Dear Luke Bailey

Outcome of Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

Your mitigating circumstances claim in respect of the following modules has been considered by the School Mitigating Circumstances Committee which was held on 14th April 2015. Please ensure that the information in the table below is correct in relation to your claim and contact us within 7 working days of receiving this letter if it is not:

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Your mitigating circumstances claim has been accepted. The submission date for your Independent Project is now Monday 27th April 2015.

Appropriate recommendations will be made to the Examining Board.

If appropriate, you may wish to avail yourself of free, confidential counselling (including bereavement counselling). For further details, please consult the Student Services website at http://www3.uwl.ac.uk/english/studentservices/counselling/pages/home.aspx. Student Services also offer free advice regarding financial matters; please consult http://www3.uwl.ac.uk/english/studentservices/finance/pages/home.aspx

Yours sincerely

Katie Thirlaway
Deputy Dean of School of Sport
Cardiff School of Sport

Dissertation Assessment Proforma:
Empirical

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²There 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

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORTS COACHING

HOW HAS AN ATHLETICS COACH LEARNED TO COACH DIFFERENT AGE GROUPED ATHLETES AND WHAT COACHING BEHAVIOURS DO THEY DEMONSTRATE?

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Coaching Science)

LUKE BAILEY

ST20000225
NAME: LUKE BAILEY

STUDENT NUMBER: ST20000225

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
HOW HAS AN ATHLETICS COACH LEARNED TO COACH DIFFERENT AGE GROUPED ATHLETES AND WHAT COACHING BEHAVIOURS DO THEY DEMONSTRATE?
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I would like to acknowledge Dr. Andy Lane for his support and guidance throughout this research project. Secondly I would also like to thank my family for encouraging me throughout these four years. Last but not least I would also like to thank my participant for their continued commitment and honest reflections for the period of data collection.
ABSTRACT

Looking at how coaches vary their behaviours and training strategies when coaching beginner and development athletes is important to ensure that athletes receive the correct support to remain engaged and develop their potential. By understanding this we can better equip coaches to help their athletes. In order to achieve this aim it was necessary to look at how coaches develop their behaviours through a variety of resources: theoretical knowledge, more knowledgeable others and practical knowledge/experience.

A case study of a current academy athletics coach was undertaken collecting evidence of the behaviours used to coach the athletes at different stages of learning. This included the coach completing diary entries of their coaching sessions and undergoing weekly interviews examining their behaviours. There was also an interview that primarily looked at how the behaviours had been developed. Once the interviews were completed there was an inductive content analysis of the transcriptions to generate themes and collate the data into tables. The key findings were that there were more differences in coaching behaviours than similarities. Also, the study found that the participant valued more knowledgeable others and practical knowledge/experience more highly than theoretical knowledge when developing these behaviours. The information obtained was then used in conjunction with other coaching research to establish which behaviours are appropriate and how and when it is advised that they are implemented.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
1.0 Introduction

There has been much coaching research that has looked at coaching behaviours and what makes an effective coach. This research is useful in understanding the common coaching occurrences found by effective or ‘good’ coaches (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Studies have looked at coaching behaviours across different stages of learning and how they either differ or are similar in their approach but there is very little research that has directly looked at a coach who coaches both beginner and development groups of athletes. There have been a number of frameworks that have tried to attribute the links between effectiveness and behaviours (Côté & Gilbert, 2004). Coaching is a complex and ambiguous profession yet the amount of influence a coach can have on an individual is enormous.

This paper aims to identify the coaching behaviours of an athletics coach who coaches beginner and development athletes looking for any similarities and differences in the approach implemented. Once the distinctions or similarities of the coach’s behaviours when coaching the two groups have been identified consideration will be given to the reasons why the coach believes that the specific behaviours are employed. The participant is a coach who is currently studying a Masters degree in Sports Coaching at University so they are very much in the development stages of their learning as a coach. By identifying behaviours utilised at different stages of learning and the reasons behind their use suggestions can be made for other coaches who are in a similar position to the participant in this case study.

It is important to establish how coaches develop their coaching behaviours to ensure there is support for coaches who are entering the coaching profession and to aid the progression of existing coaches. For this reason there will be a discussion about how the participant has developed their coaching behaviours exploring the resources and other methods that helped to sculpt their actions. Whilst this study will look in detail at the behaviours utilised and the reasons behind their use it is only examining the behaviours of a single participant so the generalised guidance it is hoped to be possible to offer on coaching athletes at different stages of learning will require additional research and testing.
1.1 Rationale

From the analysis of the research available on coaching behaviour and coach development it was apparent that there was little research that directly looked at a coach who coaches athletes at two different stages of learning. Fitts and Posner (1967) Stages of Learning outlined that learners developed at different rates. Lyle (2002) proposed a table that looked at athlete’s intentions that aimed to make coaches aware of athlete engagement. Côté et al (2006) looked at the 5 C’s and later in (2009) adapted it to the 4 C’s. This research outlined the different stages of learner but there is little research looking at coaches who have to coach both beginner and development stages. Accordingly this is where the study is focussed by analysing the coaching behaviours used by a specific coach and the way in which they have developed these behaviours.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW
2.0 Literature Review

This section will be looking at the research around coaching behaviours and how coaches learn. Firstly there will be an overview of what sports coaching is and what do coaches do. The second section will be looking at coaching effectiveness and the links it has with behaviours. The next section will cover general coaching behaviours and what the research tells us about what a coach does when they are coaching, for example do they use more instructions rather than demonstrations. This will lead onto how coaches behave when coaching the different stages of development i.e. when coaching development athletes how do they behave or how does a coach of beginner athletes behave. The final area that will be looked at is how a coach learns to coach effectively, behave and coach different stages of learner. This section will then lead onto why the intended research was carried out and how it was carried out in the methods section.

2.1. Sports Coaching Overview

Sports coaching is a process that allows for development and progression of athletes to enhance both their general capacity and specific performances (Lyle, 2002). The word coach in a non-sporting context in the 1990’s was described as being someone who sets agreed performance targets and can transfer power to people (Tichy & Charan, 1995). This can be implemented into a sporting context by saying that coaching is setting goals in order to improve competition performance (Lyle, 2002). Coaching has been described as being very much of the directed and instructional approach (Kidman, 2001) but Downey (2003) viewed coaching as being more of a questioning and listening skill. Both approaches are valid as there is a vast amount of literature that suggests using solely one method is not issue free (Lyle & Cushion, 2010).

As described by Holt (2008), the role of the sports coach is to nurture positive youth development. In fact, it is widely regarded that the coach is the most important
person in determining the quality and success of an athlete’s sporting experience (Kenow et al, 2003). Coaching at beginner and development stages of learning develops young athlete’s motor skills, and also teaches key intrapersonal skills that are useful in both sport and society. It is clear that the coach, and their specific coaching behaviours, play a huge role in the development of sports men and women. However, this is not a simple task, and that is corroborated by many previous studies into sports coaching; ‘Anyone involved in coaching and the world of sport is aware that coaches play an important role, that coaching is complex, and, therefore, coaches need to develop a knowledge base which should include coaching knowledge and sport specific knowledge’ (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Lyle, 2002; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000; Saury & Durand, 1998).

2.2. Explaining coaching effectiveness links to behaviours

In examining the behaviours of a sports coach, and in particular how they vary between coaching the different stages of learning, it is of vital importance to look at coaching effectiveness and how this links to the behaviours of the coach themselves. Côté and Gilbert (2009) defined coaching effectiveness as ‘The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athlete’s competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts’. Although clear in its definition, studying coach effectiveness in this way is difficult and the literature is lacking in a clear relationship between effectiveness and coaching behaviours. This is understandable, as to date, there is no single coaching method proven to be the most fruitful in guaranteeing the success of athletes. Perhaps the most well-known study in the subject was conducted by Tharp and Gallimore (1976). They conducted peripheral research on the basketball coach John Wooden. The most comprehensive study by Lyle (2002), examined what constitutes a ‘good’ coach, namely if the coach is successful, effective and competent in their role. The results of this study, were consistent with those found by Côté and Gilbert (2009) that coaching effectiveness and the expertise of the coach are basic frames of reference in determining ‘good’ coaching.
Given these results, it is logical to attempt to develop a theoretical basis that describes the link between coach effectiveness and coaching behaviours. Many previous attempts have been made at this (Horn, 2002; Lyle, 2002; Chelladurai, 1993; Jowett, 2002; & Mageau, 2003). However the results were inconclusive, a result echoed by Côté and Gilbert (2004) ‘Despite the emergence of these conceptual frameworks, there are no cohesive definitions of effective coaching or coaching expertise that underpin the processes, knowledge, and behaviours involved in the development of athletes.’.

It is clear then, that Coaching effectiveness is not a factor that can be easily judged by a single parameter. This is even clearer when comparing coaching effectiveness between the various stages of learning. Horn (2008) stated that coaching effectiveness can be judged solely on the outcomes of the athlete, such as winning events at national or international competition levels. This seems appropriate at elite level, but is not an accurate way of judging coach effectiveness in the beginner or development stages of learning, particularly with young athletes. At these lower levels of sports performance, it is key to remember that a coaching success may be as small as ensuring continued participation in later life. Smith & Smoll (1989) state “the ultimate effects of coaching behaviours are mediated by the meaning that players attribute to them.” Therefore showing that the effectiveness of a coach is not purely dependent on the athlete’s results, but also on the psychological effects the coach’s behaviours have on the athlete. They went on to add that in fact, effective coaches should be viewed as being instrumental in the overall development of athletes, not only of sport-specific skills (Smith & Smoll, 2002) and so in theory it is possible to judge effective coaching by the all-round well-being of the athletes in both sport and their wider life. This is in particular, hard to assess for young people.
2.3. General coaching behaviours

Franks et al (2001), stated that ‘effective instruction is crucial to the pursuit of optimal sporting performance’, and so ‘correct’ coaching behaviours are vital to the success of the athlete. Although there is no comprehensive guide to coaching, there is a vast array of literature that examines key coaching behaviours adopted by top coaches. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned is the use of physical demonstrations, particularly in the development of young athletes. Blake (1998) remarked that it would in fact be out of the norm if a physical demonstration were not given to young performers. This is because ‘creating a representation of physical relationships enhances the learners understanding of the skill to be learned’ (Carroll & Bandura, 1987). In general this type of instruction is key within practice sessions. Visual learning can have positive and negative connotations, for example, it is necessary that the athlete observes a demonstration of a suitable technical standard. It is also key to note that the athletes are always observing the coach, as said by Smith, Smoll & Curtis (1978) the coach is actually unaware of how often they behave in various ways, and in particular the effect these behaviours have on the athlete. Thus physical coaching behaviours cannot be overlooked. Smith et al (1978) went on to develop a model of leadership behaviours in sport that provides a foundation for studying coaching behaviours. They concluded that in actuality, coaching behaviours are given the meaning that athletes attribute to them, and so there is an inherent variability due to the psychological attributes of the athlete. It is mentioned by Franks et al (2001) that if a demonstration is executed poorly then it is disadvantageous to performance, unless correct feedback is given to the athletes in securing positive impacts on their development.

Early research into the benefits of instructions as being an effective coaching behaviour found that there was direct links to coach effectiveness and use of instructions (Carreira et al 1992). Hodges and Franks (2002) found that instruction was an essential behaviour needed for improving motor skills among children as did
(Schmidt & Wrisberg, 2004). Lyle and Cushion (2010) noted that instruction was the most frequently ‘active’ coaching behaviour. It is said that some coaches tend to rely on instruction to promote a secure and trusted environment for their athletes (Jones, 2004). As sport can carry high levels of pressure for both coach and athlete, the coach tends to use an instructional approach in an attempt to enhance sporting performance (Potrac et al 2007).

Communication is found to be another coaching behaviour that is crucial for people in authoritative positions such as the role of a coach (Lee, 1993). Lee (1993) also felt that communication could be broken down into three categories. The first being verbal communication which was found to be the most commonly used form by presenting information to the athlete or asking questions (Argyle, 1988.) The next form of communication that was mentioned was para verbal which is the way in which the verbal communication is delivered with the use of tone and pitch. A misconception that communication should be verbal is contradicted by the statistic that 90% of information is transmitted by nonverbal communication (Turner, 1983). The research that has been discussed with regards to communication indicates the importance for it but it should also be noted that communication is not just verbally transmitted. Another area to mention is the influence that external factors have on coach’s behaviours. Lemyre et al (2007) found that coaches avoid interaction with parents due to the amount of pressure that they put on their children. Anderson et al (2003) research supported this as they found that parental pressure had a significant influence in decreasing enjoyment levels when parental pressure was placed on the children.

2.4. Coaching behaviours for beginners and development stages

Understanding that there are different stages of learner is a vitally important recognition. Fitts and Posner (1967) Stages of Learning, divided the three stages of learner into: cognitive, associative and autonomous. These three stages of learner allows there to be a clarification of the different stage of athletes that coaches have
to coach. Beginner athletes tend to fall into the cognitive stage of learner due to the way in which they process new skills. With this in mind a coach may have to adapt their coaching behaviours to accommodate this athlete as Bandura (1986) suggested that the use of visual instruction was of more value when coaching young children. Lyle (2002) suggested that there is a difference in the type of coach by saying that in participant coaching the focus is on enjoyment and health related benefits and performance coaching the focus is on outcomes and programmes specially tailored to improve competitive results. Lyle (2002) also proposed a table that established the differences in the athlete’s intentions for participating in sport. A ‘sports teacher’ looks to improve performance but with a programme in place to obtain competitive performance. Lyle then proposed the idea that a ‘participation coach’ coaches competitive athletes but does not cover all aspects of sports science in order to develop athletic performance.

Côté et al (2006) revised the initial proposed framework of the 5 C’s to the 4 C’s being: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character/Caring later in (2009) they proposed a table that encompassed the coaching contexts in developing athlete outcome. ‘Participation coach for children’ would be of use for the coach coaching beginner athletes as the focus was more on inclusion and low organised playful games. The ‘Performance Coach for Adolescents’ would cater for the development athlete where there is a deliberate focus on practise and assessing physical, technical, perceptual and mental skills in a safe environment. Knowing the group of athletes that a coach coaches is important to ensure effective coaching is delivered as Trudel and Gilbert (2006) found that athletes who are prescribed the wrong coaching will become redundant.

2.5. Developing effective coaching behaviours

2.5.1 Theoretical knowledge/experience:
Theoretical and technical knowledge has grown in importance for coaches and most countries and governing bodies have formalised coach education and certification programmes. Indeed Côté and Gilbert (2009) believe that theoretical knowledge has become one of the most significant factors in coach education and recruitment. Anderson (1983) identified two separate areas of knowledge being declarative/routine knowledge that comprises theories specifically directed to individual subjects and procedural knowledge that aims to provide the coach with the behaviours necessary to undertake various functions or activities. The introduction of reflective practice in coach education was mentioned by Nelson and Cushion (2006) to improve youth coaches’ knowledge as a way of making the programmes more conceptual and beneficial.

Formal coaching courses are led and directed by another person but Lemyre et al (2007) noted a wide difference in the value attributed to theoretical training between coaches and Werthner and Trudel (2006) suggested that this receptiveness to coach education will be influenced by the coaches’ personal experiences and cognitive structures. Gilbert et al (2006) stated that coaches did not value formalised learning environments as highly as the learning they obtained from their hands on daily practical experiences. Moreover, whilst theoretical knowledge has increased in perceived importance there are few studies on the impact of formal education on the coaches actions and thought processes leading up to, during and following sessions with the research undertaken by Gilbert and Trudel (1999) being one of the few exceptions. Peel et al (2013) made a resounding comment with reference to the actual effectiveness of coaches who are then qualified as there is no follow up assessment to judge the coaches competencies even though the courses are run by national governing bodies.

2.5.2 More knowledgeable others

Learning through interactions with more knowledgeable others appears to be a method in which coaches develop. Wegner’s (1998) social learning theory dealt with the concept that learning is achieved through having relations with others. This was
also supported by Gilbert & Trudel (2001) as they found that coaches learnt to coach by conversing with others and resolving problems or formally known as reflective-conversation approach (Schön, 1987). Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) then suggested that reflective practise does not have to be done individually which supports the idea that obtaining knowledge does not have to be a solitary endeavour. Having a coach mentor to assist coaches appears to be another way in which coaches acquire knowledge (Bloom et al. 1998). This idea that mentoring is a valuable tool for coach development seems to be of value and is supported by literature yet Trudel and Gilbert (2004) felt that mentoring is useful but should not be the only resource as this perhaps will restrict the coaches own creativity and forward thinking. Having a coach mentor to assist appears to be another way in which coaches acquire knowledge (Bloom et al. 1998). This idea that mentoring is a valuable tool for coach development seems to be of value and is supported by literature yet Trudel and Gilbert (2004) felt that mentoring is useful but should not be the only resource as this perhaps will restrict the coaches own creativity and forward thinking. Sticking to the same line of knowledge acquisition, the notion of observing others appears to be a commonly practised behaviour for coaches (Salmela, 1996). Trudel and Bush (2007) remarked that submersing yourself with other coaches plays a central role in developing a wider grasp of differing perspectives on coaching. Lemyre et al (2007) concluded that youth coaches in their first year of coaching found it useful to ask questions to their ‘league supervisors’ and have access to a mentoring scheme.

### 2.5.3 Previous experience

Coaches’ knowledge can be obtained by previous experience whether that be athletic experiences or undergoing coaching with the intention to develop their skill. Cushion et al (2003) felt that a new coach develops through interactions in a practical coaching context and a selection of unstructured sources. Letimer and Marhes (1985) found that holding coaching positions enabled the coach to work up the coaching ladder which was of some significance. This is also supported by Cregan et al (2007) as their research found that expert coaches started coaching grass roots levels in high school suggesting that there is a progressive trend in order for coaches to develop. It is also thought that participating in sport for a number of years as an athlete is a way for a coach develop as they have a large knowledge base of how a session is structured and multiple other factors that make up a training session (Gilbert et al 2006).
A coach can learn from a number of resources, one of them being ‘unmediated learning situations’. This is where the learner uses their own initiative and responsibility to decide upon what they deem appropriate for them without the guidance of an instructor (Werthner & Trudel, 2006). They also noted that coaches should not feel as though formal coach education programmes are there to provide everything and it is in fact for the coach to decipher the information appropriate for them. There has been expansive research into the use of reflective practise in improving coaches’ knowledge by self-reflecting on their experience to better their coaching practise (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004; Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Previous athletic ability has been mentioned as being a source of gaining knowledge and some coach’s value this as being important but it needs to be noted that not all coaches view this as an important aspect (Write et al, in press).

2.6. Purpose of study

The aim of the study is to culminate the different sub sections looked at throughout this section into a basis for research. As the research is sparse in looking at coaches that are faced with coaching both beginner and development stages of learner this is where the study will focus. One of the objectives is to understand and conceptualise why the participant coaches in the way that they do and where they have developed their coaching behaviours. Therefore, based on the analysis of the literature, it is shown that sports coaches provide a basis for development of young athletes from a beginner, participatory stage of learning, through to the elite levels of sport. It is therefore key to examine the effect coaching behaviours have on the athletes and how behaviours differ between learning stages.

Also, a further aim is to understand the reasons why coaches behave in the way that they do across both stages of learning. Once this clarification is made the study will then look at how the behaviours have been developed as the research suggests there are a variety of resources in acquiring coaching knowledge. From generating an understanding of both behaviours and ways in which they have been developed there will be recommendations and suggestions for coaches to understand the results bringing together a conclusion.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD
3.0 Method

3.1. Research Design

The research carried out adopted a qualitative approach to best meet the aims and objectives identified at the outset of this study. Understanding the nature of qualitative research and the benefits of utilising it was important when selecting the research design. Fundamentally, the use of a qualitative methodology, through diaries and interviews, enabled the participant to describe their experiences and the meaning attached to these (Maxwell, 1996), giving a clearer understanding of their experiences (Weinberg et al., 2001) and overcoming some of the limitations associated with quantitative research methods (Gregg et al., 2007).

A case study approach was selected, as it would generate a detailed record of the participant’s experiences (Berg & Latin, 2004). Within this approach, the participant would be used repeatedly, over a period of time, to complete data collection and ensure a thorough understanding of their own unique coaching experience. Furthermore, the use of one coach would remove personality fluctuations that may impact the study if it had looked at a variety of coaches. The documentation of the participant’s coaching experiences over a prolonged period mirrored the methodological design previously implemented in performance studies (e.g. Maitland & Gervis, 2010; Tamminen & Holt, 2010). This approach was used to enable a more detailed appreciation of what the participant did during their coaching sessions and why they took this approach. To conclude the process, the participant was questioned to gain a greater understanding of their diary entries and to establish where the participant learnt to coach in the way that they did.

3.2. Participant

The case study used an academy athletics coach who was currently coaching two different age groups. One of the groups had children aged five to six years old of mixed gender and ability and the other group consisted of solely female sprinters aged fourteen to seventeen years old. The participant’s coaching background stemmed from an undergraduate sports degree and current enrolment on a Post graduate sport degree at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Furthermore, the participant
holds a UKA Level 1 coaching licence and is actively looking to complete their Level 2 qualification. The participant also competes consistently at national level, achieving high levels of success at the British Universities Athletics Championships for the last three years. This combination of coaching and athletic experience ensured the participant had a reasonable amount of knowledge and understanding, which ensured the participant represented a suitable selection as a participant, as their responses were likely to be in-depth and provide a clear understanding of their coaching processes.

3.3. Instrumentation

A diary comprised of seven questions was provided to the participant, which required the participant to simply record what they did in their session, how they did it and whether it was effective (Appendix A). These questions reflected the reviewed literature regarding coaching behaviours, and were posed to establish the coaching practice used by the participant. These diaries remained consistent across the four weeks to ensure the participant had familiarity with them. The participant had previous experience writing diaries about their coaching experiences due to the course content within their MSc postgraduate degree programme. The use of a coaching diary allowed the participant to write in a methodical manner straight after their session, minimising memory loss (Gregg et al., 2007), to gather a more accurate reflection and insight into their coaching behaviours during the interviews.

Like the diaries, the interview guide used was constructed based around the review of literature regarding coaching behaviours and how coaches develop knowledge, in order to better understand the content of the diaries and the underlying rationale behind the participant’s actions. The interview guide followed a semi-structured approach that allowed more freedom for the participant to explore their reflections in as much detail as they felt necessary (Appendix B). The interviews were conducted in a private study room to reduce the likelihood of breaching the participant’s confidentiality whilst carrying out each of the interviews. Also, a recording device on a modern mobile phone was used to record the initial four interviews and a Dictaphone (Sony, Japan) was used for the final concluding interview. At the beginning of the interviews, the participant was told that if they had any questions or
issues during the interview they were allowed to stop. Likewise at the end of the interviews, a reflective question was asked about how the interview was carried out and if there were any changes or moderations they would like to make for the following time.

3.4. Procedure

This project obtained ethical approved from the ethics committee at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Prior to initial data collection, the participant was given an information booklet to provide them with a greater understanding of what the study was for and what would be required of them. They then completed an informed consent form to take part in the study.

The research project required the participant to do three things: coach their two coaching sessions each week for four weeks; to complete a coaching diary after they had finished each session; and take part in an interview with the researcher each week regarding their diary entries and at the end of the four weeks to conclude the whole process. For the participant to be involved in the study, they were asked to read the information sheet to establish an understanding and awareness of the project and what their involvement was. In the information sheet, there was a question asking ‘Any special precautions needed?’ This stated that the participant was to be as honest as they could when reflecting about their coaching. The participant was asked to complete the coaching diaries as soon after their training session as possible to enable greater accuracy and clarity of their reflections (Tamminen & Holt, 2010). It was not stated how the participant was required to complete the diaries, in terms of the amount of words or structure (i.e. bullet points or continued text). After the diaries were completed, the participant was asked to send them to the researcher as soon as they could so that the researcher had time to construct the interview questions.

The researcher then carried out the interview with the participant. For the first four weeks of interviewing, the questions were focused on getting more detail about what the participant had done in their sessions, whilst also thinking about their behaviours across both groups and making some form of comparison or differentiation between
the two groups. There was then a final concluding interview, which looked primarily at how the participant had learnt to coach in the way that they did, highlighting specific examples of coaching behaviours that the researcher wanted the participant to elaborate on.

3.5. Data Analysis

Due to the nature of the research design selected, a two stage process of content analysis was required to analyses the diaries interviews. The diary entries completed each week by the participant were deductively analysed in order to generate an interview guide that allowed the researcher to gain further insight into the participant’s coaching behaviours. After each weekly interview and the final concluding interview were completed, they were each transcribed using Microsoft Word to formulate transcripts of each interview (Appendix C). Once this process was complete, a form of inductive analysis, similar to grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1996), was conducted, in an effort to interpret the data, whereby key phrases were allowed to emerge from the text. Subsequently, related quotes were coded according to the themes they related to, using the comment box function within Microsoft Word. Finally, these themes were then deductively grouped into categories, to better understand the experience under investigation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) for further discussion. See table 1 for example below and for full see evidence folder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data resource</th>
<th>Evidence from interview</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1. Data Analysis Table Example.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS
4.0 Results

The central aim of this study was to examine the different coaching behaviours utilised when coaching athletes at different stages of learning, the reasons for these behaviours and how they were learnt. In this section there will be an extensive breakdown of the results and findings from the participant’s involvement with the study. There will also be suggestions of ways to better the knowledge and understanding for coaches to potentially implement some of these ideas into their coaching. The results were gathered by asking the participant to carry out two procedures. The first procedure was for the participant to diarise their coaching behaviours for each of the beginner and development groups for four weeks, commenting on what they did and how they coached throughout each session. Each week the coaching diaries were collected in by the researcher who then generated an interview guide. This allowed the participant to expand on their diary entries and there was a concluding interview that looked at how the participant had learned to coach and a self-analysis of their coaching behaviours and motivation to coach.

The expansive summary of these results and findings can be found in the appendices at the end of this paper. The results were formatted into tables with differing headings and themes of interest through carrying out an inductive content analysis of the interview transcriptions from the interviews with the participant. Week 1 data analysis tables looked at the beginner and development coaching behaviours used by the participant. In week’s 2-4 there was also a table that looked at how the participant had developed some of their behaviours. The final interview data analysis tables were split up into 5 tables: beginner coaching behaviours, development coaching behaviours, general coaching behaviours, how behaviours were developed and reasons for wanting to coach.

Below is a snapshot of some of the key quotations from the participant’s interviews looking at: identification of behaviour, reason for behaviour and how behaviour has developed. These three headings were also used throughout the data
analysis tables to form the categories, allowing for a more detailed and conclusive set of results.

**Table 2: Coaching behaviours for beginner group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of Behaviour</td>
<td>- ‘So there’s good use of questioning, so I’d tell what I wanted them to do, I’d give them the feedback but I’d also give them the opportunity to feedback to me as well so they could improve of themselves.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ‘With the older group if they mess up you give them reinforcement feedback. So this was good, this was bad,’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Behaviour</td>
<td>- ‘But like I said they’ve got a real sense of belonging they all know what they want to achieve.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ‘With the older group I have so much more time; they all have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the beauty is they all know their own strengths and weaknesses’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Coaching behaviours for development group.**
| Identification of Behaviour | - ‘So it will always start with a given vocal of what I want; then I’ll do a demonstration or I’ll get one of the kids to do a demonstration so they can see it visual.’  
- ‘I don’t tend to progress them individually, I tend to progress collectively,’ |
| Reason for Behaviour | - ‘You have to keep it very very basic’  
- ‘I don’t really need to improve you that much because your mum is in the stand and is quite happy with you running around for an hour.’ |

#### Table 4: How coaching behaviours have been developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning stage of athletes</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Beginner & Development | - ‘I’ve got a network of people around me now and I have respect amongst coaches’.  
- ‘combination of being an athlete myself and knowing what I like as an athlete and trying to portray that when I coach’ |
5.0 Discussion

This section will be looking at the results in some detail with relation to other research that has been carried out within the coaching behaviour and coach development domain. There will be sub sections throughout covering the primary findings from the results. After the discussion of the results there will be recommendations for other coaches in applying the findings to their coaching practise or generally raising awareness and understanding of the ways coaches develop. This will lead on to a breakdown of the study’s strengths and limitations with suggestion for future research within the diameter of sports coaching.

5.1. Identification of different coaching behaviours

When coaching the beginner group the participant stated that:

‘I don’t tend to progress them individually, I tend to progress collectively,’

This indicates that the participant’s preferred coaching behaviour with younger athletes is to work with them as a group rather giving individual feedback. Both forms of feedback can be categorized as being a form of augmented feedback as this is information provided from the coach to athlete/athletes to improve performance (Lawrence et al, 2013).

Whereas when coaching the development group the participant explained that:

‘it’s separating the groups and managing the ones that can do it and overseeing them and then trying to almost manipulate the ones that can’t do it by giving the same session, in a way giving them more,’
Illustrating that a more individually structured approach was implemented with the development athletes to achieve the best performance outcomes from athletes of different abilities who have a greater expectation of achievement and skill acquisition. Lyle (2002) mentioned that the intentions of athletes change dependant on the amount of sports knowledge and understanding that they have.

Communication was highlighted as playing a significant role in the participant’s coaching behaviour. This is supported by Lee (1993) who noted that communication is vitally important for people in authoritative positions. When coaching the beginner athletes the participant commented on their approach to the way in which they that communicate:

‘You have to keep it very very basic’

This form of communication demonstrates that the participant knows the level to pitch the session at for the session to be effective given the stage of learning. Gilbert and Trudel (2006) said that the coach needs to know the group of athletes to be effective or otherwise they will more a positive impact.

A different form of communication was demonstrated whilst coaching the development athletes:

‘With the older group if they mess up you give them reinforcement feedback. So this was good, this was bad,’

From this it is seen that the participant prefers to use reinforcement feedback as a way of assisting athlete progression when conversing with the development athletes who are more able respond to this approach. Looking at both styles of communication it is apparent that the participant views the beginner athletes as not requiring as much technical input for them to develop. Rather they just require a more simple form of communication to remain focused and engaged with the session. On the other hand the development group require feedback that can look at both the positive and negatives of their performance to improve. This is likely to be
due to the level and understanding of the different groups of athletes at different stages of their learning.

The participant mentioned the use of demonstrations whilst coaching both groups. However, there appears to be a slight difference in the style of demonstration to maximize its effectiveness and suitability for each group. The participant outlined an example of how she would set up coaching a skill to her beginner athletes:

‘So it will always start with a given vocal of what I want; then I’ll do a demonstration or I’ll get one of the kids to do a demonstration so they can see it visual.’

The use of a physical demonstration to help young people to learn appears to be normal and if not used it would appear to be out of the norm (Blake, 1998). From this it is apparent that the participant can either demonstrate the skill or let one of the athletes do so. This freedom appears to contrast with the behaviour whilst coaching the development group as seen by:

‘To demonstrate to the little ones, you don’t need to warm up. But to demonstrate to the older ones when they’re at that better level I have to pretty much nail it; if one of them can get it right then it’s better for me to get them to demonstrate it there.’

Here we see that the participant appears to refrain from using herself as a technical model during a session because of the higher ability levels that the athletes are at in comparison to the beginner group. That said, the participant does also elect to use an athlete to demonstrate in both groups on occasions suggesting that self-demonstration is not always the most effective way of introducing skills. This might be because when the demonstration is carried out by one of the athletes it gives the coach the opportunity to observe the athlete performing the skill and then make comments on their technical components which is not possible if the participant
demonstrates the skill. It has been noted that a demonstration executed poorly becomes redundant in improving performance (Franks et al, 2001).

There were examples of coaching behaviours from the participant which were categorised as being dependent on the practical and technical ability of the athletes. An example of this below shows the participant’s appreciation of the varied ability levels among the beginner group:

‘It’s very difficult because they do advance at different stages’

This shows that whilst coaching the participant has to take into consideration the athletes needs which appears to be a ‘difficult’ process when coaching this beginner group of athletes. There was then a comment about the development group revealing a behaviour designed to improve their performance within a session:

‘Sometimes you need as a coach to compromise and I wanted to maintain their confidence enough so they would give it a go but at the same time dent it a little bit so take them outside of that security, or they’re never going to improve.’

The focus appears to be on improving performance levels whilst keeping the athlete in a safe enough place to feel comfortable in approaching either a new skill or other aspects of the training session. Côté and Gilbert (2009) mentioned that it is important for a coach to make the athlete feel safe so they have trust in your approach. From looking at the attitudes towards both groups of athletes the participant encounters difficult situations with each group and it is evident that there needs to be careful consideration in adopting an approach that can accommodate the needs of both the coach and the athletes.

The final coaching behaviour that was categorised from the analysis of the participant’s interview transcriptions was the use of instruction. Kidman (2001) described coaching as directed and instructional process. When the participant
coached the beginner group a specific form of instruction is used that is aimed at raising the achievement level:

‘What I tend to do is to pitch to the highest level’

This comment suggests that by pitching the session ‘to the highest level’ the participant is wanting the athletes who are below this standard, at that current point in their development, to try and reach or catch up with the other athletes. A different approach is utilised whilst coaching the development group as demonstrated by the participant saying that with this group:

‘It’s giving them that control’

This refers to the higher level of engagement and understanding of the development athletes in deciding what they want to achieve. The coaching aimed at this group is not solely dependent on the coach’s thoughts on what makes the session effective but establishes a more cohesive environment for both athlete and coach to work in. Borden and Perkins (1999) supported that the coach is not the only person with knowledge and that the athletes are knowledgeable enough to make comments about their own development. When comparing the two approaches the participant appears to adopt a slightly freer attitude when working with the development group as opposed to the more generic and structured approach with the beginner athletes.

5.2. Reasons for coaching behaviours

The participant’s own emotional responses emerged as a factor to explain why they coached in the way that they do. When talking about the beginner group the participant stated that:

‘Sometimes you feel as if you are babysitting; they don’t really want to be there’

Holt (2008) commented that the coach’s role is to nurture positive youth development. This remark poses the question as to the level of actual ‘sport
coaching’ that is being carried out or whether the coach is just there to keep the children occupied during the hour session allocated to them which makes it difficult it nurturing potential. This contrasts with the next comment below referring to the participant’s awareness of the development group that is coached:

‘But like I said they’ve got a real sense of belonging they all know what they want to achieve.’

The aim of the athletes in the development group appears to be more focused on improving actual sports performance through being part of a group of athletes who are working in unison with the coach to reach these goals. This supports Lyle (2002) as there is a distinction between the performance coach and participation coach as the athletes are wanting to improve technically and physically rather than enjoyment. When comparing the two groups it is apparent that the engagement of the two groups is very different and this has a consequential impact on the psychological response of the participant resulting in different coaching behaviours being demonstrated.

There was a category titled ‘coaching philosophy’ which brought together a greater understanding as to why the participant approached each session in a particular way. When coaching the beginner group the participant stated that there was a need to be:

‘Calm but excitable so you are trying to build up their motivation levels, because half of them don’t necessarily want to be there.’

Looking at this comment the use of the word ‘excitable’ reveals that the participant considers that a particularly high energy approach is required to ‘build up their motivation levels’ when coaching the beginner athletes. Côté and Gilbert (2009) revised 4 C’s included that the coach should promote fun and low organised games for children. This is utilised as a response to the fact that the participant considers
that some of the athletes do not really want to be at the session which contrasts with the development group as illustrated by the next quotation:

‘Because the older ones really want to be there’

It is evident that the beginner and development athletes have different reasons for partaking in the session and fully appreciating this could improve the way in which coaches approach the idea of target setting for groups of athletes. This may also be relevant for the coach when planning and preparing coaching sessions.

External pressures were noted as being one of the reasons that affected the way in which the participant behaved. Parental influences have been found to affect the way in which a coach behaves as they put too much pressure on their children (Lemyre et al, 2007) A significant external pressure that was raised by the participant for the beginner group was the children’s parents as evidence in the comment below:

‘I don’t really need to improve you that much because your mum is in the stand and is quite happy with you running around for an hour.’

Mentioning an awareness of the children’s parents in relation to behaviours employed in the session highlights the significance of parental involvement for the beginner group athletes. This is inevitably due to the age of the athletes involved in that group. The participant then refers to another external pressure that influences coaching behaviours and that is the greater amount of time available for the development group as evidenced by the quotation below:

‘With the older group I have so much more time; they all have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the beauty is they all know their own strengths and weaknesses’
As the development group comprises athletes who want to be more engaged in their own personal development this gives the participant more time to tailor the coaching to be more event specific focusing on individual goals. The external pressures of time constraints may be a consideration to bear in mind to elicit increased levels of engagement from athletes who want to improve specific aspects of their sport and achieve greater improvements.

5.3. How the coach has developed their behaviours and learnt to use them

This sub-section will look at how the participant has developed their coaching behaviours. It is important to note that unlike the other two sub-sections very little of the diary and interview data reveals a difference in how the participant learnt the behaviours for coaching the two different age groups. For this reason the quotations that will be discussed are applicable for coaches who are working with both beginner and development athletes.

The first source of learning identified is the use of more knowledgeable others from whom the participant gained coaching methods and strategies. This is evidenced by the following quotation:

‘So I speak to better coaches and that gives me the knowledge and I retain that knowledge’

From the comment above it is apparent that the participant uses other coaches who have possibly a greater knowledge base to learn from them and gain a better understanding of the sport and behaviours to employ when coaching. Bloom et al. (1998) and Cregan et al. (2007) both support this method of attaining a greater knowledge base by suggesting that having a mentor who is a more experienced coach can improve coach competency.

The participant also made a further comment illustrating support was received from others:
‘I’ve got a network of people around me now and I have respect amongst coaches’

This reiterates the practice of a coach improving their own skills by feeding off others who in turn help to cultivate and develop the skills of other coaches. It is worth noting, however, that not all coaches like to share their techniques preferring to keep them for the sole use of their own athletes. This quotation also shows that the participant feels respected by other coaches in the same field and this is highly likely to increase coaching confidence. Culver and Trudel (2006) support this by outlining that a community of practice within a coaching context is where coaches have the same common interest and that they work together to better each other’s knowledge.

It is also possible to attribute some of the participant’s coaching behaviours to theoretical knowledge. The participant is a current post graduate student with a sport related degree and referred to how academic studies had influenced the way in which the coaching practises were implemented:

‘In my undergraduate and now my Masters, we’re doing a lot of theory to practice’

It is no surprise that the study of a sports degree has impacted on the participant’s coaching behaviours as supported by Anderson & Gill (1983) where they found that many expert coaches had developed the fundamentals of coaching through studying a sports degree at undergraduate level. This suggests that to enhance coaching ability, particularly when coaching at higher levels, it may be advisable to study a sports degree.

The participant further mentions the use of theoretical knowledge with the following reference to the completion of a coaching course:
‘I’ve obviously been on a coaching course, so they’ve given me the real basics’

The use of the words ‘real basics’ indicates that the participant considers that some of the coaching courses available may be targeted at too simplistic a level to add any significant value particularly for a coach that has studied sport at degree level. There has been some dubitation whether coaching courses are effective in bettering coaching as some coaches prefer the more practical coaching (Gilbert et al, 2006).

This leads on to the next area considered ‘thoughts on approach to learning’ where the participant was asked to share their opinion of the structure and content of coaching courses and whether they were helpful in developing coaching ability:

‘It’s highlighted how ambiguous coaching is and specifically with regards to how they run the coaching courses, because they’re far too straightforward’

The term ‘ambiguous’ being applied to coaching as a whole and then making reference to coaching courses being too ‘straightforward’ indicates that the participant’s knowledge has not largely come from this source. This confirms the findings of Gilbert et al. (2006) that coaches did not look to invest much time in attending formal coach education experiences. This is further supported by Lynch & Mallet (2006) who analysed five international Australian athletics coaches where they found spending over ten years participating in sport themselves was of more value.

The participant then reiterated their beliefs on coach education by saying:

‘But from that they try to portray coaching as a linear pattern, but obviously it’s more ambiguous than that’
This clarification of the participant’s thoughts on the usefulness of coach education steers us towards the suggestion that this is not the participant’s opinion of the best way to develop as a coach, rather more it is a starting point for complete novice coaches.

The final category of how coaching behaviours developed generated from the data analysis was practical knowledge/experience. This emerged as the participant’s favoured and primary method in which to develop coaching behaviours. It was stated that the coaching behaviours utilised were a:

‘Combination of being an athlete and knowing what I like as an athlete and trying to portray that when I coach’

This comment confirms that the participant has had a substantial amount of experience being an athlete and now implements the skills and knowledge of being an athlete into the coaching practices used. Extensive research has found that previous elite-level athletic experiences have been a useful source of coaching knowledge acquisition (Cregan et al., 2007; Erickson et al., 2007; Gilbert, Côté, & Mallett, 2006; Gould, Giannini, Krane, & Hodge, 1990; Schinke et al., 1995; Werthner & Trudel, 2006).

The participant also emphasized the value of coaching experience suggesting that the more actual coaching that is carried out, the more knowledge is obtained as evidenced in the comment below:

‘The more I coach the more knowledge I gain’

Carter & Bloom (2009) also believe that many expert coaches have learnt from experiential factors in order to develop their coaching skills in a professional manor. This supports the participant’s belief that coaching experience is a valued way of
gaining knowledge which is not always achieved by coaching courses due to their structure and accessibility.

### 5.4. Recommendations for coaches

The study looked at the different coaching behaviours demonstrated by the participant throughout the case study and outlined the ways in which these behaviours had been developed. It is important to understand how a coach adapts their coaching behaviours to accommodate athletes at different stages of learning.

The participant identified knowledge gained from personal experience and other coaches as significant influencing factors in their own behaviours and this enables us to suggest that coaches should not be scared to let their own experiences guide and shape their coaching behaviours.

The participant highlighted the need to make the activities for the beginner and development athletes different. This allows us to propose that coaching beginner athletes should be more fun based and playful almost like a game whereas the development athletes who have a greater knowledge themselves of what they want need to be more fully engaged in the decision making process. We would offer, therefore, that coaches of development athletes will need to be more confident of the technical aspects of the activity and may require a greater degree of persistence to cope with the inevitable setbacks that can occur when expectations are higher.

The aim of the study was to highlight coaching behaviours rather than look at what made coaching effective as there were few instances that allowed us to assess effectiveness. In the discussion there was a brief mention about the participant’s effectiveness but not enough evidence to conclusively state that all of the coaching behaviours were effective across both groups.
That said, having a greater awareness as to commonality of behaviours used when the participant coached both groups may give coaches some reference as to how to coach both a beginner and development group. The participant also outlined their reasons for implementing these coaching behaviours making the results more comparable to the literature.

Whilst there are some similarities when coaching beginner and development athletes more behaviours are specifically tailored to the individual age groups being coached. Communication emerges as a key area where different behaviours are required and we would encourage coaches to ensure that their style of communication is appropriate to the athletes being coached. An understanding of this can better equip coaches to tailor their behaviours to the specific target group. Examples of targeted behaviour have been identified by Côté & Gilbert, 2009 as seen in table 5 below:

**Table 5. Coaching Objectives for Developing Athletes’ Outcomes (4 C’s) in Different Contexts (Côté & Gilbert, 2009):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Coach for Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adopt an inclusive focus as opposed to an exclusive selection policy based on Performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organize a mastery-oriented motivational climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Set up safe opportunities for athletes to have fun and engage playfully in low-organization Games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teach and assess the development of fundamental movements by focusing on the child First.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote the social aspect of sport and sampling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Coach for Young Adolescents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Organize the sport experience to promote a focus on one sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teach “rules of competition”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Offer opportunities for fun with increasingly greater demands for deliberate practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teach and assess physical, technical, perceptual, and mental skills in a safe environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Present positive growth opportunities through sport (i.e., civic engagement, responsibility)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table suggests coaching behaviours suitable for different stages of learning. This study has looked at the different behaviours a coach may adopt when coaching beginner and development age groups and the reasons for so doing. This study has also examined the ways in which the participant has developed their coaching knowledge and behaviours to be able to coaching to both age groups. From looking at the results as to how the participant has developed their behaviours it appears that less significance is placed on theoretical learning as a primary resource for developing knowledge. Rather the knowledge gained from practical experiences and from more knowledgeable others is regarded as more valuable and we would commend coaches to make full use of their wealth of personal and shared experience.

5.5. Study Strengths, Limitations & Further Research

One of the strengths of this study was that it used a single participant so that the coaching behaviours observed were not affected by the personality fluctuations that would have arisen had several different coaches been studied. This enabled a more objective examination of the coaching behaviours for the different stages of learning. Moreover, as the participant’s coaching behaviours for the athletes at the different stages of learning had been acquired from the same source they were not influenced by personal experiences and preferences affecting the perceived importance of formal and experiential coaching skills. Another strength was the research method implemented that involved the participant keeping weekly diaries for both groups, undertaking weekly interviews and a conclusive interview. This detailed approach over a four week period ensured that the behaviours identified were not unduly influence by emotional factors such as tiredness or events in the participant’s personal life or external factors such as time constraints or restricted access to facilities.

Whilst the study had several strengths as illustrated above a number of limitations were also identified. As the behaviours observed were from a single coach it is only that one coach’s assessment of what was appropriate for athletes at
different stages of learning that was observed whereas coaches with different backgrounds may have made different behavioural choices. Furthermore, the study did not include any measurement of the athletes’ response to the coaching behaviours they experienced either by way of performance testing or anecdotal responses. It is apparent that how a coach has acquired their coaching behaviours is significant but this was only really focussed on during the conclusive interview. Not asking the participant to reference the behaviours demonstrated to how they had been learnt during the weekly diary keeping and interviews meant that the recall and recognition of the specific behaviour may have been reduced.

Accordingly, the need for additional research avenues has emerged. Comparing the coaching behaviours utilised by a larger number of coaches with different skill sets to coach athletes at different stages of learning may reveal a wider set of behaviours. Linking how these behaviours were learnt more closely to the behaviours themselves could reveal consequential patterns of behaviour. The significance of the coaching behaviours is primarily to be found in the results achieved and measuring both the psychological and physical impact of the different behaviours on the athletes is most likely to provide the greatest benefit to coaching development and progression.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION
6.0. Conclusion

The central aim of this study was to examine the different coaching behaviours utilised when coaching athletes at different stages of learning, the reasons for these behaviours and how they were learnt. It is evident that whilst some of the coaching behaviours were utilised for both beginner and development athletes a greater number were specifically tailored to the separate groups. The participant has developed these techniques from a variety of sources but personal experience and more knowledgeable others most strongly influenced the behaviours. Based on this it is possible to provide guidance to other coaches on behaviours to implement at the different stages of learning. However, it has not been possible within the limitations of this study to test the effectiveness of the different behaviours and it would be considered beneficial that further research is undertaken within this parameter of sports coaching. The study’s aim was not to test effectiveness rather to highlight the behaviour demonstrated by the participant. Having analysed the data recorded throughout this study it is evident that looking at one coach who coaches both a beginner and development group is an area of research that is important. The importance of knowing how a coach adapts their coaching behaviours to accommodate both groups has been shown but the effectiveness has not been measured. As the significance of the coaching behaviours is primarily to be found in the results achieved by the athletes measuring both the psychological and physical impact of the different behaviours on the athletes is most likely to provide the greatest benefit to coaching development and progression.
REFERENCE LIST
References


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE COACHING DIARY
Coaching Diary

Session date:

Learning objectives/Session goals:

What did I do? (e.g. drills, exercises, repetitions, etc.)

How did I coach? (e.g. instructions, demonstrations, feedback, etc.)

Was I successful in achieving the learning objectives? Why/Why not?

Why did I use the drills I used and coach the way I coached? Was I as effective as I could have been this session?

What would I do differently next time?
Concluding Interview Guide

How have you learned to coach the different age group athletes effectively?

Why did you start coaching yourself?

So carrying on from that, why are you still coaching and do you see yourself coaching in years after?

You used the phrase ‘coaching philosophy’ throughout the interviews. What is your coaching philosophy, when coaching the two different age groups?

How have your undergraduate and current study for your post-grad influenced your coaching, if at all?

How did you prefer to be taught/coached when you were younger?

How did you manage being an athlete being coached, to being a coach coaching?

How have you learned to fill both roles effectively?
As you mentioned in one of your interviews, nurturing your athletes is important to main motivation. Can you give me an example of why this is important?

How have you learned this way of coaching younger athletes?

As long jump is your specialist event, how have you learned to coach a multi-event programme to your athletes?

How have you learned when to give your older athletes control and your younger athletes less control?

This idea of managing a group of athletes – how have you developed this skill when trying to accommodate individual athlete needs?

Where have you gained this understanding and knowing when to change position while coaching, to make your athletes less lazy; as you mentioned this situation with your older group?

How have you found this whole process?

Is there anything you would have changed or done differently?
Week 3 Interview Transcription:

**Interviewer:** Student researcher

**Interviewee:** Student athletics coach

**Interview setting:** In private study room at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The interview was conducted on 09/12/2014 at 15:00pm

**Affiliation with interviewee:** Fellow University student who coaches at the same athletics academy as myself.

(Start of Interview)

**Interviewer:** Hi, this is week three of the interview. Am I right in thinking that you have completed two diaries again?

**Interviewee:** I have indeed.

**Interviewer:** So again if there are any questions that you don’t understand at any point you want me to repeat any of the questions or you don’t want to answer any of the questions just let me know and then we’ll work on that. So the first question is, what effect if any has writing the diaries had on your coaching so far?

**Interviewee:** I think, in regards to coaching, from the first week I very much coached then did the diary but by writing the diary you divulge more how the athletes are feeling; because you are self-reflecting more it’s a good method of actually assessing the session in more depth because sometimes I go to sessions and it doesn’t quite go according to plan and I’m like, ‘Yeah whatever, I’ve got a new session next week, it doesn’t matter’ but with these you reflect and you start to learn in greater detail the characteristics within the group and what best suits the athletes and sometimes I know that the amount of times I’ve tried the same thing over and over again, because in my head I think it will work; whereas by doing these reflections, I’m like ‘Actually that didn’t work’ so the following week, instead of trying to incorporate it again because that’s what I believed would have the best effect, it has made me consider different angles to go at. So for example, if I’ve got one of the kids to demonstrate maybe and it’s worked quite well, the following week I’ll try to utilise that again so it has widen my perspective lens to actually what works and what doesn’t and given me a better perspective of how to take that forward.
Interviewer: So out of curiosity how many athletes did you have in your younger group this week?

Interviewee: In my younger group this week, I think I had nine, so it was a nice mix between girls and boys.

Interviewer: How did you find this number of athletes when doing an event like high jump where only one athlete can jump at once?

Interviewee: The only thing I can say about high jump is the beauty of high jump is at least the parents acknowledge the fact that only one kid can go at once, because of the health and safety regulations. When it comes to high jump, as much as I want to get the kids moving as much as possible, at least I don’t feel those external factors are really bearing in on me as if I was doing something like long jump and I’ve got 6 lanes to use and I’ve got them in one lane and I can only watch one at a time, I’m expected to make them to go into 6 lanes; whereas in high jump it’s quite nice. I like my athletes to be active and when they’re a young age I want to sit them down and tell them what they’re doing, so they know what they’re doing and get them off quite quickly. The group I have of this age group are actually really competent and I really enjoy coaching them, which makes it easier. For one of the drills when I was doing U bends with them, I made sure that when they were doing the U bend instead of one kid running all the way around and finishing the other side before the next kid went, I said ‘As soon as this kid starts to bend the next one go’ so you’d have 10 kids running around all in one go, so you’re just speeding the process along and then there’s the little tactic I’d use where as soon as they hit the bend, the next one can go, you work on both sides so they’d split up to the side, this person comes from this side then as soon as they’ve landed the other person would come from the other side because realistically they would land on different sides of the bed. So if one’s coming from the left hand side they’re going to land towards the right hand side of the bed so one is coming from the right hand side they’re going to land on the left, so they’d peel off to different sides. I think it just speeds the process along, I think that general consensus between parents, coaches and the kids is that this is an event that can be quite tedious so you want to get it moving as quickly as possible so everyone just sort of accepts it and just tires. I found with this group as well, they quite enjoy high jump and they were more focused on it because they didn’t want to be hanging around, so they just sort of listened a bit more.

Interviewer: In your younger groups diary you talk about getting one of the children to demonstrate to make it more competitive, how do you do this?

Interviewee: What is quite annoying is that the little kids have the usual “I need to go to the toilet” half way through, so four of my kids put their hand up and said they wanted to go to the
toilet! I was lucky enough to have a helper this week, who was a little school kid who comes along and helps, so she took them to the toilet because that’s like responsible. I was thinking ‘I can’t make my kids wait around whilst they’ve gone to the toilet because it can take 5 mins or so’, what I got them to do was, I explained the drill to these ones, so anyone looking in could see that they were engaged in a process when the other athletes went to the toilet so they were not waiting around. A couple of the kids had done high jump with me before; some of them were completely new to it, so the kids that had done it before kind of grasped it quickly and one of them just happened to be the one who didn’t go to the toilet. So I explained it, demonstrated it and he got it straight away; the other 3 did it, and when the group got back from the toilet he had already done it 3 – 4 times so that did prove to be an advantage, but I didn’t want to then spend another 5 minutes to explaining it to the kids again who had come back when the other kids were ready to move on. So I advanced the drill again, for the ones that had been there but made them do it again, because repetition is important so for them doing it one more time and the ones who got back from the toilet would only get to do it once through each. I made him demonstrate, I explained it first the said “Finn did it right, demonstrate it” because what I hoped would happen is that they would go off and think ‘He can do it I can do it’, because what I find with the younger group is that if I demonstrate something they’re very much in awe of me anyway, they’re always like “Wow, that’s amazing!” but they can’t relate to that, it’s not relevant to age or experience, so they put me on this pedestal, like “We can’t do that”. But when they see someone of their own age doing it, especially when we’re doing a multi-event system, so one week he won’t be particularly good at one event and everyone else will be better, so when they go and see him doing it, automatically they’ll go in their head “Well if he can do it, I can do it’ so it kind of helps that way.

Interviewer: Do you use this coaching technique regularly? And if so, why?

Interviewee: I only use it when I feel it’s really going to impact the majority of the group. Most of the time I demonstrate even though they’re like “Wow!”, although the stuff that I demonstrate will be relatively easy. For example if I do a pop up in long jump and they go “Wow!” By the end of the session they’ve all grasped it. The thing with the high jump, I would never get one of them to demonstrate the technique, always demonstrating just the run up, I will use it when it essential to use it, so in a situation where it’s safe for the athletes, where I know they’re going to get it right because there’s nothing worse getting a kid to demonstrate and a kid getting it wrong because then that’s defeated the whole entire purpose of demonstrating. I try and use it because I think it’s an important tool; because it also gives that kid who’s demonstrated a bit of confidence and I also sense in terms of competitiveness, everyone else in the group is then like “Ah, I want to demonstrate” so they try and improve their performance because they want to be the next person to demonstrate. However, I make sure that it’s within the realms of what they’re actually capable of achieving, so that when they’re demonstrating they are going to get it right so they don’t have the embarrassment of doing it wrong and me then having to go “That was wrong” and explain it and do it again.
Interviewer: Would you use this sort of technique with your older group?

Interviewee: I do use the technique with the older group quite a lot; there’s two reasons for this: sometimes it’s better again to relate to people your own age and a lot of the time with the older group is they all have spikes so say I’m doing blocks or something I’m not warmed up to demonstrate to the little ones, you don’t need to warm up. But to demonstrate to the older ones when they’re at that better level I have to pretty much nail it; if one of them can get it right then it’s better for me to get them to demonstrate it there. It also means, say if they’re doing block work or something, and they’re already in the position, I can push them into a different position, as it’s hard to see what position I’m in, because I can go “Ah can you see my back’s like this?” and they can just nod along and you can’t tell if they’re actually focused or anything, so that’s another reason. One of the main reasons I use it for my older group is some of the better girls are lazy. If you put them in the blocks against another girl and you know they’re going to win, so they can go at 70% and win. So I put them under pressure, like ‘Don’t get it wrong, because everyone is watching you’ and if they know, even though they’re all friends, because the girls themselves identify that these are the ones who are better, the better ones that are demonstrating are the lazy ones, they don’t want to be ridiculed by the other girls, because those girls are kind of searching for a reason to make her seem at less of a higher level than they are. Sometimes when I get other girls to demonstrate it will be the girls that aren’t as good, but that will give them confidence because every now and again in that sprints environment it’s very much a case of ‘We’re all going to run against each other’ and it’s competitive and they all want to be there now. So I get one of the less able ones to demonstrate because it gives them that sense of pride and confidence, as they will think, ‘Well, you might be faster than me but I’m getting recognition for doing this right.’

Interviewer: You mentioned you use mainly instructions with your younger group when introducing a technique of high jumping; why was this?

Interviewee: High jump is so complex and like I said, most of them have never done it before, and I don’t believe that with the little ones you should treat them like babies, with regards to as when you talk to them and approach situations. It has to be more simple, you have to get down to their level sometimes, have a bit of a laugh and joke with them and don’t be over enthusiastic about pointless stories, but when it comes to delivery of information to them, especially in relation to high jump, I don’t want them to spend the entire session just doing scissors or doing U bends I want to get them progressing, so when they get to the older age group they know what the flop is they’ve done all the fundamental stuff before and from an out lookers perspective they will go home and tell their parents ‘I did a flop today’, not many kids that age will be able to go home and say ‘I’ve done that’ so I think that’s one of the main reasons that I use mostly instructions, because all of them have never done it before and I want to get them to that level above what people actually give them credit for and think that’s all they’re capable of. So obviously, when I’m doing the flop you can’t just go straight from scissor into the flop, it’s a completely different technique. You go from landing on your feet to landing on your back, facing a completely different direction. What I had to do when I
gave them instructions is; ‘This is what we’re going to do, for your own health and safety we are
going to do it this way, this is the correct way to do it.’ So reinforcing key points. Then I’d
demonstrate it, and break it up, so the first time they did it they would scissor and they’d do the first
stage of the flop where they’d take off in a scissor position but land on their bum rather than on
their feet. Then you get them to progress so they land on their bum but facing back the way they
came, progress it onto the back. At that rate I could get them to progress at different rates without
it being really obvious, because when one of them has run round and jumped I can instruct them,
that ‘You have got this right, next time I want you to try and land in this position’ and it doesn’t look
like they’ve progressed any further, so that’s one of the reasons.

Interviewer: How do you cater for athletes with different learning styles so obviously you’ve got
audio, visual and kinesethic learners?

Interviewee: With the young ones I try and incorporate quite a lot into my session, so it will
always start with a given vocal of what I want; sometimes I give them a bit of guided discovery, but
most of the time I’m like “this is what I want you to achieve”, then I’ll do a demonstration or I’ll get
one of the kids to do a demonstration so they can see it visual, because some people are visual
learners. Then with regards to some kids, it’s all very well being visual but a lot of kids see
something and believe they’re doing it, so they’re over confident. So they see me do it and they
believe they’ve nailed it straight away, so I know touch is a sensitive subject in terms of coaching and
stuff, but I do believe the best way is to put them into the correct position and go “Can you feel
this?” so make them push their hips underneath themselves, tell them to tense their tummies, give
them activities and tense their bum so their hips are turned. When they’re doing hurdle walk overs
or high jump, a lot of the time I pull them or I’ll make them stand in the correct position and then I’ll
put their knee to 90 and their toe up. So I’m like “This is the position” so they get a sense of feeling
it as well, so I try and do it. If someone has grasped it I know that the visual or the instruction is
enough. If they’re not getting it I know there’s no point repeating it millions of times because the
chances are they’re not going to get it. That’s when I take a more hands-on approach and I’m like
‘Right they’re obviously learning through the touch and the feel of an activity, so I’m going to put
them into that position and they’re going to know that that feels right.’ So even when they start to
do it wrong they’re going to know that that feels wrong, there’s that sense of irritation within
themselves because they know they’re not doing it the way it should be, so sometimes that helps.

Interviewer: It must be difficult keeping the questions relative to an individual, how do you
manage this?

Interviewee: Like I said, within high jump, it was quite easy, because they’d have one go at a time,
so when it came to feedback I could give it to them separate from the group. The majority of the
time it is quite hard, and with the younger group the only progressions they tend to do, are all
progressions at the same time, and I tend to cater for the person at the top level, because if there is
a couple of kids who definitely can’t get up I tell them to stay on the last point, but everyone tries to aim for the top level. I don’t want to aim at the bottom level for kids because it means they are never progressing. So with the younger ones I don’t tend to progress them individually, I tend to progress collectively, which isn’t ideal but in the time frame I have its kind of the only way. Whereas with the older group I have so much more time; they all have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the beauty is they all know their own strengths and weaknesses. When I come onto doing running stuff, I go ‘Right, you’re running x; you need to work on your hips y; you need to work on your arms, z make sure you’re coming down on the ball of your foot and not the heel of your foot”. So they know their weaknesses, which make it easier to give feedback as well with the older group. But like I said they’ve got a real sense of belonging they all know what they want to achieve they all want to be at this level. Whereas with the babies, sometimes you’re babysitting, and you want to be seen to be progressing, and the amount of parents who generally don’t have a clue and they come down and they’re like “Why did my kid only do standing long jump in this session today, or scissor kick in high jump when everyone else moved on”, and it’s because they’re not ready for it, but they don’t understand themselves that their kid isn’t getting it right, and it’s too dangerous to advance some kids, in certain areas.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so how do you actually then tell the parent that? How do you do that effectively without making it?

**Interviewee:** Well this is the thing; this is why I actually make the kids progress all at the same time, and then if you’ve got a parent that turns round, (this has never happened), but if they turned round and said “Oh, this is too complex for my kids” and I know it’s happened in other groups, you can turn around and go, I don’t want to isolate this kid from the group and if she was unhappy about it I told her to tell me, a lot of the time you find that you have to give them the option, so “You can do this if you want” and if you emphasise that, you’ve always got a leg to stand on. So if a parent comes down you can say that it was their choice to try and utilise this, but that’s when it goes back to repetition. If you keep repeating the same drill over and over again, it starts to sink in. So if a parent comes down and complains, I know for a fact that the majority of the kids have pretty much hit the nail on the head with that certain exercise that’s before I progress them, and the ones that haven’t sometimes like parents - it hasn’t happened to me but it’s happened to a couple of people I have spoken to, and my views have always been tell them, tell the parents straight, it’s difficult but say ‘They’re not quite ready yet but I want to give them the chance’ so again they’re not isolated from the group.

**Interviewer:** In your older diary you use the phrase “I don’t want to crack all their confidence” can you explain to me a little more in depth:

**Interviewee:** Well, they’re doing mini hurdles this week; athletes’ securities and insecurities are good, but you’ve got to get the correct balance. You want to take them out of their comfort zone
and give them new things to explore because it will be beneficial to their learning but at the same
time they need to be secure with what they’re doing; they need to understand what they are doing,
so by spacing some of the hurdles out for some girls meant that was beneficial because they had
clacked it so they needed to move on; other girls hadn’t, so getting them to come in at full speed
would knock their confidence and would actually defeat any objective that I was trying to implement
throughout that session. So what I wanted to do was to give all the athletes a session that was
challenging for them but it would make them want to come back and they could see the real
importance of doing that individual exercise. What I didn’t want is for 10 kids to come, and the
following week only 5 turn up, because the other 5 were mind blown by the situation and miserable
the entire session because they were comparing themselves to everyone else, and I was just there as
a coach going ‘That’s rubbish, that’s rubbish; you need to improve this.’ Sometimes you need as a
coach to compromise and I wanted to maintain their confidence enough so they would give it a go
but at the same time dent it a little bit so take them outside of that security, or they’re never going
to improve. If everything they do is something within their comfort levels they’re never going to
improve at anything because they’re always going to be the same, they’re never going to get better.

*Interviewer:* If you were to apply this confidence issue, how would you put that across to your
younger kids?

*Interviewee:* With my younger ones, the main way to make sure they have confidence is to
almost make a theatrical play about everything but in a positive way. When they’re like “I can’t do
it” you’re like “Yeah you can; come on, I’ll do it with you!” so you make out that you can do it they
can do it; you relate to them, you give them the confidence and the belief to do it. With the older
group if they mess up you give them reinforcement feedback. So this was good, this was bad,
however with the younger ones if it was awful and they got to the end and you’re like “that’s
fantastic you’ve finished you’ve done it, now try this” or if they’ve done it really really badly and you
know they know they’ve done it wrong and they’re just sort of testing you, you can be like, “That
was rubbish, come on” but it’s the way you relate to them, the way you talk to them, changing your
tone so you’re cross, if they keep doing it wrong, and you know they can do better, that’s when you
can get a little bit more stern with what you say to them. However, if they are genuinely trying and
they’re just completely oblivious you want to give them that encouragement, because the more they
try the better they will get, and even if all they take from the high jump session, say the younger
ones, was just getting over the bar, even if they did in the completely wrong way but they didn’t
knock the bar, it’s a progression from the start of the session when they were just going into it, so
it’s something. Even if it’s just picking their feet up - so it’s just keep giving that confidence, so
constantly giving that reassurance, it’s the way you talk to them and the way you handle them when
they’re about to go and after they’ve gone, just making sure they’re praised a lot even when
realistically by most people’s standards it’s not a very good attempt, if they’re scared of it but
they’ve done it that’s a massive achievement.
**Interviewer:**  How have you learned to coach in this way, by changing the way you deal with confidence in the younger group, and with confidence in the older group?

**Interviewee:**  A lot of it is self-experience from myself; I know as a coach how I liked to be coached, and I think that really reflects in the way in which you coach yourself. There are certain things which my coach doesn’t do to me that upsets me, and there are certain things that he does do that make me feel really happy and confident and settled in the group and I try and put that across when I coach. I don’t believe in being negative, unless they need it, some kids do need to be ‘That was rubbish, get a grip I’m not going to waste my time trying to coach you if you’re not going to give the effort back’. The majority of the kids, they’re constantly looking for your approval, and I’m like ‘Well, don’t be mean to them when they are trying their hardest’. So I’ve learned from, basically previous experience and how if I didn’t like something as an athlete or if I liked something as a coach how I can implement that in my own session and to make sure that that session is enjoyable for them, because then they will give more back to me.

**Interviewer:**  Okay, and the final question, like in previous weeks is, is there anything you’d change in terms of interview structure or layout of the questions?

**Interviewee:**  No, I think this week’s pretty much, exactly what you’d need, or I feel like I needed to answer the questions.

**Interviewer:**  Brilliant; well thanks for this week.

*Interview ends at 21 minutes and 47 second*