the start of the coaching pathway and therefore, is generally directed to coaches at a recreational level and traditionally only offers a basic level of knowledge. A future study carried out on a more advanced programme would demonstrate how the knowledge offered at a higher level differs and consequently further impacts coaches' development and preparation. This type of future study is crucial in the process of building a picture on how coaches are being educated throughout the coaching pathway.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.0 CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this research was to examine how a coach education programme impacted the preparation of a newly qualified football coach. Through my short personal stories I have reported how certain aspects of the coach education programme had a limited impact on my preparation and development as a football coach.

One of the main findings regarding the impact of this programme on me as a coach was the emphasis on technical information, rather than on information regarding coaching itself (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Jones, 2000). Even though I had a good understanding of coaching from my previous education, this programme had no impact on my coaching techniques, or on how I viewed the coaching process. The problem with not exposing coaches to information regarding effective coaching and the coaching process, is that coach education is not preparing coaches to be able to work within the complex, uncertain, dynamic nature that coaching exists within (Saury & Durand, 1998). Coach education needs to begin to educate coaches about effective 'coaching practice' if they are going to start to impact new coaches' development and preparation more appropriately.

Throughout the programme I felt that the instructors did not take into account my existing knowledge, experiences and understanding of coaching, which consequently led to less of an impact on my development as a coach. Coach education should be aware that sometimes coaches arrive on these programmes with established understandings and beliefs relating to coaching (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, coach education should alter their content, feedback and assessment criteria, dependent on the coaches' current level of understanding, to ensure that every individual coach is impacted adequately depending on where their current level of development sits.

Although my experiences suggest that coach education has taken some positive steps towards exposing coaches to elements of the coaching process, this programme was not able to fully present what the coaching process is and how many now view it (Lyle, 2002). Furthermore, I felt that the instructors spent the least

amount of time providing detailed explanations of how these elements of the coaching process could have be practically applied to my coaching. Therefore, the knowledge I gained had little or no impact on my understanding of coaching, nor did it help prepare me to work within the complex and dynamic realities of a coaching environment.

My experiences highlighted that the instructors used practical demonstrations to try and convince me that there was a "right" way of thinking when coaching (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). I feel this method of teaching on the programme had less of an impact on my development as a coach and also discouraged me from being creative and individual when coaching (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Throughout my experiences I also felt the need to alter my behaviour and coaching to suit the needs and expectations of the programme, which also had less of an impact on my development and preparation as a football coach (Goffman, 1959; Grabber 1991). The power relationship that existed between me and the coach instructors limited my ability to be myself on the programme. Even though at times I found what the instructors were expecting me to do went against my beliefs surrounding coaching, I always conformed. I followed this pattern of behaviour throughout the programme to ensure the instructors, who had greater capital and power than me, gave me certification at the end of the programme (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010).

In conclusion, coach education seems to be having a limited impact on the preparation of newly qualified football coaches. Firstly, through only exposing new coaches to technical knowledge surrounding the sports they coach and secondly, due to the limiting effects of the power relationships that exist throughout these programmes. Additionally, coach education is not sufficiently preparing new coaches to be able to adapt to the complex and ambiguous environment that coaching exists within. Finally, through a general indoctrination approach to teaching, coach education is not encouraging the production of imaginative, creative, vibrant new coaches (Cushion *et al.*, 2003).

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

ETHICS STATUS APPENDIX

Date: 08/03/2014

To: Rebecca Exworth

Project reference number: 13/05/111U

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 27th November 2013.

Yours sincerely

APPENIDIX B

Extract from Reflective Diary

<u>Day 1</u>

Somehow modern technology had helped me finally find my destination. I drove into the car park noticing a few people hanging around what I could only assume to be the entrance. I drove to the furthest car park space and checked my clock. Still 10 minutes to go, do I get out yet? Not that I was nervous or anything about the course but I didn't want to look to keen or spend minutes chatting to people that I didn't yet know when I could be in the comfort of my own car. I finally plucked up the courage to leave the car. I grabbed my oversized bag out of the boot and slowly moved towards the now growing group of people standing by the entrance.   I noticed three other girls standing at the rear of the crowd so I naturally moved towards them and with an awkward nod and smile we started chatting. I love awkward introductions. Not! As we waited for the first leader to emerge to lead us into the building I was slyly listening to a number of the people in the group discussing their previous experiences of the level 1 coach education programme. "How easy was that? My Nan could have passed that course. It was a great laugh. Let's hope this course as easy as that". Clearly it wasn't just me that found the level one course rather simplistic and easy to pass.

Finally one of the older members of the group took the momentous steps into the building with all us sheep following him in. We walked into the building and up some spiral stairs into a small room that reminded me of a school classroom. I quickly shuffled to the table closest to the front of the class to ensure my bad eye site didn't trouble my viewing. The three girls followed. As we sat down a few men followed but as it was a table of girls we were defiantly there last option. After everyone had finally settled two men took to the front of the class to introduce themselves as our instructors and educators for the course. They gave us a brief outline of the course and introduced our first task; a set of ice breaker questions. What is your current experience in playing and coaching football? Why do you want to do the level two courses? Positive attributes you believe you have as a coach? Areas you want to improve as a coach whilst completing the level course? Everyone completed the ice breaker questions task with a partner and then we each took turns to stand up and introduce ourselves to the group. I managed to piece a

few words together about my past background of coaching and how I wanted the coach education programme to help develop further as a coach and then quickly sat back down. The personal introductions seemed to last a age which was a shame as the first few were really interesting but was so hard to continue to concentrate right to the last person. As the last person finally finished introducing himself the instructors stood back up in front of the class. The main instructor started to talk about how much diversity and experience the group already had, "This starter activity proves that even though many of you have come on this course to develop as coaches you already hold a vast amount of experience and knowledge. We all should aim (including the instructors) to try and learn off each other throughout this course. Please share your experiences throughout and when you feel you can add to the discussion please don't feel you can't. Also make sure you ask lots of questions and if you are confused make sure you question why things are being taught to you in a certain way. Don't be afraid to ask or to be heard."

  Next we were handed out these massive white heavy paper information packs. We were told these would be our bibles for the next six months and under no circumstances where we to lose them. No pack, no pass certificate. It looked very daunting. The instructors speedily went through each section of the packs with the majority of the group trying to keep up. I was struggling to take all the information in at once and just prayed that anything really important they would repeat in the future. The instructor then moved onto explaining the three CD-ROMs located in a pocket at the start of the pack, "If any of you currently suffer from   insomnia watch these CD-ROMs because it will defiantly cure it!"

Finally the work began. We were asked to move into four groups that we would be expected to work in all week, each group was named after as a Premiership football team. I was in team Tottenham Hotspur. Great! Each team were passed out the traditional flip chart piece of paper and board marker. Our task was to draw a picture to represent what we understood to be important skills and qualities   when coaching and the impact a coach can have on their athlete's. After the initial discussion/ debate on who would be nominated to draw the picture in our group, we began the task.   Straight away it was clear that everyone had their own views on what the answer to these questions should be. To begin with everyone in my group was talking over each other and the obvious stronger characters in the group were being heard more than the others. I offered a number of ideas throughout the task mainly

related to things I had found useful when coaching and information I had gained from my degree programme. Some of my ideas were used but some weren't and it was at this moment it was clear to me that each individual had their own views and ideas on what made a good coach. As the task developed and the drawer started to sketch our picture of a coach, as a group we lost focus and became more fascinated with the coaches massive ears to represent a good listener. Once we had finished the coach drawing each group had to stand up and describe what they had drawn and explain why they had drawn it in that way. The drawings were hilarious and the task itself demonstrated the many roles and skills you need to be a coach. Whilst keep group presented the coach sketches the instructors did not explain or comment on them nor did they express which were correct and which were not. I found the lack interaction form the instructors at this point strange as it clearly was the case that there were no correct answers to these questions, it was truly down to personal interpretation and individual beliefs at what makes a good coach.

We then moved onto putting the information the first two tasks had covered into our information packs. The questions we had previously been asked and had discussed each corresponded to a small box where we had to fill in the answers. As it was the first page of the information pack I found myself, trying to write as neatly as possible, with great detail including as much information as possible. I felt as it was the first page of the pack and that we had just been told how important these packs were that the best effort was defiantly needed. To be fair I wasn't the only person under this impression as we were all scribbling away for some time. After twenty minutes or so one of the instructors stopped as all from writing, "Guys you really don't need to write an essay just a few examples in the boxes and then we can move on. It's not too important. We want to get outside soon as possible" I had to question at this point the why we were doing it if it wasn't important and why it had just been drummed into us the importance of these information packs when really we doing for no reason!

We then moved outside to begin the exciting part of the course the actual practical coaching. I thought it was hilarious how the majority of the group had new boots on and matching new clean football kit. We all were very enthusiastic. The instructors explained to the group that throughout the week they would demonstrate numerous sessions on a variety of footballing topics. Each session would include a technique section where it would be based on the players completing a technique when they are unopposed, a skill section where the players would be opposed and then a small

sided game. This structure was the structure we would have to adopt for our 12 weeks of experience and practical assessment at the end of the course. As we were explained this structure of the sessions I couldn't image ever adopting it with my athletes. Only three exercises in an hour and a half session surely the young children I coach would get bored with the same activates for long periods of time. Even though I had these doubts I was still interested to see how the sessions would be coached and presented by the instructors. I wanted to learn!

The educators explained that for the first two days they would be only demonstrating two sections of the sessions, the technique and skill. The instructors explained that they would be covering the small sided game section of the assessment on a different day. The first session was on short passing. As there were so many participants on the course you could either participate in the practical sessions or watch it from the side. As it was the first session of the course I opted to participate. Plus I felt I would be able to take more information in participating than just watching.

  The two exercises in this first session were quite basic but I felt they covered the key coaching points regarding short passing. I had never played or used these exercises before. After the exercise I thought it would be definitely something I would use when coaching my athletes in the future. I had learnt something. However, I found throughout the instructor's demonstration and explanation of the first session was jammed full of instructions and key points. I found it was very hard to see and understand the session as a full practice as it was very stop and start. I don't know whether it was because it was the first session of the course but the instructors seemed to talk constantly throughout. I felt we were receiving a lot of information at once. There was no time for feedback or contribution it was very much this is how you do this session. The information I gained was mainly focussed on the exercise with not very much information regarding the act of coaching itself. The one tip or technique I did pick up regarding coaching from this session was about when and when not to offload information to our athletes. The instructors explained that when completing our final assessment we should set up an exercise through explanations and a demonstration and then let the athletes start the activity, "One thing we don't want you to do is to start coaching straight away. Take a minute at the side of the exercise you have just set up. Breathe, check your organisation is correct and that the players know what they are doing and asses the ability of the players you have. Give them a chance before you bombarded them with

information." Even though this point had been made to us regarding our final assessments, it was something that stuck with me whilst completing this first exercise. It triggered a personal reflection for me on whether I had been overloading my athletes with too much information too quickly already.

The day continued in the same manner with more practical session. The vast amount of instructions and explanation of each session continued which made it very hard for me to picture it as a working practice or session. Even though the instructors were going to great detail about each drill and each aspect of football, we never really saw the exercise up and running. The instructors were facilitating our learning instead of representing a coach. It was very stop and start. The great detail on each footballing fundamental was interesting but the information regarding how to coach was still very limited.