Sports Coaching Students’ Learning and Identity Development:

A Longitudinal Study

By

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A thesis submitted to, and under the auspices of, Cardiff Metropolitan University for the degree of PhD (Sports Coaching).

December 2016
DECLARATIONS

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Despite the rise in sports coaching programmes, limited attention has been given to understanding the learning experienced on them and their contribution to students’ identity development. In this context, little evidence exists about how students are influenced by such programmes; that is, what impact they have on the process of socially and dynamically constructed identities (Wenger, 2010). The aim of this study is subsequently twofold. Firstly, to explore students’ perceptions and experiences of the sports coaching undergraduate degree enrolled upon; and secondly, to examine how these experiences shaped students’ identities over the length of the given three-year course.

Participants comprised twelve BSc sports coaching undergraduate students from Cardiff Metropolitan University who were ‘followed’ through their three-year degree course. Adopting a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, the students were tracked through reflective logs, video diaries and focus group interviews. Data were analysed using Charmaz’s (2006) process of inductive analysis. The results showed a move from a surface and strategic approach to learning to better acceptance of the contested nature of coaching. This was reflected in the movement from a dualistic to a relativistic view of knowledge. In this context, ‘caring’ was one of the most influential aspects associated with the role of the teaching staff throughout the three years of the course. Finally, the findings also suggested that the students simultaneously occupied a role and belonged to a group, making role identities and social identities always relevant in explaining action (Stets and Burke, 2000). The findings suggest the need to encourage student-coaches to seek an increased acceptance of uncertainty and a better understanding of who they are early in their professional development. Similarly, the close link between assessment and learning, invites coach educators to provide supportive and caring environments, including assessments that are in line with the ambiguous and contested nature of the work.
PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles:


Book Chapters:


Conference presentations


Invited presentations


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to demonstrate my deepest gratitude for the help and support provided by the following persons:

Firstly, I’d like to thank the participants in this study, who dedicated their time to engage with the study for the duration of their three year degree. Your commitment has been exemplary and much appreciated!

To my supervisor, Professor Robyn Jones, I show my sincere gratitude for the time spent supporting me throughout this study. I have learned great lessons from you, which contributed immensely to my professional and personal development. “Diolch yn fawr!”

To my co-supervisor, Dr. Gwilym Davies, for listening to me in the moments of uncertainty and for the invaluable feedback provided!

To Dan, my husband, for his support and understanding without which I would not have been able to complete this PhD. I couldn’t have asked for a better husband and friend!

To my family and friends, who constantly reminded me of the PhD by asking ‘are you finished yet’? Thanks for your understanding and constant reminders!

To my colleagues who through discussions allowed me to make better sense of my study and develop my critical thinking.

Finally, I thank God for allowing for such a great experience! I am extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to complete this PhD.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Sports Coaching: Increased attention through research and academic programmes

The academic area of sports coaching has received increased investigative attention in recent years, with research being undertaken from a number of different perspectives. These include pedagogy (Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2012; Jones and Turner, 2006), psychology (Fletcher and Scott, 2010) and, perhaps most prominently, sociology (Jones, Potrac, Cushion and Ronglan, 2011). In turn, the sociological theories utilised have engaged with such aspects as power (Jones, Glintmeyer and McKenzie, 2005; Purdy, Potrac and Jones, 2008), interaction, and respect (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Potrac, Jones and Armour, 2002), in an attempt to explore the enabling and/or constraining factors inherent within coaches’ practices.

This increasing interest in coaching coincides with a rise in the number of sports coaching degree programmes offered at undergraduate and postgraduate level worldwide (Bush, 2008). The most recent example of this popularity was demonstrated in a study by Bush (2008), where British Universities offered 217 specific coaching-related undergraduate programmes, as part of the 765 courses within the more general sport science field (which invariably contain varying elements of sports coaching). Similarly, 11 higher education institutions were scheduled to offer post-graduate sports coaching courses in 2009 within a total of 59 sport-related ones (Bush, 2008).

Despite such a rise in sports coaching educational programmes, limited attention has been
given to understanding the learning experienced on them and their related contribution to students’ identity development. This is somewhat in contrast to investigations of national governing body professional preparation programmes (e.g., Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac, 2013; Piggott, 2012). Such latter evaluations have generally concluded that coaches learn more from informal and non-formal sources as opposed to any official curricula (Cushion et al., 2010). “No doubt useful in one sense, a problem with this body of research is that it has generally ignored coaches’ intellectual, or epistemological development; that is, how coaches’ perception of knowledge construction, learning, and sense of self alter over time as a consequence of their learning experiences” (De Martin Silva et al., 2015, p.669). “This relates to better understanding the contested relationship between learner, subject matter, and knowledge (in terms of what is understood…and why)” (De Martin Silva et al., 2015, p. 670).

Returning then to academic coaching programmes, although end-of-course student feedback and external examiner reflections somewhat assess the quality of the courses on offer, little evidence exists about how student-coaches are influenced by such courses; that is, what impact they have on the process of socially and dynamically constructed (coaching) identities (Wenger, 2010). For instance, there is little information on how students’ ways of knowing develop including how they learn what they learn, in addition to where and why they learn it. Similarly, no data exist on how and why student-coaches’ perceptions and identities evolve and change over time as a result of the sports coaching degree programmes they experience.

1.1.2 The relationship between learning and identity

In some instances, learning can be seen as reproduction; a not altogether unreasonable conceptualization when facts need to be learned. What universities usually pride themselves
on, however, is a *transformation* by learners of the knowledge presented to them. According to Entwistle (2000), this knowledge transformation depends, in part, on the nature of the concepts used within the teaching which have to resonate with everyday experience and be couched in accessible language, preferably with metaphorical associations. They also need to provoke critical reflection on practice; in short, they should have *pedagogical fertility* (Entwistle, 1994). This transformative learning also relates to the ability of students to make personal sense of the information presented. It is an aspiration which reflects Schön’s (1987, p. 25) belief that simply learning a theory (and even applying it to practice) is insufficient. Rather, what is required is for a quality of reflection and interpretation which enables practitioners to construct ‘an integrated knowledge-in-action’. In this sense, learning occurs as a dimension of social practice where “activities, tasks functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.53). The learner thus, has to be active in making sense of the material, a process which very often changes him or her as a person. This change in identity, in turn, holds the potential to mould subsequent learning. This is particularly related to what Marton and Säljö (1997) termed students’ intentions, which have the ability to profoundly affect the depth of learning experienced. Identity in this context, defined as the stories we tell about ourselves (Gee, 2001), is taken as being ‘man-made’, and as constantly created and re-created in interactions with others. In this way, identity provides a link between learning and its socio-cultural context (Sfard and Prusak, 2005). Identities, however, are not only shaped but also shaping; as they also provide directions, aspirations, and projected images of ourselves that guide our forward developmental trajectory (Wenger, 2010).

### 1.2 Aims and objectives

The general purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, to explore students’ perceptions of
the learning experienced on a sports coaching under-graduate degree course; and secondly, to examine how these experiences shaped the students’ identities over the length of the given three-year course. This general aim was addressed through five mutually informing detailed objectives;

1. How and why did the sports coaching students think about learning and carry out their studying in the ways they did?
2. How much did the students value the role of theory in informing coaching practice and development, and why?
3. To what extent did the knowledge and experiences gained on the degree programme contribute towards the students’ intellectual development?
4. How did the students’ identities change during the course? Why? How stable were they?; and finally,
5. What role (if any) did the teaching staff play in these developments? Why were they so perceived?

1.3 Rationale

1.3.1 Theoretical rationale

The principal significance of the project is three-fold. Firstly, that research on student learning in its broadest sense has much to offer assessment of quality pedagogy (Entwistle, 2000). This is not only in terms of what we teach students, but also how and why. Hence, such work not only serves to keep open fundamental discussions about the purpose of coach education and what should under-graduate students know as a consequence of it, but also of how best to ground such students’ beliefs and ways of knowing in considerations of pedagogy, complexity and social sensitivity. Making an assessment of this intended depth and nuance then, holds the potential to considerably improve the quality of student (coach)
learning (De Martin Silva et al., 2015; Entwistle, 1995). Similarly, by accepting that knowledge is not a given body or distinct curriculum, but a living landscape of experiences that contribute in various ways to the field of inquiry, real-life boundaries and opportunities for learning can be better articulated (Wenger, 2010). As recently articulated by Stoszkowski and Collins (2014), this is particularly in terms of exposing students to epistemological considerations related to “the ‘why’ and ‘what for’ of their own beliefs and decision making” (p. 781); something that has particular relevance to sports coaching, taking into account the dearth of such knowledge and engagement as discussed earlier.

Secondly, the project can also be seen as a response to McEwen’s (1996) still largely unanswered call for more temporal research into student identity development, and of the importance of considering various developmental processes as related to each individual’s social identity over time. This relates to paying more attention to the practices, people, places, regimes of competence, communities and boundaries that serve as the constitutive texture of identity formation and become part of who we are (Wenger, 2010). In doing so, we can attempt to better capture the complexity of the student identity development process (Jones and McEwen, 2000). Similarly, the value of the paper also lies in responding to Cushion et al.’s (2010) call for increased longitudinal research into coach development; to better capture the nuance of on-going learning. This is not only “in terms of what neophyte coaches say at a particular point in time, but how they evolve their perceptions of development over a period encompassing a variety of learning experiences” (De Martin Silva et al., 2015, p. 672).

Finally, the project is related to the recent call by Jones (and colleagues) to focus less on what and how to coach, and more so on ‘who is coaching’. Here, the construction of an identity involves a reciprocal relationship between self, others and society (Stets and Burke, 2003). In this respect individuals are considered to affect society through their actions, while
society provides social structure and roles that influence the day to day interactions of individuals (Stets and Burke, 2003). This reciprocal and symbiotic learning landscape deserves further attention to better understand how professional identities are formed (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). In this respect, the work marks an effort to put the human element back into this most human of jobs (Connell, 1985), reinforcing the view of coaching as a socio-pedagogical, collaborative and relational practice (Jones, 2007). Such a perspective locates coaching within an idiosyncratic, constructivist realm and an interpretive epistemology, which demands a considerable investment of self-in-role and personal caring from practitioners (Jones et al., 2004; Jones, 2009).

1.3.2 Personal rationale

The interest in exploring sports coaching students’ learning and identity development originated from the different roles I personally experienced within the sports coaching environment; namely as a student, a player, a researcher, a lecturer and a coach. As a student, coaching has been presented to me from a number of different perspectives. For example, at the start of my undergraduate experience, I would define coaching as a series of scientific approaches to training. I was led to believe that content covered in modules related to physiology and psychology was more relevant than that from sociology and pedagogy. I was ‘guided’ to see coaching as a rationalistic process, where everything could and should be measured, and where explanations for multifaceted issues could be presented as linear models.

This view was challenged when I undertook a Masters in the area. The programme was heavily focused on sociology, which brought some intriguing and puzzling ideas. Seeing coaching from and through such a different lens was a striking moment that raised many questions regarding my past experiences. These questions seemed to go from ‘what’ and
‘how’ I should coach to ‘Why am I coaching this way?’ and ‘Who am I in this process?’
This is not to say that I did not value the earlier gained scientific-orientated knowledge. Rather, that it acted as a ‘wake-up’ call that there was much more to coaching than I was aware of. Similarly, as a player, I started to pay more attention to the power relationships I was experiencing; I could see myself as a ‘docile body’ ready to live under the gaze of others and to comply. As a researcher then, I began to realise there were different ways to ‘do’ research, research that had real personal meaning to me.

My experiences as a lecturer, and the opportunity to participate in sports coaching curriculum development, also raised some questions regarding what students learn, what they should learn, and how I taught and should teach them. More importantly, I became increasingly interested in how students made sense of their learning experiences, and how these experiences contributed to their developing coaching identities.

Having played football/futsal and have been involved in coaching/teaching for over 15 years provided me with the opportunity to work with various coaches (and other players of course). The behaviours expressed by these coaches were the benchmarks for players’ judgements regarding how ‘bad’ or how ‘good’ each coach was. Interestingly, there were situations where a ‘respected’ coach would be safe or not criticised after delivering a pretty poor session (or any session for that matter), whereas a ‘not liked’ coach would certainly receive criticism even after a session that could be considered appropriate from technical, tactical and physical aspects. While the coaches’ tactical and technical knowledge were likely to influence players’ reactions, their ‘social’ skills were dictating their long-term likability. I soon came to realise then, that the person of the coach plays a crucial role in providing satisfaction, which can result in enhanced performance. Therefore, exploring the learning experiences of student-coaches and how such experiences impact on their identity negotiation appeared an important step in trying to understand not only who these students
become as coaches, but also how the ‘missed turns’ encountered influenced their search and willingness to arrive at respective destinations. It was from this personal platform that I began the journey of this thesis.

1.4 Overview of the study

This thesis is divided into five chapters. This first chapter presents the background, rationale, together with the aims and objectives of the study. Chapter Two comprises the literature review, where relevant research concerning learning and identity is discussed. In particular, this is divided into two main sections. Within the first part, the literature on coach learning is analysed with similar themes being identified (Lyle, 2014). These key themes are represented by the sub-headings linked to the metaphors of ‘acquisition’, ‘participation’ and ‘transformation’. This first section also explored the research designs commonly used within coach learning research, discussing the challenges and recommendations for developing future work. The second part of this review focuses on exploring theories and concepts that have been central to studies regarding identity development. Also included within the review is an exploration of the current landscape of research on coach identity. In Chapter Three, the methodology is presented. Following a discussion of the research paradigm within which the study is housed, this includes information on the study’s participants, the research design, the precise methods used (focus groups, reflective logs and video diaries) as well as the means of data analysis undertaken, in addition to issues related to ‘reflexivity’ ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘ethical procedures’.

Chapter Four includes the presentation and discussion of findings. These are presented in text and quote format and discussed using relevant literature. Here, four main themes are presented from the data; namely, (1) ‘Learning experiences’; (2) ‘Intellectual development’; (3) ‘Perceived role of the teaching staff’ and (4) ‘Identity development’.
In Chapter Five a general conclusion draws together the main points made in relation to the project’s intentions. Additionally, the implications of the study as well as recommendations for further research are discussed. Finally, a reflective personal account is presented in an attempt to demonstrate the impact of this PhD study upon my personal learning and identity development.
CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to provide an in-depth exploration of the literature on coach learning and identity, thus providing a “clear indication of current progress, limitations and future directions of the research stream” (Byrne, Keary and Lawton, 2012, p. 239). Here, being guided by the aim to identify and evaluate significant research in the area of coach learning and identity, the five step process suggested by Creswell (2002) was adopted. The process included “identifying terms to typically use in [the] literature search; locating literature; reading and checking the relevance of the literature; organizing the literature…selected; and writing a literature review” (p. 86). These steps were considered alongside Boote and Beile’s (2005) concepts of ‘coverage’, ‘synthesis’, ‘methodology’, ‘significance’ and ‘rhetoric’ when developing the review.

‘Coverage’ refers to the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of literature, an aspect related to the first three steps suggested by Creswell (2002). In the current PhD study, an exhaustive search was performed using online databases (e.g., the Cardiff Met online search engine; library catalogue), and peer reviewed journals (e.g., Sport Education and Society; Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy; Teaching in Higher Education; Sports Coaching Review; Journal of Transformative Education). Here, the use of key words as related to the aims of the study (e.g., coach education, coach learning, learning, identity, professional identity) guided the initial search. This was followed by decisions taken regarding the suitability and quality of the materials found. Particular attention here was drawn to sources that were recent (within the last 10 years) and relevant to the topic under investigation. Additionally, sources considered appropriate for the conceptual understanding (Lyle, 2014) of the field under investigation were also included independently of their year of publication. The selected sources were useful in drawing attention to further sources that were analysed in terms of
The second aspect included by Boote and Beile (2005), ‘synthesis’, consisted of summarising, analysing and synthesizing the literature selected (linked to the fourth and fifth aspects suggested by Creswell [2002]). Here, a key aspect was to discuss potential limitations and strengths associated with the studies under investigation in order to “make a genuine contribution to the state of knowledge in the field” (Boote and Beile, 2005, p. 7). In this respect, ‘synthesis’ was interlinked with the next aspect, ‘methodology’, which involved analysing advantages and disadvantages of methodological procedures adopted within studies, their potential effect on the findings, as well as future suggestions. The fourth aspect, ‘significance’, related to explaining the significance of prior research to the topic. Finally, ‘rhetoric’ involved writing the literature review within a coherent and clear structure (Boote and Beile, 2005).

This chapter is structured into two main sections. Within the first part, the literature on coach learning is analysed with similar themes being identified (Lyle, 2014). These key themes are represented by the sub-headings linked to the metaphors of ‘acquisition’, ‘participation’ and ‘transformation’. These metaphors are commonly referred to in research to demonstrate that learning is a troublesome and transformative process that goes beyond knowledge accumulation by requiring learners to collaborate and negotiate meanings (e.g., Meyer and Land, 2005; Erichsen, 2011; Sfard, 1998, amongst others). The selection of these metaphors, however, did not neglect other terms used in the learning literature (e.g., enlightenment), which were explored within appropriate subsections. Neither did it neglect key learning perspectives/theories discussed in coach learning studies (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016; Cushion et al., 2010). The use of such a thematic approach allowed for an initial organisation of the studies (Cushion et al., 2010). Here, some of the literature selected fell into more than one category (Lyle, 2014). In this case, the specific source(s) was analysed under different
sub-headings with a different focus in mind to avoid unnecessary repetition. This first section also explored the research designs commonly used within coach learning research, discussing the challenges and recommendations for developing future work.

The second part of this review focuses on exploring theories and concepts that have been central to studies regarding identity development. As with the review on coach learning, key themes were identified and explored. However, a more general, wider approach was taken here in comparison to the first part of the chapter. This was mainly due to the dearth of research that explores coach identities. Hence, the decided upon themes originate mainly from studies that investigated identity theories and concepts within disciplines other than sports coaching. These themes informed the initial part of the review on identity and were followed by an exploration of the current landscape of research on coach identity.

The separation of literature into two key sections addressing learning and identity was done to facilitate the structure of the chapter. However, as argued by Wenger (1998) “[b]ecause learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity” (p. 215). In this respect, there was a conscious effort not to lose the connection between learning and identity (Jarvis, 2009; Erichsen, 2011) throughout the chapter.

2.2 Coach learning

Coach learning has been the focus of much recent literature (e.g., Stodter and Cushion, 2014; Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2012; Stoszkowski and Collins, 2014; Piggott, 2012; Cushion et al., 2010). Despite such an increasing focus on coach learning research, the quality and scope of the studies are ‘highly variable’ (Cushion et al., 2010). Additionally, a clear definition of coaching is yet to be agreed (Côté, Young, North and Duffy, 2007; Taylor and Garrat, 2008). In this context, Jones (2006) argued that the field is under-theorised and lacks consideration
of the multifaceted context in which coaches operate. This critique originates from a traditional view of coaching as a rationalistic process (Jones and Wallace, 2005) where coaches are viewed as mere knowledge appliers. As a consequence, technical knowledge has been overly emphasised whilst pedagogical understanding has often been neglected (Taylor and Garrat, 2008). In addition, coaches have been led to adopt a product-orientated discourse that focuses on compliance with scientific models, rather than critical understanding of practice holding primacy (Day, 2012). An inherent limitation of such an approach is that it simplifies an intricate process (i.e., coaching) into a ‘clean’ and sequential structure. Consequently, coaches have often been seen as experts in replicating knowledge but less able to function well in an ever changing environment (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009).

Recent debates, however, have questioned this rationalistic approach to coaching, suggesting that coaching should be viewed as an educational and social endeavour (Jones and colleagues). Here, coaching is located within a constructivist approach (Vygotsky, 1978), where learning refers to “the process of being in the world” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 6). As suggested by Jarvis, “[a]t the heart of all learning is not merely what is learned, but what [or who] the learner is becoming (learning) as a result of doing and thinking – and feeling” (p. 6). Despite such recognition, coach education courses continue to be criticised for being de-contextualised, focussing on techno-rational ‘indoctrination’ (Rynne and Mallett, 2014; Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones, 2010; Piggott, 2012). It becomes clear then, that despite efforts to develop critical thinkers, further evidence is needed to show the impact of different types of learning environments on coach learning and development (Cushion et al., 2010; Stoszkowski and Collins, 2014).

### 2.2.1 Learning as acquisition and coaching knowledge

Acquisition can be seen as the accumulation of knowledge, through which gradual
refinement can result in richer cognitive structures (Sfard, 1998). Despite a somewhat straightforward definition, acquisition as a gradual accumulation of [coaching] knowledge is not as simple as the name suggests. Amongst the many challenges experienced in the sports coaching field are the lack of clear messages regarding what coaches should know to be able to exercise their profession effectively (Cushion, Armour and Jones, 2003). In this context, Taylor and Garratt (2008) argued that most professional occupations have a distinct and specialised body of knowledge. However, there needs to be a clear definition and understanding of the theoretical background that underpins coach education, whilst recognising the complexities inherent to coaching (Jones and Wallace, 2005). Subsequently, coach learning and coaching knowledge have been topics of recent debate in coaching research (e.g., Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, 2013; Townsend and Cushion, 2015; Piggott, 2012; Denison, 2010).

The view of coaching as a contextual and complex activity (Jones, 2006; Cushion, Armour and Jones, 2003) has led many to question the content to be covered in coach education courses (e.g., Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, 2013; Chesterfield et al., 2010). Additionally, the view of coaching as a socio-pedagogical endeavour (Jones, 2006; Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009) has resulted in theories of teaching and learning (e.g., Mosston and Ashworth teaching styles; learning theories) and sociology (e.g., French and Raven’s bases of power; Foucault’s concept of relationship of power) to be increasingly placed at the heart of coach education (e.g., Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2010). Despite this, the lack of debate regarding what should constitute a sports coaching curriculum has become a concern for the academic area (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009). The studies that follow give examples of those concerns by exploring coaches’ perceptions of their experiences in coach education courses, and, more specifically, their views on the acquisition of coaching knowledge.

Work by Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) gathered coaches’ perceptions and
recommendations about how to better develop coach education. Findings revealed that one of the key aspects desired by the coaches was knowledge ‘acquisition’, arguing that the courses needed better tailoring to their needs. In this respect, the delivery of a standard curriculum was criticised by the coaches, who wanted content that was “pertinent for their ongoing personal development” (p. 209). Here, the main criticism made by the coaches was that they were often ‘learning’ content they already knew.

In contrast, Townsend and Cushion’s (2015) findings showed how the acquisition of ‘new’ knowledge was resisted by coaches. Indeed, findings from the interviews held with 11 elite cricket coaches showed that they were resistant to knowledge that “challenged deeply held, traditional and self-referenced ‘successful’ approaches” (p. 10). Drawing on a Bourdieusian framework, the authors found that the coaches were shaped by the culture of cricket; that is, “the continuous reinforcement of similar experiences” (habitus) which resulted in “naturally developed legitimate knowledge” (p. 7-8). This taken for granted, ‘right’ way of coaching, was then perpetuated as legitimate coaching (Townsend and Cushion, 2015), which resulted in the marginalisation of ‘new’ ways suggested on the coaching course.

While the previous two studies discussed above (i.e., Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, 2013; Townsend and Cushion, 2015) provide somewhat contradictory information with regards to coaches’ perceptions of what constitutes relevant knowledge, caution needs to be exercised before applying these results as a way to progress coach learning understanding. In this respect, one should not assume that the issue lies exclusively with the acquisition of ‘new’ knowledge. As shown by Townsend and Cushion (2015), the main reason for the coaches’ resistance was the ‘contradicting’ nature of the new knowledge presented to them. This contradiction challenged previously held assumptions and ways of thinking, and this was resisted by the coaches as it did not fit previous positionings (see section 2.2.5 for a more in-depth discussion of the topic). Indeed, the coaches in Nelson et al. (2013) and in Townsend
and Cushion’s (2015) study made recommendations that can be seen as pragmatic in the sense that they “desired personally relevant and practically usable content delivered through pedagogical approaches that encourage learners to actively participate in the course” (Nelson et al., 2013, p.13). This is also in keeping with the findings from Stodter and Cushion (2014) and Jones and Allison’s (2014) studies, discussed later in this chapter.

While, on the one hand, the coaches in Townsend and Cushion’s (2015) study wished for knowledge that was accepted within their coaching circle, the coaches in Piggott’s (2012) work criticised the idea of closed systems as a way coaches should progress. The main difference here was that Townsend and Cushion’s (2015) participants welcomed the perpetuation of a view within their ‘chosen’ ‘closed system’, whereas the coaches in Piggott’s (2012) study were resistant to a ‘closed system’ that was imposed by the structure, in this case the National Governing Bodies (NGBs). Specifically, Piggott (2012) interviewed 12 coaches (from a range of sports) regarding their experiences of formal coach education courses delivered by NGBs. 10 out of the 16 courses experienced by the coaches were classified as ‘closed circles’; in other words, "social system[s] in which actors pursue knowledge and behave in accordance with that knowledge" (p. 539). According to Piggott (2012) ‘closed circles’ invite ‘common sense’ knowledge to be reproduced based on what is accepted as ‘true’ and ‘right’ within that circle. It is a view of learning as taking place via transmission and reproduction (i.e., *the acquisition metaphor*). Here, Piggott (2012) referred to the *acquisition* of knowledge that was strictly linked to attainment of levels, or, “the route to enlightenment” (p. 547).

Similar findings were reported by Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones (2010) who interviewed six coaches regarding the content knowledge and assessment experienced on a Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) ‘A’ Licence course in the UK. Here, in keeping with the work of Goffman (1959), the authors discussed how the coaches engaged in
‘impression management’; i.e., “strategies to portray the qualities desired to pass the course” (p. 310). Once the assessment was completed, the coaches reverted to their preferred and trusted methods of coaching. In this respect, the rationalistic approach, where coaches are expected to receive and apply course-delivered knowledge was perceived by the coaches as a ‘driving test’. In other words, the process was heavily informed by passing the assessment, with expected punishment for those who showed signs of ‘thinking outside of the box’ rather than following the ‘course script’.

According to the foundational work of Skinner, the punishment of undesired practices and the rewarding of desired practices serve to control future behaviour. In this respect, Skinner’s operant conditioning theory focussed on two key aspects, reinforcement and punishment (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016). Reinforcement can be divided into two parts; positive reinforcement, or “receiving something that increases behaviour”, and negative reinforcement, “removing or avoiding a stimulus to increase behaviour” (Eggen and Kauchak, 2004, p. 201). Punishment, on the other hand, refers to removing something that an individual values (removal punishment), or presenting an individual with a consequence to decrease undesirable behaviour (presentation punishment) (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016). This theory can be applied to the notion of acquisition of coaching knowledge as highlighted in the studies previously discussed. For example, in Townsend and Cushion’s (2015) study, the reinforcement of a cricket culture rewarded knowledge that was contained within the environment, and, as a result, caused resistance against other ways of knowing. Additionally, Piggott (2012) and Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones’s (2010) studies showed how coaches complied with specific coaching ‘scripts’ in exchange for the reward of passing the test (i.e., the successful completion of the assessment). These examples highlight how rewards and punishments are contextually specific (Schunk, 2004), and have the intention to control behaviour; both key aspects of Skinner’s theory.
Learning as ‘acquisition’ is affected by relationships of power (Foucault, 1978) and, subsequently, affects the discourses experienced by coaches (Denison and Scott-Thomas, 2011). In this context, power is “produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another” (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Such a Foucauldian view of power is taken as something in constant flux, rather than being a stable personal possession (Markula and Pringle, 2006). The term discourse is used by Foucault “in reference to social practices that regulate the production and circulation of statements and perceptions of reality” (Markula and Pringle 2006, p. 105). Here, the concern is that some discourses can become a tool of dominance through discipline (Denison, 2007).

An example of the above was seen in Denison’s (2007) study, where the author discussed his experience as a cross-country coach. Amongst the points raised, was the coach’s position as the one who ‘possessed’ the knowledge to be ‘acquired’ by the athlete. Later reflection on such practice revealed how it could be perceived as a strategy to produce docile bodies; in other words, athletes who conformed to dominant discourses and were “well-disciplined, economically efficient, and obedient” (Denison, 2007, p. 375). Such athlete compliance resulted in an episode of apathy and discomfort when Brian, the athlete, did not respond to the coach’s command within a poor racing performance. This marked a significant moment in the coach’s review of his role and recognition that coaches can often become ‘agents of normalization’. Here, Denison (2007) argued that coaches need to examine their taken for granted knowledge to better understand their practices. He further stated that it was essential that coaches problematise discourses, and not just accept them as a tool of dominance (O’Leary 2002). In agreement, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) stated that coaches need to “reflect upon and know explicitly what they are doing, why they are doing it and what the consequences are of what it is they are doing” (p. 33).
Recent research has highlighted how the professionalisation of sports coaching can lead to a more institutionalised view of coaching knowledge (Taylor and Garrat, 2008). Here, coaches are likely to be expected to act in a certain way in order to gain accreditation (Taylor and Garrat, 2010), something already somewhat discussed (e.g., Chesterfield et al., 2010; Piggott, 2012). This was a concern recently shared by Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2016) who argued that the discourse(s) of coaching “should go well beyond limited categorization and prescription of practice” (p. 64). Here, one of the potential concerns lies in the power relationships experienced within such environments. For example, if authorities (e.g., National Governing Bodies; Universities) are seen as the holders of ‘truth’, coaches are likely to reproduce dominant discourses that perpetuate social practice seen as ‘accepted’ and ‘desired’. Doing so, naturally limits their (i.e., coaches’) critical capability and conceptual understanding (Chesterfield et al., 2010). This resonates with view that coach learning has traditionally been perceived as the accumulation of knowledge (i.e., acquisition) with coaches very often seen as empty vessels waiting to be filled (Cushion et al., 2003). As a consequence, an institutionalized view of coaching holds the potential for dominant discourses to normalise individuals to act in a certain way, and, as a consequence, marginalise other ways of knowing (Denison, 2007; Denison, 2010). Therefore, if coaches are exclusively given knowledge (acquisition metaphor), they may be led to believe that ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ ways of coaching exist, resulting in an over rationalistic view of practice (as often encountered in coaching guides) (Jones and Wallace, 2005). Another key issue to originate from this rationalistic approach is the recommendation(s) for ‘good’ practice before adequate exploration of the complex and fluid nature of that practice (Jones and Wallace, 2005). However, it is important to highlight that discourses are enabling as well as restrictive structures. This was a point raised by Penney and Evans (2005) who argued that discourses are enabling in the sense that they allow individuals to explore language and meaning and “the ‘why’ of the inclusions and exclusions” (p. 29). This exploration is possible when
individuals focus on knowledge-for-understanding (Wallace and Poulson, 2003) and requires practitioners’ (coaches’) flexible consideration of and adaptation to constraints, which also involves participation (Jones and Wallace, 2005).

2.2.3 Participation, social learning and communities of practice

Although a significant degree of coach learning is affected by the content exposed to, results from previous studies show that a sole focus on such an aspect fails to recognise the social environment in which knowledge is learned and applied (e.g., Hodkinson, Biesta and James, 2008). Hodkinson et al. (2008) identified four problematic limitations related to the learning literature: “Individual learning is not always understood as embodied and social”, “Individual learning is often decontextualised”, “Learning theory often fails to fully incorporate wider social and institutional structures”, and “Learning theory often fails to fully incorporate the significance of power” (pp.31-32). The authors further discussed three common dualist views of learning, “the splitting of mind and body, the division between the individual and the social, and the split between structure and agency” (p. 32). Here, the authors claimed that the scales used to study learning (e.g., the individual; a local site) provide different concepts in relation to it. For example, the authors mentioned that when focusing on individuals, researchers tend to “overlook the social”, whereas if the focus is on social sites, the tendency is to focus on that thus overlooking individual agency. This echoes the words of Sfard (1998), who warns of the danger of considering only one metaphor for learning. Here, she argued that “theoretical exclusivity and didactic single-mindedness can be trusted to make even the best of educational ideas fail” (p. 11). Without such consideration, quite simply, coaching courses could be perceived as largely irrelevant (Piggott, 2012; Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, 2013). Such a conclusion is also in keeping with the work of Werthner and Trudel (2006), who argued that “learning can take place in many different ways with many diverse individuals or groups and is seen as more than just an
accumulation of knowledge” (p. 201).

In keeping with the work of Sfard (1998), the learning metaphors of ‘acquisition’ and ‘participation’ have been used in conjunction to inform coach education research (e.g., Mesquita et al., 2014). In their study, Mesquita et al. (2014) interviewed six Portuguese top-level coaches from a range of sports to explore their perceptions of different learning sources in coach development. Findings revealed that interactions with other coaches, collaborating with experts, and mentoring opportunities were cited as being key in and for development. These aspects, relate to the participation metaphor, and refer to “becoming a member of a certain community” (Sfard, 1998, p.6) where learning represents “a way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to know about it” (Hanks, 1991, p.24). In this socio-constructivist approach to learning, knowledge is considered to be co-constructed through interaction and collaboration. A principal exponent of such a view was the educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky; and it is to a brief examination of his work that I now turn.

According to Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of social development, learning is a process that requires active engagement from individuals who collaborate in the co-construction of knowledge. Therefore, Vygotsky rejected the idea that individuals learn by acquiring information and being mere recipients (Harris, 2010). One of the key features of Vygotsky’s theory relates to a zone of proximal development; that is, “[t]he distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Here, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009) refer to the metaphor of a staircase, where the zone of proximal development is described as the “vertical distance to the next stair” (p. 81). Cassidy et al. (2009) further argue that assistance from more capable others can allow individuals to internalise the resources needed to perform a certain skill, leading to less assistance needed and,
consequently, the ability to perform the skill without assistance. When this happens, a new zone of proximal development is reached or embarked upon, and the process is repeated at a higher level of development (Cassidy et al., 2009).

A second concept, scaffolding, firstly introduced by Wood et al. (1976) and commonly associated with Vygotsky’s work (Jones and Thomas, 2015; Wass, Harland and Mercer, 2011) also refers to the act of assisting others so that they can eventually complete tasks independently (Wass and Golding, 2014). In the words of Wass and Golding (2014), there are “two conditions required for scaffolding: (1) students are assisted to do something they could not do on their own; and (2) this assistance enables them eventually to learn to complete the task independently” (p. 677). Here, the authors refer to the need to encourage students to identify and solve problems rather than structuring the activity in such a simplistic way that the problems are removed (Wass and Golding, 2014).

A third concept introduced by Vygotsky was that of mediated action; something recently discussed by Jones, Edwards and Viotto-Filho (2016). Here, Jones et al (2016) built on current frameworks to analyse sports coaching from an activity theory lens. Borrowing from Kuutti (1996), the authors defined activity theory as “a philosophical and cross-disciplinary framework that can be used to study forms of human practice where both individual and social processes are interlinked” (p. 203). They further suggested “that humans are not passive participants but operate within a shared social environment where interactions instigate meaning-making processes enabling them to engage in that shared activity” (p. 203).

Learning as a collaborative process (*participation metaphor*) has also been alluded to in other recent coaching studies (e.g., Jones and Turner, 2006; Santos, Jones and Mesquita, 2013; Harris, 2010; Jones and Allison, 2014; Stoszowski and Collins, 2014). For example,
In an attempt to explore the use of problem based learning (PBL) as a means to educate student-coaches about the nature of their work, Jones and Turner (2006) analysed the use of ill-structured scenarios. The approach used “realistic, problematic scenarios and subtle tutor questioning, to challenge and instill in students critical ways of thinking…” (p. 185). The findings revealed that despite an initial shock, the students reported that the group-PBL approach made them more aware of potential issues they may face as coaches as well as widening their views on coaching.

Collaboration was also a fundamental finding in Santos, Jones and Mesquita’s (2013) research. The authors here explored “if and how coaches manipulate contexts and relationships toward desired ends” (p. 263), using the metaphor of orchestration. The findings suggested that top-level Portuguese coaches engaged in a process of ‘collaboration’ and ‘negotiation’ with others to achieve desired aims. An example of this was the coaches’ role in scaffolding players’ development. In this respect, the coaches created environments for learning that were embedded with uncertainty and challenges to ensure that players were constantly seeking to improve their performances rather than becoming complacent with their position in the team(s).

The processes of participation and collaboration may occur amongst many different actors. For instance, whilst Jones and Turner (2006) and Santos et al. (2013) focused on collaboration between peers and between coaches and athletes, Harris (2010) focused on interactions amongst coaches in so-called ‘communities of practice’. A community of practice has been defined as “an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98). This also relates to Lave and Wenger’s (1991) idea of participation as a way “of both absorbing and being absorbed in the ‘culture of practice’” (p. 95). Here, participants contribute to the reconstruction of the culture
Advocates for the concept of communities of practice argue that they allow for meaningful experiences that resonate with the ‘real world’ of coaching (Hodkinson e al., 2008). Amongst other benefits of such collaboration are the sharing of ideas and the feeling of belonging to a community (Wenger, 1998). Here, negotiation is a central concept that, it has been claimed, allows coaches to ‘make sense’ of their experiences (Culver and Trudel, 2008a). However, it should not be assumed that coaches’ engagement in conversations with others will automatically result in learning (Culver and Trudel, 2008b). As highlighted by Harris (2010), this engagement needs to be meaningful, where “coaching experiences can be better respected, harnessed and developed” (p. 4).

Despite the benefits associated with participation in communities of practice, this form of engagement is often affected by the competitive nature of sport (Culver and Trudel, 2006). For example, according to Culver and Trudel (2006), coaches tend to share their knowledge and understanding with closer colleagues rather than with those who are outside of their club environment. Similar challenges were found by Harris (2010) in a study that aimed to explore the use of communities of practice in harnessing coaches’ experiential learning during a nine month period. Results showed that whilst developmental coaches benefitted from engaging within a community of practice, elite coaches found the process less appealing. Here, Harris (2010) argued that the organisational pressures such as the obligation to sustain club norms contributed to lack of an in-depth participation in such communities.

Other factors, such as the inability to relate to course content, were also reported by Jones and Allison (2014) as a cause for the surface level of participation in coaching communities. Here, Jones and Allison (2014) investigated coaches’ experiences on an 18 month elite level coach education course. The coaches argued that the experiences they had on the course were often far removed from their day to day coaching practice, which subsequently led to a surface approach to the community learning. Despite such discontentment, the coaches
highly valued the incidental interactions during the course as a means of gaining a degree of security within a very insecure professional environment (i.e., the elite level coaching world). In the words of Jones and Allison (2014), “the course seemed to provide a latent function related to providing a ‘community of security’ for the coaches; something they valued over and above every other aspect of their educational experience” (p. 119).

Learning by interacting with other coaches was also considered beneficial in Cassidy, Potrac and Mckenzie’s (2006) study, the aim of which was also to evaluate a coach education programme. Here, semi-structured interviews with eight rugby union coaches (of ‘participation’ level) revealed that ‘talking with other coaches’ was of great value for their development. It was seen as an opportunity to share ideas relevant to individual coaching practice. Although recognising the benefit of talking to each other, the coaches argued that the given forums needed to be mediated to avoid conversations going off track and to provide more meaningful experiences. Such a suggestion was later reinforced by Stoszkowski and Collins (2016) who argued that support structures (e.g., formal learning approaches) should precede the provision of social learning activities such as communities of practice and mentoring. In the words of Stoszkowski and Collins (2016), the main aim here is “to ensure that their informal development is sufficiently open-minded, reflective and critical” (p. 794).

2.2.4 Mentoring

Recent research has highlighted the lack of a clear conceptual definition of mentoring in sports coaching (e.g., Jones and Allison, 2014; Jones, Harris and Miles, 2009; McQuade, Davis and Nash, 2015). In this respect, the aforementioned study by Jones and Allison (2014) showed how the coaches perceived their roles as mentees to be that of passive recipients whilst expecting mentors to actively lead the process. This led to a suggestion by the authors that the lack of clear role definitions (for both mentee and mentors) was a matter that needed
further consideration within coach education.

Likewise, in an earlier review of literature, Jones, Harris and Miles (2009) argued for the need to better understand what mentoring actually entails. Here, the authors presented many different definitions for mentoring, one being that from Roberts (2000, p. 162) who suggested that mentoring is “a formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that person’s career and personal development”. One of the clear messages from Roberts’ (2000) work was that mentoring should have a nurturing nature rather than a replication of one’s practices. In this respect, identifying the needs of the mentee was argued to be a key aspect for a successful mentoring relationship.

Contradicting such a focus on individual needs, the work of Zehntner and McMahon (2014) showed how the mentor-mentee relationship experienced by an Australian swimming coach was characterized by a culture of surveillance and conformity. Here, the authors drew upon the work of Foucault (1979) to make sense of the experience. More specifically, they discussed how the mentor-mentee relationship resulted in “a means and expression of disciplinary power, regulating behaviour and bodies in accordance with what comes to be not merely expected, but also normalized within the context and culture” (p. 601).

Despite Zehntner and McMahon’s (2014) association between mentoring and surveillance, other studies (e.g., McQuade, Davis and Nash, 2015) have painted a more positive picture of the potential benefits of mentoring. As argued by McQuade et al. (2015), “[m]entoring could be considered as an effective and accessible method of supporting practice in the field” (p.318). Here, the authors suggested that mentoring relationships can provide coaches with opportunities to link theory and practice. In this respect, echoing the words of Jones et al.
(2009), Mcquade et al. (2015) argued that attention should be draw to nurturing individuals rather than developing clones of the mentors. Additionally, similar to that of Jones and Allison (2014), Mcquade et al. (2015) claimed that mentoring is still very much under-theorised in sports coaching thus suggesting a need for ever greater clarification and further evaluation.

An example of evaluating a formalised mentoring initiative came from the work of Griffiths and Armour (2012). Here, the aim was to explore the use of mentoring relationships within community volunteer sports coaches and their impact on the latter’s learning. Findings from this 12 month longitudinal study highlighted the importance of interactions between coaches and the contexts in which they operate. This relates to Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of situated learning. Here, it is considered that “learning is not merely situated in practice; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 35). Griffiths and Armour (2012) referred to this notion as “the interrelationship between biography and culture” (p. 156), and went on to argue that “learning through formalized mentoring is not seen solely as the acquisition of knowledge by detached individuals, but as a process of social participation, situated within a cultural context” (p. 158). However, the coaches interviewed within the study commented that they perceived the role of the mentor to be a provider of technical skills amongst other aspects. This calls for better understanding of the relationship between individuals (mentor/mentee) and social contexts (e.g., voluntary work) in order to better understand the act and process of mentoring (Griffiths and Armour, 2012).

2.2.5 Learning as transformation

Despite the previously discussed benefits associated with learning as participation (e.g., in a community of practice), Stoszkowski and Collins (2014) called for a more detailed
exploration of ‘social’ learning as a legitimate tool in coach education. The authors argued that further evaluation is necessary to explore how social learning approaches “can influence both coach behaviour and learning for better and for worse” (p. 775). Here, they highlighted the importance of exploring coaches’ epistemological beliefs (i.e., “beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how it is gained” - p. 778) as they are likely to affect coaches’ assumptions and acceptance of content knowledge. This was evidenced in the work of Townsend and Cushion (2015) previously discussed in this chapter. Specifically, it was clear how the cricket coaches featured in this study were reluctant to ‘update’ their beliefs by not recognising value in the ‘new’ knowledge presented that contradicted their then current understandings. Here, the idea of ‘concept analysis’ as discussed by Evans (2014) can allow individuals to become more aware of their epistemological beliefs. According to Davis and Samura (2010), concept analysis includes “ways of representing ideas to students [and coaches], presenting alternative definitions and their implications, histories and evolutions of concepts while also exploring learners’ interpretations of what they are learning” (p. 857, cited in Evans, 2014, p. 53). Furthermore, in order to encourage coaches to explore their epistemological beliefs, Stoszkowski and Collins (2014) suggested that:

as a minimum requirement, presentations at CoPs should provide a clear context to what is being described, trace and make explicit the ‘chain of reasoning’ through which this particular combination of options were selected, describe some other options and finally, describe and discuss how the processes are evaluated and refined. (p. 780).

This recommendation and search for criticality involves developing a better understanding of the self and of related personal beliefs and practice. Here, Stoszkowski and Collins (2014) suggested that, despite the array of criticism formal coach education has received over the past decade (e.g., Chesterfield, Jones and Potrac, 2010; Nelson et al., 2013), it still has a role to play if considered as a long term approach. This coincides with the definition of learning as process of transformation; that is, “a movement through time of reformulating reified
structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives’’ (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). In the words of Erichsen (2011, p.114), transformative learning theory;

…is about learning and changes in our personal perspectives that transform our lives and how we see and understand ourselves, our context, and the world around us. It is a process of calling our old meanings and past experience into question due to something new in our lives or epiphanies, and then attributing new meanings to our lives and experience.

The process of transformation goes beyond the sharing of knowledge, and requires individuals to immerse themselves in the ‘not yet’ known. Hodkinson et al., (2008) refers to this process as ‘learning as becoming’; that is, learning is seen as identity construction (Wenger, 1998). Hence, it is considered that “a person is constantly learning through becoming, and becoming through learning” (Hodkinson et al 2008, p. 41). This transformation is likely to cause discomfort, as one is led to experiences outside established ‘comfort zones’ (Meyer and Land, 2005). Such aspects resonate with the concept of liminal space; that is, “[t]he period in which the individual is naked of self - neither fully in one category or another” (Meyer and Land, 2005, p. 376). Consequently, individuals who go through the liminal space encounter a “new way of understanding, interpreting, or viewing something” (Meyer and Land, 2005, p. 373). In the words of Meyer and Land (2005), this experience is described as ‘transformative’, ‘irreversible’, ‘integrative’ and ‘troublesome’.

Learning as transformation is, therefore, a complex process where individuals may encounter challenges to developing an awareness of their epistemological beliefs (Grecic and Collins, 2013). According to Grecic and Collins (2013), in attempting to work within their comfort zones, coaches often show preferences for learning environments that provide them with “a vast array of information and development opportunities at their fingertips” (p. 160). They further argued that by doing so, coaches remain with their current (and largely unexplored) beliefs about the nature of knowledge and why they practice as they do. The main issue with
this lack of awareness regarding epistemological beliefs is that it can hinder a key expectation of coaching; i.e., that which involves making other “choices about the coaching methods, techniques, and practices they [coaches] develop” (Grecic and Collins, 2013, p. 159).

2.2.6 Learning as transformation and intellectual development

According to Sfard and Prusak (2005), practitioners’ intentions, which relates to what “counts as critical to one’s identity” can dictate learning (p.47). In this context, learning as transformation is somewhat affected by the view of learning as the missing link between ‘who one is’ and ‘who one desires to be’ (Sfard and Prusak, 2005). These terms are referred to as ‘actual’ and ‘designated’ identities, respectively. This close link between learning and identity was identified by Perry (1999) through his Scheme of Intellectual development. The scheme was developed from a series of open-ended interviews conducted with Harvard and Radcliffe undergraduates during the late 1950’s and 1960’s. In raising questions related to “grouping, curriculum design, and teaching method” (Perry, 1999, p. 235), Perry mapped a relatively consistent educational journey—what he characterized as “an intellectual Pilgrim’s Progress” (1974, p. 3). Perry identified nine ‘positions’ describing how undergraduate students saw knowledge and the process of learning. One of the key findings from this work was the transformation experienced by students, a movement from a dualist view of the world (i.e., right/wrong) to a truly relativistic view, where infinite context requiring constant decisions to avoid disorientation exists. Consequently, students started to accept responsibility for making their own decisions in an uncertain world (Perry, 1999).

Perry’s work invites educators to consider ‘where students are’ in guiding timing and methods of teaching (Clarkeburn et al., 2003). Although coach education and learning research has been subject to considerable investigation, it has generally ignored coaches’
intellectual, or epistemological, development; that is, how coaches’ perception of knowledge construction, learning and sense of self alter over time as a consequence of their learning experiences. An exception to this claim is the work developed by De Martin-Silva et al. (2015) that explored undergraduate sports coaching students’ intellectual development in two formal coach education settings. The longitudinal nature of the study allowed for the analysis of the students’ development in light of Perry’s (1999) Scheme of Intellectual development. Here, the findings from reflective logs, video diaries and focus group data revealed that students experienced uncertainty and frustration during the first months of study. This frustration was caused by a discrepancy between the students’ dualistic perceptions of learning as acquisition (i.e., that provided by lecturers), and the relativist agenda being offered via the course structure and delivery. As the study progressed, De Martin-Silva et al. (2015) argued that the students moved from a dualist to an increasingly relativist view of the world. Here, alongside the previously mentioned course structure, other contributing aspects were the students’ strategic approach to learning, and the relationships established with staff members. However, as pointed out by the authors, the students’ intellectual development “was far from unproblematic and uniform” (p. 1).

Another aspect claimed to interfere with the process of transformative learning is that of assessment. Surprisingly, despite concerns regarding coach learning, the contributions of assessment practices have received little attention by sports coaching scholars (Hay, Dickens, Crudgington and Engstrom, 2012). This becomes a critical issue taking into account the often strategic approaches adopted by learners (Entwistle, 2000; De Martin-Silva et al., 2015). For example, participants in Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones’ (2010) study revealed how learners/practitioners engaged with the coaching assessment in a superficial way to meet the certification criteria. Indeed, once the test was completed, the coaches returned to what they believed to be a more authentic way of coaching. In this example, the coaches perceived the assessment not to encourage transformational learning. Instead, there
was a search for ‘right’ answers and behaviours to ‘pass the test’, resembling the idea of a surface (i.e., memorising) approach to learning (Entwisle, 2000). Similarly, in the work of De Martin-Silva et al. (2015), the students adopted a strategic approach to learning. However, the authors argued that this approach “somewhat ironically ensured their engagement on a general trajectory towards relativism” (p. 10). In this respect, the students showed signs of adopting what Entwistle (2000) defined as a deep approach to learning (i.e., a commitment to understanding the content being introduced) as the study progressed. This search for ‘commitment to a reasoned interpretation’ was described by Perry (1999) as a key characteristic related to personal development (a process of transformation).

The link between learning and assessment, therefore, may result in a significant amount of control regarding how students learn; something which can contribute towards intellectual development (De Martin-Silva et al., 2015). De Martin-Silva et al. (2015) subsequently argued that if coaches are to be developed as relativist thinkers, assessment requirements should focus on personal understanding rather than memorisation (Entwistle, 2000). This relates to what Biggs and Tang (2011) describe as constructive alignment; the alignment between learning activities, assessments and learning outcomes.

Despite the previously mentioned dearth of studies investigating coaches’ epistemological beliefs and intellectual development, current research in the area has argued for the need to promote learning environments that challenge coaches intellectually and, subsequently, transform personal perspectives (e.g., De Martin-Silva et al., 2015; Grecic and Collins, 2013; Collins, Collins and Grecic, 2015). This relates to paying more attention to the practices, people, regimes of competence, communities and boundaries that serve as the constitutive texture of identity formation and become part of who we are (Wenger, 2010). This consideration is particularly appropriate for the field of sports coaching, as it relates to seeing coaching as a complex and socio-pedagogical practice (Jones and colleagues). Here, the
metaphors of acquisition, participation and transformation (discussed throughout this chapter) appear as relevant concepts to inform the development of coach learning research and practice.

2.2.7 Research designs in sports coaching research – limitations and recommendations

Research in coach learning has often utilised limited data sets (often gathered through the use of interviews) to explore coaches’ perceptions of coach education (e.g., Stephenson and Jowett, 2009; Knowles et al., 2006, Chesterfield et al., 2010; Townsend and Cushion, 2015; Piggott, 2012; Cassidy, Potrac and Mckenzie, 2006; Collins, Collins and Grecic, 2015). Despite providing beneficial information, a key limitation with this type of research is that it doesn’t factor in the temporal aspect of development (Cushion at al., 2010). Indeed, according to Thomson, Plumridge and Holland (2003), because learning takes time, research that investigates the opportunities and challenges inherent in the learning process should incorporate a longitudinal element. This is defined as the “deliberate way in which temporality is designed into the research process, making change a central focus of analytical attention” (p. 185).

As previously mentioned by Cushion et al. (2010), the quality and scope of the work in and on coach learning are varied. Whilst a significant number of studies focus on a single point of data collection, others have used a more in-depth longitudinal approach. Examples of the latter are those by Jones and Turner (2006), Jones, Morgan and Harris (2010), Stodter and Cushion (2014), and Jones and Allison (2015). Jones and Turner’s (2006) study explored a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach as one means through which coaches could be better educated to meet the complex and holistic nature of their work. Eleven final year undergraduate students (in their third year of study) took part in this research. Data were
gathered through on going observations, reflections and a group interview at the termination of the module under investigation. The research design adopted allowed for intricate aspects of learning to be explored, such as the opportunities and challenges experienced by students.

Similarly, Jones, Morgan and Harris (2010) adopted on-going observations and focus groups to investigate how eight MSc Coaching Science students experienced a pedagogical framework aimed at addressing the practice-theory gap in sports coaching. Here, the use of a longitudinal framework allowed the authors to discern how students’ perceptions changed throughout the unit delivery. For example, it was identified that the students initially struggled with seeing the theories as “working tools” rather than “behavioural prescriptions” (p. 320). This view changed as the unit progressed and the students started to appreciate the value of theory in better understanding their practice. Without such a design, the authors would be only able to gather evidence of the students’ experiences at a specific point in time to assess a continuous and fluid process (i.e., learning). On the other hand, the adoption of a longitudinal research design, allowed for a deeper exploration of learning as “…a journey or excursion which will have intended direction and outcome, but also acknowledge that there will be deviation and unexpected outcomes within the excursion” (Land et al., 2006, p.202).

According to Stoszkowski and Collins (2014), such in-depth explorations, rather than providing selected snapshots are key for further understanding coaches’ needs. More recently, Stodter and Cushion (2014) explored two coaches’ experiences on a coach education course over the course of a year using observations and interviews pre, during and post-course. The longitudinal aspect of the study combined with the multiple methods of data collection utilised allowed the authors to analyse the changes experienced by the coaches as a result of being on the course. For many of the coaches, these amounted to “varying, even paradoxical experiences” (p. 72).

In a similar vein, Jones and Allison (2014) tracked 20 coaches over a period of 18 months
to explore their experience on an UEFA coach education course. Here, the use of video diaries and focus groups allowed data to be gathered periodically, which was key when discussing issues such as the lack of “conceptual shifts in thinking” (p. 115). Echoing the work of Jones and Turner (2006) and Jones, Morgan and Harris (2010), this study provided a wider view of the learning process. However, one could argue that more focus on presenting the results in a temporal fashion (e.g., dates for the quotes included as well as the method of data collection) could have allowed for a more detailed representation of the potential changes (or lack of) that took place in the coaches’ experiences.

Concerns with coaching research designs, however, go beyond the temporal aspect, also relating to the methods of data collection adopted. Although coaches’ perceptions can bring some insightful information to inform the design of courses (especially regarding satisfaction), it is important to remember that learning involves a certain degree of discomfort and uncertainty, which may not always be welcomed by coaches (De Martin-Silva et al., 2015; Meyer and Land, 2006). This could, in turn, result in dissatisfaction with the coach education opportunities provided (although they may be beneficial for learning as transformation). This was a point made recently by Lyle, Jolly and North (2010), who argued that, rather than merely making a case for the adoption of coaches’ preferred pedagogies, research should focus on exploring the origins of such thoughts and the effects of different learning environment on coach learning. This could be achieved not only through the use of longitudinal research (as mentioned previously) but also the use of a combination of data collection methods (e.g., video diaries and focus groups, as used by Jones and Allison, 2014).

Other concerns with coaching research designs refer to the lack of specific criteria adopted when selecting participants. One example on this is the study by Nelson et al., (2013). The study was conducted with ninety coaches from eight sports to investigate not only how coaches experienced coach education courses delivered by NGBs, but also their
recommendations to enhance the quality of those courses. The participants in Nelson’s et al. (2013) study were purposively selected with a criterion requirement of at least ten years of coaching experience, and to be qualified to the highest level offered by their NGBs. The criteria were based on research (Côté et al, 1995) that suggested ten years (or 10,000 hours) was required to become expert in their specific domain. There are two main concerns here; one relates to the criteria for expertise, and the other to the participants’ experience of ‘current’ coach education programmes. Regarding expertise, some studies have demonstrated that ‘expert’ athletes invest in greater amounts of deliberate training than non-experts (e.g., Baker, Côté and Abernethy, 2003; Deakin and Cobley, 2003). However, “there is conflicting evidence that 10,000 hours of involvement is necessary for all domains” (Baker and Young, 2014, p. 147). For example, some studies have concluded that triathletes and gymnasts required 12,558 (Baker, Côté and Deakin, 2005) and 18,835 hours (Law et al., 2007) respectively, to achieve such expertise. Other studies meanwhile have claimed that athletes required less than 4,000 hours to become experts (e.g., Soberlak and Côté, 2003). This poses the question of whether the coaches selected in Nelson et al.’s (2013) study were actually experts. The second concern is that, there was no criterion regarding the time frame (e.g., within the last five years) in which the qualifications should have been obtained. Therefore, some of the aspects raised by participants may have been already implemented by NGBs, not taking into account the considerable transformation that coach education has undergone in the last ten years (Harris, 2010).

In another study, Piggott (2012) selected participants who had completed their qualifications within the last two years in order to analyse current coach education courses. The twelve coaches who participated were selected from a range of different sports and possessed different levels of qualifications (e.g., level 1; level 2). Piggott’s (2012) study provided a broad picture regarding the nature of participants’ experiences. However, it did not allow for a deeper representation of those experiences within each NGB. For instance, although the
author mentioned that “[s]ome of the 12 participants had undertaken qualifications in more than one sport” (p. 543), it was not clear how many participants had a background in each of the twelve sports. “Thick description of the phenomena under scrutiny” is an important aspect when addressing credibility in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004, p. 69), which will be covered in more detail in the Methodology chapter. The lack of clarity regarding the number of participants from each NGB allied to the fact that each participant was interviewed once (interviewed lasted between 30-50 minutes) raises some questions about the inferences drawn in the findings; that is, that some NGBs do indeed operate as ‘closed circles’.

More recently, Stoszkowski and Collins’s (2016) study explored coaches’ perceptions of their actual and preferred ways of acquiring knowledge as well as how they applied it. The 320 coaches who took part in the study came from many different sports (30 in total), worked in a variety of countries (26 in total) and had different levels of coaching experience and qualifications. Here, the method used for data collection was an online survey, the drawbacks of which were recognised by the authors. These included the “lack of ability to clarify and probe views” (Stoszkowski and Collins, 2016, p. 801). However, based on the aims of the study (i.e. to ‘explore’ coaches’ perceptions), the ability to clarify and probe was obviously paramount; something again that somewhat limited the intended exploratory nature of the study.

2.2.8 Concluding thoughts

The purpose of the first part of the literature review was to provide an in-depth exploration of the literature on coach learning thus providing a “clear indication of current progress, limitations and future directions of the research stream” (Byrne, Keary and Lawton 2012, p. 239).
The studies reviewed showed how coach learning has been approached from a variety of perspectives which were structured using the metaphors of ‘acquisition’, ‘participation’ and ‘transformation’. The review demonstrated that whist recent research has exhibited signs of progression in recognising coaching as a pedagogical and social practice, it is yet to fully explore and embrace the intricacies inherent within coach learning.

Recent findings also revealed coaches’ resistance to the ‘acquisition’ of new knowledge that challenged their traditional ways of coaching (e.g., Townsend and Cushion, 2015). Instead, there was a clear desire for practically relevant content that fitted with the coaches’ current practices (e.g., Nelson et al., 2013; Townsend and Cushion, 2015; Jones and Allison, 2014). Additionally, coaches showed themselves to be strategic learners, often selecting content knowledge based on assessment requirements rather than a means to become ‘better’. Here, power relationships were key in dictating what counted as a legitimate way of coaching, often normalising coaches to act in specific ways; described by Piggott (2012) as closed systems, where coaches are led to reproduce dominant discourses thus limiting their conceptual understanding. There was also clear evidence of coaches’ resistance in sharing knowledge outside of their close circles (e.g., Harris, 2010), whilst informal interactions were desired and valued in the search for a ‘community of security’ (Jones and Allison, 2014).

Despite some relevant findings, many of the studies discussed were limited by the use of a single data collection point to examine something for which the evidence should go beyond one-off measures of progressive ‘satisfaction’. With the aim to develop a better understanding of the intricacies within learning, longitudinal research designs including a combination of appropriate methods (i.e., that allow the aims of the study to be achieved) should consequently be increasingly considered. Such approaches can allow for prolonged
researcher and participant engagement, something seen as key to better capture the complexity of learning experiences and their impact on identity development (Jones and McEwen, 2000). Finally, although accused by some as lacking ‘real-word’ relevancy, evidence exists that formal education can play a critical role in coaches’ cognitive development. This is particularly in terms of exposing student-coaches to epistemological considerations related to “the ‘why’ and ‘what for’ of their own beliefs and decision making” (Stoszkowski and Collins 2014, 781). This is a process akin to meta learning, where learners become “aware of task demands and of how, or even whether, to meet those demands”, in addition to “assessing and exerting control over [personal] cognitive resources” (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p. 185). Not only does such learning involve the development of reflective skills critical to becoming an effective practitioner, but also a change in the way individuals see themselves and the world around them (Erichsen, 2011). Despite such claims, however, we still know little about how this process is manifest in the development of sports coaches through undergraduate provision.

2.3 Understanding identity - a challenging endeavour

The term identity has been explored through a range of disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, philosophy) often making it a testing topic for investigation (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010, p. 175). Here, the main challenge appears the variability with which the term is defined often within the same area of study (e.g., social sciences) (Stryker and Burke, 2000, Sfard and Prusak, 2005). Examples here include use of words such as ‘multiple selves’ (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010); ‘actual and designated self” (Sfard and Prusak, 2005); ‘fictive identity’ (Jenlink, 2006); ‘possible selves’ (Ronfeldt and Grossman, 2008); and ‘core identity’ (Jones and McEwen, 2000), to name but a few.

The great variability used in relation to the term identity suggests further complexity in
understanding how identity changes. For example, the work by Watson (2006) adopted the terms ‘construction’ of identity and identity ‘development’ when presenting a narrative study that focused on the resources used by a teacher to construct his own professional identity. Flores and Day (2006), on the other hand, used the term ‘shaping’ identities when researching how new school teachers ‘shaped and reshaped’ their professional identities. Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) meanwhile utilised the term identity ‘shifts’ when reviewing literature on teacher identity, while Cassidy and Trew (2001) referred to identity ‘change’ in a study where the authors examined the multiple identities of 210 secondary school students as they transitioned to university. While the terms ‘construction’ and ‘development’ are more likely to refer to changes in identity that occur in a progressive way, the term ‘shifts’ and ‘change’ may imply the potential for a multidirectional perspective, including regression despite such an aspect not made explicit by the authors. Such a discrepancy, however, does not negate one similarity that seems to prevail in identity research; that is, the view of identity as a ‘multi-faceted’ and ‘fluid’ construct affected by the context (Flores and Day, 2006, Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010).

The close link between teaching and coaching (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016), aligned to the dearth of research exploring coaching identities, mean that many of the studies drawn upon in this part of the chapter originate from studies within teacher education. In this respect, it is taken that studies on teacher education can inform future directions in coaching where teaching, learning and professional development have likewise been highlighted as key aspects of practice (Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2004; Jones, 2006).

Identity in the present thesis is defined as “a type of on-going negotiation of participation, shaped by – and shaping in response – the context in which it occurs” (Faircloth, 2012, p. 186). Here, identity negotiation can be influenced by “how collective discourses shape personal worlds and how individual voices combine into the voice of a community” (Sfard
This individual and collective description of identity is somewhat further clarified by Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012) who discussed the formation of teacher identity as

...a continuous learning process, where each professional experience is re-thought against a background of interactions of emotions and knowledge, and where an experience can be both deeply individual and one which is experienced with peers (Timoštšuk and Ugaste 2012, p. 2).

2.3.1 – Developing a professional identity

A recent review by Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2012) revealed that, despite the focus on preparing students for the world of work, the concept of professional identity has rarely been explored comprehensively in higher education. The authors also concluded that “[o]nly a few articles that we reviewed focused on external influences upon professional identity development, despite most mentioning work environments and learning contexts fleetingly” (p. 376). This is of particular concern, as the way the self is shaped by or shapes social structure has a key impact on someone’s identity (Cinoğlu and Arıkan, 2012). Here, “[t]he development of professional identity should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon that takes place at the university or in the work context, but rather a dynamic relationship between different life spheres” (Reid, Abrandt Dahlgren, Petocz and Dahlgren, 2011, p. 91).

Despite Trede et al.’s (2012) dearth related critique of studies that have adequately explored the development of professional identity in higher education, a considerable number of studies not covered by Trede et al., (2012) claimed to do so. Many of these focused on how teachers develop their professional identities (e.g., Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010; Anh, 2013; Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Abrandt Dahlgreen and Chiriac, 2009; Friesen and Besley, 2013; Hong, 2010; Pillen, Den Brok and Beijaard, 2013; Thomas and Beauchamp, 2011; Timoštšuk and Ugaste, 2010; Timoštšuk and Ugaste, 2012). In an attempt
to highlight key themes from these studies, some of the principal ones are now examined in greater depth.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) interviewed 48 participants following their graduation from a teacher education programme. The purpose was to understand how the students’ identities shifted as they started their initial practice as teachers. Interestingly, findings revealed that despite demonstrating an ability to reflect on an ‘ideal’ identity, the students claimed this was the opportunity they had to do so, demonstrating its neglect during their programme of study. Here, the authors suggested that professional identity development should become “integral to initial teacher education programmes” (Bauchamp and Thomas, 2010, p. 639); a concept coined as the ‘pedagogy of identity’ (Jenlink, 2006). Borrowing from Thatchenkery and Metzker’s (2006) notion of “appreciative intelligence”, that is “the ability to perceive the positive inherent generative potential within the present” (p. 5), Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) argued that the role of teaching staff is to assist students to recognise their strengths as well as “stimulate their thinking about who they are now, and how they want to direct their development to reach desired goals” (p. 640). This was echoed by Trede et al. (2012) who suggested pedagogical support and mentorship as key for professional identity development. Despite such a suggestion, the methods adopted by Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) (i.e., two interviews following graduation) did not allow for an on-going exploration of how the teaching staff affected (or did not affect) professional development.

The focus on positive factors in helping student teachers to better understand their professional experiences was also highlighted by Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012). In stating that “the emotions teachers experience affect their sense of professional identity” (p. 3), they argued that teachers who focussed on positive emotions developed broader coping strategies as they were capable of distancing themselves from their experiences (somewhat similar to the concept of reflexivity, discussed later in this chapter). Additionally, Timoštšuk and
Ugaste (2012) claimed that “students should be especially strongly supported in noticing, recalling, and a detailed analysis of positive moments in teaching” (p. 11).

In a similar study, Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010) had earlier revealed some limitations in the understanding of professional development within specific disciplines. For example, with the aim to understand the impact of initial teacher education on students’ professional identity, the authors interviewed 45 students “from as many teacher education programmes as possible” (p. 1565). Despite the significant length of the interviews (between 55-130 minutes), the data gathered did not represent the professional development of teachers within specific disciplines. This somewhat contradicted a particular concern raised in the literature regarding the “importance of appreciating discipline-specific professional identities” (Trede et al., 2012, p. 379). Here, the ability to articulate disciplinary content and apply it to professional environments was considered as crucial in contributing to professional development (Ryan and Carmichael, 2016).

In a more specific context, Ryan and Carmichael (2016) explored how 25 students on a Bachelor of Radiation Therapy programme recorded and represented their professional identity development through the use of reflective journals over the course of three years. The longitudinal nature of the study allowed the authors to identify different modes of reflexivity used by the students over time. More specifically, the authors used Archer’s (2012) four reflexive modes (i.e., ‘communicative’, ‘autonomous’, ‘meta’ and ‘fractured’ indicators) when analysing the data. Despite revealing the use of reflective journals as allowing students to become aware of their developing professional identities, the approach was seen as somewhat constraining or, controlling how students reflected. This was particular the case as the students were encouraged to use Gibbs’s reflective Cycle (1988) when framing their reflections. Despite the potential benefits of presenting given stages of reflection (i.e., Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion and Action Plan),
Gibbs’s work has been criticised as oversimplifying a complex process; that reflection does not always present itself “in neatly defined stages” (Cropley, Hanton, Miles and Niven, 2010, p.184). This was echoed by Hughes, Lee and Chesterfield (2009), who argued that Gibbs’s (1988) model “is far too simplistic because the step-by-step process does not allow for in-depth learning to occur” (p. 381).

Taking a different perspective towards the encouragement of reflection, Gilardi and Lozza (2009) used an inquiry based learning approach (including reflective practice) to the development of professional identity. Differing from Ryan and Carmichael’s (2016) use of reflective models, students within Gilardi and Lozza’s (2009) work engaged in reflective practice with their tutors, whose role was to prompt the former based on the students’ experiences of a module entitled ‘Practical experience of internship’. The module, in turn, was delivered as part of a third year undergraduate degree in psychology at the Università Cattolica of Milan. The module lasted about eight months, where students undertook work experience with external companies under the guidance of tutors. Gilardi and Lozza (2009) drew upon the concepts of “reflective conversation with the situation” (Schön, 1983, p. 242) and ‘reflexivity’, in arguing that such concepts were incorporated within the development of professional identities. In this respect, a reflexive practitioner was one who “needed to be able to listen to and negotiate with others and to reflect on tacit assumptions shared within the community” (Gilardi and Lozza, 2009, p. 247). Interestingly, the findings revealed that self-reflection was one of the highest rated skills that students perceived they developed as a consequence of taking part in the module. Indeed, the encounters with tutors as well as opportunities to discuss their experiences with others were considered as ways that students could clarify the information for and to themselves.

The general case put forward in this body of work was that by reflecting on a future ideal identity, or in other words, who they would like to become, student teachers can progress
towards achieving that identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010). This relates to the work of Hamman et al. (2010), where ‘possible selves’ theory (Markus and Nurius, 1986) was adopted through which identity development was made sense of. This theory refers to “how individuals think about their potential and about their future” (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954). In this respect, a key aspect of the theory is its potential to inform and motivate individuals towards the achievement of their “hoped-for potential self” (Hamman et al., 2013, p. 309). Similarly, Hamman et al. (2010) argued that “[i]ndividuals with foresight of what they want to become, may be more likely to persevere in pursuing their goals and aspirations” (p. 1351).

Hamman et al. (2010) conducted a study with 175 student teachers and 46 new in-service teachers aimed to identify the expected and feared developing ‘teacher selves’ within the first year of teaching. The findings suggested that for student teachers, the possible teacher selves (both expected and feared) were mostly task-focused, whereas for the in-service teachers the expected possible selves were quality-focused. The authors suggested that in-service teachers “may be able to look beyond the everyday tasks and consider a more abstract, value-laden future self, while remaining aware of the consequences of not mastering typical classroom tasks” (p. 1356). Although the above work has no doubt contributed to better understanding the development of professional identities, further exploration of the ‘whys’ behind the findings is necessary. Here, the use of a longitudinal research design could be beneficial in adding a temporal insight.

Another key point highlighted by Hamman et al. (2010) was that in order to affect behaviour, possible selves need to be meaningful (i.e., “be really possible in a concrete future”) (p. 1352). Here, individuals must experience a sense of agency, which, according to Hamman (2010, p. 1357), “is formed through reflection”. This is in keeping with the work of Fellenz (2016) who argued that ‘agency’ is a key aspect involved in becoming a professional. This
sense of ‘agency’ can be seen as “the active pursuit of professional development and learning in accordance with a teacher’s goals” (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010, p. 177). Agency also relates to “[t]he extent to which possible selves are associated with strategies to achieve or avoid” (Hamman et al. 2013, p.1358). Of importance then is that ‘structure’ as well as ‘agency’ are key in the process of identity formation (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Structure, in this context, refers to the “external and structural factors that are influential over identity” (Cinoğlu and Arıkan, 2012, p.1117). A key message here then is that individuals are not only the objects of social structure but more importantly contribute to its creation (Stets and Burke, 2003).

2.3.2 Social identity theory and identity theory

Research has highlighted two main strands of identity theories; namely Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1972) and Identity theory (Stryker, 1968; 1980). These theories have often been considered in opposition to one another, despite key similarities between them. This separation, however, has been somewhat contested by Stets and Burke (2000) who argued for a more integrated theory of the self. In the words of Stets and Burke (2000), “although differences exist between the two theories, they are more differences in emphasis than in mind” (p. 224).

2.3.2.1 Social identity theory

Social identity theory is concerned with how individuals form their identities by belonging to different social groups (Stets and Burke, 2000; Cinoğlu, and Arıkan, 2012). A key aspect here is that of self-categorisation where individuals define themselves in relation to other groups (Stets and Burke, 2000). This is done through a social comparison process where, through efforts to be seen as in-group members, individuals accentuate the perceived
similarities with that group whilst distinguishing themselves from out-group members. This is an attempt to “confirm and enhance [individuals’] social identification with the group” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 232). When this happens, Cinoğlu, and Arıkan, (2012) argue that “individuals will cease to have personal opinions and will become a reflection of the group” (p. 1124). It refers to the process of despersonalisation; i.e., “losing one’s personality in favor of group’s existence” (Cinoğlu and Arıkan, 2012, p. 1125). Additionally, it has been argued that classifying and identifying with specific groups and consequently adopting group behaviours serve to reaffirm social structures (Stets and Burke, 2000). This is not to say that in-group members are similar in every respect, rather that they are seen as members “of a unique combination of social categories” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 225), which leads to unique identities.

Another relevant facet of social identity theory in this context is that group membership may not necessarily be defined by the individual’s identification with the group. Instead, it may be confirmed when others show acceptance of that individual as an in-group member (Stets and Burke, 2000). This acceptance provides the individual with the evidence of belonging “to a certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him [or her] of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292). Hence, behavioural ‘performances’ can be seen as powerful strategies to gain acceptance into a group. Here, individuals act in ways that they perceive are desired by group members (Stets and Burke, 2000). This is in keeping with the work of Goffman (1959) who drew upon the concept of ‘impression management’ to explain how individuals portray images of themselves in attempts to dictate how others see them. Here, ‘social rules’ provide the base for behaviours that are seen as desirable or not within a certain group’s code of interaction (Jones et al., 2011). These group ‘rules’ are more than often not explicitly communicated. Rather, they are part of the process of seeing the self as reflexive; an activity that involves seeing oneself from others’ perspectives in an attempt to create the “uniformity of perception and action among group
members” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 226). Despite such search for homogeneity, social rules are not automatically accepted. As argued by Jones et al. (2011), individuals have the ability to “manipulate the procedure of social interaction” (p. 19), thus allowing room for agency.

When in-group homogeneity is strong and individuals identify with in group members, greater levels of commitment to the group are observed (Stets and Burke, 2000). Commitment in this respect can be defined as “the attachment of the self to the requirements of social relations that are seen as self-expressive” (Kanters, 1972, p. 66). Additionally, situational changes can result in different activities being considered salient. Here, Stets and Burke (2000) discussed accessibility and fit as key aspects that influence salience. Accessibility was defined as “a function of the person’s current tasks and goals, and of the likelihood that certain objects or events will occur in the situation” (p. 230). Fit, on the other hand, referred to “the congruence between the stored category specifications and perceptions of the situation” (p. 230).

A final aspect of social identity theory relates to the motivational processes that accompany the activation of social identities. Here, self-esteem (Abrams, 1992) and uncertainty reduction (Hogg and Mullin, 1999) were two aspects cited as key in the process of social identity activation. According to Stets and Burke (2000), by activating a certain identity and acting in line with expectations, one increases their identification with any given group and, consequently, their self-esteem, while decreasing any feelings of uncertainty.

2.3.2.2 Identity theory

Identity theory has its roots on Mead’s (1934) structural symbolic interactionism, where the process of symbolic communication is key in creating, maintaining and changing self and society (Cassidy and Trew, 2001). It is widely acknowledged in identity research that self
and society come in a reciprocal relationship where self can affect society though individual actions and society can affect self through providing a social structure and roles that influence day to day interactions (Stets and Burke, 2003). This process involves the exchange of symbols and meanings, which Mead (1934) considered essential in understanding behaviours of others as well as one’s own self (i.e., who they are). Another key aspect in symbolic interactionism is the relationship between the ‘I’ and ‘me’ (Mead, 1934), also known as reflexivity. Reflexivity here is “the ability to somehow turn around and take itself as the object of its own view” (Carver, 2003, p. 179). In this respect, one views oneself from the perspectives of others. Therefore, ‘me’ becomes an object of exploration. This relates to Mead’s concept of the ‘generalised other’. For Mead, people are affected by “how they think their entire social group, in an abstract sense, responds to them” (Tice and Wallace, 2003, p. 92). This builds on the concept of ‘looking-glass self’ introduced by Cooley (1902), which claimed that significant others (such as close members of a social group) were more likely to affect one’s self-concept when compared to other people (Tice and Wallace, 2003). Here, Tice and Wallace (2003) made a very relevant claim that “[i]t’s people’s perceptions of how they are viewed, not how they are actually viewed by others, that have the strongest impact on people’s self-concept” (p. 103).

Despite similarities with the symbolic interactionist approach suggested by Mead (1934), identity theory has a more explicit focus on how social structure works within the self-structure. In this respect, identity theory is concerned with the roles that individuals occupy in society (Stryker, 1980). These roles take place within a social structure, where expectations are incorporated within the self in an attempt to successfully perform the role (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Whilst in social identity theory, the homogeneity of perceptions is assumed, in identity theory, individuals act in ways that are specific to their roles, often negotiating meanings in different situations (Stets and Burke, 2000). Here, individuals tend to see themselves as different to others, with specific role performances required. Instead of
seeing things from the group perspective then, individuals negotiate their understandings and relate to each other in reciprocal, yet unique ways (Stets and Burke, 2000). Additionally, according to Stryker and Burke (2000), individuals adopt multiple roles which often result in reciprocal or competitive relationships. In this respect, roles that are reciprocal were considered to reinforce one another while those who compete may result in stress, especially when levels of commitment and salience to each role are equivalent (Burke, 1991).

In this context, commitment is defined as “the degree to which persons’ relationships to others in their networks depend on possessing a particular identity and role” (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). That is, as Stryker and Serpe (1982) argued, “[a] man is committed to the role of ‘husband’ in the degree that the number of persons and the importance to him of those persons requires his being in the position of husband and playing the role” (p. 207). Salience, on the other hand, is defined as “the probability that an identity will be activated” whilst activation refers to the probability “that an identity actually will be played out in a situation” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 230). According to Stryker and Burke (2000), role identities are organised in a ‘salience hierarchy’. Here, an identity is not activated by the situation, but by the individual who invokes those roles that are higher in the salience hierarchy. Indeed, Brenner, Serpe and Stryker (2014) concluded that “a highly salient identity is likely to be enacted or to define a situation to promote its own enactment” (p. 232).

Interestingly, a study by LeBouef, Shafir and Bayuk (2010) paint a more transient nature of identity salience. In examining how conflicting identities affect choice, the authors claimed that “identity-salience fluctuations…occur naturally and frequently as decision makers navigate and balance their many roles” (p. 58). LeBouef et al. (2010) further claimed that salience was associated with preference in giving the example of a woman who chooses to use a bookstore gift card to buy ‘professionally oriented books’ over ‘children’s
books’ (p. 48). However, the woman’s preference, rather than a sign of salience, could be interpreted as a sign of identity prominence. Indeed, Brenner, Serpe and Stryker (2014) also draw attention to the need to separate identity salience (Sryker, 1980) from identity prominence (McCall and Simons, 1978). Prominence refers to the “individual’s subjective sense of the worth or value of an identity to himself or herself” (Ervin and Stryker, 2001, cited in Brenner, Serpe and Stryker, 2014, p. 233). In this respect, an identity could be of high importance to the individual but not necessarily likely to be invoked. This shows that salience (behaviour) and prominence (affect) are two distinct concepts and should be treated as such (Brenner, Serpe and Stryker, 2014). This is because salience focuses on the aspects likely to be displayed but not necessarily what one wishes to perform. On the other hand, a prominence hierarchy refers to different levels towards the ‘ideal self’ (Brenner, Serpe and Stryker, 2014).

Despite such differences in conceptual meaning, Brenner, Serpe and Stryker (2014) claimed a causal relationship between identity prominence and identity salience. More specifically, they maintained that “a highly prominent science student identity leads to a highly salient science student identity” (p. 246). Such findings contradict earlier findings (e.g., Stryker and Serpe, 1994) that showed a low correlation between prominence and salience. This then, is an area in need of further clarification.

Despite differences between social identity theory and identity theory, Stets and Burke (2000) argued that many similarities between them exist and that they should therefore be linked to “establish a more fully integrated view of the self” (p. 224). The point is reinforced by the belief that “one always and simultaneously occupies a role and belongs to a group” (p. 228). One of the similarities between social and identity theories is that individuals reaffirm social structure arrangements by entering into a process of self-verification (identity theory) or depersonalisation (social identity theory). In other words, individuals act
according to expectations associated with their group memberships and with the roles they perform. Another similarity regards the motivational processes that lead individuals to act in certain ways to meet group or role expectations. Here, Stets and Burke (2000) claimed that “individuals may categorise themselves in particular ways (in a group or in a role) not only to fulfil the need to feel valuable and worthy (the self-esteem motive) but also to feel competent and effective (the self-efficacy motive)” (Cast, Stets, and Burke, 1999 cited in Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 233).

2.3.3 Multiple dimensions and core identity

Researchers have argued for the need to better understand how ‘multiple’ dimensions of identity affect identity development over time (e.g., Jones and McEwen, 2000; Abbes, Jones and McEwen, 2007). Studies here have revealed a clear consideration for understanding dimensions in conjunction with one another rather than in isolation. For example, exploring how students made sense of their identities, Jones and McEwen (2000) developed a model that comprised multiple dimensions of identity (e.g., gender, race, religion). Accordingly, they claimed that these dimensions could assume different salience for different individuals based on contextual factors (e.g., family background; current experiences). Results from the study concluded that students who were perceived as less privileged by systems of inequality (e.g., Black women) perceived race to be a very salient dimension.

An interesting and useful aspect highlighted by Jones and McEwen (2000, p. 408) is that the model they presented refers to a “one person’s identity construction at a particular time”. This dynamic approach to identity incorporates a view that identity is always changing and never stable. This view is shared by Gee (2001) who states that “the ‘kind of person’ one is recognized as ‘being’ at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and of course, can be ambiguous or
Although claiming there is a dynamic nature to identity, Jones and McEwen (2000) highlight that ‘at the center of multiple dimensions of identity is a core sense of self’ (p. 408). This core is seen as the ‘inner identity’ or ‘inside self’ and includes personal attributes, personal characteristics and personal identity. Moreover, the salience of a certain dimension is dictated by its proximity to the core identity. For instance, Jones and McEwen (2000) argue that if a dimension (e.g. religion) is more likely to be invoked at a certain moment of an individual’s life, it will tend to be closer to the core (‘inner identity’). Although the idea seems very plausible and complete at first glance, it poses an important and perhaps contradictory question regarding the fluid nature of identity previously defended by the authors. Here, the use of the word ‘core’ brings the assumption that it is somewhat stable and unchangeable. Indeed, whilst Jones and McEwen argue that contextual differences affect the salience of each identity dimension to the core, they do not discuss how adaptable or fluid the core is.

The terminology ‘core’ identity has also been used by Gee (2001), despite from a different perspective. The author refers to ‘core identity’ as the consequence of someone’s immersion in discourses, and not as a central point around which dimensions are classified as more or less salient. In this respect, what Gee (2001) is defining as ‘core identity’ could simply be called ‘identity’. This point is made clear at the introductory section of the article when the author recognises that “some people reserve the term identity for ‘core identity’” (p.100).

Here, once again the lack of a clear definition for terms in identity research poses a challenge to further developing advances in the area. This is a point that Gee (2001) seems to ignore when the author argues that ‘I do not think it is important what terms we use’ (p.100). A question to be asked here is why shall ‘identity’ be referred to as a ‘core identity’? A core
identity portrays the image of something being central and, therefore, influencing other aspects of one’s identity. This is a concern raised in Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) as they reconceptualised Jones and McEwen’s (2000) model of multiple dimensions of identity by adding what they called ‘meaning-making capacity’. Here, Abes et al. (2007) were interested in how students “come to perceive them as they do” (p. 13). It was an attempt to combine intrapersonal, interpersonal and cognitive domains. A key point raised in this study was the idea of how the core is formed. For some of the participants, a dimension (e.g., sexual orientation) was part of their core as they considered it to be “internally defined”. For others, the same dimension was part of their core because they perceived it to be affected by external factors. This led the authors to revisit the concept of ‘core self’ and reconceptualise it as a ‘fluid in nature’ but representing “aspects of identity that individuals perceive as central to their sense of self” (p. 15).

The idea of having a ‘core identity’ also contradicts the concepts of identity introduced by Gee (2001). For Gee (2001), identity is influenced by the positions individuals occupy in society (Institutional-identity), how they are seen by others (Discourse-identity) and the experiences they have in certain affinity groups. In a broader sense, Gee (2001) presents four different types of identities, which he argued could not be seen as separate from each other but rather as predominant in a certain time and place. The first of them is ‘nature-identity’, which the author describes as a state that is developed from natural forces (e.g., being twins). The next type is ‘institution-identity’, or a position someone assumes within an institution that is authorised by its members (e.g., being a Professor). The third way to view identity is as a ‘discourse-identity’, which relates to individual traits that are recognised in discourses or the language used by individuals. Finally, the ‘affinity-identity’ relates to social practices that sustain group affiliations (e.g., a group of sports coaching students dressed in a similar way).
Gee (2001) called these different ways to see Identity as ‘interpretive systems’. According to the author, ‘almost any identity trait can be understood in terms of any of these different interpretive systems’ (p. 108). For example, consider a coach identity. It can be understood as an institution-identity, where individuals will be expected to act in a certain way, which the institution sees as being a coach. One can also treat being a coach as a discourse identity. This refers to the language people use when talking to and about someone as a coach. The coach identity can also be seen as an affinity-identity, which is recognised by coaches sharing their practices and affinities with other coaches, such as discussing their coaching practices. Finally, understanding coach identity as a natural identity would challenge the majority of discussions surrounding the profession. Perhaps, this is one example to show that some of the interpretive systems will be more specific to ‘almost any’ yet ‘not all’ the traits under investigation.

Furthermore, most of the interpretive systems cannot operate on their own (Gee, 2001). For example, being a coach (institution-identity) could not be sustained without discourses and dialogues. Individuals’ positions as coaches are only sustained because people talk about and treat them as coaches (discourse-identity). This perspective is illustrated by Gee (2001) who argues that “[i]t is only because other people treat, talk about, and interact with my friend as a charismatic person that she is one.” (p. 103). Here, due to the fluid nature of discourses the concept of ‘core identity’ seems incompatible.

2.3.4 Coach Identity – an under explored territory

As highlighted in the first section, “learning changes not just what the learner knows…but also who the learner is” (Wortham, 2004, p. 716). This process of transformation “is an experience of identity” (Wenger, 1998, p. 215) that invites researchers to consider ‘who’ is
coaching (Jones et al., 2012). The focus on the person of the coach can allow for important findings in order to “succeed in developing relational, social and emotional accounts of coaches’ work” (Purdy and Potrac, 2014, p. 3). Here, paying more attention to the landscapes in which individuals operate is needed if the formation of professional identities are to be better understood (Beijaard et al., 2004). This is in keeping with the work of Faircloth (2012) who discusses the fluid nature of identities that are continually negotiated through daily experiences.

Despite the above recognition, little attention has been directed to better understanding how coach identities develop (Purdy and Potrac, 2014). This is not to say that the focus of some studies are not relevant to identity work. For example, Cushion and Jones (2014) highlight two key aspects relevant within identity theory, namely agency and structure. More specifically, the authors uncovered the unwritten rules that informed the interactions between coaches and players in a Football Academy. This is an important aspect in developing an identity as through better understanding their practices, coaches can decide on how much resistance they may direct to specific practices, a learning opportunity that again shows how learning and identity processes are inextricable (Wortham, 2004). Despite discussing some relevant aspects related to identity shaping, the study focused on how players were affected by social practices that served to reproduce the existing culture rather than on how coaches’ identities were affected.

The study by Cushion and Partington (2014) provided a review of literature on ‘coaching philosophy’. Taking into account that previous literature on the topic (e.g., Camire, Trudel and Forneris, 2014, 2012; Kidman and Hanrahan, 2011) use words such as personal values and beliefs when describing coaching philosophy, one could recognise the potential link between philosophy and identity. This potential connection is reinforced by Cushion and Partington (2014) when they introduce the notion of self-awareness, a concept that is also
focused upon within identity literature (e.g., Carver, 2003). Here, borrowing from the work of Jones, Edwards and Vioto-Filho (2014), Cushion and Partington (2014) criticised “the uncritical representation of a fixed and stable individual” (Cushion and Partington, 2014, p. 9), a discussion that is often present in identity literature. For example, Erichsen (2011) refers to a postmodern conception of identity as “in flux, continually changing, and always becoming” (p. 128). Despite briefly referring to the term ‘social identity’ when discussing how coaches acquire “a set of practical cultural competencies” (p. 10), Cushion and Partington (2014) focused on the lack of a conceptual clarity for the term ‘philosophy’ rather than exploring how it is developed or its connection with identity.

Another study by Nash and Sproule (2009) focused on the development of expert coaching rather than analyzing the landscape in which coaches operate. Despite recognising the role of the context in informing coach development, the authors did not explore how such contexts affected ‘who’ the coaches became (i.e., experts). This exploration is a key aspect of work on identity where the interaction between individuals and the social environment are investigated (Illeris, 2014). Instead, the work of Nash and Sproule (2009) takes a retrospective approach where coaches were asked to recall their experiences of coach education during interviews, already considering their then current perceived positions as expert coaches. Despite beneficial in informing coach development, such approach did not allow for exploration of coaches’ identity; that is, a “type of ongoing negotiation of participation shaped by – and shaping in response – the context(s) in which it occurs.” (Faircloth, 2012, p. 186).

On a perhaps closer attempt to explore coach identity from a role identity theory perspective, the work by Pope, Hall and Tobin (2014) showed how the coaching role was dominant within the participants’ (i.e., coaches’) lives. However, as the authors acknowledged, the study was “limited to descriptive analysis and did not allow for inferences pertaining to causal
relationships” (p. 150). Despite no doubt a relevant start to better understanding coach identity, a more in-depth approach appears necessary to explore how identities are shaped by (and shape) the subject and structure. This would require a closer involvement with the coaches’ day to day lives, instead of the one interview used in this instance. Moreover, a more homogeneous group may allow for better representation of how certain structures may impact on identity prominence. For example, the participants varied in relation to age (22 to 60 year olds), coaching experience (between 5-35 years), sports coached, years coached (between 5 and 35 years) and level coached (e.g., High School and National). The main concern here is that the great level of variability between the participants may make the analysis of identity somewhat hard, given the great influence of the different social contexts in its development. Drawing on the work of Miller and Cronin (2013), Thomson, Potrac and Jones (2015) remind us, “action both shapes and is shaped by context, making both mutually determinative” (p. 988).

In a longer intervention (four months), Thomson, Potrac and Jones (2015) interviewed a newly appointed coach in relation to the acceptance and respect experienced within a new club. The completion of five interviews within the four month period showed how Adam (the coach) attempted to establish himself as a coach. Concepts such as micro-politics, professional front and social bond can all be related to aspects inherent to identity and social identity theory (Stets and Burke, 2000). For example, when adopting the ‘role’ of a coach (identity theory), one is also led to live within a set of social rules that categorise one as a member of a specific group (social identity theory). This often involves individuals behaving in ways that will accentuate their similarities to in-group members while enhancing the perceived differences with out-group members (Stets and Burke, 2000). Despite creating the potential for such discussion, Thomson, Potrac and Jones (2015) use the work of Goffman (1959) with the aim to further explore the micro-political nature of coaching rather than the impact on Adam’s identity. This serves to highlight that despite recent interest with
understanding identity-related concepts in coaching research, there is still a long territory to be explored in order to understand how “coaching identities are developed, advanced, sustained, or, indeed, disrupted” (Purdy and Potrac, 2016, pp.779-780).

2.3.5 Reflective Practice

Reflective practice, acknowledged in previously discussed literature (e.g. Ryan and Carmichael, 2016; Gilardi and Lozza, 2009; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010) as a contributing factor to the development of professional identities is seen as a much needed and valued practice in the sport context (Knowles, Gilbourne, Cropley and Dugdill, 2014; Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016). Despite the recognition of the value of reflective practice for learning and identity, its application in practice is not a simple task (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016). This is particularly the case in coaching where individuals tend to learn from observing those who they respect and often take their practice as the right way of coaching without further considerations (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016).

There are many different definitions for reflective practice, one of them being the act of “[l]ooking back and making sense of your practice, learning from this and using this learning to affect future action” (Ghaye, 2010, p.22). Amongst the many benefits highlighted in the literature is the role of reflective practice is supporting sport practitioners (e.g., psychologists, coaches) to deal with the complex nature of their work (Bowes and Jones, 2006; Cropley and Hanton, 2011). It is also seen as a way for learners to connect and make sense of their experiences (Knowles et al., 2014). Here, reflective practice is particularly valued by those coaches who associate their role as that of a teacher; that is, someone who is invested in the teaching and learning process (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016). In this respect, despite advances made from a theoretical point of view, there needs to be more ‘on the ground’ evidence-based research to further develop the field (Knowles, Katz and
Change (including personal and professional development) has been considered a key aspect originated from involvement in reflective practice (Knowles et al., 2014; Anderson, Knowles and Gilbourne, 2004). This change has been related to, amongst other aspects, a “change in knowledge of the self” (Knowles et al 2014, p. 10). Despite such an important consideration, reflective practice has been criticised by being driven by policy and a requirement of courses if individuals are to obtain their qualifications (Huntley et al., 2014). A potential concern suggested by Huntley et al. (2014) is that individuals may attempt to engage in reflective practice as a box ticking exercise rather than a meaningful and developmental activity. Other concerns refer to how realistic and meaningful the practices are in relation to the requirements of the workplace. For example, Knowles et al. (2006) interviewed six graduate students from a Coaching Science bachelor degree to explore how they deployed reflective practice within their coaching practice after graduation. Findings of the study suggested that participants’ engagement with reflective practice did not match the academic rigour with which it was discussed in the course undertaken by the graduates. Here, the criticality of such practice was one of the key aspects that suffered. As a result, Knowles et al. (2006) argued that a review was needed to better understand how reflective practice (covered in the course) met the requirements of the workplace.

This call for a review in the way reflective practice affects professional development and practice is an essential advancement required in sports (Picknell, Cropley, Hanton and Mellalieu, 2014; Knowles, Borrie and Telfer, 2005). Findings from Knowles, Borrie and Telfer (2005) revealed that despite adopting assessment modes that required the use of reflective practice (e.g., logs), the six National Governing Bodies they examined failed to provide evidence of having teaching structures that helped learners to understand and nurture their use of reflective practice. With this being the case, coaches are not provided with the
time and space that is needed to develop their reflective skills which is likely to result in superficial reflection (Cushion et al., 2010). Knowles, Borrie and Telfer’s (2005) study focused on analysing the programme structures which resulted in only two cases where reflective learning was included as part of their learning outcomes. Despite beneficial in parts, the sole use of documentation to assess the use of reflective practice in courses may paint a rather incomplete picture of what happens in practice. Here, the combination of documentation analysis with other methods of data collection (e.g., participant observation) had the potential to reveal more about what courses advocate they do (espoused theory) and what they actually do (theories in use) (Argyris and Schön, 1974).

The advancement in the way reflective practice is studied is of paramount importance as much of the information discussed is based on theoretical or subjective accounts (Picknell et al., 2014; Cropley and Hanton, 2011; Hall and Gray, 2016). In this context, Hall and Gray (2016) argue that “the coach’s voice has been largely ignored in a domain where their highly personal experience is absolutely central to the topic of interest” (p. 2). It is not surprising then, that Hall and Gray (2016) decided to adopt a narrative approach based on action research to represent the experiences of a coach (i.e., Edward, the first author) when engaging with reflective practice in two coaching courses (i.e., level three rugby coaching and MSc in sport coaching). Indeed, action research has been seen as an approach “that encourages coaches to have a reflective conversation with the situation” (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016, p. 26). Interestingly, one of the key findings discussed by Hall and Gray (2016) was the discomfort felt by Edward when observing his own coaching practice and recognising that his espoused theory was incompatible with the theories-in-use. The use of video footage here allowed Edward to recognise that many of his practices were taken for granted as the right ‘way of coaching’ without a clear justification or attempt to reflect upon his assumptions.
The use of video observation also helped coaches in Partington et al.’s (2015) study to better understand and, as a result, change their behaviours. This is in keeping with the work of Cushion, Harvey, Muir and Nelson (2012) where the use of reflective practice was seen as a catalyst for change. More specifically, Partington et al. (2015) followed five youth football coaches for three Football seasons to examine how their coaching practice may have changed over time as a result of the use of video-based feedback. Similar to Hall and Gray’s (2016) findings, the coaches argued that being able to watch their sessions was key in igniting the value of reflective practice for improving practice.

Other reflective practice techniques have been suggested in recent literature such as the use of reflective cards (Hughes, Lee and Chesterfield, 2009). Here, three Equine sports coaches were required to reflect in-action (Schön, 1983) over a six week period and participate in two focus groups where they discussed their use of reflective cards. Hughes, Lee and Chesterfield (2009) argued that participants became more self-aware of their practice as a result of reflection. This was seen as particular important in coaching where ‘noticing’ (Dewey, 1933) was key for guiding action to improve practice, something that Ghaye (2008) has argued to be the main aim of reflective practice. Furthermore, becoming self-aware has been suggested as a key aspect in professional development (e.g., Peel, Cropley, Hanton and Fleming, 2013; Holt and Strean, 2001). It was facilitated by both the use of reflective cards and the reflective conversations that participants took part in during focus groups.

Despite many benefits associated with reflective practice, barriers have also been discussed in the literature. Amongst those are time constraints, lack of motivation and understanding of how to reflect (e.g., Knowles et al, 2006; Cropley and Hanton, 2011), difficulties in reflecting on positively perceived moments (Ghaye, 2011) and the emotional responses that may challenge previous ways of knowing and behaving (e.g., Peel, Cropley, Hanton and Fleming, 2013). These barriers aligned to very recent critiques regarding the intricacies of
reflective practice call for a more comprehensive understanding of contexts in which it occurs (Cushion, 2016). Here, Cushion argued that reflective practice is often taken for granted as a positive tool to develop sports coaches. According to Cushion (2016), the concern is that, instead of the development of individuals through empowerment, reflective practice may become a normalised practice that legitimates certain ways of being and thinking. In this respect, Cushion (2016) claimed that if coaches refuse to engage in prescribed reflective practices, they may be seen as unprofessional. Whereas some literature focus on how the use of reflective practices with others may result in positive outcomes (e.g., Hughes, Lee and Chesterfield, 2009; Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2016) such as self-awareness, Cushion (2016) focuses on the idea that it may instead “reinforce practitioners’ self-surveillance as well as contribute to the construction of docility” (p. 9).

Despite the lack of studies that use reflective practice frameworks to understand identity development, some significant contributions are seen in the work of Dixon, Lee and Ghaye (2016) and Peel, Cropley, Hanton and Fleming (2013). Dixon, Lee and Ghaye (2016) argued that the use of strengths-based reflective practices can target one of the common discussed barriers in reflective practice; that is, the focus on ‘problems’ that need to be solved. The use of the word ‘problems’ often receives negative connotation in the literature due to its association with ‘mistakes’ and wrong doing (Loughran, 2006). As such, it relates to what Dixon, Lee and Ghaye (2013) called ‘pedagogy of scarcity’; that is, an approach to reflective practice of which the main focus is to ‘fix’ problems (p. 597). Counteracting this approach, Dixon, Lee and Ghaye (2016) argue that “particular reflective practices which are fuelled by positivity and the use of strengths (both performance and character) can reveal new insights and understandings about who we are, what we do and why” (p. 155). This relates to a ‘pedagogy of abundance’ (Dixon, Lee and Ghaye, 2013) where a focus on expanding the individual’s strengths (rather than deficiencies) can lead to transformation. This echoes the findings from Peel, Cropley, Hanton and Fleming (2013), who examined the use of reflective
practice by a volunteer youth sports coach in an autoethnographic study. The findings showed that, as a result of focusing more on his strengths (instead of ‘deficiencies’), the coach was able to recognise qualities in his coaching practice that he wanted to reproduce in other aspects of his life (e.g., work as a manager). Here, the use of reflective practice and exposure to sociological and psychological theories allowed the coach to understand his own development. Again, despite initial links between reflective practice and identity development, the focus of Peel et al.’s (2013) work did not allow them to comprehensively examine the relationships between both aspects.

Based on the literature reviewed, it is clear that reflective practice is seen as a valued tool for developing coaching identities. It is also suggested that through reflection individuals become more self-aware. Equally important are the challenges imposed in studying the topic, most notably the need for more evidence based studies that take into account the contextual complexities experienced by coaches and the idea of a pedagogy of abundance where reflective practice happens through a closer focus on the coaches’ strengths.

2.3.6 Concluding thoughts

The purpose of the second part of the literature review was to explore theories and concepts that have been central to studies regarding identity development. As apparent in the review, the main challenge in studying identity is to grapple with the variability with which the term is defined often within the same area of study. This then suggests further complexity in understanding how identity changes.

Many of the studies drawn upon in this part of the chapter originated from studies on teaching. Here, pedagogical support and mentorship were considered key for professional identity development (Trede at al., 2012). Moreover, limitations in the understanding of
professional development within specific disciplines were also raised (Timoštšuk and Ugaste, 2010). Overall, despite beneficial, the studies reviewed rarely allowed for ongoing exploration of professional identity development.

Key aspects related to social identity theory and identity theory also revealed many similarities between the two theories. In this respect, the belief that “one always and simultaneously occupies a role and belongs to a group” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 228) calls for “a more fully integrated view of the self” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 224). Amongst the many aspects discussed in this review, the concept of ‘core identity’ was problematized as ‘fluid in nature’. Additionally, the role of reflective practice as a catalyst to self-awareness and identity change appeared as a key finding originated from studies in the sports area.

Despite the recognition that identity relevant aspects have been covered in some coaching research, little attention has been directed to better understanding how coach identities develop (Purdy and Potrac, 2014). Indeed, there is still a long territory to be explored in order to understand how “coaching identities are developed, advanced, sustained, or, indeed, disrupted” (Purdy and Potrac, 2016, pp.779-780).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into 11 sections. This first (a brief introduction) sets the scene for the chapter. Section two explains the ontological and epistemological tenets of the research paradigm adopted. This subsequently informs a brief overview of the methods used in the study which are, in turn, covered in section three. Section four comprises a discussion regarding the sampling criteria and recruitment process adopted within the study, followed by a discussion of the research design utilised. Section six contains a detailed account of the methods of data collection (focus groups, reflective logs and video diaries), procedures and practicalities. An overview of the pilot work undertaken is covered in section seven, followed by an in-depth account of the data analysis process adopted in section eight. In section nine, the concept of reflexivity is discussed with a particular focus on how it was applied within the study. Research trustworthiness is then covered in section ten, focusing on the key concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Finally, an account of ethical considerations in relation to the study is presented in section 11.

3.2 Research paradigm: ontological and epistemological considerations

A research paradigm can be defined as “a view of what counts as accepted or correct scientific knowledge or way of working” (Cohen, Manion and Morrissson, 2011, p. 5). It “contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p. 33). The researcher’s ontological assumptions refer to “assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature of things”, whereas epistemological
assumptions refer to “ways of researching and enquiring into the nature of reality and nature of things” (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 3). In other words, a researcher’s ontological and epistemological premises reflect the way they understand the world and how it should be investigated.

Amongst the major research paradigms are positivist, postpositivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical and feminist-poststructural (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). The paradigm adopted in the current study was the constructivist-interpretive. Building on a view of learning and identity as socially and contextually negotiated, the adoption of such a paradigm held the potential to “address the processes of interactions amongst individuals” (Cresswell, 2013 p. 25) as well as taking into account the context in which they were investigated. In this respect, it also had the potential to address the key aims and objectives of the study. This is because the central aim of the interpretive paradigm “is to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 17). More specifically, the use of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm was of particular relevance to this study, the aims of which evolved around ‘making sense’ of students’ learning experiences and identity changes. Here, in line with this paradigm’s epistemological premise, knowledge was viewed as subjective and co-created by the researcher and participants.

The ontological premise of the study is based around relativism; in other words, there is an understanding that experiences are locally constructed, resulting in the creation of multiple realities (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Indeed, “[f]rom an interpretative perspective the hope of a universal theory that characterizes the normative outlook gives way to multifaceted images of human behaviour as varied as the situations and contexts supporting them” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 18). Here, knowledge is seen as a human construction and, therefore, “it can never be certifiable as ultimately true but rather it is problematic and ever changing” (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26).
The assumptions made about the nature of reality (i.e., ontology = multiple and self-created realities) leads to the epistemological assumptions embedded within the interpretivist paradigm. Here, “subjective interaction seems to be the only way” to access the realities that exist in people’s minds (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26). In this respect, the findings of any research are a result of the interactions between the researcher and participants (Guba, 1996). Indeed, the researcher is referred to as “the research instrument par excellence” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 18). Rather than objective findings then, the methods adopted when collecting data in interpretivist work allow for subjective knowledge to be co-created by participants and researchers (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011).

It is, therefore, accepted and expected that the results obtained from this study are not applicable worldwide and/or in their entirety. Indeed, recognising multiple and contradictory realities whilst neglecting ‘one size fits all’ assumptions is essential in the search for meaningful and rich contributions. Having said that, an expectation exists that not only can the results but also the process of developing this longitudinal research provide insights that invoke critical reflection and meaningful discussions amongst those who are involved in the creation and elaboration of coach education provisions. Additionally, although interpretative studies may look at specific cases, by reflecting on the findings one is able to generate ways to improve aspects in their own context.

Despite the many contributions made by interpretivists, especially in educational research, their work has not been free from criticisms. Amongst these are the claims that interpretivists “have gone too far in abandoning scientific procedures of verification and in giving up hope of discovering useful generalizations about behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 21). Another criticism regards the suggestion that “subjective reports may be incomplete and misleading” and that they may create “narrowly microsociological perspectives” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 21). A response to these assertions focuses on the steps adopted to guarantee trustworthiness within the current research agenda. For example, a clear and thorough explanation of the
data analysis process employed can prevent contradicting claims regarding incomplete or misleading reports. This and other aspects related to the quality and ‘reach’ of the study are discussed later on in this chapter.

3.3 A Brief overview of the methods adopted

In line with the constructivist-interpretive approach adopted, the methods to be used within the study were decided upon based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions introduced in the previous section. More specifically, methods were chosen that allow interaction between the researcher and participants so that realities can be co-constructed (Angen, 2000). In this respect, the objectives of the study were addressed through the use of three research methods within a broad ethnographic framework. These included individual reflective logs (RLs), video diaries (VDs) and focus group (FG) interviews.

Qualitative researchers have increased their search for ‘new’ methods of data collection (Travers, 2009). However, “whether something is recognised as new will depend on where and when one makes the claim, and the particular cultural context” (Travers, 2009, p. 169).

It is worth noting, therefore, that the methods adopted in the current study were not entirely new. For instance, there is evidence to show the use of video diaries (e.g., Noyes, 2004), reflective logs (e.g., Jindal-Snape and Holmes, 2009) and focus groups (e.g., McLafferty, 2004) in previous work. The ‘innovation’ within this study, however, comes from the combination of the three and the context in which they were used; to explore learning experiences and identity development throughout a three year coaching degree.

It is important to note that the methods were selected not because of their somewhat ‘innovative’ characteristics, but most importantly, for their appropriateness in answering the
research questions (Morgan, 1997). In this context, there was an attempt to avoid ‘being dazzled’ by new technologies, and risk trivialising crucial aspects such as the practicalities and ‘problems’ faced when using such methods. A more detailed account of the methods used within this study is presented after introducing the participants and the research design.

3.4 Characteristics and recruitment of participants

The participants comprised 12 BSc undergraduate sports coaching students. They were chosen using purposeful and convenience sampling (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2014). Purposeful sampling involves sampling with a particular purpose in mind. The principal objective of such a procedure is not representation of all possible variations, but to gain a deeper understanding of analysed cases. Here, the criteria used for selection was to recruit students who were in their first year of study on the BSc Sports Coaching programme at Cardiff Metropolitan University. This leads into the second aspect of sampling, that of convenience. The need to collect information from students soon after they had begun their studies meant that their availability and willingness to take part in the study were of crucial importance. Despite such an initial focus, the recruitment process allowed the researcher to discuss the research in depth with the participants as well as providing them with opportunities to consider whether they had the potential to be ‘information-rich’ cases, or, in other words, “those from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 2002, p. 46). This was particularly with regards to their ability and willingness to contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the study over the course of the three years, including engagement with the methods of data collection used.
The study was introduced to first year students during their induction week; i.e., the week that preceded students’ first week of official lectures. Two days were targeted for the recruitment process; both being during the induction week. On the first day, the aims and objectives of the study were presented to students, who were provided with an information sheet (see appendix 1) containing further details about the project. Students were then given opportunities to ask questions. Those students who showed an initial interest to partake in the study were asked to provide contact details by filling in and detaching the slip from the information sheet. The students, however, were made aware that they did not have to commit to the study there and then. In order to allow the students to decide whether they would like to take part in the study, they were informed that they would have another opportunity to ask questions and discuss the implications during the second session of the week. A total of 10 students showed interest during the induction week. This number was raised to 13 when three more students decided to join the study two weeks later. However, further discussions with the students to gather evidence of their suitability for the study revealed that one of them showed concerns regarding being able to contribute and commit fully to it. Consequently, it was agreed that his participation in the study was not appropriate. Subsequently, a total number of 12 students committed to the study and signed the consent form as detailed in the ‘Ethical Procedures’ section.

3.5 Research design

The process of developing high quality research consists of a well-thought and detailed approach; one that is fit for purpose (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). It involves making a series of decisions in accordance with the aims and objectives of a particular study. It also involves an alignment between aspects such as the aims of the study, the methods adopted, and the resources available (Flick, 2009). This planning stage, very often called
‘research design’, constitutes “the means for achieving the goals of the research” (Flick, 2009, p. 133). It is important to highlight that, although the term ‘design’ may suggest a rigid structure, flexibility is (and was) essential “to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 255).

Taking into account the aims of the current study (identified in Chapter One), a longitudinal design was adopted. This approach is defined by Thomson, Plumridge and Holland (2003) as a “deliberate way in which temporality is designed into the research process, making change a central focus of analytical attention” (p. 185). Indeed, the ability to register changes through repeated data collection cycles, a key aspect of the current study, is seen as one of the strengths of a longitudinal research design (Flick, 2009).

Within this longitudinal design, a qualitative approach was embraced and can be defined as

...an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions ...that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

More specifically, this qualitative approach consisted of three principal methods: individual reflective logs, video diaries, and focus group interviews. Such an approach has been termed ‘methodological eclecticism’ (Hammersley, 1996), which emphasises the practical nature of research as the driving concern to ensure an appropriate fit between the method and the study’s aims and objectives. Table 1 provides an overview of the study, in which participants were required to keep reflective logs and video diaries throughout the three years of their undergraduate studies (i.e., from October 2011 to June 2014). In addition, the focus groups met four times during each year (October, December, February and May). Consequently, 16 rounds of group interviews were held throughout each year, making a total of 46 throughout the three year duration of the project.
3.6 Methods of data collection; Procedures and practicalities

3.6.1 Focus groups

3.6.1.1 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are defined as “an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic” (Patton, 2002, p. 385). They are “[a]mongst the most widely used research tools in the social sciences” (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2007, p. 1). Despite this popularity, their use in educational research presents a more steady growth when compared to areas such as politics and business (Cohen et al., 2011).

Amongst the advantages of focus groups are: the presence of the researcher who is able to interact directly with the participants, asking extra questions when necessary; the potential to produce rich data; the discussion of ideas that would not have been possible without the
interaction of group members; flexibility as the researcher is allowed to investigate different
topics in a variety of settings; and, the relative quick capturing of data when compared to
individual interviews (Stewart et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2011).

On the other hand, focus groups can also present challenges to the research process. Amongst
these are the ability to deal with an opinionated or dominant participants, and “the more
difficult organizational details and work required to analyse group protocols” (Flick, 2009,
p. 207). Other challenges involve people not willing to share their viewpoints if they perceive
it to be the minority perspective (Patton, 2002). Cohen et al. (2011) further remind us of the
need to consider key aspects when conducting a focus group such as the size and the number
of groups required. These are discussed next amongst other key factors that were taken into
account when developing this study.

3.6.1.2 Group sizes and composition

It is common to find literature suggesting that focus groups should include between 6 and
12 participants. For instance, Creswell (2009) argues that focus groups should be undertaken
‘with six to eight interviewees in each group’ (p. 181), while Stewart et al. (2007) argue that
they generally involve 8-12 participants. However, Krueger and Casey (2009) claim that
focus groups can be performed with as few as four participants. This view is reinforced by
McLafferty (2004) who claims that the focus group interviews she conducted (of which some
contained four participants) were a rich source of data and more manageable. Despite the
number of textbooks delimitating the number of participants in a focus group session,
Morgan (1997) argues that ‘one should not feel imprisoned by either this lower or upper
boundary’ (p. 43); a position which somewhat disagrees with Stewart et al.’s (2007) claim
that “[f]ewer than 6 participants makes for a rather dull discussion” (p. 58). Morgan,
however, highlights the danger of following such a stipulation without taking into account
the purpose and constraints associated with the research being developed. For instance, the
author argues that if rich information is to be obtained from each participant, “small groups are more useful” as they allow “each participant more time to talk” (p. 42). This view is shared by other researchers who claim that participants in smaller gatherings can play a more active role and create more focused discussions when compared to larger groups (Wibeck, Abrandt Dahlgren and Öberg, 2007; Krueger and Casey, 2009). According to Krueger (1994), there are two factors that dictate the size of a focus group: “[i]t must be small enough for everyone to have opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions” (p. 17).

After conducting a pilot interview with four PhD students (see ‘pilot study’ section for more details), it was concluded that the number of participants in each focus group should be between three and five. Indeed, experiences throughout the data collection process revealed that participants were more ‘equally’ engaged in the focus groups when in groups of three. Despite this, there were instances when the students’ availability meant that groups of five participants had to be adopted. In this context, some of the participants, who previously showed a good level of active engagement in previous focus groups, presented themselves in a quieter and in a ‘not as comfortable’ way. Therefore, efforts were made to keep the groups to “3 highly involved participants” (Morgan, 1997, p. 43) based on the aims of the study and the number of participants available.

In order to verify saturation levels; that is, the point at which additional data collection no longer generates new understanding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), the decision about the number of groups required throughout the project was crucial. Here, between three to five groups was seen as ideal to provide such a level (Morgan, 1997). Despite the initial target set for the study of having four groups of three participants each, special consideration was given to the possible need for more groups, in which case, a new recruitment process would have taken place (Morgan, 1997, p. 44).
Each student (n=12) was allocated to one of four focus groups; each group then, comprised three students. Regarding the composition of the groups, Morgan (1997) argues that one of the key aspects to take into consideration is the variability of the participants within and across groups. Moreover, “a certain amount of homogeneity among group members is desirable, while for the sake of active discussion, some heterogeneity should also be sought” (Wibeck et al., 2007, p. 260). However, one could argue as to whether it is possible to form a ‘homogeneous’ group. For instance, Roulston (2010) claims that “to organize a group on the basis of one category (e.g., that of occupying an identity as an ‘international student’), may overlook other relevant social locations (e.g., native language or country of origin) that may be of relevance to both the participants and the topic studied.” (p. 40). A comparison between groups was not the aim of this study. Consequently, due to students’ varied schedules, the group compositions were decided according to students’ availability. Therefore, the composition of group members varied from one set of focus groups to the next.

**3.6.1.3 Organising the groups**

In order to verify participants’ availability for each of the focus groups, the students were contacted through different means including face-to-face conversations, emails and text messages. This contact was made at least one week prior to the focus group interviews. Students were provided with different dates and times and were asked to verify which days/times they would be available (providing more than one slot when possible). This strategy is seen by Krueger and Casey (2009) as an efficient way to organise focus groups. Indeed, the authors claim that contacting participants before having the dates in mind could result in a “nightmare” (p. 75). Different dates and times were offered with the aim of providing suitable slots for participants, increasing the likelihood that they would be free to participate (Stewart et al., 2007). After gathering information on participants’ availability, the next step involved creating groups of three participants. This represented a straight
forward process at times (i.e., when groups of three were formed naturally as a result of participants’ availability) whilst in other situations (i.e., when participants’ availability meant group numbers included other than three participants) students were contacted again to discuss their potential availability to attend a suitable slot.

The sessions took place in different rooms at the University and on a few occasions, in social settings such as a local café. Each room was booked for two hours to make sure time was sufficient for not only the focus group itself but also to allow (pre and post) informal conversations between the researcher and the participants. The final step was to send participants a reminder a day or two before the focus group session (Stewart et al., 2007).

3.6.1.4 On the focus group day

In order to create a welcoming environment, the interview room was organised in advance and refreshments were provided. Chairs were organised in a circle around a table to ensure that group members could see each other and to “reduce the tendency for particular members of the group to emerge as dominant” (Stewart et al., 2007, p. 32). As many of the focus groups were conducted near a mealtime, some form of food (sandwich, biscuits) was also provided. According to Stewart et al. (2007), “[t]he presence of food tends to relax participants, and it encourages participation by eliminating concerns about meals.” (p. 56). Once the room was organised, participants met just before their focus group in one of the University’s cafés, as this was an easy place to find (Krueger and Casey, 2009). From there students were directed to the focus group room. My being on time and showing students an appreciation for their participation in the study contributed to creating an environment of trust, seen as essential in focus group functionality (Wibeck et al., 2007).

Preceding the start of each focus group, the participants had a chance to chat for a few minutes about anything that would come naturally to the conversation. This was a way of providing opportunities to talk which could also facilitate their interaction in the focus group.
(Krueger and Casey, 2009). This was also a way of developing a positive relationship between myself as the researcher and the participants.

The next stage was a brief introduction to the focus group. Here it was made clear that the students’ experiences were being explored in a non-judgemental way. This was seen as key in allowing participants to discuss their actual feelings and experiences, rather than attempting to some self-presentation in perceived desired ways.

3.6.1.5 Using semi-structured interviews

The level of structure adopted during focus groups can influence the results obtained. For instance, the use of more structured group interviews can allow for greater focus directed at the researcher’s interests, despite those not necessarily being as important for the participants themselves (Morgan, 1997). On the other hand, less structured group interviews can be a strong tool that can ‘spark a lively discussion among [the participants] without much guidance from either the researcher’s questions or the moderator’s direction.’ (Morgan, 1997, p. 40). Despite such a benefit, however, a risk exists in this latter strategy that the group discussions may lack direction and, therefore, not allow for the objectives of the study to be achieved.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, as well as respecting its aims and objectives, a balanced and flexible approach was seen as desirable. Therefore, semi-structure interviews consisting of open ended questions (see appendix 4) were adopted (Cohen et al., 2011). Being semi-structured in nature, the interviews allowed a framework of questions whilst allowing freedom to probe beyond the immediate answers given. This offered the flexibility for gaining further information on issues deemed important, enabling both clarification and elaboration to take place (Bryman, 2016). The interviews were also loosely structured on the students unfolding logs and video diaries, thus providing an opportunity for participants to communicate their own understandings, perspectives and attribution of meaning as well as
providing an opportunity for their further examination and deconstruction.

In order to provide participants with sufficient cues to stimulate discussion, one of the strategies used was the addition of scenarios to the interview guide. Such scenarios are seen as “powerful triggers” by Abrandt, Dahlgren and Öberg, (2001, p. 278), especially when they contain opinions that may be provocative and stimulate emotional involvement. Using quotes from the video diaries and reflective logs proved to be an effective way to provoke participants’ interest in discussing topics. It also allowed participants to further explore themes that had been raised, and for knowledge to be elaborated upon and co-constructed (Wibeck, et al., 2007).

3.6.1.6 The role of the moderator

The role of the moderator during focus groups involves a balance between being directive and being a “voiceless participant” (Wibeck et al., 2007). Such a role was described by Wilkinson (1998) as the person who

…allows students to focus and direct discussion while listening carefully to determine when intervention…is needed to refocus the discussion, challenge thinking, or subtly raise additional points to be considered. (p. 304)

There was an interest in letting the discussion flow naturally as long as the participants were focusing on the topic of interest. When irrelevancies were introduced, the conversation was carefully and subtly (very often using humour as a strategy) guided back on target (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Additionally, the use of humour served as a “powerful bonding agent” in this regard, especially when used with spontaneity (Krueger and Casey, 2009, p. 102).

It is also crucial that a moderator be aware of the dilemma between dominant versus silent participants. In this sense, silent participants were encouraged to contribute in order to avoid dominant participants monopolising the discussion. The former’s participation was
encouraged by the use of non-verbal signals and prompts, resulting in their increased involvement (Smithson, 2000).

The use of prompts and pauses were crucial whilst moderating the groups (Krueger and Casey, 2009). For instance, a short pause of around five seconds was given after participants seemed to have finalised their comments on a topic, in order to observe if other points were added to the discussion. Moreover, a concern existed regarding the probing of ‘vague’ answers. For example, when participants mentioned ‘I agree’, they were often asked to explain their opinion further. However, excessive probing was avoided as it “can be time consuming, annoying and unnecessary” (Krueger and Casey, 2009, p. 100).

There was also an effort to provide ‘value neutral’ gestures and comments. This was in line with the idea previously introduced to participants regarding the search for their opinions rather than ‘right’ answers. There was, however, an attempt to show empathy towards participants’ comments by using words such as ‘ok’, ‘uhm’ and open ended prompts.

Another aspect considered in this respect was the value participants attributed to a particular topic being studied. As argued by Morgan (1997), ‘…[w]hen participants discuss a topic at length, this is a good indication that they find it interesting, but that is not the same as saying that they think it is important’ (p. 62). Therefore, special attention was paid to identifying the aspects students considered important in their discussion rather than leaving it to speculation. Such identification was done by using prompts and summarising participants’ contributions in order to clarify whether the message received was the one intended.

3.6.1.7 Recording the data

Data were collected using an Olympus digital voice recorder (model WS-650S). Additionally, notes were taken in the form of key words to facilitate further exploration of aspects raised by the participants during focus groups. For instance, in one, Steve mentioned
how a lecturer never gave students a straight answer, demonstrating frustration. At this point, the word ‘frustration’ was noted down, which allowed further exploration once appropriate.

Disturbing the flow of the focus group was not desirable, especially as this could risk not listening to what the participants had to say thus providing a very ‘researcher led’ conversation. As soon as the focus group ended, and once participants had left, notes were written based on the issues discussed in the focus group and the key issues and emotions revealed, which facilitated the process of data analysis (Krueger and Casey, 2009). The next stage involved checking if the data were successfully recorded before storing them in a safe computer, ready to be transcribed.

3.6.1.8 Focus group duration

Special attention was given to generating an appropriate number of questions that could allow rich data to be collected. In this respect, rather than the number of questions answered, the focus was on the depth in which they were answered. A flexible approach was adopted here, which was based on the participants’ contributions. This way, interesting or unclear responses were considered in depth without the moderator feeling hurried to complete the questions pre-established.

The focus groups’ duration varied from 60 to 90 minutes. This somewhat differed from that proposed by Stewart et al. (2007), who argued that focus groups should last between 90 and 150 minutes. It is important, however, to remember that the same authors proposed groups of eight to twelve participants which may at least partially explain the higher average duration recommended.

3.6.2 Reflective diaries

3.6.2.1 The use of reflective diaries as a research method

Data collection through written means has been performed in many different ways within
research. For example, Irwin and Hramiak (2010) used online discussion forums to better understand trainee teachers’ identities. Other studies (e.g., Snee, 2010) similarly used blogs in trying to understand the stories people tell about their gap years. Reflective diaries have also been used as a pedagogical tool, more specifically when assessing student work (Dummer, Cook, Parker, Barrett and Hull, 2008) and to better understand the challenges and successes experienced by students during placement (Morrell and Ridgway, 2014).

One of the benefits of using written diaries is the participants’ opportunity to deal with internal tensions. For example, in a study which had law students as participants, Maclean (2010) claimed that the ‘writing’ of letters allowed the students to find their own way of managing the tension regarding “internal contradictions in the way the law characterises itself” (p. 192). The ability to manage such tension is essential if one is to fully take up a social or professional identity (Fairclough, 2003). Indeed, the findings of Jang’s (2009) study revealed that by writing diaries, the participants “demonstrated how they understood, questioned, and negotiated their contexts and identities” (p. 53). Another benefit of written evidenced by Morrell and Ridgway (2014) was the potential of subsequent data to inform practice. Here, student nurses were able to reflect on the factors that facilitated and/or hindered their development during their final year placement. These factors were then used when discussing how to better prepare the students during their placement. A third example of the benefits of using written diaries was demonstrated by Miller (2013). Here the students were asked to record their personal experiences and relate them to the course material that had been covered in sessions on feminist economics. The findings showed that the students enjoyed the use of diaries as they felt they were learning whilst writing it.

When using written diaries for research purposes, a key aspect to consider is that these diaries should allow participants to reflect on significant moments rather than being forced upon them. Indeed, when this (latter event) happens, Jindal-Snape and Holmes (2009) claim that students may express negative feeling regarding writing. In this respect, Prinsloo, Slade and
Galpin (2011) suggest that one should “explore initiatives that may deepen reflection and critical engagement while not compromising spontaneity” (p. 36). Another key aspect is the need to initially guide participants/students with regards to the meaning of diary writing and ways in which it can be performed as some participants may be initially uncomfortable with the idea (Jindal-Snape and Holmes, 2009). A related issue then is the level of structure provided. Findings from Prinsloo, Slade and Galpin’s (2011) study demonstrated that “unstructured, private learning diaries can assist students to become more self-aware” (p. 27). Here, the authors claimed that “unstructured and un-assessed diaries do allow for spontaneous and authentic reflection” (p. 36). Additionally, the authors argue that the addition of specific headings and questions with the aim to encourage deeper reflection, may instead “impact negatively on the spontaneity of student postings and erode the difference between learning diaries and more formal review activities” (Prinsloo, Slade and Galpin, 2011, p. 36).

3.6.2.2 Collecting data through reflective diaries

In the current study, reflective diaries were used as a means to collect written data. The term ‘reflective diaries’ refers to “first-person observations of experiences that are recorded over a period of time” (Krishnan and Lee, 2002, cited in Yi, 2008, p. 1). Participants were required to add entries to the virtual learning environment (Blackboard) on a page that was created specifically for this purpose.

The purpose of using a reflective log was to look closer at the experiences of undergraduate sports coaching students throughout their three year degree. Each participant was required to keep a reflective log with an emphasis on reflecting upon personal experiences, reactions, ideas, questions and self-evaluation, rather than merely recording and describing events. The main purpose then, related to getting participants to consider their own personal development over time. In this respect, the logs provided insights into students’ views of their own
learning and evolving identities; albeit in line with the study’s aims. This also related to the idea that creating their own stories could help students establish their own identities (Marble, 1997 cited in Malderez et al., 2007, p. 239).

Understanding the context in which a diary was written was essential (Beattie, 2009). Therefore, unclear and/or interesting statements made by participants were followed through by often replying to the participant’s entry. This allowed participants to further explain their perceptions while leading to a better understanding of the message intended. Similarly, prompts were provided to students on a sporadic basis and became an important tool to guide them at the start of the process. This was in accordance with the aims and objectives of the study. However, there was a crucial consideration for how the prompts could affect the degree to which participants’ experiences were being represented. In order to cater for aspects that may not have been included in the prompts, careful thought was given to including questions such as ‘Is there anything else you would like to talk about?’

3.6.2.3 Creating an online diary for the reflective entries

The blog (i.e., the written reflective entries) was created with support from the learning and teaching department using a specific tool on the virtual learning environment (i.e., Blackboard). The blog created enabled me, as the researcher, to see all the entries made by the students. However, the students only had access to their own entries, and to general announcements. The restriction was implemented as it was anticipated that students would be more willing to write candidly if they felt comments were confidential. This was an attempt to make the students comfortable, a challenge also faced in Jindal-Snape and Holmes’s (2009) study.

3.6.2.4 Steps for creating the blog

The first step was to decide on what type of ‘blog’ would be used. After discussions with the
Learning and Teaching department at the University, the conclusion was that using a blog on Blackboard would be more accessible to students. This was because they had to use Blackboard on a regular basis to gather information regarding their modules and lectures.

Once the blog site was decided, the next step was to find out the type of blog that was needed. There were many different options here, such as creating a blog where students could share their thoughts and see each other’s entries. The option that best suited the study was one of the simplest ones which, as described above, enabled students to see only the entries they had posted and the comments made by the researcher on their specific entries. It was expected that some students would not be familiar with using the blog so all students were shown how to access the blog and add an entry. Participants were free to choose when to enter the data but they were told that of the expectancy to contribute every week or so.

3.6.3 Video diaries

The use of video diaries as a research method can be seen as a valuable addition to the data collection and analysis armoury (Mason, 2006). A video diary is defined by Buchwald, Schantz-Laursen and Delmar (2009, p. 13) as “a digitized diary used for research with purposes similar to those of studies using written diaries; that is, the collection of data on informants’ lives over an extended period.”

3.6.3.1 Exploring learning and identity

Although a certain similarity regarding the purpose of using video and written diaries can

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1 Part of the content included in this section was published by Jones, R. L., Fonseca, J., De Martin-Silva, L., Morgan, K., Davies, G. and Mesquita, I. in 2014. See reference list for further details.
seem to exist, results from previous studies show discrepancies when assessing their respective applicability for research in learning (e.g., Roberts, 2011) and identity (e.g., Stenberg, 2009). For example, Roberts’ (2011) study on the use of video diaries as a tool to investigate transformative learning showed video diaries to be “much more successful in capturing the development of student learning than written diaries” (p. 675). According to the author, this success could be attributed to students’ familiarity with the camera, which allowed aspects of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ to be explored. Similarly, Pink (2009) suggested that,

…it [video diary] offers a sense of intimacy, a route to (intercultural) understanding and ways of knowing not available when represented through written words. (p.141)

The potential of video diary as a tool to explore learning and identity was the key aspect that led to the use of video diaries as a method of data collection within this project. The longitudinal nature of the study pointed to the need for methods that could portray students’ perceptions of their learning experiences and how these influenced their identity development. With this in mind, it was important to engage with the mundane understandings experienced by the participants. Along the same lines, Cashmore et al. (2010) claimed that video diaries hold the potential to illustrate “the extent to which [participants] engage with shifting, sometimes contradictory, insights and emotions throughout a given” time span (p. 108).

This engagement opportunities were afforded through capturing verbal and non-verbal elements of accounts. For instance, Noyes (2004, p. 199) argued that the use of video diaries allowed him to explore different aspects of a student’s experience of mathematics. These included participants’ body language, body shape, hair style and clothing, which enabled the author to have a more holistic view of the student’s social background and context in which
learning took place. This corroborates with Mannay’s (2010) use of visual methods as an instrument that makes "the familiar strange, and provides a gateway to destinations that lay beyond my repertoire of preconceived understandings of place and space" (p. 96). In this case, video diaries can not only allow access to words, but also provide the researcher and participants with opportunities to revisit and ‘make sense’ of non-verbal data over time (Bottorff, 1994). Complex layers of information can, therefore, be unpicked. In other words, video diaries provide “lenses through which otherwise inaccessible aspects of….experiences can be viewed” (Noyes, 2004, p.206).

3.6.3.2 Empowering participants

Another reason for the use of video diaries originated from claims that they have an empowering aspect that allows the participants to tell their own stories (Buchwald, Schantz-Laursen and Delmar, 2009; Noyes, 2004). For instance, Noyes (2004) used video diaries in his research after realising that his presence was limiting students’ contributions during interviews. This perceived limitation led the author to believe that he was “in need of a tool whereby they might talk more freely about their unseen day-to-day experiences” (p. 196). Kaplan and Howes (2004) claimed that such means allow existing institutional hierarchies to be by-passed, allowing a transparency not always apparent through other, more researcher-dominated, methods. In this respect, methods that ask participants to ‘create’ their own realities are believed to overcome some of the problems associated with the “rationalistic tendencies of (strictly) verbal approaches” (Buckingham, 2009, p. 633).

The view of identity as “narratives-stories we tell about ourselves” (Bloustein, 1998, p. 126 cited in Noyes, 2004, p. 200), suggests that stories shared in the form of video diaries have an important role in understanding students’ identity development. Here, Cashmore et al (2010) argued that free-form video diaries enabled students to “project a sense of identity
that is not limited by their social status as students” (p.107). In other words, students were able to express experiences and emotions that were relevant at a particular time, without the imposition of particular researcher assumptions.

Although free-form video diaries are seen to contribute to empowering students’ participation, different approaches have been adopted in other studies. For instance, Cherrington and Watson (2010) in their study of college basketball players tried to achieve a balance between guidance and freedom in the production of video diaries. Participants were given information about the type of content sought but claimed that “there were degrees of flexibility and freedom implicit within these” (p. 270). Here, Cherrington and Watson (2010, p. 270) claimed that the use of prompts “was aimed at being practical, prompting aspects of ‘identity’, ‘day-to-day acts’ and ‘feelings’ but did not specify an exact topic for conversation.” The authors showed a concern with empowering participants to tell their own stories, whilst focusing on their “embodied identities in the context of everyday lives” (p. 270). It is important to note, however, that despite the implied or explicit freedom and flexibility evident in a research project, the story told (as per the interpretive approach) is co-constructed by the researcher and participants. In this respect, material collected cannot be presented as solely the participant’s own production of audio-visual knowledge (Brown, Dilley and Marshall, 2008) as researchers control the conceptual framing of the research.

3.6.3.3 Collecting data though video diaries

Each participant was required to keep a video diary. Video diaries are often considered a way for participants to frame and represent their own lives. Their use in this project then, represented an effort to somewhat empower the student participants; enabling them to tell their own stories, and to represent their own situations. It also marked an effort to engage with the diarists’ mundane, everyday experiences. While recognizing that there is no actual escape from the observer’s gaze and the project’s hierarchy, what was nevertheless hoped
for from the use of such a research method, were less ‘mediated’ representations of participants’ selves (Pini, 2001).

A principal intention related to their use was to create a secure means where students could feel comfortable to express their own ideas and feelings. The aim, therefore, was to generate rich and interesting data through the representations afforded by the method: to access the meanings behind the words (Pink, 2007). The student participants then, were free to utilize any electronic dispositive capable of recording video (e.g., video camera, phone, computer) with no established rules given in relation to ‘where’ and ‘when’ the videos could be recorded. Guided by the two principal themes of learning and identity, the participants were asked to keep a video diary where they reported stories, experiences and thoughts about their lives as students, and reflected on ‘how’ and ‘why’ on-going events had affected them. The participants were asked to upload and submit the video to www.sendspace.com after each recording. As soon as possible thereafter, the videos were analysed.

Students were initially told they could write about any positive and/or negative experiences they had in the programme of study, explaining and giving examples to show how and why the experience affected them. In order to give the students a ‘voice’ (Muir, 2008) to directly express their views, they were asked to produce free-form video diaries whilst prompts were used on a sporadic basis to guide participants. The prompts were added to the study page (an online page created in their learning environment area specifically for the current study) and sent to the students personal and University email addresses.

As highlighted by Cherrington and Watson (2010), the aim was to achieve a balance between guidance and freedom in the production of video diaries. There was a crucial consideration for how this could affect the degree to which participants’ experiences were being represented. As argued by Tribe (2006), the experience was meant to be empowering for students allowing them to be the experts in the production of the video diaries. However,
according to Tribe (2006), the giving of guidance or specific prompts does not mitigate against empowerment and true representation of the participants. Along similar lines, careful thought was given to the creation of prompts that allowed participants to expand on their thoughts in both depth and breadth. Students were also informed that they should not see the prompts as a rigid structure to be followed but rather as an example of aspects they could focus upon (e.g., what they felt were the strengths and weaknesses of their programme of study and why).

3.6.3.4 Further considerations regarding the use of video diaries as a research method

Although no doubt able to supply additional information than just the spoken word, Banks (2007) urged caution in relation to unproblematically accepting such a claim on behalf of video diaries. Alternatively, he argued that while images could well reveal insight not accessible by other means, it is not universal or automatic that those benefits could not be reached by other methods. Indeed, the indiscriminate and uncompromising gaze of the camera may not provide the indisputable representation of reality that could be supposed (Rich et al., 2000). Similarly, others (e.g., Chaplin, 1994; Lomax and Casey, 1998) have variously suggested that visual images and their understandings are not direct or unproblematic representations, but rather co-created by producers and viewers. In this way, they are similar to other texts and should, therefore, be subject to the usual interpretive cautions. This was a point reiterated by Stanczak (2007), who stated that such images tend to ask us to hold positions related to ‘this has been’ while also questioning subjectivities simultaneously. For Stanczak (2007) then, the visual ‘moment’ is both decisive and decided.

The multivariate nature of the production of images in itself can be a rich source of analysis. In this respect, Gibson (2005) suggested that participants may position themselves in a given way for a perceived audience when producing video diaries. “Participant-generated video
accounts can thus be analysed not only for content but also for how participants engage in identity construction” (p.3). Still, the total authenticity of material produced cannot be assumed. Consequently, writers such as Gibson (2005) and Pink (2007), while applauding the notion of empowerment and collaboration in research, stress the importance of reflexivity in the conduct of the research. This is a topic that is explored later on this chapter.

On a different matter, Holliday (2007) suggested that video diaries carry with them potential for frustration in that they are one way conversations and thus not possible to enter into a dialogue over. This, however, was not an issue in the current study as the points raised by the participants were used to inform the focus groups interview guides allowing for further exploration of meaning. Moreover, the participants often related to the camera as the researcher. This is in keeping with the work of Moinian (2006) and Noyes (2004), who claim that some participants may see the camera as a friend, an audience who takes the place of the researcher. Here, Tribe (2006) suggested that although the story is inevitably “skewed by the person of the researcher and their situatedness” (Tribe, 2006, p. 375), a video-diary approach can minimise external influence by ensuring the voice of the individual respondent is retained and reported.

3.7 Pilot data collection

Pilot studies are “mini versions of a full-scale study” (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001) used to assess the feasibility of a study and to pre-test specific instruments used within a particular investigation (Bryman, 2016). They allow the researcher to experience a ‘dry run’ of the methods adopted allowing for an evaluation of their appropriateness and identification of potential room for improvement within the research process (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, the
use of pilot studies can increase the likelihood of developing a successful study (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

In the current study, pilot studies were adopted to assess the feasibility of using the three methods of data collection (i.e., reflective logs, video diaries and focus groups) within the research process. It was somewhat expected that potential problems and solutions could be uncovered and, as a result, better inform the procedures used. Finally, this was also seen as an opportunity to familiarise myself with the research process (e.g., identify resources needed; assess the practicalities of the research design adopted).

Below is an account of how a mini version of the study was developed to ‘pre-test’ the three methods adopted within this particular study.

3.7.1 Reflective diaries

In order to verify if the reflective logs would work as planned, two volunteers were ‘enrolled’ on the log and asked to add a ‘test’ entry each. This test revealed that the entries could be seen by all the participants, therefore not matching the intended outcome. As a result, discussions were held with the learning support team and modifications were made so that participants could not see each others’ entries. After a week of entries on the blog, it was concluded that I was the only one seeing the entries made by the two ‘test’ participants and, therefore, the blog was ready to be added as a data collection instrument.

3.7.2 Video diaries

With the aim to select the best option for students to share videos with the researcher, meetings with the Learning and Teaching and IT departments took place within the five months preceding the start of the data collection process. As a result, using an online cloud storage service was decided as the most appropriate option for the requirements regarding video sizes and specifications.
In order to test the practicalities associated with the process of making and sharing a video diary, a pilot test was conducted with two volunteers. Feedback gained revealed that using a digital camera (e.g., computer; video) to make videos was appropriate and easy (even for those who had never used a camera before). The same applied to the use of www.sendspace.com to send the videos produced. The only information participants were required to enter was their email address and my email address. Both would then receive a link in their email account inbox, which was available for around five days. This link provided the sender and the receiver with access to the videos uploaded by the participants.

3.7.3 Focus group

A pilot focus group was undertaken with four PhD students. I decided to focus on their learning experiences which echoes to the topic of the current study. This experience allowed me to obtain feedback from the participants regarding their contribution and feelings as well as feedback from my supervisor who was observing the session. The other relevant aspect to consider was the group size, which was subsequently decided upon (see focus group section for more details).

The pilot study also served to create an awareness of how different backgrounds can affect participants’ interaction in the focus group. For instance, one of the PhD students had just joined the University at the time of the pilot study. Her participation in the focus group was not as engaging as the other PhD students. Understanding the context and her background was a key learning opportunity that informed future facilitative behaviour (e.g., how to engage participants more equally) during the data collection process (more details are provided in the focus group section, more specifically when discussing the role of the moderator).
3.8 Data analysis

The collected data were fully transcribed and analysed as soon as they had been collected, so that the design of the next data collection phase could benefit. Here, by starting the transcription at an early stage allowed for a more detailed understanding of the data (Bryman, 2016), which subsequently guided the design of the focus group questions as well as of prompts used to explore issues further in the video diaries and reflective logs. The on-going analysis also avoided being swamped by data, which, according to Bryman (2016) is a common occurrence when analysis is deferred until the end of the data collection process.

Once transcribed, the content of the focus groups, reflective logs and video diaries was analysed using Charmaz’s (2006) process for inductive analyses (initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding). This process is based on a constructivist grounded theory approach the aim of which is “interpretive understanding” (Charmaz, 2013, p. 305). In this respect, such a process is in keeping with the ontological and epistemological positions adopted in this study (i.e., interpretivism) as previously discussed.

3.8.1 Initial coding

Of crucial importance at this stage was the creation of codes from the data rather than ‘forcing the data to fit them’ (i.e., codes) (Charmaz, 2006, p.49). Here, a code refers to “a researcher generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes” (Saldana, 2013, p. 4). This process resembles that of mining without a pre-conceived search for specific stones. Here, if preconceived codes were the case, many of the findings could be ignored. Initial coding then is a process of discovery,
which, in the current context, was later ‘polished’ as the data analysis process developed. It is also a process of construction as the codes were ‘named’ by the researcher. In this initial stage, every effort was made to follow Charmaz’s (2006) suggestion to stay as “close to the data as possible, starting from the words and actions of respondents [to] preserve the fluidity of their experience and give new ways of looking” (p. 49). An example is provided below where a code (i.e., ‘Being strategic – assessment influences what students choose to learn’) was created based on the data being analysed:

**Being strategic - assessment influences what students choose to learn**

*I just feel – yes, I’m probably even more strategic than I was in the first year, because now I’m thinking ‘All right, what’s going to get me the best marks? How can I tick those boxes?’* (Barry)

There are different ways of performing initial coding, including word-by-word, line-by-line, segment-by-segment and incident-to-incident analysis (Charmaz, 2006). In terms of the above example the latter two types of coding were adopted. It is important to note that the length of the segment being analysed varied depending on the data collected. Here, if participants spent a significant length of time or space talking or writing about a specific issue, codes often originated from analysing paragraphs rather than lines. Segment-by-segment analysis encouraged a critical analysis of data while considering the context in which they occurred. Additionally, incident-by-incident analysis allowed for later comparisons and the identification of emerging concepts; a key aspect, especially taking into account the longitudinal nature of the study.

At this initial stage, despite the focus not being on word-by-word analysis, there was attention paid to the language used by the participants whilst coding. This is referred to as *in vivo* codes; that is, “codes of participants’ special terms” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55). This allowed for an understanding of implicit meaning while providing further evidence for later comparisons between the data and the emerging themes (or categories). For example, Fran
referred to the caring provided by lecturers in the first year as “tough love”. The use of such a term allowed for further exploration of the participants’ views of the lecturers’ roles. Similarly, it provided information that was compared to previous interpretation of the data collected.

Once each focus group, reflective log and video diary were initially coded, they were transferred to an excel spreadsheet to facilitate the next stage (focused coding). Each focus group (total of 46) was transferred to an individual table as shown in table 4. Another two separate tables were created for the video diary and reflective log entries, respectively (table 3 and 2, respectively). Here, to avoid a ‘robotic’ approach to data analysis, there was careful consideration of the context in which the data occurred by returning to the original transcription documents. The information provided on the tables include examples of raw data, initial codes, the study’s objectives, and the date (for RLs and VDs) or number and page (for FGs) to show when the data were collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel much more committed already than I did at my A levels…the work is more focused at what I want to do as a job (Katie)</td>
<td>Feeling committed to the course as it is linked to career ambitions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17th October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m really enjoying coaching science. I can see how it’s going to help my coaching… (Tracey)</td>
<td>Finding sessions relevant to coaching practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25th October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a close friend from back home living close to me means that together we keep ourselves ‘grounded’ reminding ourselves who we are and not to change to a different person. (Steve)</td>
<td>Being ‘grounded’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13th November 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer the interactive lectures where questions and answers are involved, but I’m not a fan of the lectures where you just sit there and listen for an hour. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Showing preference for interactive lectures</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13th November 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really have no worries when it comes to coaching and have good confidence with myself but I think I would just like a chance to do some more of it. (Barry)</td>
<td>Wishing he could do more practical coaching</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29th November 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Example of initial coding for reflective logs
I usually go to the lecturers and like just tell them what I think (emphasis on her voice and slower pace) like what I think (bring shoulders forward) the answer is so that they can confirm that is kind of right. (Mary)

Looking for reassurance

3

16th October 2011

I’ve enjoyed my practical sessions when I had the opportunity to coach my peers in small groups. Actually pretty (raises eyebrows) interesting… (Martin)

Enjoying peer coaching

2

25th October 2011

I’m not entirely sure if that (e-lesson) is compulsory or not but I paid to go to Uni and paying for something I wana be taught it. (Gavin)

Not understanding why he is doing e-lessons as he paid to be taught

1

24th October 2011

It’s hard when you got all this workload (raises eyebrows) and no one there to help you (nods her head downwards). (Fran)

Feeling there is no one to help with Uni work

3

1st November 2011

I was pretty happy with (looks at the camera) she tapped me on the back and said “Have you got any swimming qualifications? Because I was really impressed with your session”. (Martin)

Feeling happy after being praised by a lecturer

5

13th November 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually go to the lecturers and like just tell them what I think (emphasis on her voice and slower pace) like what I think (bring shoulders forward) the answer is so that they can confirm that is kind of right. (Mary)</td>
<td>Looking for reassurance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16th October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve enjoyed my practical sessions when I had the opportunity to coach my peers in small groups. Actually pretty (raises eyebrows) interesting… (Martin)</td>
<td>Enjoying peer coaching</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25th October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not entirely sure if that (e-lesson) is compulsory or not but I paid to go to Uni and paying for something I wana be taught it. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Not understanding why he is doing e-lessons as he paid to be taught</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24th October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s hard when you got all this workload (raises eyebrows) and no one there to help you (nods her head downwards). (Fran)</td>
<td>Feeling there is no one to help with Uni work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st November 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was pretty happy with (looks at the camera) she tapped me on the back and said “Have you got any swimming qualifications? Because I was really impressed with your session”. (Martin)</td>
<td>Feeling happy after being praised by a lecturer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13th November 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Example of initial coding for video diaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m probably even more strategic now than I was in the first year, because now I’m thinking “All right, what’s going to get me the best marks? How can I tick those boxes?” (Barry)</td>
<td>Assessment affects what students learn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think now I realise that coaching is a hard profession and isn’t secure. Whereas when you’re younger, when we first joined I thought “I enjoy that, I want to earn money from it” (Nathan)</td>
<td>Changing goals as a result of a reality check</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although we’re learning the theory, you can learn from how they are as a lecturer and even when they talk about their own experience as coaches you can learn from them, which is really helpful. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Learning from who lecturers are</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not sure, because if I were to coach it would be as a career, it would be skiing, because you’re moving around and it makes it hard to have a proper life. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Changing ambitions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Example of initial coding for focus group number 44
3.8.2 Focused coding

The second stage (focused coding) consisted of returning to the data and recognising similar codes across the complete dataset. One of the goals of this stage was to determine how adequate the codes were when categorizing the data “incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 58). A key aspect in this stage is that data are acted upon rather than being passively read. Here, then it was possible to compare recently created codes with previous codes as well as using such codes as potential topics to be covered in future data collection. Consequently, once recognised, similar codes were highlighted in a particular colour to show their commonality. In the example below, the passages were included under the theme ‘Strategic learning’ as this was the common theme that best described all three.

**Having grades as a motivating factor**
Daniel: I think you’d still gain that learning experience of going to university from the year, because obviously you’re here, you’re learning, you’re there, but I think having something to motivate you to still go to those lectures, and do well in your exams and things, having that extra little bit of grading or extra points towards your final degree, that helps a little bit.

**Aiming for 40%**
Tracey: My aim is 40%... if I pass this year, I’ll sort it out next year.

**Assessment affects what students choose to learn**
Barry: I just feel – yes, I'm probably even more strategic than I was in the first year, because now I'm thinking ‘All right, what’s going to get me the best marks? How can I tick those boxes?’

The focused coding stage was also represented on a table to facilitate further analysis and organisation of the data. An example of such tables is provided next, this time with an extra column related to ‘focused coding’:
Having that extra little bit of grading or extra points towards your final degree helps a little bit. (Daniel)

I’m probably even more strategic now than I was in the first year, because now I’m thinking “All right, what’s going to get me the best marks? How can I tick those boxes?” (Barry)

I think now I realise that coaching is a hard profession and isn’t secure. Whereas when you’re younger, when we first joined I thought “I enjoy that, I want to earn money from it” (Nathan)

I’m not sure, because if I were to coach it would be as a career, it would be skiing, because you’re moving around and it makes it hard to have a proper life. (Nathan)

Although we’re learning the theory, you can learn from how they are as a lecturer and even when they talk about their own experience as coaches you can learn from them, which is really helpful. (Daniel)

Following the creation of tables organised by data set in chronological order (as shown above), the next step was to organise the data under specific objectives and when collected so that further temporal analysis could be performed. This strategy was also adopted to avoid being swamped with so much data without knowing their meaning and significance to each stage of the data collection process. Here, the codes originated from FGs, VDs and RLs were all combined under similar themes. In total, twelve yearly thematic tables were created (see appendices 5-16), with objectives 1 and 2 being represented in the same table, whereas objectives 3, 4 and 5 were presented in individual tables. An example is shown next (table 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having that extra little bit of grading or extra points towards your final degree helps a little bit. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Having grades as a motivating factor</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m probably even more strategic now than I was in the first year, because now I’m thinking “All right, what’s going to get me the best marks? How can I tick those boxes?” (Barry)</td>
<td>Assessment affects what students choose to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think now I realise that coaching is a hard profession and isn’t secure. Whereas when you’re younger, when we first joined I thought “I enjoy that, I want to earn money from it” (Nathan)</td>
<td>Changing goals as a result of a reality check</td>
<td>Identity-ambitions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not sure, because if I were to coach it would be as a career, it would be skiing, because you’re moving around and it makes it hard to have a proper life. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Changing ambitions</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although we’re learning the theory, you can learn from how they are as a lecturer and even when they talk about their own experience as coaches you can learn from them, which is really helpful. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Learning from who lecturers are</td>
<td>The role of the lecturers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Example of focused coding for focus group number 44
I think that I need a lot from others to reassure myself that what I am doing is correct or right. (Tracey)

Looking for right answers (Need reassurance from others)

Intellectual development

3

Year 1 Reflective Log

20th January 2011

I know the whole point is for us to give them the answers (stares at the camera) but I work better with them giving the answers so I know the answers when it comes to the test. (Mary)

Looking for right answers from the lecturer

Intellectual development

3

Year 1 Video diary

7th December 2011

It prompts you to explain everything you’re talking about and to go into more depth with the answer. If he gives you a closed question it’s just a yea or nay. (Fran)

Discussing the benefit of having open ended questions

Intellectual development

3

Year 2 Focus group 30

7

The lecturer always asks us what we think because we know there isn’t always a right answer…(Heather)

Accepting multiple answers

Intellectual development

3

Year 3 Focus group 37

16

I think there’s always going to be an element of doubt. If you understand why it has the most value to you and why you think it’s better than anything, then I guess that’s all right. (Tom)

Accepting doubts as part of learning

Intellectual development

3

Year 3 Focus group 41

3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that I need a lot from others to reassure myself that what I am doing is correct or right. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Looking for right answers (Need reassurance from others)</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Year 1 Reflective Log</td>
<td>20th January 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know the whole point is for us to give them the answers (stares at the camera) but I work better with them giving the answers so I know the answers when it comes to the test. (Mary)</td>
<td>Looking for right answers from the lecturer</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Year 1 Video diary</td>
<td>7th December 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It prompts you to explain everything you’re talking about and to go into more depth with the answer. If he gives you a closed question it’s just a yea or nay. (Fran)</td>
<td>Discussing the benefit of having open ended questions</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Year 2 Focus group 30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lecturer always asks us what we think because we know there isn’t always a right answer…(Heather)</td>
<td>Accepting multiple answers</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Year 3 Focus group 37</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think there’s always going to be an element of doubt. If you understand why it has the most value to you and why you think it’s better than anything, then I guess that’s all right. (Tom)</td>
<td>Accepting doubts as part of learning</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Year 3 Focus group 41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Example of data included in a thematic table (intellectual development) for FGs, VDs and RLs across all 3 years of data collection

3.8.3 Theoretical coding

Theoretical coding relates to “possible relationships between categories developed in focused coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). It moves the “analytic story in a theoretical direction” (p. 63), in order to make the analysis “coherent and comprehensible” (p. 63). Theoretical codes then, are used to ‘clarify’ and ‘sharpen’ the analysis without imposing a
framework. Subsequently, theory is taken as “emergent and must arise from particular situations” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 18). In the current study, theories related to learning and identity were used to create an awareness of the research landscape. However, in this respect, theory was not imposed on the results, but rather used to facilitate knowledge exploration and creation. In this sense, the analysis and interpretation of data were also guided by the study’s aims and objectives (Mason, 2005). Consequently, it should be acknowledged that the notion of a totally ‘grounded’ analysis was not the case here. This was not only in relation to the study’s stated objectives but also my personal previously constructed perspectives and beliefs. Here, Harry, Sturges and Klinger (2005) argue that although the inductive nature of grounded theory “requires researchers to approach the data from a perspective of relative neutrality” they usually also do so “with a great deal of knowledge about literature on the topic being studied, as well as a set of beliefs…” (p.11).

In the current study, links with the literature were created or developed from analytical memos. Here, memos are defined as “a place to ‘dump your brain’ about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them” (Saldana, 2013, p. 41). It consists of being reflexive regarding the data being analysed; in other words, “thinking critically about what you are doing and why, and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see” (Mason, 2002, p. 5). The example below illustrates a segment of the process undertaken;

**Memo:** Students were clearly adopting what Entwistle (2000) would describe as a strategic and surface approach to learning in the first year. Their approach was often focused on what was needed to pass the assessment. Here, as the grades from the first year did not count toward their final degree classification, they did not feel they had to invest as much effort. Potential links with constructive alignment between learning outcomes, assessment and teaching methods (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Also, focus on the idea that if coaching is to be seen as a complex endeavour (Jones and Wallace, 2005), so have the assessment requirements. Action: See how this view develops throughout the study and what affects it.
Although the links with theory were mainly developed in this latter ‘theoretical analysis’ stage, reflection was constant at all times. Hence, if there was a perceived link with literature, it would be recorded immediately. This relates to Dey’s (2007) argument that we “do not categorise and then connect; we connect by categorizing” (p. 178). An initial link was thus made and developed further as necessary in the general inductive process.

The theoretical analysis was not the ‘final’ stage of the analysis per se. Rather, the data that had gone through the three stages of analysis were constantly revisited in attempts to ‘see them with different eyes’ and thus be able to get a glimpse of the many associated intricacies inherent within them. This relates to the ‘constant comparative methods’ identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Such comparison required constantly returning to the data to explore how the participants understood experienced situations before making judgements regarding perceived changes in their actions and perceptions.

### 3.8.4 Specific considerations when analysing video diaries

Although Charmaz’s (2006) process was adopted when analysing data collected through reflective logs, focus groups and video diaries, extra considerations were given when analysing data from the video diaries. Here, Noyes (2004) discussed his difficulty in communicating the mental image on paper. To overcome them, Noyes (2004) used descriptions of non-verbal communication alongside the text, which facilitated the creation of a mental image when reading the passages. An example from Noyes’ (2004) work is given below:

[Approximately two minutes into interview]...as it is my first day of the diary I find it really good today...(pause for effect)...to get to know...YOU (points, stares and grins proudly at the camera)...because...first time I’ve been in front of a camera...don’t feel bad...(grins)...feel good...feel famous (satisfied giggle) (p. 199).
In the current study, the videos were transcribed following the examples given by Noyes (2004). Therefore, in addition to the words spoken, special attention was paid to representing a ‘mental image’ on paper by following a detailed description of the witnessed non-verbal communication.

3.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity has been defined as “the ability to take oneself as an object of knowledge or ‘reflection’” (Benton and Craib, 2001, p. 185) or “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p. 183). It refers to the researcher reflecting “about how their role in the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations and the meaning they ascribe to the data” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 186). The researcher then is acknowledge as one “who actively constructs the collection, selection and interpretation of data” (Finlay, 2003, p. 5), rather than “someone who extracts knowledge from observations and conversations and then transmits knowledge to an audience” (Bryman, 2016, p. 388). In this respect, “subjectivity in research is transformed from a problem to an opportunity” (Finlay, 2002a, p. 531).

Although reflexivity is considered essential to the process of qualitative research, questions regarding ‘how’ to practice reflexivity still current exist (e.g., Doyle, 2013). In this context, Doyle (2013) argues that reflexivity goes beyond “internal conversation” (Archer, 2007, p. 3), to a “practice in which to actively engage” (p. 251). Finlay (2003) divided the practice of reflexivity into five variants: introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique and ironic deconstruction.

The current study adopted the first three of Finlay’s (2003) variants. Firstly, reflexivity in
introspection was adopted through the use of (my own) personal written and video research diaries. The use of research diaries has been seen as very beneficial in the process of doing reflexivity as they allow on-going reflection upon the research process (e.g., Baxter et al., 2001; Alley, Jackson and Shakya, 2015). Alley, Jackson and Shakya (2015) argue that “by taking the time to engage in reflexive practice, researchers have the opportunity to develop greater self-awareness and insight into how their values, beliefs, and assumptions affect the synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and application of research finding” (p. 430).

Reflexivity as introspection focuses on ‘self-dialogue’ and ‘discovery’ (Finlay, 2003, p. 6). This process was also encouraged by frequent meetings with my supervisor, which led me to search for and clarify internal dialogues regarding the methods I was adopting in my study. More specifically, the use of such reflective diaries encouraged me to not only express my opinions and feelings, but also to better understand the decisions being made. Here, as suggested by Finlay (2003) I was using “personal revelation not as an end in itself but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight” (p. 8). An example can be found below:

I seem to keep getting stuck and keep asking myself “How should I present the data? How should I discuss the data?” But now, I have achieved a point where I know what I am doing (showing the paperwork). As you can see, it is still a mess, but it is almost like “Why haven’t I thought about this before?” So, “how did I get to this point?” I guess it was about not giving up when I wasn’t certain about what I wanted to do. I feel like the PhD has helped so much in adopting this approach as in the past if I got stuck the way I did, I might have stopped and not really thought about it as part of the process of learning. (Researcher’s video diary, September, 2015)

Link: https://youtu.be/YSpFQhTHCxEY

Despite the benefits associated with reflexive introspection, it is not without its challenges. Here, to avoid having my voice overshadowing those of the participants (a critique made by Finlay, 2003), there was a conscious effort to listen to the participants’ voices and how they made sense of their experiences. This refers to the second type of reflexivity introduced by Finlay (2003); “reflexivity as intersubjective reflection” (p. 8). Here, I focused on my
relationship with the participants which can be referred to as “self-in-relation-to-others” (Finlay, 2003, p. 8). It included analysing my position throughout the study. Mannay (2010) argues that the position assumed by the researcher in research (e.g., insider/outsider) is a debatable and often contradictory issue. More specifically, the search for 'research legitimacy' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) results in some advocating that researchers should possess certain characteristics that allow them to be an insider or an outsider. With regards to the current study, I had characteristics that classified me as both. For instance, my background in sport and having graduated with a sports degree could classify me somehow as an insider. However, a great part of my educational background took place in a different culture which positioned me as an outsider.

It is crucial to highlight that this notion of sharing (or not) similar characteristics with the context and participants should not be seen as a black and white or clear cut issue. Indeed, the idea of a binary system where people either 'are' or 'are not' members of a certain group who possess similar experiences ignores the "multifaceted nature of identities" (Mannay, 2010, p. 92). Consequently, recognising similarities and differences with the participants while reflecting where to position myself throughout the research was essential for developing a trustworthy relationship with them. The excerpt below from my research journal illustrates the type of questions I grappled with, especially during the first year of the study in this respect:

*I keep asking myself: “How much shall I interfere with what they write? What am I looking for?” The answer that comes to mind is “I want to explore, understand their learning and their identity development. I am trying to find a balance, trying to find the best way to ‘assist’ students with their reflection. So I think “What feedback shall I give them?” I do not want to dictate the content of their reflection as this would mean choosing what is affecting their development, which could be misleading. (Researcher’s reflective journal, November 2011)*

The relationship between myself, as a researcher, and the participants was an important aspect in helping to recognise when to ‘zoom in’ and when to ‘zoom out’. In other words, it
allowed for the environment to be assessed, which led to the identification of support needed and involvement required for the success of the research process. This relationship involved the (hoped for) development of “trust and integrity” (BSA, 2002, para. 14). These were demonstrated and nurtured by arriving for meetings in good time and being available for informal chats.

Finally the concept of “reflexivity as mutual collaboration” (Finlay, 2003, p. 10) was adopted when involving myself in a reflexive dialogue with the participants, with PhD colleagues and with my supervisor. Firstly, with the participants, the methods of data collection allowed me to engage in mutual reflection during focus groups based on their contributions to the written and video diaries. As explained in the ‘Methods of data collection’ section, the participants were led to explore issues from their diaries in a discussion with others and myself. This allowed for clarification, elaboration and negotiation when co-constructing and making sense of knowledge.

With regards to my supervisor, frequent meetings encouraged me to become more aware of my thoughts and myself, and to consider different (at times conflicting) positions. Despite a potential danger of taking my supervisor’s advice as ‘right’ due to his position as a more knowledgeable other, his effort to provide suggestions in the form of open ended questions proved to be a catalyst in my own reflexive activity. Here, despite bringing uncertainty, it demonstrated the value in being constantly reflexive and to search for my own commitment to my decisions (an aspect that is key in developing an identity) (Perry, 1999). It also allowed me to re-evaluate previous and present understandings (Enosh and Ben-Ari, 2016). Interestingly, moments of reflexivity resulted in emotional outcomes. Below is an entry to my research diary minutes after I met with Bill and Robyn:

‘The most interesting thing is that although I am analysing how the students’ identities are changing I feel like I am going through the same process. I am a student, a lecturer, a footballer (although I feel this part of my identity has become
weaker in the past year). Losing who I am is bothering me... (a minute of silence and tears start coming out of my eyes)... I tried to resist... I didn’t want them to see me crying, but it was too late!!! Robyn looks at me and says: Are you ok? I try to say yes but it was clear that something was going on. I was going through a period of transition and just had that feeling of ‘naked self’. (Researcher’s reflective journal, April 2012)

It was clear that the research process was affecting me as a researcher and as a person. However, despite the event shared above, I was careful to not to be overpowered by one of the major pitfalls regarding reflexivity; that is, the swamp analogy or, “getting lost in endless narcissistic personal emoting or interminable deconstructions of deconstructions where all meaning gets lost” (Finlay, 2002b, p. 226). Here, of crucial importance was to ensure that the focus on interpersonal aspects did not move away from the topic under study (Finlay, 2003). For example, sharing the findings of the study with my supervisor(s) allowed an in-depth conversation about the concept of ‘caring’, which led to further investigations regarding the participants’ perceptions of the role of the lecturers;

As I go through my data, I reflect on what exactly they are trying to show me. I have been debating whether the perception that lecturers care is sufficient for student satisfaction and engagement in sessions. I feel that as long as students think lecturers care, they are fine with it – so when Tracey said “if they show that they care”...as long as she believes they do, then it is fine. So, in a sense, by reflecting on what I had written about my results before, I don’t think this was only in the first year. This was something that students had throughout the study. However, what changed was their perception of what caring meant to them. Whilst they initially thought it was providing them with the right answers, they later realised that by challenging their ways of knowing, lecturers were caring – BUT, they only realised that in the second year, which means that the frustration they felt in the first year (when not being given the right answers) contributed to their development. This makes me think that we really need to consider how staff develop (and the CPD courses available) as some may listen to the student voice without the necessary critical awareness needed. Instead of student satisfaction, perhaps student frustration could be a sign of development???(Researcher’s reflective journal, August 2015).

Overall, reflexivity constituted a key process through which I ‘made sense’ of my role in the research process. It allowed me to deal with uncertainties and grapple with the challenges involved in developing such a demanding yet very rewarding project. It kept me motivated
and challenged me to search for new ways of knowing. It was certainly a process of self-dialogue, intersubjective reflection and mutual collaboration. Here, of crucial importance was the opportunity to focus on the aims and objectives of the study whilst acknowledging my own development in the research process.

3.10 Research trustworthiness

Quantitative researchers often refer to terms such as validity and reliability when assessing the quality of research. Although some qualitative researchers may adopt such terms, many prefer to distance themselves from such terminology (Bryman, 2016). Instead, the quality of qualitative research is often assessed using the concept of trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In order to ensure trustworthiness within the current study, Guba’s (1981) four constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were considered. Firstly credibility, or “accurately record[ing] the phenomena under scrutiny” was achieved by adopting aspects introduced by Shenton (2004, p. 64). The first related to the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations. Here, engagement with participants was done through meetings, text messages, emails and by attending lectures within their programme of study. This allowed for an understanding of the context whilst developing a relationship of trust with the participants. Here, a concern existed in not being ‘one of the students’ which, according to Shenton (2004), can overly influence professional judgements. Additionally, and equally, there was a concern with not becoming too close to staff members and being seen as one of them. Consequently, I made sure that any experiences that could affect my relationship with the participants were carefully discussed with my supervisor. For example, as part my teaching training programme, I was asked to mark assignments for the first year BSc Sports Coaching students. I discussed the offer with my supervisor and my related concerns regarding its impact on relationships with the participants. We decided it was not a risk worth taking.
The use of video diaries, reflective logs and focus groups in the current study symbolised an attempt to ‘see’ the phenomenon from different ‘angles’ and allowed for complementary and/or contradictory insights to be explored (Flick, 2009). This refers to triangulation, which is defined as the strategies “for improving the quality of qualitative research by extending the approach to the issue under study” (Flick, 2009, p. 405). The methods complemented each other in the sense that on-going findings (related to the aims of the study) guided the following set of data collection as discussed in previous sections. It also allowed for iterative questioning, which was adopted when asking students questions to clarify their thoughts and opinions on specific issues. This was particularly the case when the information provided was not detailed or when there was discrepancy amongst participants’ contributions. Here, the use of three methods, however, was not invested in equally by the participants. For example, the study demonstrated that the participants perceived the focus group interviews as being more important than the video diaries, often due to having the opportunity to physically meet in a group within short periods of time (Jones et al., 2014). Thus, as Jones et al. (2014) suggested, combining different methods of data collection should take into account situational aspects related to the participants and the research context.

Frequent debriefing sessions constituted another aspect adopted in the study. Regular meetings were held with the supervisory team to discuss approaches adopted in the research (e.g., data collection and analysis process). This contributed to not only answering questions, but more importantly, generating access to previously inaccessible ways of thinking. Below I share one of my reflective diary entries:

Before I came to the meeting today, I was concerned about having a 'right' and 'accepted' way of analysing data. I wanted to perhaps have a relatively simple answer for something that is complex (the analysis of the data with the means of enhancing understanding). I keep asking myself: “How flexible should I be when thinking about the different steps I have to go through when analysing data?
What if I think of an important theory while doing my initial coding? It took me a lot of thinking regarding the organisation of the data but I feel that my discussion with Robyn today made me more critical of my thoughts and assumptions. (Researcher’s reflective journal, April 2012)

In this respect, frequent meetings with my supervisor also resulted in peer scrutiny of the research project. This aspect was also gained from conference presentations and feedback from reviewers during the process of publishing peer reviewed articles and book chapters related to the study. Here, the feedback gained allowed me to refine my understanding and development of the study. Similarly, the participants were guaranteed access to the data collected if they wish to examine them (as previously mentioned), which allowed for further member checks.

The reflective journal served not only as a way to consider future practice but also to review my experience. The researcher’s “reflective commentary”, was attained by keeping a reflective journal throughout the duration of the study. This enabled me to reflect on the successes and potential issues associated with the research itself. Below is an example of such experience when looking back at my experience at the end of the first year:

I am now at my desk in Research House and feel very happy about the data collection process I’ve been through in this first year. I feel the participants have shared their experiences to the best of their abilities and I’ve been able to collect some very relevant data. This has been a rewarding process. I remember when I was worried about having all the participants and how now things seem to have fallen into place. My relationship with them has become stronger...I don’t feel we are closer in terms of being friends, but I definitely feel there is an element of trust and respect that has been growing throughout this first year. This makes me really happy. (Researcher’s reflective journal, May 2012)

In order to provide a detailed account of the methods and procedures adopted in the study, careful attention was drawn to making sure a comprehensive account of the process employed was developed. This relates to what Shenton (2004) defines as thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Here, however, contradicting Shenton’s (2004) work, the aim of providing such a detailed account was not seen as a way to allow others to “determine
the extent to which the overall findings ‘ring true’”. Instead, it was an attempt to provide the reader with further understanding of the context in which the research took place, a key aspect that can allow for naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 2000) and transferability (i.e., when readers relate findings to their own positions) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this context, naturalistic generalisation means the ability of the reader “on the basis of a thick description and the provision of a vicarious experiential account, to determine if and how these experiences can be used to understand a new setting” (Hellström, 2008, p. 324). This concept informed the idea of transferability introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985). According to the authors, “the degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts” (p. 124). In this sense, measures were taken such as to describe key aspects (e.g., duration of the data collection; length of the sessions; the number of participants) to provide readers with sufficient information to “compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations” (Shenton, 2004, p. 70).

Further details regarding the research design, the data collection process and an appraisal of it contributed to the study’s ‘dependability’, a term that is usually referred to as ‘reliability’ in quantitative research “to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained” (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). This term should however be used with caution as the attainment of similar results in qualitative research is problematic. Instead, dependability in this context focused on a “thorough understanding of the methods used and their effectiveness” (Shenton, 2004, p. 71); something (hopefully) accomplished by devoting detailed sections to explain the research design, the data collection methods and procedures as well as a reflective appraisal of the project through the use of a research reflective diary.

Finally, in order to guarantee trustworthiness, the concept of confirmability was considered.
This refers to ensuring “as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). In this context, the detailed description of the data analysis process adopted, including transcription in full of all focus group interviews and video diaries helped to illustrate a consistent way of engaging with the data. Furthermore, an appreciation of the context in which the videos were produced was important in constructing interpretations of the participants’ meanings. This echoes Ball and Smith's (2002) concerns regarding the relatively easiness to manipulate images and provide results that are out of the initial context. It also relates to Pink’s (2001) claim that reflexivity needs to be engaged with in terms of recognising the context in which images and knowledge are produced.

3.11 Ethical Procedures

According to Bryman (2016), participants should be informed of any ethical issues before they agree to participate in a specific study. To achieve this, information detailing their participation in the study was provided to the students during the recruitment process. The information included the aims of the study; what participation in the study consisted for those who agreed to take part; the methods used; and how the findings would be disseminated (see appendix 1).

The Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (BSA) (2002) and the Data Protection Act (1998) were key in deciding upon key ethical considerations that were adopted throughout the study. The sections focused upon are referred to when introducing the ethical considerations in the text that follows. Ethical procedures adopted within the current study were also approved by the University of Wales Institute (UWIC)’s (now Cardiff Metropolitan University) research ethics committee prior to data collection.
Anonymity

Pseudonyms were used to avoid the recognition of participants in the presentation of data. This was adopted for all data, including reflective entries, video diaries and focus groups. However, the original reflective log entries contained the participants’ real names. This was part of the standard process when logging into the University’s virtual learning environment and adding entries to respective reflective logs. However, a word document was subsequently created with all the entries ensuring the replacement of participants’ names with pseudonyms.

Students were also given the opportunity to create their own pseudonyms which was seen as a way of further involving the students in the study. The use of pseudonyms for video entries, however, was obviously not a guarantee that participants would not be recognised. Therefore, data in the form of video diaries were only released (e.g., for presentations in Conferences) after prior consent was obtained from the participants for each of the videos and each of the occasions they would be used for. This corroborates with the British Sociological Association requirements when using a method that could lead to actual or potential identification of participants. This way, it was made “clear to research participants the purpose of the notes, filming or recording, and, as precisely as possible, to whom it will [read would] be communicated” (BSA, 2002, para. 20). This ‘transparency’ in providing information regarding how the data would be disseminated is one of the key concepts underlying the Data Protection Act (1998).

Consent form

The participants who volunteered for the study were invited for an initial group meeting where they had the opportunity to meet each other and ask further questions. After all the questions had been satisfactorily answered, they were invited to read and sign the consent form (see appendix 2). Consent is another key aspect informing the Data Protection Act
Here, the participants were reassured that they were free to withdraw at any time without reason, that they would be guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and that video entries would only be used with prior consent. Therefore, there was a careful consideration that “consent [was] to be regarded, not as a once-and-for-all prior event, but as a process, subject to renegotiation over time” (BSA, 2002, para. 25). The data collected were saved to a secure computer to which only myself as the main researcher had access. Access was restricted by the use of a password, and the data were held in secure premises (Social Research Association, 2013).
The purpose of the results chapter is to present the key findings of the study, in accordance with the stated aims and objectives. The data have been organized in a text and quote format, and in chronological order. Most of the data cited are derived from the focus group interviews as they provided opportunities for further examination, elaboration, and deconstruction of the video diaries and reflective logs (as detailed in the methods section). In terms of structure, the chapter is divided into four main sections, namely ‘Learning experiences’ (objective 1 and 2); ‘Intellectual development’ (objective 3); ‘The role of the teaching staff’ (objective 5) and ‘Identity development’ (objective 4).

Following each results section, a discussion of the findings is presented. Here a conscious effort was made to avoid “imposing a specific theoretical framework on the study at the outset” (Dunne, 2011, p. 119). Instead, theories were used as and when they had the potential to ‘make sense’ of the data and further the analysis.

4.1 Learning experiences - Results

The results presented and discussed in this section primarily refer to objectives 1 and 2; more specifically, 1) ‘How and why did the sports coaching students think about learning and carry out their studying in the ways they did?’ and 2) ‘How much did the students value the role of theory in informing coaching practice and development, and why?’

The findings were structured under six key themes, namely ‘The first steps: a strategic and surface approach to learning’; ‘The transition to a deeper, yet still strategic, approach to learning’; ‘A lack of understanding and motivation for ‘independent’ learning’; ‘Towards
more engagement with ‘relational’ learning’; ‘Coaching theory and practice – From knowledge for action to knowledge for understanding’ and finally, ‘Applying theory to practice is not always a straightforward process’.

4.1.1 The first steps: a strategic and surface approach to learning

Data from the first year of the study demonstrated that the students expected a ‘traditional’ learning system, where information is transferred from lecturers to students. The main focus within such an approach lies on memorising facts and concepts (i.e., acquisition). Hence, engaging in critical analysis was not seen as a priority for the students in the current study. Rather, during these initial experiences, learning centered around three main aspects; ‘getting knowledge from the lecturer’, ‘being able to remember the information’ and ‘linking theory and practice’. In the words of three of them:

Getting knowledge of things you don’t know...or you don’t know as much about...so getting that knowledge from the teacher (Steve, year 1, FG4/15, May 2012).

Something that you can actually repeat again and again...just not like a one off (Barry, year 1, FG4/13, May 2012).

You learn a theory and then put the theory into practice. If you are not actually putting it into practice, I don’t class that as actually learning (Martin, year 1, FG4/13, May 2012).

All twelve students commented on the fact that the first year of the study did not count towards their final degree classification, and that they only had to achieve 40% to progress to the second year. As a result, the students did not invest too much effort in the first year ‘as it’s not as important, whereas next year we will probably have to, not go out so much, do more work, get out of bed for lectures’ (Nathan, year 1, FG1/3, November 2011). In the words of one:

It feels like “OK, I’m glad I know that now.” But the amount of effort that [reading] took...[laughs]...I’ve got to times that by, like, a thousand! To be able to write an
essay. And then I just think - “is it really worth it?” And at the moment, it’s not, because I only need 40% [laughs] (Tracey, year 1, FG2/4, December 2011).

This strategic and surface approach to learning was clearly a decided upon choice, as the students demonstrated situational awareness and recognition that they ‘should be doing a lot more research on the topics and looking at different theories to expand my knowledge’ (Tracey, year 1, RL, November 2011). Amongst the factors that contributed to this apparent surface approach to learning was the perceived complexity and demands associated with reading. As a result, reading was completed only in preparation for assessments:

...so, having a goal in front of me, like an exam, is why I’d be reading the book...I know what I’m looking for. Read for that. Find the relevant chapter, or what the relevant page is, and just sort of stick to it (Tom, year 1, FG2/7, December 2011).

Furthermore, the students’ interest in the topics covered in lectures affected how much they were willing to read. This interest often originated from their ability to relate to the topic in question. Here, a common finding was that students were reading for the modules that they enjoyed whilst ignoring those they considered had ‘no relevance to my head’ (Steve, year 2 FG5/19, October 2012).

Another factor that contributed to the surface approach to learning witnessed was the influence exerted by second and third year students. Such students tried to persuade the first years to focus on their social life rather than their studies by arguing that ‘this year doesn’t really count’ (Mary, Year 1, FG2/4, December 2011). As a result, the participants argued that it affected their thoughts: I’ve got that into my head now. So I think, “Oh, it doesn’t count, as long as I pass it...” (Fran, year 1, FG2/5, December 2011).

The effects of such a surface approach to learning manifested themselves in the lack of understanding regarding some of the content the students had been exposed to. For example, Tracey mentioned that “I feel like I am only just scraping by and not learning anything but
4.1.2 - The transition to a deeper, yet still strategic, approach to learning

As the study progressed, a change in the students’ conceptions of learning took place. Here, a move was evident towards the need to ‘understand’ (rather than simply memorise) information. In the words of Daniel:

“We’ve been to lectures and it’s all about gaining that understanding... The actual understanding of it we gained from going to those lectures; so that was definitely a bonus for me (Daniel, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014).

In this context, learning started to be seen as a more complex process (e.g., ‘I don’t think you can simplify learning as just one specific thing’ - Daniel, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014) and about exploring different avenues (e.g., ‘for a lot of the stuff we’ve learned about there’s no ‘right’ answer and there are still a lot of avenues to explore, by having those conversations, it’s the ability for us to come out with stuff’ - Tom, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

This change in the meaning associated with learning coincided with a move towards deeper approaches. Here, one of the contributing factors was the development of critical thinking through, for example, the use of reading tasks in preparation for seminars combined with in-class group discussions:

Because you have these small groups for the seminar...it is helpful, because you know, when we spread our ideas, sometimes we have the same ideas. And then when we receive these different ideas, I think it’s good that, you know, maybe we tend to think outside of the box. Like, “why would he do this differently?” (Heather, year 2, FG6/23, December 2012).

This process required students to deal with previously inaccessible ways of thinking, resembling the idea of learning as a process of transformation. Here, the teaching staff played
a key role (especially during seminars), where they were able to demonstrate that confusion and uncertainty were inherent to the learning process.

Linked to the idea of learning as a transformative process, the personal stories shared by lecturers were perceived as very beneficial in terms of providing students with ideas for potential career aspirations and actions to be taken (e.g., the relevance of finding external coaching opportunities). In the words of Steve:

*I remember a guy coming in to talk about his experience at university. He said he got a First Class Honours degree but he didn’t get a job because he didn’t have experience in the workplace. So he spent the next 3 years gaining the experience to get a job. Whereas if you can combine while you’re at university you’d be there quicker. I think getting people who’ve been through university to come back and give you a lecture, I found it interesting to know where they’ve been and how they got there* (Steve, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

The alteration in the course structure from the first to the second year was a catalyst for changing the students’ attitude towards learning. More specifically, once the marks started counting towards the students’ final degree classification (in the second year of study), they showed more motivation to learn:

*The motivation changed because there were just lecturers saying your first year doesn’t count and the second year counts towards your degree – it’s just a massive change. I find everyone’s trying a lot harder this year. Everyone’s in there and we’re all studying but last year we were just out drinking* (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).

Relatedly and importantly, the nature of the assessments was crucial in encouraging a deeper approach to learning. Here, the students referred to assessments that prompted them to ‘explain everything you are talking about...which makes you better cos when you come to write your essays you’ve got to back up every single thing that you say’ (Fran, year 2, FG6/21, December 2012). The adoption of ‘take home’ tasks such as reading and completion of workbooks to be discussed in seminars was another powerful assessment aspect that encouraged deep learning. Here, the need to complete the task was reinforced when students argued that without it, they were a ‘bit of an outcast’ (Daniel, year 3, FG11/43, March 2014).
Indeed, having a purpose for doing the tasks was key for their engagement as the following excerpt illustrates:

*If they told me to read them and do the work, and you only get a tick in a box for it, I wouldn’t do it. But, because I get to discuss it, I know what I’m doing and where I am. I… I’m more likely to do it because it’s going to be more relevant to what I learn* (Steve, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012).

In this respect, (inter)active participation in their own learning was key in stimulating the students’ engagement in the learning process. Here, one suggested that ‘*If I get involved in discussions or group tasks in any way, I can learn a lot more*’ (Daniel, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013).

The students’ developing perceptions of learning included its re-conceptualisation as a demanding activity. This was because of a better understanding of what was needed to participate in meaningful seminar discussions as well as to complete the assessment requirements of the course. This, in turn, resulted in a recognition that without effort and personal commitment they would not have enough knowledge to question others, including the lecturers:

*For me, I probably don’t read enough and I don’t know enough about the subject, so I go into a lecture thinking that the lecturer is going to be right, because I don’t have enough knowledge to question him* (Martin, year 3, FG12/44, March 2014).

Indeed, reading (something perceived as demanding) became an activity seen as very beneficial for learning, as the students increasingly recognised that ‘*I understand more from them [the sources they read], they say a lot of things and explain more, rather than from the lecture notes*’ (Heather, year 3, FG9/35, October 2013). Here, as the students entered their third year of study, they argued that the need to read for their dissertations, as well as making
their own decisions and taking responsibility for knowledge construction, was also beneficial
towards developing a deeper approach to learning. In the words of two:

You had to really dig in and get your own answers – it was hard! You're never really
sure. But I can see why it’s hard work and it makes a lot of sense (Gavin, year 3,
FG12/47, May 2014).

In second year, you’d have an assignment, then you’d have a break. But in third it’s
just constant. You’ve got to be in the library every day or you’re not going to get
your work done. There’s no stopping, there’s always something you need to be
working on (Daniel, year 3, FG10/39, December 2013).

4.1.3 – A lack of understanding and motivation for ‘independent’ learning

The data revealed that the concept of independent learning was not clear to the students,
which often led to a lack of interest and motivation for undertaking such work:

I think the main thing is that, as undergrads, we don’t really understand the full
extent of independent learning - and we’re not, definitely not fully participating in it!
(Tom, year 1, FG2/7, December 2011).

Indeed, the initial stages of the course showed independent learning to be a challenge for
students. In this respect, a principal barrier was the lack of motivation for doing the work
(e.g., It’s hard to say “OK, this hour I’m doing biomechanics” on your own - you just end
up not doing it’ - Tracey, year 1, FG2/4, December 2011). Here, the perceived lack of
support from others was seen as a key barrier (e.g., it’s hard when you’ve got all this
workload (raises eyebrows) and no one there to help you (nods her head downwards)’ -
Fran, year 1, VD, December 2011).

When discussing independent learning, the students mentioned that they had rarely done it
in the first year. Tom suggested that the reason for this lay in its perceived irrelevancy; ‘you
don’t need to this year, like the fact that you can pass, like comfortably without doing it....’

(year 1, FG4/15, May 2012). He and Steve explained it further;

Tom: When there’s an essay and stuff you end up going back over it. And cos this year is not really worth anything...cos it’s not worth, you don’t really need to, I don’t know, I just don’t feel you need to put as much effort in...

Steve: I don’t think the motivation is there cos it doesn’t count to anything

(year 1, FG4/15, May 2012)

This initial barrier to being ‘independent’ originated from the students’ previous experiences (e.g., At college I used to get everything on a piece of paper – like, people would just tell me, do this, work...but at uni, you come here, they just say “do this by this. And read this.” I'm like, “no!”’ - Gavin, Year 1, FG2/6, December 2011). In this context, the students demonstrated their lack of time management skills, which led to a desire for being told what and when to do work (e.g., Sometimes I wish someone would be, like, “You need to get on and do this piece of work.” Because I feel like sometimes I'm just leaving it a bit too late. I need to plan my time better - Katie, year 1, FG1/3, October 2011). Additionally, handing in assignments ‘two minutes before the deadline’ (Gavin, year 1, FG2/6, December 2011) was not uncommon amongst the students in their first year.

Consequently, while some accepted that independent learning was part of being at university, others showed frustration when not given the ‘service’ they perceived they should be receiving:

I paid (uses hands for emphasises whilst talking down at the camera) to go to uni and paying for something, I wana be taught it! So I didn’t pay (raises eyebrows) to sit at home in the computer do e-lessons, it’s kind of stupid, I don’t really get that. But it’s gotta be done (shrugs shoulders), it’s extra knowledge and all that nonsense but yeah it kind of annoys me that I’ve gotta teach myself in some respects’ (Gavin, year 1, VD, October 2011).
Other barriers to doing what students perceived to be ‘independent’ learning were the distractions experienced when living on campus (e.g., ‘with all your mates living around you, and having the gym, and the tennis courts, and all sorts... I just do something more fun than sit down and work’ - Nathan, year 1, FG2/5, December 2011). This lack of engagement with academic work was evidenced in some of the students’ responses (e.g., ‘I got kicked out of a lecture today (looks up) for not having done my blog for Coaching Science. Not good at all! [Shaking head right and left]’ - Gavin, year 1, VD, December, 2011). The following research diary entry illustrates this point further:

*I start walking to the lecture room and see students who were supposed to be in the lecture walking past me coming from the building. I start to doubt: “Have I got the room number wrong?” This doubt passed as I used to attend that lecture every Tuesday and was certain of the room number. A second question came to mind: “Have they changed the room?” followed by another thought: “Has the lecture been cancelled?” More and more students were walking past me. I asked one of them to see what was going on: “Has your Coaching Science lecture been cancelled?” The student replied: “We all got kicked out by the lecturer as we didn’t do the blog.” I get to the lecture room that is normally packed with around seventy students, now had only fifteen. Students were set an activity that they had to bring in order to evaluate each other’s work. As most students had not completed the task they were told there was no point in them being there (Researcher’s reflective diary, year 1, 16th December 2011).*

4.1.4 - Towards more engagement with ‘relational’ learning

As the study progressed, the students increasingly showed more engagement with activities they characterised as ‘independent learning’. However (despite the term) such activities were always related to, or embedded within a wider context set by another (e.g., lecturers), and often related to assessment.

Interestingly, when the learning tasks were related to assessments (particularly in the second and third years of study), the students showed more evidence of completing them:
I think the way they’ve structured this year, with our seminars, I’ve definitely done a lot more reading because you’ve got to bring a certain amount of work with you, so you need to contribute to it (Tom, year 2, FG7/24, February 2013).

If we didn’t have that coursework that we have to submit, then I’ll just... do nothing (Heather, year 2, FG6/23, December 2012).

In this respect, ‘relational’ learning (e.g., set by others in relation to assessments) was what students referred to as independent learning. Here, the use of weekly tasks motivated the students and gave them a sense of goal setting to do the work (e.g., ‘Oh, I have to submit this, so I have to work for it’ - Heather, year 2, FG6/23, December 2012).

Despite the initial challenges faced by the students in trying to understand their role in independent [relational] learning, the initial perceived lack of support previously introduced in this section, was now recognised as very beneficial for their subsequent development:

I feel it’s helped a lot this year because I’ve learned to think and do everything on my own, because I’ve had to and now I’ve got their help I feel I’ve got loads of help, rather than just being used to being spoon-fed in college (Tracey, year 3, FG10/38, December 2013).

A better understanding of the benefits of doing work on their own was evident in the second year of study. Taking into account that most of the tasks set were in preparation for group discussions during seminars, students argued that they had a ‘social responsibility’ to contribute:

And there was group discussion, so if you didn’t do anything and left the work to someone else to talk about, you just felt “Why am I actually here?” So you had social responsibility, sort of thing (Martin, year 2, FG8/29, May 2013).

...this year, because it’s worth something, because it is working towards the degree, I think there’s a kind of mutual respect between everyone that if you have to go and do work, then you have to go and do work (Barry, year 2, FG8/31, May 2013).

It was also a way of positioning themselves in a knowledge scale, as Daniel explained:
But in that as well, I’d hate sitting there and knowing someone else knows so much more about something that I do. So then you just feel as if you’re miles below them (Daniel, year 2, FG8/29, May 2013).

4.1.5 Coaching theory and practice – From knowledge for action to knowledge for understanding

In the initial stages of the course, the students had a clear focus on knowledge for action as opposed to knowledge for understanding:

I come here to learn how to be a better coach, not how to write a book about how to be a better coach… backing it up with theories and stuff, well it doesn't matter as long as I know it... right now I just want to know how to coach, and I just want to get out and coach (Tracey, year 1, FG3/10, February 2012).

Such a focus on knowledge for action resulted in the students not recognising the value of theory in informing coaching practice. In this respect, coaching was not considered particularly worthy of academic study:

It doesn't matter about all the intellectual stuff unless you want to be a performance analyst or a psychologist or anything, anything else completely irrelevant (Gavin, year 1, FG3/10, February 2012).

I think it [theory] just makes it too complicated. Certainly more complicated than it needs to be (Nathan, Year 1, FG2/5, December 2011).

As a result of focusing on ‘how to coach’, and neglecting the need to explore the ‘whys’ behind coaching practice, the students perceived practical coaching experience as sufficient for successful coaching:

I got a lot of experience (hands on mouth), I can, you know (looks at the camera for a few seconds), I don’t (hand gestures) really need to plan or anything I can just make up on the spot (looks to the left) and it goes really smooth (Gavin, year 1, VD, December 2011).
Despite such initial resistance, the students recognised that some of the theories covered in
the course were beneficial for improving their coaching practice. This was particularly the
case when students had opportunities to apply theory to practice:

I would never use that (reciprocal learning) until he told me. Like I’ve been using
this in my swimming lessons now...I go into more depth now so it helps with
understanding a bit more...and also the whole reciprocal learning and guided
discovery and that helps a lot. I wouldn’t have said that before...it’s just learning
new things that work really (Mary, year 1, FG4/14, May 2012).

I don’t think I have stopped doing anything I was doing already but I think that I’ve
just added more to it...like a couple of things especially just like the guided discovery
that kind of thing, and like empowerment (Tracey, year 1, FG4/12, May 2012).

Consequently, for it to be valued, the students had to perceive the information (or theory)
received as being relevant to their working practices. When this was not the case, the theory
was not perceived as valuable. For example, Barry suggested that ‘it’s all very well having
all this theory, but I think it’s not... it’s all fairly useless unless you can actually get out and
experience it’ (year 2, FG5/17, October 2012).

The challenges faced by the students when learning the theories included their conception
of learning (i.e., need to memorise the theory) and their resistance in getting out of their
‘comfort zones’; (a topic discussed in depth in section 4.4). In the words of two:

There’s too many different variations. Like, I can’t learn and remember them.
Because I haven’t looked at them enough, and because I’m not really interested in
them... I don’t like... I’m not really motivated to look at it (Tracey, year 1, FG4/12,
May 2012).

Getting from the stage of learning the theory to being comfortable in using it is a
long process. Very long process. And it’s so easy to sort of just sit back into your
usual, I guess... because that’s your comfort zone (Daniel, year 1, FG4/12, May
2012).
As the study progressed, however, the students increasingly recognised the role of theory in developing their understanding of coaching and its application in practice:

*I’m not just sitting on experience now. I’m able to understand how I think as a coach or how I was previously coaching and it further enables me to reflect on that... I know going into leading sessions now, especially from advanced coaching, the science, I’d be a lot better equipped to deal with anything. I feel I could coach a multiple range of sports* (Gavin, year 2, FG9/36, November 2013).

*Before I came here I thought I was a pretty good coach, and was quite confident. But my coaching now compared with how it was then is completely different and I would say I’m ten times better now, just because the theory makes you think differently and just taking into account different things that you’d just pass over without doing the theory, I think.* (Nathan, year 3, FG11/42, March 2014).

*Now, compared to first year, my kids are moving up stages more quickly, because I understand their way of learning from using these theories* (Mary, year 3, FG12/45, May 2014).

The increasing recognition of the value of theory in informing practice coincided with a change in the students’ conception of coaching from talking to someone about ‘skills’ (Nathan, year 1, FG4/13, May 2012) and ‘giving people structure to follow’ (Tom, year 3, FG10/37, December 2013), to focusing on different ways of learning and the steps needed in co-constructing knowledge.

One of the contributing factors that allowed students to see the value of coaching theory was the increasingly reflective nature of their practices.

*Recent lectures on reflection interest me. I started to understand why those lectures could be so beneficial before we actually become coaches. In addition to the seminars, my understanding of reflection has improved. To date, I actually use reflection every day and come up with better action plans which I think are really effective especially when I am doing practical activities* (Heather, Reflective Log, 18th November 2012).

The students, therefore, generally recognised that reflective practice was not something they would have consciously engaged in previously (e.g., ‘I don’t think I’d ever reflected about my coaching after a session until now’ – Daniel, year 2, FG5/18, October 2012). As the
study progressed, however, the students argued that adopting reflective practice was making them aware they were ‘actually slowly improving’ (Steve, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012). Here, theory was seen as an important aspect that allowed them to make sense of their coaching:

You’d just coach and you wouldn’t know any different. You wouldn’t know if it was a good session or a bad session. You’d just do something and you might think “Oh, I wonder why they reacted like that?” but you wouldn’t have a theory to explain “this is why” So it is helpful (Daniel, year 3, FG10/39, December 2013).

The interesting information that I was talking about was when we learnt about the variations of powers that could be used during a session to cater for the participants. This term we are into Foucault’s idea of disciplinary power, how we as individuals can insert power into ourselves by our body language and, position where we might stand during a session (Steve, Reflective Diary, February 2013).

In this respect, the students argued that having background knowledge (i.e., knowledge about the theory being discussed) was key before applying theory to practice, which was in line with their increasing focus on knowledge for understanding (instead of focusing solely on knowledge for action):

In my psychology lecture, we’re actually being sports psychologists, having to go through case studies and stuff and it makes it so much more relevant, but we couldn’t do that if we hadn’t known the theory beforehand (Martin, year 3, FG9/35, December 2013).

The creation of a learning environment that encouraged students to be reflective was crucial for their development as reflective practitioners. This included using seminars to provoke meaningful debates that resonated with the students’ own experiences:

It’s quite good to talk in the seminars about how you use the theory and how it works... (Nathan, year 3, FG10/39, December 2013).

I’d say this year has been very much about us - “How can you use these theories and this is how it’s going to look, and what happens if you get these problems?” (Gavin, year 3, FG9/36, November 2013).
The teaching methods adopted by the lecturers also allowed the students to ‘experience’ different theories and ‘feel’ what it was like to apply them in practice (e.g., *Whatever theory they’re teaching, they use it on us without us realising, until at the end we go “Oh, they used that on us!”* - Mary, Year 3, FG9/36, October 2013). Similarly, the use of academic writing (i.e., essay format) was also seen as beneficial for understanding the theories covered on the course (e.g., ‘if you really reflect and look back on your essays, you can say “I do have a good understanding of that knowledge or of that theory. I can use it in my coaching now”’ - Daniel, year 3, FG11/43, March 2014).

Additionally, observing other coaches triggered further reflection when analysing behaviours and potential suggestions for the students’ own coaching: ‘*He coached some the more advanced stuff, and then coached the other three the beginner stuff. So, he adapted for that. Which was quite good*’ - Martin, FG8/29, May 2013).

Another contributing aspect to the development of reflective practice was the use of workbooks pre and post-sessions (e.g., *it actually makes us think out of the box in terms of the reflection* - Heather, FG4/14, May 2012). Here, the practical sessions experienced on the course and external coaching practice encouraged students to engage in ‘*a process of evaluating your performance and your own abilities. So self-awareness I think*’ (Tom, Year 3, FG10/37, December 2013). Becoming more self-aware (and aware of their own practice) was beneficial in guiding the students’ general development:

*I think one of my favourite things this year is caring [content that was covered in the course]. I know that sounds like a woolly topic area, but I've found when an athlete tries to talk to me, because there's very little time to coach the session, I'm not actually taking any interest in what they say.* (Martin, Year 3, FG11/42, March 2013)
The data revealed some interesting findings as the course progressed, often contradicting the students’ initial ways of thinking about coaching theory and its application to practice. For example, the students started to accept that applying theory to coaching practice was not the straight forward process they wished for in the first year:

*I think the main trouble with most of the theories is that they’re a lot harder to apply than you initially think, but I think it’s just more a persistence thing; you’ve almost got to ... if it doesn’t work the first time, don’t give up* (Tom, year 3, FG10/37, December 2013).

In furthering the case for practical experience, any perceived lack of such experience was perceived by the students as a potential barrier to their understanding of theory. Here, Heather commented:

*I think because I don’t have that experience it’s hard. I agree with Martin, we understand it if we see it... if I don’t understand, then OK, I’m going to research in the books and the books are going to explain everything. So yes, I understand it a lot better. But I think maybe the understanding is quite different, because they have the experience and I don’t* (Heather, year 3, FG9/35, October 2013).

Still, and rather paradoxically, although the students recognised the benefits of practice in allowing them to further their understanding of theories, some of them failed to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the University. They often attributed their lack of engagement to laziness:

*There’s a lot of opportunities and I haven’t really taken advantage to like...there’s quite a lot to get involved in (pause). Got to get off our backsides and do it, sort of thing. But that’s the thing, like – just get in such bad habits from last year, get lazy, and... I mean, any of that’s all down to us... we’re the ones that are being lazy* (Tom, year 2, FG8/32, May 2013).
A further challenge faced by the students was the role given to them within the clubs they worked at. For example, Martin argued that ‘if you’re an assistant, you can’t really go out and try it, I think that’s the problem’ (Year 3, FG9/35, October 2013). This feeling was shared by others, especially in the second year of the study when the students had their first compulsory involvement with external placement providers:

I’m finding it difficult to put that theory into my coaching...so... I’ll coach the youth sides, but... er, I find it... quite difficult to... because if you don’t run the session, if you’re an assistant coach, then you don’t really have much control over it (Daniel, year 2, FG6/21, December 2012).

4.2 Learning Experiences – Discussion

4.2.1 Students’ conceptions of, and approaches to, learning: From surface to deep

The results showed an overall shift from surface to deep learning approaches during the students’ three years of study. In line with the work of Entwistle and Peterson (2004), such change was slow, especially during the first year when the students showed a relatively stable conception of learning. Here, learning was conceptualised as remembering information provided by the teaching staff, resembling the idea of learning as acquisition. This is in keeping with the work of Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013), where the coaches’ cited desired the acquisition of new knowledge. The coaches in the above study, however, also expressed a desire to be actively involved in the planning of the course content, which differs from the initial stages of the current study. Rather, the students here did not seem to question the knowledge being acquired as they saw it as a means to pass the assessment, as opposed to a means of becoming more knowledgeable coaches. This resulted in a strategic and surface approach to learning during the first year of the course (Entwistle and Entwistle, 1991). In this sense, the students often questioned the need to invest more effort than what was
perceived as necessary to pass the test (a characteristic of the surface approach to learning – Entwistle, 2000). This strategic and surface approach chosen by the students was influenced by the structure of their course, which required the students to achieve only 40% to progress from the first to the second year of study.

Assessments, thus, played a key role in the students’ learning. In this respect, the prevalence of a strategic approach was aligned to the surface learning engaged in by the students during their first year of the study, and to the deeper approach adopted in the second and third years. These results somewhat contradict those from Mogashana, Case and Marshall’s (2012) study that demonstrated students adopted a strategic surface or deep approach to learning according to what they needed to achieve the peak of performance. This was not the case in the first year for the current study’s students, whose aim was not to achieve peak performance but just to pass. Here, the fact that the results from the first year did not contribute to the final degree classification was a key aspect that led students to adopt such a surface approach to learning.

The strategic approach adopted by the students, despite initially being seen as a negative aspect (focused on the marks), generated opportunities for deep approaches to learning to be engaged with as the study developed and their conception of learning changed. These opportunities (set by the lecturer and often linked to assessment) included pre-reading in preparation for seminars, the use of workbooks for the completion of weekly tasks, writing assignments, and seminar group discussions which required students to be reflective in the co-construction of knowledge. However, not all practices were always seen as relevant by the students. For example, there was an initial resistance to writing assignments, which was later identified as beneficial to learning by the students. Here, the students recognised (in hindsight) the importance of having background knowledge (i.e., what they already knew
about a topic) to develop as coaches. Additionally, the constructive alignment between the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and the assessment was crucial to increase the students’ engagement in the learning process (Biggs and Tang, 2011). In this way, learning was seen as relational rather than independent.

4.2.2 Independent or ‘relational’ learning?

The view of learning as relational rather than independent should not be seen in negative terms. Indeed, constructivist theories have argued for the benefits of relational learning such as the opportunities to scaffold learning, challenging the learner to the next level of attainment (Wass and Golding, 2014). In the current study, the students argued that they did not understand the concept of independent learning, often referring to ‘independent learning’ as that which occurred when completing tasks or studying for exams; that is, learning that was always ‘related’ to an activity (including assessments) set by another person.

The lack of student understanding of the term ‘independent’ is not surprising. As the literature suggests, the term ‘independent learning’ is open to a variety of interpretations. For example, Balapumi and Aitken (2012, p. 2) define independent learning as “where the direction, control and regulation of the learning process is solely guided and managed by the learner”. The UK Higher Education Academy argued that independent learning “may include situations of group learning where activity may be collaborative and individual learning outcomes similar (or different) but each reached independently” (p. 4). Here, independent learning is believed to happen not only in isolation but also “within a community of learners” (p. 4). Other studies have additionally used different terms when referring to independent learning [(e.g., self-regulated learning (Yue, Wing and Greg, 2016), directed independent learning (HEA, 2014)], which adds to the complexity of the matter.
The relational aspects found in the students’ responses are in line with the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), who argue that the social context plays a crucial role in what people learn. Indeed, the results indicated that the teaching staff and the assessments employed were crucial in engaging students in their ‘relational’ learning. Learning as a collaborative process has been the focus of recent research in coaching (e.g. Mesquita, Ribeiro, Santos and Morgan, 2014; Stocszkowsky and Collins, 2014), suggesting that the negotiation and collaboration present within communities of practice can be very beneficial in developing coaches (independent of their expertise level). This results from the opportunities created for coaches to share and ‘make sense’ of their experiences (Lave and Wenger, 1991). However, the mere participation in a community of practice does not automatically result in the learning intended (Harris, 2010). It is important that mutual collaboration is present (Culver and Trudel, 2008). Results from the current study revealed group work as a catalyst to developing a deep approach to learning. For example, the students argued that pre reading and the discussions they had with other students (mainly as part of the course) allowed them to understand and question their own practices, especially when they were confronted with previously inaccessible ways of thinking (Meyer and Land, 2005).

4.2.3 A matter of ‘social responsibility’

Interestingly, the students’ engagement with pre-reading and discussions in seminars often originated from a sense of what they called ‘social responsibility’. In other words, by doing the work, the students felt that they were respecting their classmates as they were all working towards the same aim in a ‘fair’ way. This reflects Aguilera’s et al. (2007) multilevel theoretical framework of corporate social responsibility. Here, the authors argued that three main motives exist for engaging in social responsibility; “instrumental (self-interest driven), relational (concerned with relationships among group members), and moral (concerned with
ethical standards and moral principles)” (p. 839). The first, self-interest, is displayed in the search for fairness (Aguilera e al., 2007). More specifically, “when fairness is perceived, employees [read students] are happy and work harder” (p. 840). Findings from the current study demonstrated that the students developed a ‘mutual respect’ for each other when they accepted the idea that as the work was counting towards their degree, it was fair that they all committed to doing it. In this respect, the decision to engage was affected by social comparisons with the other group members. More specifically, the students’ perceptions of how others were committed to the task (i.e., engaged in pre-reading and group discussions) guided and encouraged their motivation for completing it themselves. This refers to the second aspect (i.e., relational motives) of Aguilera et al.’s (2007) framework. Here, a key focus lies on “how individuals manage their relationships with others” (Huseman, Hatsfield and Miles, 1987, p. 222). In this respect, failing to engage in a perceived ‘fair’ way could result in demotivation, therefore not fulfilling the students’ need for belongingness (a key aspect of individual social responsibility) (Aguilera et al., 2007). In the current study, the students perceived fairness and equity as two key aspects for their engagement in learning. This is in keeping with Adams’s (1965) equity theory which claims fairness and equity as key components of a motivated individual. In this respect, the higher an individual’s perception of equity the more motivated they would likely be. This was evident in the current findings when the students argued that if they did not engage in the work, they would question “Why am I actually here?”

Of crucial importance here is the importance of social comparison. In this respect, “[i]ndividuals evaluate their relationships with others by assessing the ratio of their outcomes from and inputs to the relationship against the outcome/input ratio of a comparison other” (Huseman, Hatsfield and Miles, 1987, p. 222). In this sense, despite the search for fairness and equity, the students also positioned themselves in a knowledge scale where they needed to feel competent with regards to their knowledge (e.g., I’d hate sitting there and knowing
that someone else knows so much more about something that I do” - Daniel, year 2, FG8/29, May 2013). Thus, the concern with group relationships presented itself in terms of a relationship of power. Here, the idea of ‘having’ knowledge served as a source of ‘expert’ and ‘informational’ power (French and Raven, 1959). Expert power is based on a perception that an individual has expertise on a specific topic, while informational power relates to the content of the information being provided rather than one’s perception of expertise (Lyngstad, 2015). Despite its potential to ‘make sense’ of the findings, caution is needed when using French and Raven’s typology of power. For example, the findings suggested the types of power experienced by the students were not easily divided. This relates to the work of Foucault (1979), who discusses the idea of power as a fluid relationship (Markula and Pringle, 2006). In keeping with a Foucauldian view, knowledge and power “both depend on and produce each other” (Potrac and Jones, 2011, p. 142). As with previous studies (e.g., Potrac, Jones and Armour, 2002; Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2003), the students perceived that showing their knowledge was a way to gain respect from others. This was a way to show that they fulfilled the expectations of being a second year student; expectations that were embedded within the environment in which they learned. This sentiment was described by all the students as they were influenced by the discursive practices that surrounded them. These discourses “worked somewhat anonymously as they circulated through a variety of human interactions via a capillary-like network with no one seemingly in control” (Denison and Scott-Thomas, 2011, p. 32). In this respect, the students attempted to use their power to develop positive relationships with peers in accordance with what they deemed as being correct. The idea of social responsibility was, therefore, “socially constructed…[and] communicated from one employee [read student] to another, eventually spreading to groups and entire organizations and shaping the organization-level climate for CSR [corporate social responsibility]” (Aguilera et al., 2007, p. 840).
Morality, the final aspect of Aguilera et al.’s (2007) framework of social responsibility, refers to “the norms, values, and beliefs embedded in social processes which define right and wrong for an individual or a community” (Crane and Matten, 2010, p. 8). According to Kant’s duty-based or deontological ethics, actions are seen as right or wrong independent of the consequences. This seems to contradict the findings of the current study, where the decisions made by the students regarding their engagement was based on a context informed by social comparison. Therefore, the students chose their responsibilities based on perceptions of fairness and intentions; that is, based on the context in which they encountered themselves.

4.2.4 An increasing investment in knowledge for understanding

In the initial stages of the study, the strategic and surface approach to learning coincided with a clear focus on knowledge for action (Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2010). This resonates with previous studies (e.g., Townsend and Cushion, 2015; Stodter and Cushion, 2014; Jones and Allison, 2014) where coaches “desired personally relevant and practically usable content” (Townsend and Cushion, 2015, p. 13). In this respect, theory was considered relevant if the students perceived it to be directly applicable to coaching practice. Additionally, there was the recognition by the students that the theories presented in more ‘scientific’ modules were of greater ‘use’ (e.g., performance analysis and psychology rather than coaching science). Here, coaching was recognised as something learned from experience (doing); a view that coincided a definition of coaching as technicist and rationalistic (Taylor and Garrat, 2008; Jones and Wallace, 2005).

Despite similarities with previous findings, the longitudinal nature of this study allowed for differences to be explored at various points of the students’ experiences. For example, despite an initial search for knowledge for action, the students subsequently invested in
knowledge for understanding (Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2011). As mentioned in the results, key catalysts here were the students’ engagement in self-critical reflective practice and a change in the students’ conception of coaching. Here, theories covered in the module became means through which the students started to make sense of their own practice. As a result, the students began to realise there was more than one way of coaching, and that their initial view was too simplistic (Jones and Wallace, 2005; Bowes and Jones, 2006). This was particularly the case when the students had the opportunity to ‘experience’ the application of theory to problematic ‘scenarios’ and to their own external coaching practice. Here, the students took greater interest in engaging with theory to better understand and improve their coaching, rather than just apply to their practices. It is a finding which resonates with the work of Bethell and Morgan (2011), who suggested the use of problem-based and experiential learning to enhance student understanding of topics covered in sessions. In the current study, the students were provided with chances to explore scenarios and ‘solutions’ that often went beyond the content covered in lectures. This exploration, in line with the study by Jones and Turner (2006), led to the development of critical thinking among the students (Sivan et al., 2000). More specifically, the application of theory to practice was facilitated by the programme structure, which included opportunities to discuss case studies in seminars, practical sessions and placement opportunities.

4.2.5 Final thoughts

The findings demonstrated the prevalence of a strategic approach to learning by the students throughout the study. This was aligned to a surface approach in the first year of the study, and to a deep approach in the second and third years. In line with the work of Strutyven et al. (2006), the approaches to learning adopted by the students are not to be considered stable psychological traits. Indeed, the findings made it apparent that the students’ learning was significantly affected by the structure of their programme and thus fluid in nature.
particular importance here was the view of learning as ‘relational’ rather than ‘independent’. The teaching staff and the assessments employed were crucial in engaging students in this process. The findings, therefore, call for further clarity regarding the definition of independent learning, as well as how (and if) it can be achieved.

Perhaps the most striking finding in this section relate to how the students referred to their engagement in learning as a matter of ‘social responsibility’. This resembles the idea of how to become a legitimate member in a community of practice (Christie et al., 2013). Here, the students’ learning appeared a result of their perceptions of how they should behave in a certain community. This sentiment of respect for each other originated from a concern with fairness (self-interest), the relationships among group members, and moral principles (Aguilera et al., 2007). This invites educators to consider the learning environments established and experienced by the students in a search for active engagement. Here, it is important that relationships of power are considered in detail to guide potential teaching interventions.

Finally, despite an initial search for knowledge for action, the students subsequently invested in knowledge for understanding. This process was affected by the students’ involvement in reflective practice, a topic that was heavily covered on the programme. Similarly, in developing such awareness, the constructive alignment between the course structure, learning outcomes and teaching activities was key.
4.3 Intellectual development - Results

The results presented and discussed in this section refer principally to objective three, which aims to explore the extent to which the knowledge and experiences gained on the degree programme contributed towards the students’ intellectual development. The results are organised under four principal themes: ‘Uncertainty and frustration’, ‘Better accepting uncertainty – a progression to relativism’, ‘The continued progression to more complex cognition and the strategic nature of students’ learning’, and finally, ‘Alternatives to growth and the complexities of intellectual development’. Each is now presented in turn.

4.3.1 Uncertainty and frustration

A constant desire and search for academic certainty was a common occurrence in the initial stages of the degree among the students. This was particularly in terms of the content knowledge exposed to:

Steve: *He (the lecturer) never gives you a straight answer. You ask him questions, he just argues the answer.*

Gavin: *He's like, “um, yeah, ah, well, there's this and there's that. And...”*

Steve: *He gave an answer, he goes, “Er, maybe”, then he argues it, and it's like, just give me a yes or no...*

Gavin: *That could be... it's like, “ah, man, just say yes, please!”*

Gavin: *You just need certainty. He doesn't sound stable at all. I don’t know... scared!*

Steve: *So, you're more confused leaving than you were going in.*

* (Year 1, FG2/6, December 2011)

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*My first [coaching science] assignment was a bit scary cos I’m not sure I did it right,*

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2 Part of the content included in sections 4.3 and 4.4 was published by De Martin-Silva, L., Fonseca, J., Jones, R. L., Morgan, K. and Mesquita, I. in 2015. See reference list for further details.
When the desired certainty was not forthcoming, a negativity fuelled by confusion and frustration was evident among the group:

*Once someone tells me something I’m like ‘ok, got it, don’t tell me anymore, don’t confuse me anymore... (Laughs)... For me to just understand something straight to the point, I’ll be like “yes, perfect!” and then someone from the other side of the classroom says “I don’t understand this” and I actually put my hands in my ears, repeating over it “this is what it is, this is what it is, keep it on your head”... I think confusion is the worst thing for me... I get too stressed over it... (Mary, year 1, FG4/14, May 2012).*

Such frustration was often caused by the ambiguity encountered as the student-coaches’ established dualistic way of thinking was increasingly questioned. This early phase of their higher education experience then was characterised by the students’ perceptions of themselves as mere receptors of information. Having their notion of knowledge as an accumulation of given facts (i.e., acquisition) challenged by relativist positions created resistance among the students, who saw staff as the principal sources of authority, as the following excerpt illustrates:

*They’ve got to know the course, so they’ve got their own knowledge on all the information to give people. Maybe that’s one of the bonuses of going to a lecture – you get one or two statements that they say (Steve, year 1, FG2/6, December 2011).*

As a result, students often showed satisfaction when the information provided by lecturers resulted in understanding without the need for further work outside the lecture. In the words of Tracey:

*...like, coach science, it’s not that I’m really interested in what they’re saying but the way they deliver it, and the way they teach it to me, I really understand it. So, it makes me like it more. Because I don’t have to, like, really think about it. Because they go a lot slower, I understand it whilst I’m in the lecture, and then I don’t have to do anything else when I come out of it (Tracey, year 1, FG2/4, December 2011).*
This search, and respect, for ‘knowledge-authority’ stretched beyond the staff to other student-coaches’ themselves:

_The night before, we revised as a group. This helped a lot because others had learnt it, and were able to explain it properly… and it made sense to me (Tracey, year 1, RL, December 2011)._}

Such a tendency, however, was more than a simple ‘recourse to authority’. Rather, it resembled a search for a collective security; an affirmation of the students’ developing perceptions. Although initially evident prior to exams, this ‘checking of understanding’ also became prevalent in relation to general issues and content as the course progressed. Instead of accepting insecurity as a challenge to personal progress, most of the students found alternative means to make them more secure in their learning. These included sticking rigidly to only revising information given out in the lecture-based sessions.

Despite such tendencies, the students were nevertheless evolving their epistemological perceptions of knowledge, particularly when encountered by what they considered to be more than one ‘sound argument’ (e.g., ‘When you’ve written something down and he just creates an argument like “yeah, I’ve just written this and it may be wrong” or you keep rethinking stuff’ - Steve, year 1, FG4/15, May 2012). Additionally, as the students progressed through their second year of study, evidence emerged of them better accepting their role in the construction of personal coaching knowledge (e.g., ‘I dunno if I want... like, this year, I don’t know if I’d want definitive answers’ - Tom, year 2, FG6/21, December 2012).

4.3.2 Better accepting uncertainty – a progression to relativism

Students’ movement towards better accepting uncertainty happened slowly. It was not until halfway through the second year that students showed signs of developing greater security
in terms of both better accepting the contested nature of coaching knowledge and their active role in its personal construction. The process was multifaceted, and the students found it hard to attribute the changes to specific moments:

*I hadn’t really thought there was a point where I thought to myself, ‘OK, now I accept this’ – I think that it’s just kind of... now that you’ve mentioned it again, I kind of thought, well actually, we have just got on with it. Which... get used to it (Tracey, year 2, FG6/21, December 2012).*

The acceptance of the contested nature of coaching knowledge coincided with an overall movement from dualist to relativist approach to learning:

*I guess it’s a bit like coaching science in first year. Like, we all didn’t like the fact that there was no answers. Whereas now, like, I remember last time we were talking here, like – it’s quite nice. Like, you get to kind of put your own spin on it (Tom, year 2, FG8/32, May 2013).*

The movement to a more relativist view of the world was initially fuelled by negative thoughts regarding ‘being confused’ amongst ‘so much literature’ (Fran) and ‘so many different answers’ (Tom, year 1, FG4/15, May 2012). Such a movement gave room to a more positive view, where students recognised their role in the co-construction of knowledge (as previously mentioned in this section), despite in some cases, not yet practising it. In the words of two;

*Fran: There’s no simple definition. I suppose it’s not really giving a definitive answer, it’s about going to all the different lectures, and then getting all the different opinions, and then putting your own subject within it.*

*Fran: And finding – yeah, finding your own sort of answer...*

*Tom: Guess I haven’t got to that bit yet – I’m still trying to get my head around all the literature!*

(year 2, FG6/21, December 2012)
A principal factor in the development of students’ into more ‘relative’ learners was the structure of the course which encouraged engagement with the content and related objectives. Students soon recognised that ‘the course isn’t going to change for us, so we’ve got to work around that to learn from that, the way it’s being taught’ (Daniel, year 2, FG 6/21, December 2012). One component seen as particularly useful was when three staff members gave differing opinions on coaching; from rationalistic, pragmatic and relative viewpoints. The students were then broken into discussion groups to debate, not only the merits of each case, but also personal stance(s) in relation to them. In the words of Steve;

I’ve had one opinion [about coaching] which was fine, and then someone else came in to give a neutral perspective. And today we’re getting someone that actually disagrees with the first opinion. It’s good, I actually started reading about coaching to understand it better (Steve, year 2, FG5/19, October 2012).

Additionally, seminar sessions were viewed as very beneficial in and for the students’ cognitive development. Here, they were actively encouraged to discuss perceptions and answers;

Tom: I realise now there isn’t one answer. I also want to be aware of all the possibilities so I can make the most informed choice.
Q: And where do you get those possibilities from? How would you become aware of them?
Heather: From discussion I guess, during the seminars...because the lecturer always asks us what we think, so we can give our own opinions about it, and from there we can gather other options.

(FG, year 3, FG10/37, December 2013).

Because someone’s debating it, it opens your mind to both ends of the sort of debate. (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).

Such a structure which included interaction opportunities within traditional lecture-based sessions, not only allowed but ensured a level of engagement and preparatory interpretive work: (e.g., ‘It gets you to read them [articles on coaching], doesn’t it. You have to, because you know you’re going to have to discuss them’ - Steve, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012).

A challenging issue here, however, concerned the different areas of knowledge and their
respective epistemic foundations, which the students were subjected to. For example, the degree course undertaken consisted of modules related to physiology and biomechanics in addition to pedagogy and sports coaching itself. Within some modules then, students were exposed to absolute, dualistic information, while in others they were expected to behave as relative learners. A consequence of such a situation was to make the transition from dualistic to relative thought additionally problematic. In the words of one;

*Each lecturer in different subjects has their own beliefs and views. So you get some who just give you closed answers and you get some who are open-answered about everything. Which makes it really hard for us (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).*

*Coaching science is subjective, whereas learning and sport, for me, is more scientific, because you expect answers...Like – the muscular skeletal system. And stuff like that. And when it comes to stuff like that I want rigid answers. Because that’s what science is for me (Tom, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).*

Despite such obstacles, the students were journeying from a more dualistic position to one increasingly aligned with contextual relativism.

In addition to the course structure, another principal reason for this movement was the staff member(s) exposed to. Hence, the students’ readiness to discuss answers and considerations appeared to be heavily influenced by the relationship with the lecturer in question. This, in turn, was linked to the aforementioned structure of course, which better (or not) allowed such relationships to flourish:

*This is about feeling comfortable with the lecturer. So, if he [lecturer] knows my name, we know each other a little bit...or if he takes my seminar, I have more contact. Some lecturers, I don’t even know who they are (Barry, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012)*

*He talks to you, not at you. And asks your opinion, not giving his all the time (Tracey, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012).*

This was more than simply viewing staff as approachable people (e.g., ‘I like the fact, just before seminars, he sits down with us, and just talks about everything’ - Steve, year 2,
Rather, it appeared as a justification for the students’ changing cognitive engagement. What seemed to develop this perception was a belief that the staff in question cared about the students’ learning (an aspect that is further explored in sections 4.5 and 4.6). Here, staff empathy was key in guiding student intellectual development, with a significant moment being described by Tracey:

I have a seminar lecturer – [he/she] told us, ‘being confused is good.’ It means that you’re understanding there’s not just one right answer... it did make me feel a lot better (Tracey, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012).

Despite the importance attached to staff empathy, which created the context for more relative engagement, staff were still viewed as authority figures (e.g., ‘He’s [lecturer] willing to chat to us...so we’re all ready to listen to him’ - Steve, year 2, FG7/26, February 2013). Consequently, even though the students were becoming aware of a multiplicity of views, compliance with authority, in this instance the wishes of staff, still loomed large in their intellectual development and learning.

4.3.3 The continued progression to more complex cognitions and the strategic nature of students’ learning

As the student-coaches progressed into the final year of their course, evidence emerged of their development, not only as ‘relative’ but also as ‘committed’ learners (Perry, 1999); i.e., where responsibility for personal judgments were increasingly made. Similarly, there was a perception of their roles as creators of personal knowledge (even if compliantly told to do so by staff):

I told my supervisor I find it hard agreeing or disagreeing with someone...and he said “you’ve just got fight it and think through it.” In academic and, I suppose, in coaching terms you’ve got to critique everything and fight it (Steve, year 3, FG10/38,
If they gave you just one answer which fits all, it wouldn’t work; coaching isn’t like that. At the start I was like, “just tell us the fricking answer!”...and he said you have to pick your own encounter, and now that makes perfect sense (Gavin, year 3, FG12/45, May 2014)

Coaching has to be what you make of it... trying to understand what has the most value to you and why (Tom, year 3, FG12/45, May 2014).

If you are moulded into a ‘robot’ coach, how is that going to help? How did the ‘big’ managers/coaches get to where they are? By being told what to do and how to do it? No, they were individualistic, having their own methods and approaches, being creative (Steve, year 3, RL, November 2013).

This finding was aligned to a desire ‘to be aware of all the possibilities’ in order to make the most informed choice. There was also the recognition that providing a rationale was essential:

So if you understand why it has the most value to you and why you think it’s better than anything, then I guess that’s all right; but if you just say “I’ll have this model or this theory” but you don’t really know why, then maybe you’ll miss out on something else (Tom, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

Although, as suggested, the curriculum structure and developing staff relationships impacted on the students’ movement to a more relativist way of thinking, of arguably more importance was their position as ‘strategic learners’. In this respect, the students appeared, almost without exception to be primarily concerned with ‘passing the test’ and ‘finding an answer’ as the following excerpt illustrates;

Because every lecture, every seminar, every little task counts now, everyone’s taking it seriously. Now, in a seminar, you can sense that people want to speak, because it counts (Steve, year 2, FG5/19, October 2012).

The movement towards relativism in the students’ thinking, therefore, was more problematic than first appeared. This was principally related to the fact that they still considered staff (and the institution) as authority sources. Allied to their dominating tendency to be strategic learners, such compliance somewhat ironically ensured their engagement on a general
trajectory towards relativism; a form of ‘relativism’ that could be viewed as infused with subordination. In the words of two of the students:

*I suppose, they want us to...see how we interpret things, probably. Because that’s what coaching’s about, right?* (Tracey, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012).

Steve: *Now I just think, yes OK, I’m on the right track, I can do it* (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).

The students’ increased relativist way of thinking also had an impact on how they saw staff; not as the authority sources, but rather an authority source always in contestation with others. This questioning shift was facilitated (perhaps rather paradoxically) through students’ closer personal relationships with staff. These were, in turn, attributed to the increased number of seminars during the second and third years of study (e.g., ‘He’s [the lecturer] someone I can have a conversation with now’; ‘I’ve got to know her more as a person’ - Daniel, year 2, FG8/29, May 2013). Allied to this acceptance of multiple realities and perspectives, the students increasingly questioned the ‘correctness’ of staff (e.g., ‘It doesn’t mean they are actually right’ - Steve, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013). Such disagreement, however, can also be seen as somewhat reinforcing the staff’s standing, with the students sometimes taking a diametrically opposed position. Hence, the students often came to define themselves in relation (i.e., in opposition) to that of their teachers. Taken as such, the power and influence of the staff over the students’ intellectual development was still very much in evidence.

A final catalyst in the students’ general progression towards relativism was the influence of peers. As each grappled with the move from dualism, despite content-based disagreements, the students found security in each other’s frustrations. Here, perspectives were shared, and perceptions influenced; the result being a general convergence towards increasing relativism (in line with the overall course objectives). In the words of Steve;
I remember, like, every... if we were in the same lecture, or someone in my house is in the same lecture, we go back in the house and we discuss what we learned. And then I get her view on what we learned, and it comes in my mind, because we've just discussed it. From last year, we just... “nah, let's play FIFA. Let's go to town.” Or something. This year, even on the way back home – we walk back home – we discuss it...And I’m like – what? This change, it is weird (Steve, year 2, FG5/19, October 2012).

4.3.4 Alternatives to growth and the complexities of intellectual development

Despite evidence demonstrating the students’ better acceptance of uncertainty, they also found ways of delaying and/or denying their responsibility in the construction of knowledge. In this respect, some students shifted their standpoints not only to progress their learning but also to avoid new ways of knowing.

Interestingly, the students’ experiences as they developed intellectually coincided with the behaviours shown while they participated in the study. More specifically, it was as if the students on occasion ‘paused’ to gather forces before returning to the process. The extract below shows my concern with one of the student’s lack of participation in a focus group and failure to reply to emails:

The only student I am worried about right now is Tracey. I know she is very busy and really wouldn’t like her to withdraw from the study. So, I am trying to be as flexible as I can with her. I am looking forward to receiving her email/text/call....this will be a great day as, at the moment, I do not know where she stands with regards to the research (Researcher’s Reflective Journal, year 2, 11th March 2013).

This attitude, initially seen as a potential lack of interest in continuing the study, was soon perceived as part of the student’s intellectual development:

I’m feeling apprehensive. Tracey just walked past me when going towards the pool table with some friends. I’m not sure whether she saw me. I’m very tempted to go and have a chat with her, but not sure if this is the best option... ...not sure if I should approach her??? I really want to....she has been so important for my study. I feel she is changing...perhaps the way she is behaving now is how she does within her course. From what she said she does things when she feels there is something to gain behind
it...perhaps she doesn’t think the study is offering her much…

A few minutes later…

YAYYYYY...so happy!!!! just got back from speaking to her!!! And she is still on board!!!! This made my day!!! We had a chat and she mentioned how she was busy as she had 4 assignments to write and just handed in the last one half an hour ago. She also said that she wrote something on a notepad as she didn’t have her computer at the time and that she will post that on the log!!!! So relieved!!

(Researcher’s reflective journal, year 2, March 2013)

The example above serves to show that the route to intellectual development was not straightforward. Moreover, a somewhat unstable position was showed by students, especially when under stressful situations. Despite recognising their active role in the construction of knowledge, students still wanted ‘answers’ when under perceived stressful situations:

Tracey: I still feel sometimes that I wish they'd just give me the answer! Especially when I was doing my dissertation, [Lecturer’s name deleted] being an amazing dissertation tutor and was saying things like “I want you to develop as a person during your dissertation and not just write the dissertation.” And I was “I know, but when I’m getting stressed I need you to tell me what to do, and what to write.” And he was just like “Well, what do you think?” and I was going “I don’t know!! This is why I'm asking you!” So he’d say “OK, you could do this, this and this.” And I was “Perfect! That’s what I'm doing!” ...Oh! Just tell me the answer! So when I was stressed and didn’t have the time it really annoyed me, but if I had plenty of time to understand myself that it would be useful.

Barry: Yes, it’s definitely got potential to make you think about all the different answers, but I'm sure when you're struggling to deadlines and things, you just want to get it done.

(year 3, FG 11/41, March 2014)

4.4 - Intellectual Development - Discussion

4.4.1 – A progression from dualism to relativism

Similar to the students in Perry’s (1970) work, through engagement with the programme activities, the students within this study generally progressed from a dualist to a more
relativist position in their intellectual development. Indeed, the findings revealed an initial search for certainty, particularly in the first year of their undergraduate course. By assuming a dualist view of knowledge, students also saw lecturers as the main source of authority; in other words, the ones who held the valuable truth. In this way, a position as mere recipients was adopted by students in their initial grappling with the higher education environment. Additionally, when certainty was not forthcoming, the students displayed signs of frustration, often resisting the move away from established comfort zones (Erichsen, 2011). Such a position reflects that of keeping away from feeling “naked of self” (Meyer and Land, 2005), a position where the learner is “neither fully in one category or another” (p.376). It is perhaps not surprising then, that resistance existed, as “[t]he movement away from dualism is a challenge to the security and order of a world of clear-cut objective answers” (Thoma, 1993, p. 135).

As the study progressed, the students increasingly revealed signs of better accepting uncertainty and their role in the co-construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). This was especially the case when they were encouraged to engage with conflicting information such as the different opinions of lecturers and peers. Such conflicting information contributed to a change in the students’ beliefs regarding the simplicity of knowledge. This was facilitated by the course structure, where small discussion groups were increasingly utilised. In this respect, seminar sessions gave the students an opportunity to consider their own views concerning issues covered in the modules, whilst ‘opening their eyes’ to other ways of knowing. The ‘old’ and ‘new’ ways of seeing the world relate to the concept of ‘liminality’ defined by Baillie, Bowden and Meyer (2013) “as the state in which there are two competing ways of seeing a situation, one the established but increasingly inadequate way and the other a new, more powerful and comprehensive way of seeing” (p. 240). Despite the positive experience advocated by the students in relation to being exposed to conflicting information,
it was noticeable that some students found engagement with the uncertainties inherent in such practices difficult to accept.

Consequently, instead of welcoming new understandings, one of the students decided to ignore such debates as an attempt not to get confused. Thus, the student showed that learning was far from a linear process (Meyer and Land, 2009). More importantly, the student was resisting a key aspect in developing professional competence; that is, “capabilities of seeing and handling novel situations in powerful ways” (Bowden and Marton, 1998, p. 114). Consequently, such a behaviour served to hinder the notion of transformative learning, more specifically regarding the development of knowledge capability which involves a continuous learning process that includes “getting it wrong” and then “working on it to get it right” (Baillie, Bowden and Meyer, 2013, p. 243).

Of equal importance in stimulating the movement from dualist to relativist thinking, was the assessment demands of the course. The students repeatedly showed themselves to be strategic learners (Entwistle, 2000), much more attuned and concerned to ‘pass the test’ than any engagement with the wider notion of ‘learning’ as related to coaching. It is a finding which resonates with the work of Mallett et al., (2009) who recognised the role of assessment in driving learning. Although this inherently powerful link between learning and assessment may appear disheartening to pedagogues who champion the merits of wider learning for its own sake, on deeper reflection, it brings a liberation of its own. This is because, if students are driven by the instrumentality of ‘passing the test’, then as long as the assessment is adequately conceptualised and considered, what and how they learn can be controlled to a significant degree. Hence, if the aim is to get student-coaches to behave as relative, reflective and insightful thinkers, the task for coach educators is to devise and structure appraisals that stimulate and engender such objectives. This would appear of particular relevance to an activity such as coaching which is both personal and social (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac,
and one which demands engagement with insecurity, ambiguity and considered creativity.

4.4.2 Complying with course and staff demands and intellectual development

The results draw great attention to how the students consistently complied with course and staff demands which, rather ironically, included a call for greater independence of thought. Such findings suggest that the context in which the students operated affected how they ‘chose to’ negotiate their own understandings. This finding also highlights that the students’ insufficient engagement with transformative learning during their first year of study may have been due to the lack of a recognised need for doing so (e.g., when only having to achieve 40% to progress to the next level of study). Here, the importance of the context needs to be highlighted. As argued by Magolda (2004) the idea of intellectual development as a gradual process that unfolds in a logical sequence should, instead, focus on the context in which interactions occur. This contextual view forms the base of the work of Louca et al. (2004), who believed that the changing nature of context plays a more important role in epistemological development than an individual’s cognitive level. Indeed, in the current study, students who often displayed characteristics consistent with relativist thinking, chose to adopt a dualistic approach when perceived to be under stressful situations (e.g., time constraint; deadlines). In this sense, although students’ intellectual development took place in a temporal fashion (despite perhaps not being as structured as some previous studies have suggested), the context in which it took place encouraged students to display aspects that were closely linked to previous positions (e.g., dualism - desire for a right answer). In this sense, the findings suggest that questions regarding “whether the same individuals can adopt multiple epistemological positions at the same time” are still open to debate (Richardson, 2013, p. 192). Based on the results of the current study, the students showed signs of adopting positions that coincided with a period of transition. Therefore, as with Perry’s (1970) previous claims, the students demonstrated evidence of being in more than one position at
the same time during their undergraduate years. Nevertheless, this did not seem to be the case when students ‘jumped’ from seeing things in a relativistic way to (re)adopting a dualistic approach. In this case, students did not show themselves to be authentically adopting more than one epistemological position. Nor did they show a sign of regression to previous positions, a pathway that Perry describes as ‘retreat’. Instead, students here showed themselves to be aware of their position (i.e., relativism) and, more importantly, used less developed ways of knowing (e.g., dualism) to cope with the demands of a perceived stressful task. It is, therefore, important for coach educators to ‘notice’ small nuances within their work environment before making any assumptions regarding coaches’ intellectual development.

One aspect that proved particularly problematic for the students was the epistemic range of modules experienced. Here, some units were taught from an interpretive standpoint, while others were rooted in a positivistic paradigm. Although Perry recognised the problematic influence of students’ epistemic assumptions and their effects on learning (Clouder 1998), the precise workings of in-built course contradictions (as witnessed) have remained largely unexplored. The results from this study pointed to a degree of student confusion from this inconsistency, which proved something of an obstacle to the student-coaches’ general intellectual development. In this sense, while some assessments required students to write assignments that discussed and appraised topics from different and often conflicting points of view, others (especially exams) required memorisation, which according to Zhang and Watkins (2001), may not require a relativistic approach to learning. Similarly, the findings suggest that greater attention could be paid to how and why a person transitions from one phase to another. Although Perry concedes that an individual can be at different stages at the same time with respect to different subjects, little attention has been given to how this impacts on identity development or the commitment to a given subject (e.g., sports science or sports coaching) that teaches from differing epistemological positions.
The findings also highlighted how relationships of power continue to be manifest in students’ intellectual development. Although others have reported on Perry’s under-appreciation of power, the precise nuance of its workings continue to lack clarity. Indeed, although Perry was aware of the need to ‘get to know students’ to affect their intellectual and ethical development (Geisler-Brenstein, Schmeck and Hetherington, 1996), the power dimension within this unavoidable hierarchical relationship was given inadequate attention. In contrast, the current study stressed the importance of ‘who’ is the teacher in student-coaches’ intellectual development. This was evidenced in two principal ways. Firstly, as a result of more meaningful staff relationships and accompanying perceptions of care; discernments arrived at through increased opportunities to interact with and discuss content-relevant concepts. Secondly, staff proved catalysts for students’ cognitive maturity through their espoused positions, against which students defined their increasing participation in the co-construction of knowledge (e.g., willingness to actively engage in sessions by feeling more confident in answering questions).

In discussing motivation for learning, Paulsen and Feldman (1998) argued that it can be enhanced if students are led to see learning as more complex than simply deciding between right and wrong answers. Nevertheless, this increase in motivation for learning was not unanimous. Indeed, one of the students in the current study showed signs of ‘temporising’; in other words, a pause in their development as if they were gathering forces or waiting for something that can motivate them to engage again in their own growth (Perry, 1999). It is important that students recognise that learning takes time and, as shown in the findings, lecturers can be key in promoting environments where confusion can be seen as a recognition that there are different ways of knowing and, therefore, constitutes part of the learning process. The idea of working slowly and looking for several solutions is an example of a potential way to promote a more relativist view of knowledge (Paulsen and Feldman, 1999).
This relates to a careful organisation of the curriculum to allow for in-depth discussions (De Martin-Silva and Mesquita, 2016).

The move towards a greater acceptance of relativity is particularly appropriate for the field of sports coaching. This is because it gives credence to those who argue for the inclusion of complex concepts and a constructivist perspective, as opposed to rationalistic discourse, within coach education courses (e.g., Jones, Morgan and Harris, 2012). This was a point recently argued by Jones et al. (2016), who made the case that decontextualised simplicity will not help us understand complex things, like coaching. Borrowing from Law (2006), they went on to claim that some coaching scholars’ refusal to (sincerely) acknowledge (and therefore pedagogically engage with) the messy nature of coaching, “actively repress[es] the very possibility of understanding the reality they purport to study” (Jones et al., 2016, p. 202). Luce (2008), albeit in a different area (i.e., music therapy), argued that a dualistic epistemology can limit one’s ability to make sense of any profession, especially when making the transition to real life scenarios that require the modification of practice and adaptation to different settings. Taking account of coaching’s complex nature then, like students in general, developing coaches should be challenged to leave the safe ground of dualistic certainty as early as possible. This view echoes the work of McMahon (2005), who suggested that setting expectations early on is key in encouraging students to accept the limitations of knowledge. Although the movement away from dualism often results in a degree of resentment and defensiveness against the new learning, it is the price to be paid as learners move towards a degree of relativism: a pre-requisite to understand the inherent complexity of activity. Not to engage student-coaches’ in such non-linear ways of learning, by holding to a view of coaching that can be unproblematically elaborated into given systems of knowledge, does developing practitioners a continuing disservice.

Finally, the construction of high quality learning environments, i.e., environments where a clear constructive alignment is adopted (Biggs and Tang, 2011) to promote “greater personal
involvement and acceptance of responsibility for learning” (Tolhurst, 2007, p. 221), requires educators to observe and carefully listen to students’ voices, not as a way to provide what they want but, more importantly, as a way to identify their needs by understanding how their behaviours are grounded in their epistemological development (King and Strohm Kitchener, 2004). For this to happen, educators must create high quality learning environments (Magolda, 2014) where they can share and negotiate their own development. As a result, educators “…can enable student transformation rather than just deliver a product.” (Magolda, 2014, p. 8).

4.4.4 Final Thoughts

The students within this study generally progressed from a dualist to a more relativist position in their intellectual development. In their initial year, the students searched for certainty and saw the lecturers as the main source of knowledge. When certainty was not forthcoming, students displayed signs of frustration.

As the study progressed, the students showed evidence of better accepting their role in the co-construction of knowledge, especially when presented with conflicting information. Here, the use of group discussions during seminars as well as the relationship with the teaching staff proved to be catalysts to such changes. The strategic nature of the learning approaches adopted by the students meant that they consistently complied with course and staff demands, which allowed for their intellectual development. This development (and subsequent student behaviour) was heavily affected by the structure of the course and was far from linear.
4.5 – Students’ perceptions of the roles played by the teaching staff - Results

This section introduces the findings regarding students’ perceptions of the roles played by the teaching staff during the three years of their undergraduate course (objective 5). More specifically, the findings are presented under four subsections: ‘An exchange relationship: caring as challenging’; ‘Factors that contributed to students’ perceptions of caring’; ‘Students’ perceptions of the lecturers’ roles’; and ‘Factors that affected students’ perceptions of teaching staff’. These are followed by a discussion of their meaning.

4.5.1 An exchange relationship: caring as challenging

Caring was one of the most significant aspects mentioned in the study. In the first year, students often referred to how some lecturers took the time to learn their names and ask them questions, which were taken as signs of ‘caring about’ them. For example,

…he interacts with his students. He... he talks to them, he asks them what’s going on, you know “how have you been”, things like that. And, “I haven't seen you in my lectures lately, where have you been?” You know what I mean? Like, you can tell that he cares about his students (Fran, FG4/16, May 2012).

The students also recognised that caring for so many students was not an easy task for lecturers, especially in their first year of study often housed in big lecture rooms. As a solution to such perceived issues, Tracey argued that ‘... if they [lecturers] give the impression that you could always come to them, then, even if you didn’t, you’d still feel happier - because you thought “well, if you needed to...”’ (FG2/4, year 1, December 2011). Perceptions of being cared about therefore provided a special feeling for students, very often described as ‘a little buzz that they know you as a person’ (Steve, FG2/6, year 1, December 2011). It was also seen as a sign of respect which the students argued made them ‘want to work harder in that module’ (Steve, FG2/6, December 2011). In the words of two:
Because they give you respect, and you talk to them, and you'll have a conversation, and he's interested in what you've got to say...then you'll sit there and you'll listen to him (Tracey, year 1, FG2/4, December 2011).

It's how they take like a little bit of time to learn your name, have a little bit of joke with you...makes a big difference on how much you engage, so it's important (Gavin, year 1, FG2/6, December 2011).

Here, the students clearly demonstrated their belief that caring was an exchange relationship.

In their first year of study, the expectation was that lecturers should initiate the process if they were to receive any rewards from students (e.g., engagement). In this respect, the students generally had high expectations without much perceived responsibility placed on them within the learning and development process. In the words of Tracey:

... you came to university and it just seemed they didn’t care, because you weren't used to it. Whereas now, you’ve built up that relationship to what you had with your school and college teachers, but I think it was just a shock because I’d never had to build up a relationship with a teacher, because it had always just been there and it had just been automatic, really (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

Evidence of change in this respect was seen towards the end of the second year of study.

Students thus appeared to start recognising their active role in building [caring] relationships with lecturers. There was a common view amongst students that they should show their investment in modules if they were to expect support from lecturers:

...like, if you’re willing to give them your time, they’ll be willing to give theirs, sort of thing. I mean, that might be why they get a little bit annoyed if you’re not in lectures. (Daniel, year 2, FG6/21, December 2012).

I think, well, if you ask, you can get help...But they expect a certain amount of effort from your part. So, if you email saying ‘I don’t understand this’ then they’ll come back saying: ‘have you read this? Have you read that?’ ...’No.’ ...’OK, read that, come back...’ (Tom, year 2, FG7/24, February 2013).

As the study progressed, the students showed a closer link between caring and learning. In this respect, they recognised that lecturers cared for their learning, showing a clear focus on being challenged:
The coaching science lecturers really want you to understand it and if you don’t, they’ll tell you in a different way and they keep going because they ... yes, I feel like they care and they actually really want you to learn (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

...they really want to challenge you. They’ll ask you something and you’ll answer and it’s ‘And?’ You say more and it’s ‘And?’ They really push you to think quite deep and hard about it (Tom, year 3, FG12/45, May, 2014).

Indeed, a common perception amongst the students was that the approaches adopted by the lecturers in the course (e.g., the initial perceived lack of support) helped them to subsequently become more responsible for their own learning. In the words of two:

In the first year, we thought “They’re not giving us any support, they don’t care”. But they were [caring], coz it might just have been that they were trying to make us to think for ourselves (Tracey).

You can understand it more. Obviously it is seen as not caring, because they don’t want to spend all their time on you and then you just drop out and don’t put in any effort. So you can understand it lot more, that maybe it is kind of caring but it’s like tough love (Fran).

(year 3, FG11/41, March 2014)

In this respect, a different conception of caring was embraced by students, especially in their final year of study. Such a change was recognised only retrospectively and was affected by a mixture of aspects introduced in the next subsection.

4.5.2 Factors that contributed to students’ perceptions of caring

The increasing perceptions of caring staff relationships coincided with an increase in the ‘number’ and ‘perceived quality’ of interactions between the students and the lecturers. Of particular importance here, was the use of small classes as the course progressed:
...this year, having been in smaller classrooms all the time, nearly all of my lecturers I’d be able to say hello to and have a bit of a laugh and a joke with and I just sort of respect them more for it and see that maybe if they’re making an effort to get to know me as a person, then I’d want to make a bit more of an effort in their class (Barry, year 2, FG8/31, May 2013).

I think it’s a lot more difficult as well to care for a group of 150 – 200 students in the first year, whereas in third year it’s a group of something like 30 or 40. You get to know them a lot better, but you can’t care for that many [first year] students at one time (Daniel, year 3, FG12/43, May 2014).

The creation of a positive and ‘safe’ environment where ‘troublesome knowledge’ could be shared was an influential factor in the students’ perceptions of caring. This dictated their preference for lecturers who worked within a relativistic agenda, making students feel proud of their contribution, which resulted in more engagement and less worry about getting answers ‘right’. The conversation below illustrated such a point:

Tracey: The thing is though, the lecturers I prefer and the lecturers I think are the better lecturers, they’re the ones who say there’s no right or wrong answer. So you might say something and they’ll be ‘Yes, that’s good. So if you just expand that to this bit, that’s an even better answer.’ So even if you say it slightly wrong, they’ll say ‘You’re on the right lines, but if you just think about it in this way that’s better...’

Steve: There’s no rigidity in the way they say it.

(Year 3, FG10/40, December 2013)

Interestingly, the creation of a safe environment was seen as influencing the perceptions of caring throughout the study. However, the main difference between the initial and late stages of the course was the meaning attached to such a concept. In the initial stages, the students tended to see a ‘safe’ environment as one where they could hide away. In the words of Mary:

He knows people that he shouldn’t bring forward, and, like, talk to the class, he’ll know probably from me that I’ll get a nervous version of me talk to everyone, if you pick me, so he knows... It feels nice, like, if they know you (Mary, year 1, FG2/4, December 2011).
As the study progressed, the students recognised that caring was not directly linked to allowing them to stay within their comfort zone. Instead, it meant being comfortable to take risks and engage in the sessions without the fear of getting answers wrong. In the words of Steve:

"[Before] I was just hiding away! But now I’m sitting there thinking “If he asks me a question, I can answer”. Whether I get it right or wrong, I don’t care, because I’m comfortable in that situation (Steve, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013)."

Steve gave an example to show why he started to feel comfortable with the lecturer:

"Now I’ve got to know him on the coaching side we communicate a lot about football things, and I’ve got to know him a bit more as him rather than just as a lecturer and a coach. So, when I state something in my coaching and my practicals I’m comfortable in saying it. And if I get it wrong, he’ll just take me to one side, not because I’m wrong, but a different way of saying it better. In first year I couldn’t ever think it would happen with any of the lecturers. But I think it’s just getting to know your lecturers, obviously not pushing the boundaries and becoming pally with them, but just that you’re comfortable with them and not being afraid of them (Steve, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013)."

The students also recognised that the individuality with which they were treated by the teaching staff was part of the caring process:

"He definitely does it in different ways as well; because there are some people – like me with my dissertation tutor, he’s got a pretty ruthless this year with me, but with other people he’s really friendly taking the mickey out of them, it works in different ways. It’s quite impressive... (Gavin, year 3, FG11/43, March 2014)."

In order to achieve such individual treatment, the students recognised the value of tutorials, where lecturers’ often empathetic approach was a principal factor in the students’ satisfaction with the caring process.

"...two weeks ago, bless him [a lecturer], I broke down crying in front of him, because I was so stressed, and he said “Right, you’re going to go home. You’re going to do this. And then tell yourself what you’re going to do to sort this out.” He said “There’s no stress that you cannot resolve.” Also, you can talk to other people; and talking to them, they’ll say “actually you’ve got loads of time, you look at it from this"
view, you’re probably feeling so negative from one angle when you’ve not seen it from another aspect.” And I hadn’t thought of that (Mary, year 3, FG9/37, October 2013).

Of further relevance was that students’ perceptions of caring were very closely linked to the ‘effort’ or ‘intentions’ they perceived staff to invest in producing caring relationships; i.e., where lecturers demonstrated an active concern for student learning:

At the end of today’s lecture, he was like – “I feel that I haven’t taught you that last bit very well”…and you could tell that he was annoyed at himself because he hadn’t got the point across (Daniel, year 2, FG7/26, February 2013).

Perceptions of caring were also affected by the informal interactions the students had with the lecturers. For example, Barry shared his experiences of having discussions with lecturers in informal environments (e.g., in the corridor after lecturers), which was perceived as ‘forming a friendship over time’.

He’s someone I can have a conversation with and not feel as if he’s trying to teach me all the time. There were quite a few classes this year where I’ve wandered out of the classroom at the same time as the lecturer and chatted to them all the way down from the lecture room to where we end up going our separate ways. It’s a nice way to get to know someone, without being in a formal environment chatting to a lecturer (Barry, year 2, FG8/31, May 2013).

Others referred to a simple ‘hi’ in the corridor, that made them feel special:

The personal aspect of it…if you see someone in the corridor and they say your name, so they know you, they’ve taken the time to remember you, you’re a memorable person. It makes you think that actually they care… (Fran, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

As a result of more frequent and quality exchanges, the students experienced a more positive environment, where their commitment to the lecturers was evident. For example:

...if I know they care and I'm not really in the mood I feel bad, because they're trying really hard, so I feel ‘Oh, OK, I want to listen and I want to learn.’ Because you want to do it for them as well (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).
I find with certain lecturers, in that awkward silence and no one answers, and I think ‘I could say something here’, but with her (lecturer) I want to say something because it’s her (Tom, Year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

Despite the somewhat informal relationship, the need for boundaries was nevertheless continuously stated by students.

Not surprisingly, and conversely, when students did not perceive lecturers to be particularly helpful or concerned with their learning, they considered them not to care. This was particularly the case when lecturers failed to ask questions in sessions, or to remember who the students were. In the words of three:

...some lecturers would be like – ‘That’s how the heart works. See you later.’ That’s pretty much it, like! It’s just like...you don’t care at all about us, really (Daniel, year 2, FG7/26, February 2013).

...his lectures are basically – he reads off the slides, goes ‘bang bang bang’, you’ve got to read over it again otherwise you’re not going to learn; he does generally seem like he doesn’t... care. He doesn’t ask any questions or anything (Gavin, year 2, FG8/32, May 2013).

If they remember who you are when you turn up to lectures, I’ll get on with them. But if I turn up to lectures and they email me saying ‘you never turned up’, I won’t get on with you (Steve, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012).

4.5.3 Students’ perceptions of the lecturers’ roles - from a ‘scary figure’ to a ‘friend’

The students considered the staff to play many different roles. For example, in their first year of study, the students perceived lecturers as having responsibility for pushing them towards coaching opportunities:

‘...like push us into going [coaching]. Otherwise it’s very easy to sit back and not do anything’ (Barry, year 1, FG3/9, February 2012).
As the study progressed, however, the students’ perceptions of the lecturers changed to being teachers, coaches and researchers. Indeed, there was a perception that those lecturers who were also coaches had enhanced pedagogical knowledge: (e.g., Like – *the coaching lot, they’re fantastic. Because they’ve all be through coaching...So they know how to present a lecture* - Mary, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012).

Although the role(s) as teachers and coaches were valued by students, there was evidence of a preconception regarding lecturers’ role as researchers. Some of the students here referred to the researchers as ‘probably having a better understanding than any of the teachers! But they can’t get it across to us in the way that we can absorb it and learn it’ (Tracey, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012). The conversation below provides further insight into the students’ opinions:

*Tracey: And as soon as they [researchers] start talking, you can tell, like... a lot of the time, they don’t address you when you first go in. It’s simple things...*

*Katie: ...“Right, let’s start.”*

*Tracey: They’re just like – “OK, we’ll start.” And then they’ll start reading. And they haven’t got your attention from the start.*

*(year 2, FG5/20, October 2012)*

Despite such generalisations, at the start of the second year, the students recognised that some of the ‘really good’ lecturers were also researchers: (e.g., ‘He’s doing loads of research. Like, every lecture he gives is always, like, updated references with his name on it – Tom, year 2, FG8/32, May 2013).

The principal role all students expected teaching staff to adopt was that of a facilitator. This was particularly noticeable in the second and third years of study. The increasing use of seminars, in particular, encouraged students to play a more active role in the construction of
knowledge, making the role of the lecturer more apparent as a facilitator: (e.g., ‘He just facilitated everything, he just guided us everywhere and we all ... I learned the most that I ever did’ – Steve, year 3, FG12/43, May 2014). More specifically, Daniel mentioned that they would ‘probe questions which will literally open up your mind, to start a discussion on the table, and then he’ll just move to the next table’ (Daniel, year 3, FG12/43, May 2014).

As a result, the students argued that ‘I don’t think the lecturers have much responsibility for teaching the whole thing...If I’m going to learn anything, it’s through having spoken and discussed about it during the seminar (Barry, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012).

In this respect, the initial view of lecturers as providers of information was somewhat contested by the students. Here, the lecturers’ role as facilitators created a sense of connection and responsibility within the students to actively contribute to their own learning:

*He gave us like lots of aspects of it and then he got us to interact a lot. He put us into groups and gives us something to talk about and feedback to him (Katie, year 1, FG4/15, May 2012)*

*I wouldn’t imagine him standing there in a seminar and telling us what to do in an hour. He’s trying to give us a sense of, like, responsibility for our own learning (Steve, year 2, FG6/22, December 2012).*

Despite the recognition that lecturers’ roles included guiding students in their learning process, there was also awareness that the lecturers were the creators of tasks, which consequently led students to seek their approval for answers; something of a paradox. In the words of Gavin:

*But the leader still dictates it and steers it and guides it in the way that he wants you to take up the task. So you seek his approval at the same time as giving you answers, because he’s the one giving you the task to do. Although you are, kind of, choosing how you do that task, he is still the origin of where that task came from and therefore the origin of whether you get it right or not, to some degree (Gavin, FG10/40, December 2013).*
4.5.4 Factors that affected students’ perceptions of the role of the teaching staff

In the initial stages of the study, the students’ perceptions of lecturers as providers of answers and the role that resembled that of a ‘pushy parent’ was affected by their need for reassurance in the search for ‘right’ answers. This attitude, one could suggest, was closely related to their intellectual development and their initial surface approach to learning (For a more detailed discussion please refer to sections 4.2 and 4.4).

With the main concern being on finding the right answers through support from lecturers, individual feedback, focused on corrective action, was seen as crucial within the learning process. Additionally, within the interactions experienced by the students, the use of humour was seen as helpful tool in ‘breaking down barriers’:

*If somebody is up there who hasn’t smiled all lecture and they could move around and talk to you, but if they’re not really interacting with you, I just think you’re not getting anything from them. You’re just getting facts and a blank face (Martin, year 3, FG11/42, March 2014).*

*...if there’s like a joke going on, they [students] will want to listen (Mary, year 1, FG3/8, February 2012).*

Humour also seemed to influence how much students liked the lecturer in question, particularly in the first year of study. Gavin argued that he liked one lecturer because ‘*he is so engaging and upbeat*.’ Mary added that ‘*he makes the lectures really fun, like he’s still focused on it.*’ (year 1, FG3/8, February 2012).

The use of humour was also seen to facilitate information retention and participation in sessions (including dealing with getting answers wrong). Here, the students claimed that they could remember theories and equations by associating them with the jokes made by lecturers in the classroom. They also commented that ‘*It feels as if it doesn’t matter if you*
get it wrong – he’ll have a joke about it, rather than “Oh my god, this person’s a doctor; this person’s got their PhD!” and you think “Oh!” (Tracey, year 3, FG10/38, December 2013).

Despite the unanimous perception that humour was an important aspect for engaging students in lectures, the need for a balanced approach was still generally advocated:

I think there’s a level... some lecturers who are trying to be too funny and then you just end up listening to their jokes and then you’re like ow I haven’t actually learned anything... I’ve had a couple of lecturers who just like just kind of skip through the slides and haven’t really gone through them and just start making jokes and I’m like I kind of wana learn something here (Daniel, year 1, FG4/12, May 2012).

Enthusiasm also influenced students’ perceptions of how enjoyable their learning experiences were. It was also a motivating factor for students to be enthusiastic themselves, as ‘if you see the coach isn’t very, like, bothered or interested, then you’re not going to be’ (Martin, year 1, FG3/11, February 2012). In this context, relating the lecturers’ role to a coaching role was commonly found in the students’ opinions. This came from a perception that lecturers were adopting aspects that they were learning in the course, and ‘Even though it’s a lecture, they’ll intro... like, say hi, and welcome us, and... just like get your attention straight away’ (Tracey, year 2, FG5/20, October 2012), much like the coaching content they were being taught. In this respect, the students showed evidence of seeing theoretical relevance in practice.

Barry gave an illustration of how enthusiasm could make up for a poor session:

Even if...you’ve got an absolute rubbish session lined up but you are excited and you are energetic about it and you can have a bit of a laugh about it then I think that participants will be much more interested in getting involved’ (Barry, year 1, FG1/2, October 2011).
Despite enthusiasm being highly valued in the final year of study, it was clear that students started to question whether enthusiasm was always a good thing:

*He has a lot of energy when he lectures! Pretty much anything he’d say within his topic, you’d pretty much believe him because he’s got so much energy about him, so you’d think “Yes! He must be right!” So he’s quite convincing, so even if he is absolutely, completely wrong. But is that good? Being persuasive? Or is that a bad thing* (Martin, year 3, FG9/35, October 2013).

Despite the recognition that interaction, enthusiasm and humour affected students’ increasing perceptions of lecturers as facilitators, this consideration was also affected by the context in which relationships took place. Here, the perceptions of the roles of lecturers were influenced by the module being taught. In this context, the students created distinctions between the role of the lecturers in modules that they deemed more factual (e.g., Biomechanics and Physiology) and those more related to social science (e.g., Coaching Science):

*A Coaching lecturer would have to make you think more, so somebody like prompting and asking you certain questions, making you think around the theory and around the subject. Whereas somebody for Biomechanics of Physiology or something like that is quite different “This is this.” There’s no point talking around it* (Nathan, year 3, FG11/42, March 2014).

Similarly, the mode of assessment adopted in the modules seemed to affect students’ views of the role of the lecturer. In the words of Tom:

*The role of the lecture is still for me the same as in first year, for physiology – although it’s more complicated now. The way you’re assessed hasn’t changed...it’s quite consistent, it hasn’t really changed. Whereas coaching seems to have changed, having a placement and coaching, doing that through some of the week, it’s a change* (Tom, Year 3, FG10/38, December 2013).

Here, the context in which learning (including assessment) took place was paramount in defining the role of staff. In this respect, the context affected students’ assumptions about the nature of knowledge, authority and how they engaged with it.
4.6 Students’ perceptions of the role of the teaching staff - Discussion

4.6.1 Caring as an exchange relationship

Results showed that ‘caring’ was one of the most influential aspects associated with the role of the teaching staff throughout the three years of the course. Such a finding relates to the work of Agne (1999) who suggests that the “key to the classroom is caring” (p. 172). Here, in discussing the way of the master teacher, Agne (1999) argued that “the classroom is much more a function of who teachers are and of what they believe than of what teachers do” (p. 172). Despite the focus on caring, the findings of the current study showed the separation between who teachers are and what they do hard, if not impossible. For example, the students recognised many of the lecturers (i.e., who they are) as caring individuals based on their behaviours (i.e., what they do). For example;

_The coaching science lecturers really want you to understand it and if you don’t, they’ll tell you then in a different way and they keep going ...I feel like they care and they actually really want you to learn (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014)._

Here, the way in which the lecturers communicated with the students (i.e., what they did) was key in demonstrating that the former cared for them. Without such behaviour (or a behaviour of a similar kind), it could prove hard to “sustain a [particular] image in the eyes of others” (i.e., in the eyes of the students) (Jones et al., 2011, p. 2). In this respect, “the differences between coaches [read educators] and coaching behaviours [read educator behaviours] may not be easily observable, or even identifiable; after all, what is said and done is both reflective of who has said and done them” (Jones et al., 2011, p.2). The link between who the person is and the behaviours they display is in keeping with the findings from the current study where the teaching staff were seen as role models due to their engagement in both coaching and teaching practice. As demonstrated in the results section, the students perceived the lecturers who were also coaches to have an enhanced pedagogical
knowledge. The lecturers’ engagement in coaching also served as a motivating factor; that is, it encouraged the students to follow similar steps and get involved in external coaching opportunities, something that is often referred to as a key component of coach learning (e.g., Mesquita et al., 2010; Stodter and Cushion, 2014): ‘just seeing them [lecturers] and their passion for coaching and what they’ve done over the years, just excites you so that you want to get out there and do it’ - Daniel, FG3/33, 22nd October 2013.

Of particular relevance here were the students’ perceptions of caring as an interdependent and exchange relationship (Blau, 1986). For example, the findings demonstrated that the students’ perceptions of lecturers’ care affected their engagement in sessions. In the first year of the study, the students often expected lecturers to initiate such caring relationship, otherwise they were not prepared to ‘[re]pay the price’. This relates to a key aspect in exchange theory; that is, those involved “each gains something whilst paying a price” (Blau, 1986, p. viii). In this respect, echoing the work of Blau (1986), the students in the current study considered alternatives before acting to ensure they maximised their profits whilst minimising costs. Here, it is important to highlight that exchange relationships do not mean that members make similar investments. Indeed, Blau believed that reciprocity is achieved “by an imbalance in the exchange” (Blau, 1986, p. 27). This reciprocity is based on concepts of dependence and power which Blau believed to be inversely related (Jones and Bailey, 2011).

The relationship between power and dependence was particularly unbalanced in the first year of the study. Perhaps paradoxically, while the teaching staff were seen as the holders of truth (therefore, expected to exert a powerful role in interactions [Blau, 1986]), the context in which they operated painted a somewhat different picture. It was a context in which the grade achieved by the students (i.e., 40% to progress to the second year) did not contribute towards their final degree classification. In this respect, in the first year of study, the students
didn’t perceive themselves subject to relationships of power; a situation which often resulted in their lack of commitment (e.g., by not always completing set tasks; handing work in the last minute; missing lectures) despite the apparent investment by lecturers’ in planning and delivery. This then was due to the structure within which the students operated, which resulted in a low dependence on lecturers. Here, the students felt that investing heavily in their first year of study was an excessive demand which could not be justified by the rewards. However, as the study progressed, power and dependence within the staff-student relationship became increasingly more balanced; a result of the students’ reactions to the structural changes and discourses within the institution which positioned them as less ‘powerful’ and more ‘dependent’. An example was shared in section 4.1 where the students referred to a common perception regarding the need to work harder in the second year: “because it is working towards the degree, I think there’s a kind of mutual respect between everyone that if you have to go and do work, then you have to go and do work” (Barry, year 2, FG8/31, May, 2013).

In this respect, the way in which the students referred to the second year (i.e., ongoing work contributing to the final degree classification) affected their perceptions of roles (both for themselves and for the lecturers). Here, the common view that they ‘had to’ do the work exemplifies the students’ dependence on the lecturers (i.e., people who set up the structure): (‘Although you are, kind of, choosing how you do that task, he is still the origin of where that task came from’ - Gavin, year 3, FG10/40, December 2014).

In this respect, the power relationships evident were in a state of constant negotiation, and were influenced by “social practices that regulate[d] the production and circulation of statements and perceptions of reality” (Markula and Pringle 2006, p. 105). This echoes the work of Foucault (1979), who argued that discourses have an influential role to play in society. Indeed, Denison (2007) referring to Foucault’s work argued that:
social life and the meanings we make as human beings are never innocent. This was what he [read Foucault] meant by his theory of discourse, whereby it was statements that accumulated meaning within specific cultural and historical contexts that produced knowledge that defined the practices people engaged in (p. 380).

As the study progressed, the students started to better accept their role in initiating the caring process. This involved recognizing the benefits they could receive in proving themselves engaged and ‘attractive’ to lecturers. Indeed, the students recognised that their lack of engagement in the first year may have been a factor in their perception of lecturers’ apparent lack of care. Such recognition stemmed from greater exchanges with lecturers; a result of having smaller classroom cohorts and more opportunities to interact with staff. This relates to what Biggs and Tang (2011) define as social learning. Here, the students broadened their understanding about the subject and the people (e.g., lecturers, students) who were involved in its teaching. This was a point reiterated by the students in Jones, Morgan and Harris’s (2011) study. Here, the participants argued that social learning through small group discussions allowed the sharing of experiences, something that greatly enhanced their process of understanding. In the current study, the students’ increasing engagement in the learning process was also related to a particular strategic approach; that is, they engaged because they were concerned with their final degree classification and not simply with achieving a ‘pass’ as in the previous year (for a more in-depth discussion, see section 4.2).

The increased frequency of exchanges between staff and students resulted in more positive emotions (Lawler, Thye and Yoon, 2008) followed by a commitment based on ‘social attraction’. According to Blau (1986), social attraction is a key aspect that stimulates exchanges between people. It is defined as “the force that induces human beings to establish social associations on their own initiative and to expand the scope of their associations once they have been formed” (p. 20). Blau argued that this association is only possible when members can anticipate that the relationship will be rewarding. The findings of this study
showed how the students chose to engage or invest in those modules they anticipated they would be rewarded for. For example, the students argued that it was a ‘special feeling’ when lecturers knew them ‘as a person’. Here, the social reward gained from such a relationship was described as a ‘little buzz’ when the lecturers were perceived to care (e.g., by addressing the students by their first names or spending extra time with them). The increased frequency of such exchanges allowed the students to recognise emerging patterns in their relationships; a crucial development in deciding whether mutual attraction was maintained. In this respect, the quality of such encounters was key in maintaining social attraction. It evolved slowly as a result of increasing levels of respect and trust.

4.6.2 The ‘turtle instinct’ and the ‘Eagle spirit’: Discussing the role of teaching staff as activators and facilitators

In the first year of study, the students associated the act of caring with the provision of ‘safe’ [learning] environments. In this sense, the students perceived that lecturers cared when they could or were allowed to ‘hide in their shells’. This resembles the ‘turtle instinct’ or, in other words, the turtle’s act of hiding in its shell as protection from danger or the unknown. Here, then, the students were hiding from more active participation in the sessions, something that was (initially) perceived as uncomfortable.

As the study progressed, the students’ perceptions of caring were still closely related to the creation of a ‘safe’ environment, although the focus became increasingly placed on learning. The students then became more comfortable with the idea of being challenged, resembling the concept of being ‘psychologically safe’; in other words, “feeling free enough to take risks” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 40). This educational approach relates to the work of Rodrigues (1984). In discussing the political and social functions of education, Rodrigues (1984) critiqued the idea of a turtle instinct, arguing that it leads students to isolate themselves from
their world in passive attempts to protect against the unknown. This, in turn, teaches individuals to protect themselves against what they see as external threats, thus becoming reactive and living with fear (Rodrigues, 1984). As an alternative, Rodrigues (1984) suggested that individuals should be educated to develop the ‘Eagle spirit’; that is, flying over mountains, developing their senses and abilities and being willing to take risks. This is one of the key aspects of learning as a process of transformation (Erichsen, 2011). Such change (towards the Eagle spirit) was evident among the students in the current study, who during their second and third years welcomed and desired new challenges: (e.g., ‘[Before] I was just hiding away! But now I’m sitting there thinking “If he asks me a question, I can answer”’ - Steve, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013). Consequently, the students started paying more attention to the nuances of the teaching world, often commenting upon and praising lecturers’ ability to create environments that allowed them to flourish (e.g., ‘They always push you to think outside of the box’ - Heather, year 2, FG6/23, December 2012). However, despite providing a metaphor for how students should behave in an educational setting, Rodrigues (1984) fails to provide an account of the role of the teaching staff in facilitating such a process. This echoes the point argued by Goodyear and Dudley (2015), who claim that “many questions have remained unanswered about the teacher-as-facilitator” (p. 275).

Results from the current study clearly demonstrated that staff played a crucial role in the students’ development. This refers to the argument that “student-centeredness does not mean that students are simply left alone by teachers” (Goodyear and Dudley, 2015, p. 275). Instead, of crucial importance was the role of the teaching staff in creating a form of ‘updraft’ to enable the students to initiate and sustain their (‘Eagle spirit’) flights, without the fear of the unknown. This ‘support’ also resembles one of Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) central tenets. More specifically, two key aspects introduced by Vygotsky (i.e., ‘more capable others’, and ‘zones of proximal development’) can help in better making sense of the findings. The interaction with a more knowledgeable other was seen by Vygotsky’s as key for social
development. The more knowledgeable other can be defined as “anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner with respect to a particular task, process or concept” (Harris, 2010, p. 42). As the study progressed, the findings revealed that the teaching staff were seen by the students as more knowledgeable others, inhabiting a facilitative role in the learning process by creating effective challenging environments. This corroborates the work of Metzler (2011) who suggested that teachers should be considered more than a ‘guide on the side’ (Goodyear and Dudley, 2015, p. 279). Indeed, the students referred to a very active role played by lecturers which included designing and initiating activities, noticing student engagement, analysing contributions, and intervening when appropriate to create and capitalise on learning opportunities.

The support provided by lecturers refers to the second of Vygotsky’s aforementioned concepts; namely ‘zones of proximal development’ (Vygotsky, 1978). The process involves learners being supported by more knowledgeable others to achieve the next level of independence: (‘the lecturers probe questions which will literally open up your mind, to start a discussion on the table, and then he’ll just move to the next table’ - Daniel, year 3, FG12/43, May 2014). This process of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) works best when learners are in their ‘zone of proximal development’; that is, a space where individuals are required to perform tasks that could not be previously performed without help (Morgan and Sproule, 2013). Here, the students referred to the role of lecturers in asking questions and involving them in their own learning. This two-way means of communication (through questions and answers) is a key aspect of interactive teaching, which aims to “ask for, and act upon, students’ suggestions and ideas” (Metzler, 2011, p. 32). It is also a process of engaging learners in critical thinking, therefore developing understanding (Gillies and Haynes, 2011).
4.6.3 Caring as challenging

The increasing view of lecturers as activators and facilitators coincided with their roles not as the providers of information but as designers of learning, thus contradicting the views of the students in the first year. It also coincided with a retrospective appreciation of lecturers’ care during the first two years of the programme. Here, students recognised that the perceived lack of support at times may, in fact, have been a sign of caring (i.e., a facilitation and activation of the process of learning as described previously). This is in keeping with the work of Noddings (1984), who provides the example of a son who leaves his home in anger and rebellion. She questions whether one could assume that the mother does not care if she fails to act directly to bring him back. Noddings further argued that the inaction may be a result of a thought-through process in which the mother believed the son needed time to work things out by himself. In this respect, such inactivity can be a way to facilitate learning. Similarly, in the current study, the students’ initial perception of lack of caring by the teachers (often related to a lack of being ‘spoon fed’) later resulted in their recognition that it was necessary for their own development. In this respect, the focus of caring changed from caring ‘about the students’ to caring ‘for the students and for their learning’ (a concept referred to here as ‘caring as challenging’).

The recognition of ‘caring as challenging’ originated from the students’ sense of accomplishment, of being ‘good’ at what they were studying and as a consequence, feeling more confident to contribute. This was clearly expressed in the students’ preference for lecturers who valued their opinions and recognised there were many answers to a given question; that is, lecturers who adopted a relativist view of the world (as further discussed in section 4.2). According to Rogers (1980) this acceptance of the learners symbolised the lecturers’ trust and respect “for the other as having worth in his or her own right” (p. 271). In this respect, it is “a prizing of the learners as imperfect human beings with many feelings,
many potentialities” (Rogers, 1980, p. 272).

A further aspect that initiated this view of caring was the students’ perceptions of the lecturers as empathetic (Rogers, 1969). This concept refers to “standing in the students’ shoes” and viewing “the world through their eyes” (Nelson et al., 2014, p. 520). Here, the students perceived they were not being judged, resulting in a feeling of being cared for. It also resulted in an increased self-acceptance by the students, thus having a significant impact on how they contributed in sessions and, consequently, to their own learning. Such a ‘climate for learning’ has been claimed when “in the presence of an understanding teacher” (Rogers, 1980, p. 156); someone who provides “needed confirmation that one does exist as a separate, valued person with an identity” (Rogers, 1980, p. 155). Such empathetic understanding was also evident from the students’ having tutorials when anxious and confused regarding their coursework. In this situation, within the multiple roles played by the teaching staff, an “awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student” was of crucial importance for their well-being and perceptions of caring (Rogers, 1969, p. 111).

In addition, perceptions of caring were apparent when the students experienced personal encounters with the lecturers. Here, the students valued when lecturers became candid about “where they were” emotionally, something that Rogers (1980) referred to as “realness in the facilitator of learning” (p. 271). For example, the students valued a lecturer’s apologetic message once a session had finished in showing dissatisfaction with their own teaching performance (of not ‘getting my point across’). This is in keeping with the work of Nelson et al. (2014), who suggested that (coach) educators should experience the emotion that accompany their practice, and share them with others if they think it could benefit learning. The current findings went beyond such affirmation, showing evidence of how this occurred. More specifically, the students’ perceptions of a lecturer’s intentions (concerned with their learning) resulted in a feeling of respect and willingness to engage (e.g., ‘...if I know they
care and I'm not really in the mood I feel bad, because they're trying really hard, so I feel “Oh, OK, I want to listen and I want to learn.” Because you want to do it for them as well’ - Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

To a certain extent, the lecturers’ role was also referred to as that of a friend. Here, the increasingly informal nature of the relationships encouraged a change in students’ perceptions of staff. Instead of a somewhat aloof ‘brain’ box, the students started to see lecturers as more like themselves. This was especially the case in the more ‘relaxed’ context of seminars and, particularly, when the students felt their answers were being valued (e.g., ‘It feels as if it doesn’t matter if you get it wrong – he’ll have a joke about it, rather than “Oh my god, this person’s a doctor; this person’s got their PhD!” and you think “Oh!”’ - Tracey, year 3, FG10/38, December 2013). Here, the concept of unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1969) served to create an environment where the students were accepted and valued with feelings and imperfections.

In this context, humour played an important role; a role referred to as ‘breaking down barriers’. This was of particular importance, especially when trying to create the acceptance that mistakes were inherent to the process of learning and, therefore, should not be taken too seriously. The situated nature of humour (Ronglan and Aggerholm, 2014) places an important role on the environment where it takes place. Here, the art of noticing is fundamental in providing a “balancing act”; that is, deciding when it is “productive to use humour as a strategy…and when it is more appropriate to use other interactional strategies” (Ronglan and Aggerholm, 2014, p. 43). The use of humour as a balancing act was also recognised in the current study. Indeed, the students recognised that an excessive use of jokes could hinder the learning process. For example, Daniel commented that ‘it is very easy to become too matey with someone and you don’t learn because you’re just being too jokey’ – Daniel, year 3, FG9/33, October 2013).
Results showed that ‘caring’ was one of the most influential aspects associated with the role of the teaching staff throughout the three years of the course. It was also seen as an exchange relationships in which those involved in it “each gains something whilst paying a price” (Blau, 1986, p. viii). In the first year of study, students saw caring as being provided through the provision of a ‘secure’ and ‘comfortable’ learning context. This resembled the ‘Turtle instinct’ (Rodrigues, 1984), or a way to protect themselves from the unknown. When such secure environment was not delivered, students perceived that the staff ‘did not care’.

As the study progressed, students started to accept their role in the co-construction of knowledge, including the need to be challenged away from their ‘comfort zones’ (Meyer and Land, 2005). This coincided with a retrospective appreciation of lecturers’ care during the first two years of their programme. Here, the students recognised that the perceived lack of support at times may, in fact, have been a sign of caring (Rogers, 1980; Noddings, 1984). Caution is, therefore, needed with regards to identifying students ‘wants’ and ‘needs’ which were often influenced by the context in which they were taught and their assessment requirements. The evidence provided for applied pedagogical approaches goes beyond ‘one off’ measures of ‘student satisfaction’, to exploring temporal aspects of coach learning. It also invites educators to consider their role in developing the ‘Eagle spirit’ (Rodrigues, 1984), providing the necessary updraft that allows students to seek new flights without the fear of the unknown.
4.7 Identity development - Results

The results presented and discussed in this section refer to objective 4; namely ‘How did the students’ identities change during the course? Why? How stable were they?’ The findings were organised under seven key themes: ‘I’ and ‘me’ – Identity as how ‘I’ see myself as and how others see ‘me’ – Fitting into a first year university student identity’; ‘Multiple identities’; ‘From sports students to sports coaching students’; ‘Developing a Coach Identity’; ‘Self-awareness, designated identities and agency’; ‘Environmental constraints and their impact on identity’ and, finally, ‘Who are the students when they leave and how stable are their identities?’.

4.7.1 ‘I’ and ‘me’ – Identity as how ‘I’ see myself as and how others see ‘me’ – Fitting into a first year university student identity

The students argued that identity could be defined as a combination of who they perceived themselves to be, and how they were perceived to be by others. This was summed up well by Nathan, who defined identity as ‘Half of it is how you see yourself and the other half is how people see you’ (Nathan, year 1, FG4/13, May 2012). Fran, another student, explained further:

You may portray yourself as ‘A rugby lad’ but when you’re at home, you’re the baby of the family! I don’t know, isn’t that how others perceive you? How others perceive you and how you perceive yourself as well (Fran, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

The initial stages of the study demonstrated that the students were investing in an identity that represented their idea of being a university student. Within such social identity, the students argued for the need to make good impression on their peers, which often resulted in following a ‘code of behaviour’ (Tom, year 1, FG1/3, November 2011). This point was clearly expressed in one of Mary’s video diary entries: ‘because it’s the start of uni it (going out for socials) is like a thing that we have to do (sighs)...I know we get a choice but you
kind of get bullied (forced laughter) so I don’t want that at the minute’ (Mary, year 1, VD, October 2011). The students’ perceptions regarding being university students also related to partaking in a drinking culture; ‘If you didn’t drink, then you’d feel kind of left out, possibly’ (Martin, year 1, FG1/3, November 2011) as ‘...all the socials are centred around it [drinking], aren’t they’ (Tom, year 1, FG1/3, November 2011).

In the initial stages of the course, the sense of belonging to specific groups originated from simply living in the same house. However, as the study progressed, the students became more selective when choosing their so called ‘friends’:

'It's different now. When we go out they will find their hockey friends there, rugby friends, athletics friends (raises eyebrows and talks looking above camera) and then there's the netball girls. So it’s not the same but I suppose it’s gonna happen, it’s gonna change...so there’s always gonna be changes while we are at Uni (tilts head to her left) hopefully not too much (Fran, year 1, VD, December 2011).

4.7.2 Multiple Identities

The students perceived themselves to have multiple identities according to the roles they played in different environments. Here, in line with their conception of identity, the participants recognised their roles (as stated previously) based on who they perceived themselves to be and who they believed they were perceived to be by others. In the words of two:

*Perhaps different in different environments, I think. My friends see me as a sports student/water polo player; people that I work with see me as a sports coaching student; er, parents see me as a coach, or teacher... It depends, like...it depends on what environment you’re in (Mary, year 2, FG7/24, February 2013).*

*Each module now makes me represent myself as a different person. Like, if I do Sport Development, I think I’m an officer; like I work for Sport Wales. And when I’m doing Coaching Science I feel like a proper coach. If I do PA (performance analysis), I feel like a geek, looking at computer screens in a lab, just thinking “What?” Every module gives you an identity of different things (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).*
The students also recognised that the different roles occupied had an effect on each other. For example, Mary suggested that ‘the more confident you get in life, like as a student, reflects on you as a coach’ (year 1, FG4/14, May 2012). Here, Mary was referring to the social skills needed in each of the roles she played.

Such a variety of roles, however, were not always seen as functional. For example, if, on the one hand, some roles complemented each other, others, meanwhile, were perceived to clash. The clashes happened particularly when managing time and prioritising tasks. For instance, Tracey, one of the students that demonstrated a strong athlete identity in the first year of the course, argued that the way she saw herself changed from athlete to coach and back again, as a result of her experiences:

*The main reason I wanted to come here was to train. I wasn’t actually doing that much coaching – but it didn’t bother me. Then the training went downhill and I did really badly, so in my second year, I was thinking “I’m probably not going to do athletics.” So I put more into coaching. Then, I did a bit better in athletics so I’ve decided I want to go back to it as an athlete. So, I’m just coaching for money at the moment, and I’m back training (Tracey, year 3, FG10/38, December 2013).*

In this context, an identity was perceived to be something in a state of constant change. However, as highlighted by Mary, such changes were ‘not dramatic, just changes to adapt to your role’ (Mary, year 1, FG4/14, May 2012). Interestingly, the students believed that certain situations (e.g., being with their family or with housemates) made them behave differently (i.e., adopt different roles) on an everyday or even hourly basis. While such adaptations were considered to occur quickly, other changes were experienced over a longer period of time. The conversation between Nathan and Heather illustrated this point:

*It’s like a core identity that you have and then the external bit around it, and it’s this that changes depending on your environment or the situation you’re in. The core identity can also change over time, I think. I don’t think I have the same identity I*
had when I started here, but it doesn’t really change quickly; only over a long period of time (Nathan).

It’s like… I think core is something which relates to our beliefs and values. That’s why I think it becomes the core, because we believe in it… it’s embodied – and then that’s why it’s hard to change, even though we are in different situations (Heather)

(year 3, FG11/42, March 2014).

In this respect, the students believed that some aspects (e.g., values, beliefs) were part of a core self, which would change only slowly over a long time. This was in comparison with what they perceived as an ‘outside layer’, which tended to constantly change. According to the students, both the core and the outside layer were made of different dimensions, which were dependent on contextual factors. These included experience, confidence, social groups, rewards, knowledge, intellectual development, achievements (or failures) and values and beliefs. However, especially in the first year of the study, the students found it hard to recognise the changes that were going on:

This is one of the most difficult things I find… to self-assess yourself… and you asked other people, like people you live with, has this person changed since you first met them? I think everyone would be like yeah… (Daniel)

But, you don’t notice that you are changing (Tracey)

(year 1, FG4/12, May 2012)

4.7.3 From sports students to sports coaching students

During the initial stages of the study, despite considering themselves sports students, the participants argued that they did not feel like ‘Sports Coaching’ students. This perception originated from, amongst other factors, the fact that the modules enrolled on were shared with students from various programmes (e.g., BSc Sport Science; BSc Sport Development).

For example, Barry mentioned that ‘most of the stuff we do, everyone… every other first year sports student does here’ (Barry, year 1, FG1/2, October 2011).
Half way through the second year, however, a Sports Coaching student identity was apparent amongst nine of the twelve participants. A key factor affecting their perception here was related to the programme structure, especially regarding the modules offered as part of their course:

"I feel like a sports coaching student now. Just because we’re not all doing the same modules this year. We’re doing... a kind of little separate pathway (Tom)"

"Yeah. Definitely. And like – more focused on the coaching (Mary)"

"...we’ve got rid of like... don’t do biomechanics any more, don’t do psychology any more, I don’t do sports science any more – like, a lot of the modules I was doing that made me a generalised sports student (Tom).

(year 2, FG7/24, February 2013)"

"I feel in second year I don't have to do, for example modules that, in my eyes, are irrelevant to me...topics I'm not too bothered about. That has helped my experience at uni a lot more, enables me to focus a bit more, and not get distracted or weighed down (Gavin, year 2, Reflective Log, March 2013).

The precise module design was another key aspect highlighted by the students in this regard as it allowed them to apply theory to practice and discuss their experience in seminars. A good example was the module ‘Coaching Science’ as mentioned by Tracey:

"I feel like a coaching student this year; purely because we’ve had to coach practically while in the coaching lectures everything they say there’s a coaching example to relate back to coaching, so you’re just surrounded by the world of coaching and your coaching experience (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014)."

However, three of the students argued that, in their second year, they still did not feel like sports coaching students. This was mainly because of their interests and the alternative modules chosen as part of their course. For example, Barry’s main focus changed from sports coaching to management, while Heather was involved with sport development opportunities.
and, therefore, chose a related specific module. For Nathan, meanwhile, his interests (biomechanics) meant he followed a specific pathway. He explained:

*I don’t feel like a coaching student. I feel like a sports student. My main interest is biomechanics, and that’s got nothing to do with coaching, really. Er...so, I’m going to do my dissertation in biomechanics. I’m still going to come out with a degree in coaching, but I wouldn’t see myself as a coaching student* (Nathan, year 2, FG9/25, February 2013).

4.7.4 Developing a Coach Identity

4.7.4.1 Responsibility within coaching practice

The data collected indicated that practical coaching experiences which involved a certain level of responsibility (*you get more power and control* - Martin, year 2, FG10/35, October 2013) were key in developing stronger coach identities. Here, a significant moment was when participants *went from assistant coaches to head coaches* (Martin, year 2, FG11/35, October 2013), claiming that *because I'm managing my own team, I've become my own identity in a way* (Steve, year 3, FG11/43, March 2014). In this respect, the participants argued that *I could do what I wanted to do and I think coaching is all about that really, isn’t it? So for me that identity changed* (Daniel, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014).

The students who experienced a level of responsibility within their coaching claimed that they were encouraged to reflect on their experiences in light of the theories covered in lectures. This, in turn, affected their coach identity. In fact, the students who had such experience argued that their coach identity was more apparent than their student identity towards the end of the second year of study:

*From experience of coaching, I’ve been able to reflect more on how I do it and build more confidence of what works well...what doesn’t...yeah, I’d definitely say my coach identity got stronger* (Mary, year 1, FG4/14, May 2012).
This year, I’ve actually been given the opportunity to coach, and had my own sessions, so I’m much preferring that to actually studying it (Martin, year 2, FG7/24, February 2013).

On the other hand, those who had the experience but lacked a sense of ‘responsibility’ over their decisions mentioned that ‘...even though I have had a coaching job, I don’t think it’s made me any better as a coach. Because the job wasn't great’ (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014). A sentiment which emphasised the difference gleaned from being a head coach.

Despite the emphasis on the value of external coaching practice, opportunities to coach within the course were also seen as beneficial by the students, especially when it involved a positive relationship with the lecturer. Here, a key aspect in contributing to the development of a coaching identity was the idea of being rewarded, a recognition of competence:

Afterwards I was pretty happy with (looks at the camera) she tapped me on the back and said ‘Have you got any swimming qualifications because I was really impressed with your session?’ I said ‘No’ because don’t. I don’t know. It was quiet a nice thing (grins), feeling at the end of it.’ (Martin, year 1, VD, November 2011)

4.7.4.2 Knowledge and understanding

The students argued that their developing knowledge and understanding as a result of doing the course affected the people they became. In the words of three:

Through the degree as well, it’s helped me to change, a bit more confident as a coach, having that belief in yourself and trust in your philosophy (Daniel, year 3, FG11/44, May 2014).

I thought “Yes, I'm a good coach, I'm getting all these kids from this to this.” I thought I knew how to coach. Then I came here and I thought “Actually I've realised how much I don’t know as a coach.” Then I thought I was a good coach; whereas now I think I've got a long way to go in coaching... (Tracey, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

I’ve learned that being able to speak clearly, give my instructions directly and for my athletes to hear me I have to speak slower, more concisely and maintain eye contact with them (pauses, bites lips and looks down)...and actually value what they
are saying to me. So if they have any questions or anything I try to evaluate what they are saying (looks down) and then answer so that they either understand it or they gain more knowledge from the exercise or session I’m delivering (Martin, year 1, VD, December 2011).

A view shared by the students was the significant changes in their vocabulary and language. This was a result of ‘getting drilled into the academic style of writing’ which means ‘it’s just going through your mind all the time and you just end up speaking like that as well’ (Daniel, year 1, FG4/12, May 2012). The alterations in the students’ vocabulary (and others’ recognition of such change) was one of the significant moments that made them realise they were changing. In this respect, the alterations experienced by the students went beyond the behaviours they displayed. Indeed, as the study developed, the changes affected their understanding (why they did what they did) of behaviours they may have earlier displayed. Take the example of Gavin. At the start, he argued that ‘I haven’t changed much at all. Anything really I guess just maybe my head got a bit bigger as the stuff that I’m learning now I already know’. Gavin considered himself an experienced coach, and kept asking himself questions such as ‘what’s the point of being here?’ (Gavin, year 1, VD, December 2011). However, as the study developed, the knowledge acquired started to affect the students’ understanding of their own coaching. As commented by Gavin, ‘how you coach might not be different, but understanding how you’re coaching might have changed quite a lot. I kind of know why and how I’m doing that now’ (year 2, FG7/26, February 2013). Here, the students recognised that there was much more to coaching than they initially considered.

4.7.4.3 Reputation

One of the key aspects contributing to the development of a coaching identity was the participants’ perceived reputation as coaches. This reputation originated from the students’ views of who others perceived them to be. A comment shared by Steve illustrates this point;
I just see myself as having the identity of a coach; I wear clothes which represent a coach. People see me as a coach. They'll start a conversation about coaching, because if that's how I come across, that's my identity (Steve, year 2, FG8/30, May 2013).

Steve then added that ‘It’s quite strange that I’ve created a name for myself and that’s what’s the most pleasing for me’ (Steve, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

The development of a coaching status originated from the students’ involvement with external coaching opportunities and the course itself, as the two excerpts below illustrate:

I think I’ve got that perception that I am a coach, which I’ve created for myself. I remember in first year I wanted to have a job where it’s not a placement; it has to be a job where I create my own reputation; I wanted to work myself up, rather than just being a number, which I’ve managed to do. So that’s quite pleasing and I have created it in three years, the reputation of being a coach (Steve, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

They asked me if I could come and work for them over the summer. So that’s changed for me knowing that I’ve spent 3 years studying coaching, my identity as a coach back home has changed quite a lot. Now I’m not just seen as a little assistant coach Level 1, who can help set the cones out. Now I’m running quite good sessions; and they want me to work for them (Daniel, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014).

Another aspect that contributed to developing a stronger reputation as a coach was the professional qualifications obtained. In this respect, Heather commented that taking the UK athletics coaching qualification helped her to see herself in a coaching role. Here, the link between gaining external qualifications and developing stronger coach identities was made in relation to others. Here, Heather (again) compared herself to other students and realised that she needed to gain qualifications others already had if she was to see herself in a coaching role. The reflective log excerpt below illustrates the point:

We are now being asked to look for any sports related job adverts that we are interested in. With that selected job advert, we are being asked to produce a CV and cover letter. When this task hit me, it made me realise that I lacked coaching experience and qualifications in comparison with others. By looking at others’ CV, it also made me realise that to be a coach, a variety of experiences and qualifications
are essential and it is not ‘a cup of tea’ to have those many experiences (Heather, year 2, Reflective Log, November 2012).

4.7.5 Self-awareness, designated identities and agency

The external coaching experience was also important in supporting students to define their designated identities (who they wanted to become). In the words of two:

I worked last week, and I worked from like 9 til 5. I just felt, I want to do that (Steve, year 1, FG3/11, February 2012).

I always knew that I probably wanted to work in elite coaching, it was always the dream. But I never experienced it so ‘do I actually like it?’ As soon as I got there, and I did a couple of days, it was like – yep. Definitely. This is my sort of stuff (Tom, year 2, FG7/24, February 2013).

Becoming aware of their career ambitions and feelings as achievable also prompted students to work harder towards achieving their aims, as ‘it becomes more purposeful when I know what I’m doing’ (Gavin, year 3, FG9/36, November 2013). As a result, the students commented that ‘I feel that I can reach that. I feel I’m more confident, and I feel that if I work my ass off then... I will be able to get there’ (Fran, year 1, FG4/16, May 2012).

Of particular interest here was the students’ belief that taking part in the current study was beneficial in allowing for reflection and, as a result, developing self-awareness. The extract below, taken from the last round of focus groups, summarised such thought:

These focus groups have helped, I reckon. They’ve helped us assess where we are. Staying in touch keeps you thinking about where you are and where you want to be (Martin)

It is quite nice sitting here and discussing and actually sorting out where you think you are and where you want to be as it reinforces goals (Tom)

Keeps your feet on the ground, doesn’t it? (Gavin)

Yes, it’s nice to talk things out (Mary)
The sort of questions – I think the questions you asked us this year in particular because you get to go back, it’s quite interesting. I think it’s definitely something worthwhile (Tom).

(year 3, FG12/45, May 2014)

The students who demonstrated signs of being self-aware and whose designated identity was to become a coach were actively seeking opportunities early in the course. When asked how active he was in trying to find coaching hours outside the university, Steve commented; ‘I thought this was like the first thing I should do when I came to Uni...just get, just have a good job so that I can progress and learn’ (Steve, year 1, FG4/15, May 2012). Similarly, an excerpt from one of Mary’s video diaries demonstrated her active engagement in searching for a coaching role:

I’ve got all these contacts (moving pen on her hand) which I have to get all sorted and get moving now. Hopefully, the one for the pool will start about January so that will be good (looks up). At least I can get some qualifications in, so I know when it comes to my second year I can do some work and I can get myself on the role [coaching] (hand gestures). Hopefully, cross fingers, that will go well (Mary, year 1, VD, December 2011).

On the other hand, the students whose initial designated identity (i.e., to become a coach) changed suggested that they were not investing as much effort on their course as they were likely to if they still saw themselves as pursuing that role. For these students, becoming self-aware was developed later in the course as they re-evaluated their initial career ambitions:

When I came here all I wanted to do was to be a ski instructor and now I don’t want to. If I still wanted to, I’d be putting more effort into the coaching. It might have affected my identity and the way I see myself (Nathan, year 3, FG11/42, March 2014).

...if I had had a set goal, if I’d had a determined route, then I would have worked towards that. But because I don’t have an identity as a coach, I don’t have that set goal and it hasn’t given me that kind of motivation to actually go towards it (Barry, year 3, FG11/44, March 2014).
4.7.6 Environmental constraints and their impact on the students’ identity development

The perceived constraints present within the respective coaching environments had significant effects on the students’ designated identities:

*It’s quite frustrating because you get taught in university about being different and you have to cater for different needs and become this diverse coach and they encourage you to be creative but if you go into the real world and be creative none of the instructors want you to be creative, they want you to do it their way, which discourages you from being a coach...* (Steve, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

The students’ experiences here showed how some of the external coaching providers perceived them as students rather than coaches which, to a certain extent, contributed to their own self-perception. On the other hand, the students mentioned that their relationship with lecturers (especially in the final year of the course) showed that they were treated as coaches:

*They’ll talk to you about coaching and they’ll talk to you like another coach... Whereas the employers who shouldn’t really see us as students at all, they actually treat us more like children* (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

Tracey’s frustration (where she felt very constrained by an academy structure) was one of the key aspects that changed how she described her identity:

*My identity as a coach is non-existent now. I don’t really have anything to do with coaching, or want to do any coaching! So yes, it’s [the coaching experience in a youth sports academy] made me realise that I don’t really want to coach, especially as a full-time job* (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

4.7.7 Who are the students when they leave and how stable are their identities?

Throughout the study, the students’ identities developed in different ways. Seven of the students (Steve, Daniel, Nathan, Barry, Heather, Fran and Mary) joined the course claiming
that they wanted careers as sports coaches. Three others (Tracey, Martin and Gavin) had very strong athlete identities, hence, held the primary intention to become better athletes. Tom decided to study Sports Coaching as an alternative to Sports Science as he did not achieve the grades needed in order to enrol on the latter degree. Finally, changes in Katie’s identity were not followed through as she decided to withdraw from university in her second year.

Interestingly, the changes in designated identity (who the students wanted to become) during the course were diverse. Three (Mary, Steve and Daniel) of the seven students who had an initial intention to follow a coaching career continued with the same intentions until the end of the course. Here, the aspects that affected their decision were the ones previously introduced in this section (e.g., responsibility within coaching practice, developing knowledge and understanding, reputation and self-awareness).

Barry and Heather (who claimed their initial ambition was to work as coaches, despite not showing strong evidence for it – e.g., agency towards engaging with external coaching opportunities) changed their designated identities during the course, seeing themselves as a sport manager and sport development officer respectively:

_Initially I said ‘I’m interested in coaching.’ But now I’m more interested in development. That’s clearer now in my final year. I used to love coaching but since I learned about sport development I realised that where I come from doesn’t have that. I think we need to develop more things, so that’s why (Heather, year 3, FG9/35, October 2013)._ 

..._that’s a bit more of a reality check in that I’ve got to look for a career rather than my dream job, which was that I was going to be a coach in the Premiership somewhere! That’s never going to happen, but it’s always something that you’d hope for (Barry, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014)._ 

Fran and Nathan, meanwhile, were uncertain about their futures after reflecting on their initial ambitions:
At the start it was stable, because coaching was what I wanted to do and I was here to do a coaching degree and I think now, now we’re coming out into the big wide world and stuff, it’s very, very unstable. So I don’t know where I’m going... Maybe in a couple of years it will be completely solid and that won’t change for the rest of my life, but at the moment it is very unstable and I don’t know where I’m going to go (Nathan, year 3, FG12/44, May 2014).

I don’t know, I came here “I’m a coach. I know how to coach. I’ve coached kids, I’ve coached teenagers, I’ve coached disability.” I came with a coach identity of “I know what I’m doing and I want to build on that and improve that and do more.” And now it’s just non-existent...Maybe it’s because I haven’t really coached for so long and when I’ve coached now it’s just been for ten minutes for an assessment. I haven’t actually put theory into practice to actually improve my coaching style. So it’s stayed the same; if not got worse. So I don’t really see myself as a coach any more. That’s how I see it (Fran, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).

Out of the three students whose intentions were to develop athletic careers at the start of the course, two (Martin and Gavin) came to see themselves as coaches, whilst Tracey wanted to do a PGCE and become a Physical Education teacher:

I came to university to be an athlete. Now I probably even more want to be a coach. So whether that’s down to me not improving and thinking “Oh Christ! What’s going on with my pole vaulting?” So then I’ll end up coaching but I think, I’m doing a Sports Coaching degree so it’s probably relatively linked (Martin, year 3, FG11/42, 26th March 2014).

Identity is changing loads, but now that I know I’m doing a PGCE next year and I know I’m going to be a teacher, so that’s a stable job that once I’m in a teaching job I’m probably going to stay there for quite a while. I think that once I get there that’ll be a stable identity (Tracey, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014).

Finally, Tom, who initially wanted a career in Sports Science (despite not having a clear career pathway in mind), argued that his experience in the course made him realise what he wanted to do and where he wanted to be; ‘this degree has confirmed that I want to coach at a high level and then in terms of identity I think I see my route to coaching professionally. I see my route as perhaps being an original in the sense that my coaching is academically informed’ (Tom, year 3, FG11/41, March 2014).
4.8 Identity development – Discussion

4.8.1 How the students’ social identity was affected by discourses and structure

In line with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1972), initial findings from the study highlighted how the participants enacted a ‘code of behaviour’ relevant to the perceived social identity that characterised being a first year university student. This resulted in a process of self-categorisation (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell, 1987 cited in Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 224), where the students recognised similarities between themselves and those who they perceived as in-group members. It was clear that, in order to become part of the group, the students adopted what became dominant discourses that, in turn, dictated their behaviours. Discourses here are defined as “a relatively consistent set of ideas that people use to navigate social life and make sense of their experience” (Pringle, 2007, p. 387). In this respect, the discourse that produced the “truth” that first year students should prioritise social life over work went unchallenged as the participants attempted to solidify their social identification with the student group (Stets and Burke, 2000). Despite such occurrence, and echoing the work of Cinoğlu and Arıkan (2012), the findings also demonstrated that the students did not cease to ‘have’ personal opinions. Indeed, the findings revealed the students’ ‘conscious’ decision(s) to abide by what they perceived to be the in-group rules. Subsequently, the prevalence of discourses that emphasised the importance of social life served to obscure other ways of knowing (e.g., first year students should work hard and achieve good grades). In this sense, involvement in the discourse was seen as necessary if the students were to become in-group members. This perception often came from the students themselves as they discussed the potential of feeling left out if, for example, they did not drink.
The social structure of the course shaped how the students perceived their membership of social groups. In the first year, all the students categorised themselves as ‘sports students’ as opposed to members of the ‘sports coaching’ group. This originated from the course structure (i.e., similar modules available to students enrolled on different programmes in the first year of the study) which led to the perception that sports coaching students were similar to students from other courses (e.g., sports development or sports science). However, as the study developed, and more bespoke trajectories were available, the students began to see themselves as sports coaching students. This change was the result of a process of self-categorisation (Stets and Burke, 2000), carried out through social comparison. Here, through focusing on ‘in-group members’ similarities (i.e., the bespoke pathway for sports coaching students), the participants distinguished themselves from out-group members.

Despite echoing some of the tenets of social identity theory (i.e., belonging to a social group; self-categorisation), the findings also suggested that the students were unique individuals (a central precept of identity theory – Stryker, 1980), who performed different roles within different social groups. A clear example here was the different social groups to which Martin (e.g., sports coaching students; university athletes; athletics coaches) and Heather (e.g., international students, sports coaching students) belonged to. Within those groups, they also played a variety of roles (e.g., coach, athlete, ambassador and student). This individuality somewhat contradicts a key concept of social identity theory; that of ‘despersonalisation’ of self; in other words, acting “as embodiments of in-group prototypes rather than unique individuals” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995, p. 261). Indeed, as the study progressed, it became clear that the students simultaneously occupied a role and belonged to a group, making role identities and social identities always relevant in explaining action (Stets and Burke, 2000).
Some of the roles occupied by the students conflicted with each other (e.g., athlete and coach), whilst others were complementary (e.g., student and coach). Here, the idea that identities can co-exist was clear. This is an idea which somewhat challenges Jenkins’s (2008) concept of ‘lost’ or ‘confused’ identity, defined as “people who can’t prove who they are, who appear not to know ‘who they are’, who are one thing one moment and something else the next, who are in the throes of ‘identity crisis” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 26). Rather, the findings from the current study suggested that the students demonstrated multiple role identities without showing signs of crisis. Instead, they were contextually and momentarily adapting to the roles required within their social groups (e.g., being a student, an athlete, a coach). This in line with the work of Deaux and Martin (2003), who argued that identity negotiation is “a dynamic, motivated process embedded in, but not limited to structural opportunities and constraints” (p. 105).

The roles played by the students took place within certain social structures (e.g., the University, the club environment etc.) and were affected by expectations and individual role interpretations. Here, the students’ views seemed to agree with the idea of coaching as a complex process (Jones and Wallace, 2005; Bowes and Jones, 2006); a view that, amongst others, was both experienced and discussed on the course. For example, Tracey and Steve shared their frustration when having to follow rules imposed by their clubs which contradicted what they had been taught on the (degree) course. Here, the students somewhat resisted the structural constraints imposed by external employers while defending an approach that catered for coaching as a complex activity. This way of knowing was notably developed during the duration of the three year course as previously discussed in the ‘Intellectual development’ section. The findings here are in keeping with the work of Townsend and Cushion (2014), where participants showed resistance to new ways of knowing that challenged previously held conceptions about their role as coaches. However, differing from Townsend and Cushion’s (2014) work, the students within the current study
demonstrated evidence of critical thinking rather than merely following a dominant discourse (Foucault, 1978). In this respect, rather than seeing their coach education course (i.e., three year degree) as a closed system (Piggott, 2012), the participants’ revealed that the course enabled them to ‘think outside of the box’ as opposed to only following scripts as suggested by the participants interviewed in Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones’ (2010) study. In this respect, certain structural constraints faced in the clubs (e.g., rigid session plans), were seen by the students as constraining their development as coaches. Here, the somewhat ‘taken for granted’ knowledge (Cushion, 2016) propagated by the clubs were challenged by the students.

According to Stryker and Burke (2000), role identities are organised in a ‘salience hierarchy’. Here, an identity is not activated by the situation, but by the individual who invokes those roles higher in the salience hierarchy. This somewhat contradicts the findings of the current study, where the students invoked roles according to the environment in which they encountered themselves, rather than corresponding to any established identity hierarchy. For example, Steve commented on how different modules made him see himself in the role of a sports development officer, a coach and a performance analyst. In this respect, the social ‘environment’ affected the choice of behaviour.

The findings of the current study also suggested that emotions played a key role in identity prominence; that is, the “individual’s subjective sense of worth or value of an identity to himself or herself” (Ervin and Stryker, 2001 cited in Brenner, Serpe and Stryker, 2014, p. 233). For example, Tracey discussed how positive emotions in athletics led to a higher value being attributed to her athlete identity in the first year. Additionally, she argued that failing to do well in athletics in the second year (and doing well in her coaching) led her athlete identity to assume lower value, whilst her coach identity adopted a higher one. Interestingly, her emotions affected her identity once again in the third year after she felt very constrained by an academy structure and decided she did not want ‘anything to do with coaching’.
In referring to the work of Stryker (1987), Stets and Burke (2003) argued that “identities that generate positive feelings [are] played out more often and move up the salience hierarchy, whereas identities that repeatedly cause negative feelings [are] less likely to be played out and move down in the salience hierarchy” (Stets and Burkes, 2003, p. 139). In the current study, this could be said about identity prominence but not salience. However, as with the work of Brenner, Serpe and Stryker (2014), the findings of the current study demonstrated the existence of a tentative causal relationship between prominence and salience. Here, the students’ perceptions of the sense of worth or value (i.e., prominence) of an identity resulted in a higher probability of that identity being activated (i.e., salience). This activation, however, was highly affected by the environment as previously mentioned.

The coach identities experienced by the students consisted of many different dimensions (e.g., experience, knowledge, confidence) which, in turn, affected their development. Similar to the work of Jones and McEwen (2000), the students mentioned the idea of having a core identity in this respect with additional ‘layers’ revolving around it. However, differing from Jones and McEwen (2000), the students referred to two areas in a circle to represent different durations for changes to occur (the central area representing dimensions that take longer to change). In this respect, the use of the word ‘core’ by the students resembled that of Gee (2001) as they seemed to only be referring to what they would represent as identity. It also related to the reconceptualised idea of ‘core self’ as “fluid in nature” (Abes, Jones and McEwen, 2007, p. 15).

### 4.8.2 Self-awareness, designated identities and agency

In the current study, self-awareness played a key part in changing the students’ coach identities. Here, higher levels of self-awareness (e.g., showing signs of self-reflection; awareness of expectations compatible with the role of the coach) coincided with higher
levels of agency (i.e., “the active pursuit of professional development and learning in accordance with [personal] goals” - Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010, p. 177). In this sense, the findings somewhat agree with Hamman’s (2010) suggestion that agency “is formed through reflection” (p. 1357), with self-awareness being key in promoting such a connection; that is, self-awareness was the connecting aspect that encouraged agency. For example, Mary, whose designated identity (i.e., “stories believed to have the potential to become a part of one’s actual identity” – Sfard and Prusak, 2005, p. 18) was to become a coach, actively sought coaching opportunities as well as qualifications in year 1. This resonates with Carver (2003), who argued that “self-aware persons ascribe greater responsibility to themselves for various kinds of events” (p. 182). This was evident in all the students despite, for some, this self-awareness resulting in a change of designated identity (i.e., choosing a career ambition other than coaching). Here, such students’ attention was drawn to other alternative pathways (e.g., sport development for Heather and sport Management for Barry).

The concept of reflexivity, defined as “the ability to somehow turn around and take itself as the object of its own view” (Carver, 2003, p. 179), was key in the development of the students’ self-awareness. Important in the encouragement of reflexivity was the content learned on the course; such as reflective practice, the opportunity to compare themselves with other classmates, opportunities to discuss their own views during seminars and focus groups, and the practical coaching experiences. As a result, the students who started the process of reflexivity in the initial stages of the course (e.g., Steve, Mary, Tom and Daniel) were also the ones who had developed a more ‘secure’ identity by the end of it. Security was also related to identity stability. When the students knew what they wanted to become and were in a safe environment (e.g., doing a degree for three years alongside other coaches), they argued that their coach identity was more stable. However, the thought of leaving university and ‘coming out into the big wide world’ posed some questions regarding how long this stability would last for (Nathan, FG3/44, 13th May 2014).
In this respect, echoing the findings from Jones and Allison (2014), “the course seemed to provide a latent function related to providing a ‘community of security’ for the coaches” (p. 119). This finding was evident when some of the students showed their doubts regarding the sustainability of their coach identity outside the University. This was often related to their uncertainty in finding a coaching job, something that would dictate how stable their identity became. This sentiment originated from an institutional and discursive identity (Gee, 2001). More specifically, the institutional identity was represented by dialogues within the institution, which sustained the students’ coach identities. Likewise, discourse identity refers to how the students were treated (i.e., as coaches) by others. It was, therefore, not surprising that some of the students demonstrated an unstable coach identity as they were about to graduate.

Security also originated from the students’ commitment to a coach role identity. Indeed, there was a clear tendency among those who identified with a coaching role (and displayed high levels of commitment towards performing that role) to show more confidence and belief that they could achieve such a career aspiration (i.e., have a full time job as a coach). This commitment in and to the role, led students to search for opportunities that provided them with a certain level of responsibility and control (e.g., when the students were promoted from assistant to head coach roles). Such control was key in reinforcing the students’ designated identities, allowing them to feel confident that they could perform the role of the coach. This belief resembles Maddux and Gosselin (2003) definition of self-efficacy; i.e., “the ability to coordinate and orchestrate skills and abilities in changing and challenging situations” (Maddux and Gosselin, 2003, p. 219). The students’ self-efficacy also stemmed from praise given by lecturers who recognised the quality of the work done. In this sense, how the students were perceived by others (reflected self) affected their self-efficacy. Here, the example provided by Martin when being praised by a lecturer was a key moment that affected his perception of how good he was as a coach, and, as a consequence, his coaching
identity. As argued by Maddux and Gosselin (2003), “So often people ask the question ‘Who am I’ by asking, ‘What am I good at’?” (p. 218). This was clear in the students’ experiences, such as when dealing with their multiple role identities. Hence, the recognition that they were good coaches was key in strengthening their coach identities.

4.8.3 Self-verification, impression management and the reflected self

The students showed evidence of seeing “themselves as they believe[d] others see [saw] them”, a concept called the ‘Reflected Self’ (Tice and Wallace, 2003, p. 91). Although no doubt the students valued appraisals by significant others, they were not passive in the related identity development process. Indeed, the findings showed how the students consciously behaved in certain ways to match the identity they were trying to portray (e.g., coach). This process of self-verification (Stets and Burke, 2000) served to create the students’ reputations as coaches. This in turn affected the students’ beliefs about how others saw them. For example, Steve mentioned: ‘I think I’ve got that sort of perception that I am a coach, which I’ve created for myself since first year. People see me as a coach...if that’s how I come across, that’s my identity’ (Steve, year 3, FG12/46, May 2014). Here, Steve referred to actively engaging in behaviours that he associated with the role of a coach in the process of identity creation and development (e.g., wearing coaching kit; coaching outside the course; discussing coaching with others).

This process of self-verification also resembled the concept of ‘impression management’ from Goffman’s (1959) work, which suggests that “in our social encounters we present an impression of selves that we wish others to receive in an attempt to control how others see us” (Jones et al., 2011, p. 17). This was a strategy used by coaches in Chesterfield, Potrac and Jones’s (2010) study who engaged in impression management to “portray the qualities desired to pass the course” (p. 310). In this sense, the performance through engagement in
impression management “does not refer to some dark tactical scheming” (Jones et al., 2012), or as “an ‘act’ behind which the real person lurks” (Watson, 2006, p. 509). Instead, it represents a way of negotiating one’s identity, and therefore, part of who one is.

4.8.4 Final thoughts

The findings from the current study both support and, most importantly, build upon existing work on identity. Firstly, they highlight the students as being engaged in a process of self-categorisation (a key aspect in social identity theory - Tajfel, 1972) as a way to recognise similarities between themselves and others perceived as ‘in-group’ members. Such a categorisation was based on following a ‘code of behaviour’ relevant to the perceived social identity that characterised being a first year university student. In this respect, the social structure in which the students operated, affected how they perceived their membership of social groups (e.g., sports or sports coaching students).

The findings also suggested that the students were unique individuals (a central tenet of identity theory – Stryker, 1980), who simultaneously occupied a role and belonged to a group, making role identities and social identities always relevant in explaining action (Stets and Burke, 2000). This somewhat contradicts a key concept in social identity theory; that of ‘depersonalisation’ of self. Here, the students negotiated and adapted to their multiple roles, which is a finding that also contradicts Jenkins’ (2008) concept of ‘lost’ or ‘confused’ identity.

Perhaps, one of the most important findings in this section relates to the role of self-awareness in identity change. Here, students who displayed earlier signs of self-awareness were also those most committed to professional development, ascribing greater responsibility to themselves for doing so (i.e., agency). The subsequent implication for coach education lies in the need to encourage students to seek a better understanding of who they are early in their development as coaches. Who the coaches are represents “an issue which has been largely overlooked within coaching research” (Jones et al., 2012, p.1), the
recognition of which is an important step if coach education is to move beyond the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of coaching.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, the aims and objectives of the study presented in chapter one are revisited. This is followed by a summary of the main findings before outlining implications, limitations and potential directions for future research. Finally, I provide a reflective account of my learning experiences and identity change whilst undertaking and developing this study.

In chapter one, emphasis was directed at the lack of studies related to understanding the learning experiences of students, and their potential for identity development. Subsequently, the significance of the project centred on three principal aspects. The first focused on learning as a dimension of social practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and suggested that research on learning and identity development can inform how best to ground students’ beliefs and ways of knowing including ‘the “why” and “what for” of their own beliefs and decision making’ (Stoszkowski and Collins, 2014, 781). Secondly, referring to relevant literature (e.g., Jones and McEwen, 2000; Cushion et al., 2010; De Martin-Silva, 2015), the importance of developing longitudinal work to better capture the nuance of on-going learning and its effect on identity change was highlighted. Finally, in keeping with the work of Wenger (2010) the value of this work lay in “paying more attention to the practices, people, regimes of competence and boundaries that serve as constitutive texture of identity and become part of who we are” (De Martin-Silva et al., 2015, p.2). This relates to the recent calls by Jones (and colleagues) to focus more on ‘who is coaching’, including a reciprocal relationships between self, others and society (Stets and Burke, 2003).
5.2 Recapping the aims and objectives of the study

The general aim of this study was twofold. Firstly, to explore sports coaching students’ perceptions and experiences of the under-graduate degree enrolled upon; and secondly, to examine how these experiences shape students’ identities over the length of the given three-year course. This aim was addressed through five mutually informing detailed objectives:

1- How do sports coaching students think about learning and carry out their studying?
2- How much do students value the role of theory in informing coaching practice and development? And why?
3- To what extent does the knowledge and experiences gained on the degree programme contribute towards the students’ intellectual development?
4- How do the students’ social and role identities change during the course? Why? How stable are their identities?
5- What role (if any) do teaching staff play in the students’ developments? Why are they so perceived?

5.3 Summary of the main findings

The main findings of the study addressed the five objectives (above) in the following ways;

*As related to objectives 1 and 2*

The findings here demonstrated the prevalence of a strategic approaches to learning by the students throughout the study. This was manifest as a surface approach in the first year of study and to a deeper one in the second and third years. In line with previous work, the approaches to learning adopted by the students were not stable psychological traits
(Strutyven et al., 2006). Rather, it became apparent that they were fluid and significantly affected by the structure of the programme. Of particular importance here was the view of learning as ‘relational’ rather than ‘independent’. The teaching staff and the assessments employed were crucial in engaging students in this process. The findings, therefore, somewhat take issue with the prevalent independent learning discourse evident as a goal within HE.

Perhaps the most striking finding in this context related to how the students referred to their engagement in learning as a matter of ‘social responsibility’. This resembles the idea of how to become a legitimate member of a community of practice (Christie et al., 2013). Here, the students’ learning resulted from their perceptions about how they should behave in a certain community. This sentiment of respect for each other originated from a concern with fairness (self-interest), the relationships among group members, and moral principles (Aguilera et al., 2007); factors which invite educators to consider the learning environments experienced by students in their quest for increased engagement in the process.

Finally, despite an initial search for knowledge for action, the students subsequently invested in knowledge for understanding. This process was affected by the students’ involvement in reflective practice, a topic heavily covered on the programme. Subsequently, the value of practices such as ‘academic’ writing and the role of theories in understanding coaching, were only recognised retrospectively.

**As related to objective 3**

The students within this study generally progressed from a dualist to a more relativist position in their intellectual development. Here, the findings revealed an initial search for certainty, particularly in the first year of their undergraduate course. In this context, the
students adopted a position as mere recipients in their initial grappling with the higher education environment. As the study progressed, the students increasingly showed signs of better accepting uncertainty and their role in the co-construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). This was especially the case when they were encouraged to engage with conflicting information such as being confronted with different opinions.

The changing nature of context played a very important role in the students’ epistemological development. Interestingly, those who displayed characteristics consistent with relativist thinking still chose to adopt a dualistic approach when under stressful situations (e.g., time constraints; deadlines). One aspect that proved particularly problematic for the students was the epistemic range of modules experienced. Here, some units were taught from an interpretive standpoint, while others were rooted in a positivistic paradigm. Additionally, the importance of ‘who’ was the teacher in student-coaches’ intellectual development also came to the fore. This was evidenced in two principal ways. Firstly, as a result of more meaningful staff relationships and accompanying perceptions of care; discernments arrived at through increased opportunities to interact with and discuss content-relevant concepts. Secondly, staff proved catalysts for students’ cognitive maturity through their espoused positions, against which students defined their increasing participation in the co-construction of knowledge (e.g., willingness to actively engage in sessions by feeling more confident in answering questions).

As related to objective 4

The findings from the current study both support and, most importantly, build upon existing work on identity. Firstly, they highlight the students as being engaged in a process of self-categorisation (a key aspect in social identity theory - Tajfel, 1972) as a way to recognise
similarities between themselves and others perceived as ‘in-group’ members. Such a categorisation was based on following a ‘code of behaviour’ relevant to the perceived social identity that characterised being a first year university student. In this respect, the social structure in which the students operated affected how they perceived their membership of social groups (e.g., sports or sports coaching students).

The findings also suggested that the students were unique individuals (a central tenet of identity theory – Stryker, 1980), who simultaneously occupied a role and belonged to a group, making role identities and social identities always relevant in explaining action (Stets and Burke, 2000). This somewhat contradicts a key concept of social identity theory; that of ‘depersonalisation’ of self. Here, the students negotiated and adapted to their multiple roles; a finding that also contradicts Jenkins’s (2008) concept of ‘lost’ or ‘confused’ identity.

Perhaps, one of the most important findings in this section relates to the role of self-awareness in identity change. Here, the students who displayed earlier signs of self-awareness were also those most committed to professional development, ascribing greater responsibility to themselves for doing so (i.e., realising personal agency).

**As related to objective 5**

Results showed that ‘caring’ was one of the most influential aspects associated with the role of the teaching staff throughout the three years of the course. It was also seen as an exchange relationship, in which those involved in it “gained something whilst paying a price” (Blau, 1986, p. viii). In the first year of study, the students saw caring as being provided through the provision of a ‘secure’ and ‘comfortable’ learning context. This resembled the ‘Turtle instinct’ (Rodrigues, 1984), or a way to protect themselves from the unknown. When such an environment was not present or delivered, the students perceived the staff ‘not to care’.
As the study progressed, the students started to accept their role in the co-construction of knowledge, including the need to be challenged and taken away from their ‘comfort zones’ (Meyer and Land, 2005). This coincided with a retrospective appreciation of lecturers’ care during the first two years of the programme. Here, the students recognised that the perceived lack of support at times may, in fact, have been a sign of caring (Rogers, 1980; Noddings, 1985). This increased perception of caring relationships coincided with an increase in the ‘number’ and ‘perceived quality’ of interactions between the students and the lecturers. These interactions tended to occur especially in seminars or in informal environments (e.g., in the corridor after lectures). One of the key roles that the students expected the lecturers to adopt was that of a facilitator. This was particularly noticeable in the second and third years of the study, contesting the initial view of lecturers as providers of information.

5.4 Implications and limitations of the study

This study presents different implications for coach education. Firstly, the findings suggest the need to encourage student-coaches to seek a better understanding of who they are early in their professional development. Who the coaches are represents “an issue which has been largely overlooked within coaching research” (Jones et al., 2012, p.1), the recognition of which is an important step if coach education is to move beyond the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of coaching. In this context, the students should be presented with conflicting information early in their course as a way to challenge previous ways of knowing. This conflicting information was not initially welcomed by the students, who perceived the lecturers not to care. However, as the study progressed, students acknowledged that the teaching staff cared for their learning, something that was only realised with hindsight.
Similarly, the findings suggested that intellectual development was affected by an increased acceptance of uncertainty and the relative nature of knowledge. Here, the students experienced frustration as a result of their discontentment with the lack of ‘right’ answers during the initial stages of their course. This frustration was later replaced by a sense of achievement and being grateful that they were led to think for themselves rather than being provided with the answers they initially desired. Caution is, therefore, needed with regards to identifying students ‘wants’ and ‘needs’ which are often influenced by the context in which they are taught and the assessment requirements. The evidence provided within this study, therefore, invites educators to consider their role in developing the ‘Eagle spirit’ (Rodrigues, 1984), providing the necessary updraft that allows students to seek new flights without fear of the unknown. Of particular relevance here was the role of formal education in offering opportunities for coach development. Such a format has been often contested in the sports coaching literature. Instead, other studies (e.g., Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, 2003; Piggott, 2012; Cushion et al., 2010) have concluded that coaches learn more from informal and non-formal sources as opposed to given curricula. On a different note, the findings of the current study serve to highlight that what matters most is not necessarily the ‘formality’ of the experience but the quality and duration of the programme.

The findings also suggested a close link between assessment and learning. Despite disappointing on the one hand, such a link could prove very powerful in designing courses, the requirements of which lead students to adopt a deep approach to learning. In this respect, instead of fighting the strategic nature of learners’ engagement in coach education, coach educators should focus on assessing aspects in line with the ambiguous and contested nature of the work. Here, the use of formative assessment (that requires a deep approach to learning) and the support offered from teaching staff (i.e., relational learning) becomes crucial for developing critical understanding. Finally here, the findings of the study also suggested that
the longitudinal research design adopted was a key aspect in allowing for understandings absent in previous research on coach education.

However, the study also presented limitations. One of those refers to the fact that, despite its temporal nature, the work was essentially carried out from the perspective of a relatively small group of students. As discussed in the methods section and in line with the interpretivist paradigm, it is, therefore, accepted and expected that the results obtained from this study are not universally applicable. Having said that, an expectation exists that not only can the results but also the process of developing this longitudinal research provide insights that invoke critical reflection and meaningful discussions amongst those who are involved in the creation and elaboration of coach education provisions. Additionally, although interpretative studies may look at specific cases, by reflecting on the findings, one is able to generate ways to improve aspects of their own context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

5.5 Recommendations for future research

The findings of this study serve to confirm the value of exploring students’ experiences over a long period of time. It is, therefore, suggested that future research continues to examine learning and identity utilising such longitudinal designs. This can allow researchers to move away from presenting a ‘snapshot’ of learning to what can be considered a much more complex process. The issue here, lies in searching for solutions for matters that have not been widely and appropriately explored. Hence, there is a need to further explore learning and identity development in different environments before thinking about changes to the current systems. This background knowledge (obtained via longitudinal studies) is crucial to better guiding the impact of coach education provisions.
Despite the benefits from exploring students’ perceptions of their experiences, being able to investigate the teaching staff’s views of the students’ experiences and identity change (as well as their own) could allow for a more integrated framework. This is a consideration that should be taken into account in future research; for example, to analyse the ‘whys’ behind the decisions made by the teaching staff. This could be particularly important and relevant if one is to devise better ways to educate and support tutors/educators. Finally, the use of different methods of data collection is suggested as a future investigative consideration to allow for data to be collected from various perspectives and stages during a processual study. As with the current work, the use of video diaries and reflective logs allowed for relevant information to be analysed in guiding the focus group interview guides. However, caution is advised when setting expectations to ensure for a more realistic view of what such methods can provide (Jones at al., 2014).

5.6 Final reflection: My learning experiences and identity development

The process spent doing my PhD have undoubtedly been an invaluable learning experience during which I felt the more I familiarised myself with literature on learning and identity, the more I could see myself ‘living’ the aspects I was exploring. Early in the process, I experienced a difficult time moving away from one of my role identities (Football player) which had been a key part of ‘who’ I was for 15 years. I still remember reading about identity development and how the loss of roles previously played can result in an identity ‘crisis’. That was what it felt like. In a meeting with my supervisors, Robyn and Bill, I could not hide my sense of ‘naked self’. I had never been through such an experience until then, and I’m not sure I would be so aware of it if it wasn’t for my PhD. That was the day when our PhD meeting turned into a walk around campus to get some fresh air and wipe the tears away.
After such an ‘eventful’ start, and as I continued to research how the students changed throughout the three year degree, I saw myself reflecting on the changes that were simultaneously happening in my own identity(ies). Playing different roles (e.g., player, coach, lecturer, student), I could feel that being amongst PhD students and having regular meetings with my supervisors increased the prominence of my student role identity. I also felt that my PhD student identity was affected by the way I was treated by my supervisor who highlighted my progress in a very positive way. An example was how I was praised for my commitment to the study, which made me believe in myself and feel excited and motivated. I remember when Robyn once said to me “Luciana, how do you manage to always run on a full tank of petrol?” I am not sure if this was a sign of contentment or concern. Perhaps, it was a bit of both! At the time of starting the PhD, I was offered a full time job as a lecturer in sports coaching. After a long chat with Robyn, I recognised that for many students the job opportunities tend to come later, after they finish their PhD. So, I felt anxious but also valued when being given that opportunity at the start of my PhD years. I knew it was not going to be easy but I also knew that my commitment and love for challenges would encourage me to really invest in both roles (i.e., student and lecturer).

Since starting my PhD in 2011, I have become increasingly interested in the student experience and attitudes to learning. Indeed, the PhD and my job were so well interlinked that I was able to use many of my findings in guiding my own academic practice. For example, William Perry’s scheme of intellectual and ethical development (Perry, 1970) showed that as students progressed through their studies, they developed ‘increasingly more complex and integrated ways of viewing the world’ (p. 248). Perry’s scheme, which forms an important part of my thesis’ discussion chapter, raised questions in my mind regarding curriculum design and teaching practices. More specifically, I started to consider the developmental positions students were occupying at particular times during their course.
This meant paying more attention to their behaviour during lectures and seminars. I looked forward to sharing my findings with colleagues through attending conferences, staff development sessions and writing book chapters and journal articles. It just felt like I had developed my understanding and practice in coach education (and higher education) so much by being able to reflect on the unfolding findings from my study that I felt it was my responsibility to share them with others.

I also shared my findings with students, perhaps in a more informal way. I wanted to make them aware of the intellectual ‘positions’ they were going through, and to explain that it was ‘normal’ to feel uncertain and, at times, frustrated. I started to understand my undergraduate dissertation students better. Here, I focussed more on their personal development and understanding of the world (rather than the ‘box ticking’ strategic approach that I saw myself previously using). As a result, I was in a better position to support the students I taught throughout what Meyer and Land (2005) described as the liminal space, or in other words, a space full of doubts and challenges.

My PhD experience has also influenced the way I believe curriculum should be developed. A key resulting consideration or question was how could I affect student self-awareness and designated identities, as they appeared to be two of the main aspects that led my PhD participants to actively pursue professional development (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010). I subsequently decided to incorporate group sessions within the placement modules that allowed students to share their experiences whilst reflecting on ‘who they wanted to become’. Another aspect discussed with the teaching team at my place of work was the need to generate a programme identity by creating a link between the modules covered within each level and, at the same time, developing pathways that allowed students to progress their knowledge and further develop their professional identities.
I truly believe that the experiences and findings I encountered in my PhD were responsible for developing my own professional identity as a lecturer. This is a profession that I love, and being able to apply the PhD findings to improve teaching and learning has been incredibly rewarding! And I really believe that having the opportunity to share my PhD findings with others gave purpose to my work. Like the students, I felt that the responsibility I had in making changes to impact the student experience (e.g., assessment design) was key in making me believe that I was capable of devising strategies that were theoretically informed and ‘tested’.

My understanding about research also underwent a considerable change. I clearly remember myself thinking “How am I going to analyse all the data that I collect?” “How am I going to organise millions of words in a meaningful account”? I thank those moments for the progress I made as a researcher. And, most importantly, I thank my supervisor for not giving me ‘yes/no’ answers when I may have looked for them. I tended to spend hours thinking about a way of doing something (e.g., organising the data), when suddenly it clicked and ended up with a “yes” in the middle of the office! The moments of uncertainty that led to discoveries were key in my development. I have learned that uncertainty is part of life and that it should not be seen as detrimental to development. Instead, it was the catalyst for my own development (both personally and professionally).

Completing this thesis has certainly been one of the biggest achievements in my life. The learning experiences and identity change experienced as a result of the almost five years developing this study cannot be compared to anything else. I am eternally grateful for this opportunity and I already feel like losing my PhD student identity will come at a cost that may require another walk around campus; this time, I hope, with tears of joy!
REFERENCES


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Paulsen, M. B. and Feldman, K. A. (1999), Student Motivation and Epistemological Beliefs. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 17–25. DOI: 10.1002/tl.7802


Appendix 1 – Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Sports Coaching Students’ Learning and Identity Development: A Longitudinal Study

This research is part of a doctoral (PhD) project at UWIC (School of Sport) which aims to explore students’ perceptions and experiences of the sports coaching under-graduate degree enrolled upon. Namely, we are interested in understanding:

1. How students learn what they learn
2. How this affects them as individuals

The value of the study

The value of the study lies in understanding the influences on coaches’ learning and development.

Your Participation in the Research Project:

Why have you been asked?
This University (UWIC) was specifically selected because of its association with good teaching practice and course design.

What would happen if you join the study?
If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to give consent to:

- Participate in four focus groups interviews per year in a group of four students (a total of 12 focus group interviews over the three year duration of your course);
- Keep a diary to record your thoughts about the course and things associated with being a student in the course (that will take around half an hour a week);
- Make a video diary reflecting on issues you find relevant in relation to your learning as a student/coach.

The point here is to record, explore and understand, not to evaluate.

What happens to the focus group interviews, reflective logs and video diaries?
The information from this study will be used in a number of ways:

1. To write up as part of my doctoral thesis (PhD);
2. To write research papers to be published in academic journals;
3. To be presented in academic congresses or seminars.

What happens next?
You will receive a consent form to complete to confirm that you are willing to take part in this study.

I sincerely hope you agree to partake in the study. If you need more information, please feel free to contact me or my principal supervisor by telephone or email at:

Contact Details:
Luciana De Martin Silva  Tel: (deleted)
E-mail: lusilva@cardiffmet.ac.uk/ lucianadms@yahoo.com

Alternative contact
Professor Robyn L. Jones (Principal supervisor)  Tel: (deleted)
E-mail: rljones@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Appendix 2 – Informed Consent

PARTICIPANT (STUDENT) CONSENT FORM

UWIC Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: Sports Coaching Students’ Learning and Identity Development: A Longitudinal Study
Name of Researcher: Luciana De Martin Silva

Please initial each box with Y for Yes and N for No.

1. I confirm that I understand the nature of this project and why I have been selected to participate in it. [ ]

2. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider the information given, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

3. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

4. I understand that none of the participants’ names (yours or other students’) or other personal details will be referred to in a way that could lead to identification. [ ]

5. I understand that the use of videos containing my image will only be possible after my authorisation. [ ]

6. I agree to any interviews and focus groups being audio recorded. [ ]

7. I understand I can request a copy of the results of the study. [ ]

8. I agree to data from the interviews, video diaries and reflective logs being used for publishing purposes. [ ]

9. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

_________________________________  ________________________________
Name of Participant                  Name of person taking consent

_________________________________
Signature of Participant

_________________________________
Signature of person taking consent

_________________________________
Date

_________________________________
Date
### Appendix 3 – Programme structure and features, curriculum units (modules), credit, levels and award requirements

#### B.Sc. (Hons/Ord) Sport Coaching Level 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Module Number</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Core/ Option</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<td>Coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Options Choose 20 Credits from:</strong></td>
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<td>SSP5056</td>
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<td>Sport Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport and Exercise Physiology</td>
<td>SSP5057</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>1,2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Physiology &amp; Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Biomechanics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport and Exercise Psychology</td>
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<td>Physical Activity, Health and Special Populations</td>
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<td>Sport Techniques and Analysis (Outdoor Activities)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>1,2 &amp; 3</td>
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## B.Sc. (Hons/Ord) Sport Coaching Level 6

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
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<th>Credit Value</th>
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<th>Core/Option</th>
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<td>Analysis and Application (Cricket)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis and Application (Dance)</td>
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<td>Analysis and Application (Gymnastics)</td>
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<td>Analysis and Application (Hockey)</td>
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<td>Analysis and Application (Rugby)</td>
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<td>Analysis and Application (Soccer)</td>
<td>SSP6078</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credit and award requirements

Students following the Sport Coaching programme complete 80 compulsory credits at Level 4. These credits reflect what the programme team feel are essential elements to be covered by all students studying sport coaching and include core skills such as study skills, research methods and planning for personal development and introductory elements of the main academic disciplines in sport. In addition, students complete a 20 credit compulsory module that is specific to the programme pathway and introduces students to the principles and practice of coaching science. They then have a further 20 credit module choice of one of the other pathway specific compulsory modules from the other undergraduate programmes.

At Level 5 students further develop their core research methods and professional development skills through 20 credits of compulsory modules. There are a further 60 credits of compulsory modules specific to the programme, these develop core knowledge and understanding of both practice and theory that is integral to the study of sport coaching. These are made up of 20 or 40 credits from sport development or socio-cultural issues. Students then have an additional 20 or 40 credit choice from a range of theory-based modules depending on the options selected and two applied practical options worth 10 credits each.

In the final year, students must complete a 40 credit independent project, a 30 credit compulsory module that is programme specific and which explores the key concepts associated with contemporary sport coaching, a further 30 credit theory module which provides the opportunity to develop a specialist area of interest and two 10 credit practical analysis and applications options.

A 10 credit module represents 100 hours of student effort. This normally represents 24-36 hours of class contact and 64-76 hours of additional directed study and assessment preparation time for each student. In the case of practically-based modules, the class contact time is extended to up to 45 hours in order to facilitate experiential learning and experience.

Work Based Learning

Work based learning is an important feature of the undergraduate programmes in Cardiff School of Sport. The increase in the number of new graduates in sport means that it is now more important than ever to show potential employers that students have been proactive in developing transferable skills that can be used in the workplace. The School provides a range of formal and informal opportunities for learning and development in the workplace including: academic and personal development, career management, understanding work culture, developing people skills and developing a range of general and specialist organisational skills. Work based learning has been developed in line with UWIC and QAA Codes of Practice.

The Student Volunteering module is incorporated as a compulsory module at Level 5 and work experience is incorporated as an option at Level 6 of the programme. In addition to these two modules, sport coaching students are also expected to be involved in coaching practice and use the theory to inform practice for a 30 credit compulsory module at Level 6. The main purpose for engaging students in this way is to encourage academic and vocational integration. It also allows students opportunities to gain experience of working practices and further develop practical skills.
### Appendix 4 - Focus Group Guide example

**FOCUS GROUP 6 – December 2012**
Key questions based on previous findings and the study’s objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Previous findings based on data analysis for year 1 (reflective logs, video diaries, previous focus groups)</th>
<th>Questions to be asked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1- Learning experiences | Strategic learning – getting together to study when there are exams (year 1)  
Independent learning – not motivated in year 1 (not contributing to final classification).  
Students’ intentions and ambitions seemed to dictate their willingness to learn. | 1.1 How is independent learning now? Has it changed? Why? How?  
1.2 How do their ambitions affect their views regarding learning and their engagement in the programme? Has it changed? How? Why (not)?  
1.3 How were their ambitions developed? What do they believe were the key moments? Do they believe they can achieve their ambitions? (agency; hope) |
| 2- Coaching theory | Theory not seen as relevant for coaching (Year 1)  
Second and third year students were telling PhD participants that reading was not necessary as ‘first year doesn’t count’. | 2.1 What are their thoughts about theory and writing and reading now? Has it changed? If so, why and how?  
2.2 Would they give the same advice to first year students now that they are in the third year? Why (not)? |
| 3- Intellectual development | Being confused resulted in students forgetting about it and being lazy (Year 1)  
Lecturers were seen as Authorities – having the right answers | 3.1 What happens now? Do they get confused? What happens next (agency)??  
3.2 What are their approach now? What’s the role of the lecturer and the role of the student? |
| 4- Identity | Students saw themselves as sports students (not sports coaching students).  
Some students mentioned that the coaching practice they would do outside Uni would show how much they had changed as a coach (e.g. Tom) | 4.1 Think about how you saw yourself in year 1 and how you see yourself now. Has it changed? How? How stable is this change?  
4.2 How do you compare you coaching practice now to first year? What has changed? How? Why? What contributed to the change? |
| 5- Lecturers’ roles | Enthusiasm and humour; care; pushing them to do the work were seen as part of lecturers’ roles  
Perceptions of caring were related to being provided with the right answers and being acknowledged – e.g., names. | 5.1 What are students’ perceptions of the lecturers’ roles now? Why and how satisfied are they with the roles they experience? Why?  
5.2 What does CARING means now? How do they know that the lecturer cares? Have their perceptions changed from year 1? |

Allow a flexible approach to the interview guide, prompting as and when appropriate. No specific order in which the questions should be asked – adapt according to the answers provided by the participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting knowledge of things you don’t know…or you don’t know as much about…so getting that knowledge from the teacher. (Steve)</td>
<td>Defining learning – getting knowledge from the lecturer</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something that you can actually repeat again and again…just not like a one off. (Barry)</td>
<td>Defining learning – remembering information</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being able to remember it. (Tom)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>FG13</td>
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<tr>
<td>You learn a theory and then put the theory into practice. If you are not actually putting it into practice, I don’t class that as actually learning. (Martin)</td>
<td>Defining learning – linking theory and practice</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not just about theory, reading…turn theory into practice. (Heather)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FG14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining knowledge of something…ahmm, learning new things, trying them out and see if they work. (Mary)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You feel like you should get a grade for it, but, no - that’s not going to happen! No! [laughs] (Mary)</td>
<td>Feeling like you should be praised for doing your reading</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>It feels like ‘OK, I’m glad I know that now.’ But the amount of effort that took…[laughs] (Tracey)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When it’s over forty, I’m like “yes”! but then when you think about its really bad!” (Katie)</td>
<td>Doing work in the last minute and happy when they achieve over 40%</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG15</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>My coaching science was the first one. I gave it one minute before. I was sitting there and going 29, go on go on, and I was like (knocking on the table) waiting for the receipt to come out. (Steve)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I need to and feel I should be doing a lot more research on the topics and looking at different theories to expand my knowledge and put it into more practical situations or example…but then I don’t have that much time and when I do, I have other work that I see as more important because reading is not high on my priority list (Tracey)</td>
<td>Strategic and surface approach to learning</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>28th Nov 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeah. One thing that’s pulling me down, like reading, that is, like second and third years saying that this year doesn’t really count. Like, it does count, but… (Mary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeaaa! (Heather)</td>
<td>Being influenced by 2nd and 3rd years – first year doesn’t count!</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>...it's when they say like “it doesn’t count, you should be partying” I'm like…(Mary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loads of people have told me “oh, don’t worry about first year, it doesn’t count.” And that’s... I’ve got that into my head now. So I think, “Oh, it doesn’t count, as long as I pass it...”</td>
<td>Being influenced by 2nd and 3rd years – first year doesn’t count!</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Tracey)</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 5</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think the main thing is that, as undergrads, we don’t really understand the full extent of independent learning - and we’re not, definitely not fully participating in it!</td>
<td>Finding it hard to understanding or fully participate independent learning</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 7</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Tom)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that’s why year one, it doesn’t count towards your overall degree at the end; it’s just getting you there so that year one, when you start, you’re ready. So I think we should try a bit to do the independent learning, otherwise year two is going to be a massive shock!</td>
<td>Finding it hard to study on their own (independent learning)</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Daniel)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>But, if there was a lecture on, like, if they had two biomechanics lectures, I’m likely to go to both of them. And if they split it between the two, then I’m likely to understand it more. But because they... because it’s not on, you just don’t do it, do you? It’s hard... it’s hard to say “OK, this hour I’m doing biomechanics” on your own - you just end up not doing it. You think “Oh, I’ll do it next hour! I’ll do it tomorrow!”</td>
<td>Feeling the work is confusing and nobody is there to help</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>1st Nov 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Tracey)</td>
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<td>I feel terrible(rubs left shoulder with her right hand), I want be out there, I want be coaching, I wana be learning, I wana be training but it’s hard when you’ve got all this workload (raises eyebrows) and no one there to help you (nods her head downwards). And the work itself is confusing (eyebrows raised as her head tilts downwards towards the camera). So today it’s been (pauses, pulls her head more upright and licks her lips) pretty crap but hopefully tomorrow (tilts her head to her top right) it will be better, (voice goes quieter) being optimistic and make sure (shrugs her shoulders) I get to lectures. (Fran)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feeling the work is confusing and nobody is there to help</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>1st Nov 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The start felt impossible cos I’ve never done reading by myself...like being told to do like ‘read this chapter for this lecture’...I wish I’d read every lecture now. I just found it really hard to start but I find it much easier now... I think it was about middle of term two that I realised you just gotta do this by yourselves...’</td>
<td>Finding independent learning hard at the start but easier after finding it useful for exams – linked to strategic learning</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 14</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Mary)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I just don’t feel you need to put as much effort in…you don’t need to this year, like the fact that you can pass, like comfortably without doing it...</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Tom)</td>
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<td>I don’t think the motivation is there cos it doesn’t count to anything. (Steve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>But even if it was like 10%. (Tom)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because at college I used to get everything on a piece of paper – like, people would just tell me, do this, work. Explain the work, like, really go into detail with it, do it by a certain date – so I had something to do on that date, do work. But at uni, you come here, they just say “do this by this. And read this.” I’m like, no! (Steve)</td>
<td>Barrier to independent learning – previous experience</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 6</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>And you know, when we had our first coaching science, she’s like, “oh, you should all be doing your essay by now.” Everyone was like, “what?” (Gavin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Desire to being told what and when to do the work</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes I wish someone would be, like, “You need to get on and do this piece of work.” Because I feel like sometimes I'm just leaving it a bit too late. I need to plan my time better. (Katie)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 3 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeah. I'll do assignment, like, I'll hand in my coaching science assignments two minutes before the deadline. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Handing assignment minutes before the deadline</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 6 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not get this! Im not entirely sure if that's compulsory or not but I paid to go to uni and paying for something I wanna be taught it. So I didn’t pay to sit at home in the computer do e lessons, it’s kind of stupid, I don’t get that. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Not understanding why he is doing e lessons as he paid to be taught</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 VD 24th Oct 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think if I was at home, I probably would do it, but here with all your mates living around you, and having the gym, and the tennis courts, and all sorts… I just, you know, do something more fun than sit down and work. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Living on campus and distractions</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 5 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Really not doing work at all actually. I got kicked out of a lecture today for not having done the blog for Coaching Science…pretty good (shaking head) Not good at all….well to be far the last course work coaching science I submitted 2 minutes…I submitted work at 5:28 and the deadline was at 5:30. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Lack of engagement with academic work</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 VD 6th Dec 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>And, yeah, like I said earlier, I feel like I'm not very book-smart, but industry… industry-smart I suppose. Then yes, I could do quite well in it. Yet I'm here, having to write down everything that... yeah. In order for me to look like a good coach here, I've got to be able to write an essay well. Well – I'm not here to write essays, I'm here to learn how to be a better coach, which is through coaching. Through practical work. (Barry)</td>
<td>Focusing on knowledge for action</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 10 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>It doesn't matter about all the intellectual stuff unless you want to be a performance analyst or a psychologist or anything, anything else completely irrelevant. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Claiming the intellectual stuff does not matter if you want to be a coach</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 10 28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Er, it just makes actual coaching too complicated. Whereas simple's best -- simple works. Why not do it... instead of using coach theories...(Nathan)</td>
<td>Theories makes actual coaching too complicated whereas simple is best</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 17 26</td>
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<td>I got a lot of experience you know I don't really need to plan or anything I can just make up on the spot and it goes really smooth. I've got a lot of experience doing it. So, I'm pretty good at that experience you know being relaxed and just being professional. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Valuing experience as suffice for coaching -- knowledge for action</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 VD 6th Dec 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>To me the practical sessions are most relevant as I think they build on things I think I'm not very good at i.e. being more confident and providing feedback, of course the information given in lectures supplement the practical sessions. (Katie)</td>
<td>The value of practical sessions</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 RL 17th Oct 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physiology lab is a little more interesting (his left hand rubbing is neck) it's a bit more practical…at least we are up doing practical ahm things (raises eyebrows) which I find far more interesting (head sways to his left). I suppose I learn from it as well I can picture it better in my mind I can think about what I've done (looks down) as opposed to think about what notes I've written. (Barry)</td>
<td>Finding practical sessions better for learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 VD 10th Nov 2011</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 6. Thematic table (objectives 1 and 2) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So you have to understand it first, and then you have to keep that in your mind. So that you know, when you go into that moment when you have – ‘Oh, na na na’ – say you can use it, it’s not about just memorising it. It’s about… I think it’s important to have that understanding (Heather)</td>
<td>Learning as understanding and not only memorising</td>
<td>Conception of learning 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d say, like, when it clicks, find in your head – and you understand it properly. (Mary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I guess you understand it first, then maybe come back to it like, after a period of… mm. Not, maybe, on that topic, but you still remember it; still quite ingrained in your head, and… and then maybe if you get the opportunity to apply to our coaching, then you find ways to do so. …I think that’s like the final step. The sort of… dunno. Maybe… dunno… option to apply is quite specific to coaching. Just general learning – understanding, the ability to recall it, is enough. But – coaching’s a practical thing, so being able to apply it is very important. (Tom)</td>
<td>Understanding and applying</td>
<td>Conception of learning 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think being able to apply it will show that you’ve learned it. Definitely. Well, like, clear things up in your mind, or…or…it’s important to be able to apply stuff. Definitely. Otherwise, what’s the point in .understanding it, I suppose. (Barry)</td>
<td>Being able to apply something will show that you have learned it</td>
<td>Conception of learning 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel. Gaining an understanding of something, as well, like. Because you can happily be told something, doesn’t mean you learn it. I think, like, implementation and understanding is key for learning.</td>
<td>Learning as implementing it to something that is real to them and gaining an understanding</td>
<td>Conception of learning 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er, I’ve still got a naivety about… if I’ve got an interest in the subject I’ll read up about it, but if it has no relevance to my head, I won’t do anything about it. (Steve)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Yeah – depends on the model that we use, and…(Heather)</td>
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<tr>
<td>There should be, like… if I don’t understand it, I should read about it. But in my mind if I don’t understand it, I won’t read about it. (Steve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[laughs] (Heather)</td>
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</table>
Which is odd (Steve)

It’s the other way around! (Heather)

Yeah – I should… but…(Steve)

Yeah. But then going back to the coaching science, you ended up getting a book…. (Researcher)

Because there’s coaching, and then there’s coaching. Like, learning a sport, I don’t… for the first lecture, it had no relevance to coaching, he discussed the history of learning or something…which I had no interest in. But this is coaching, so I was like…it has relevance to sport, like, coaching, like how I could maybe improve. I do understand it a bit, but it just confuses me – all these different views and opinions. From one end of the scale to the other. (Steve)

Yeah. (Heather)

So I’m trying to get a broader view by myself. (Steve)

I don’t read up on the subject. (Steve)

No. (Barry)

No. (Nathan)

I still don’t do that. Don’t like, I just don’t find it interesting to read – my preference is I don’t like reading. About a topic I don’t. I’m not interested in. Or a massive book, I guess you’ve got to read it. Rather not. But when it comes to real tasks that we do every week, I find that more interesting. If it gets us to read two journals, two books, it gets me in that routine of reading. But like, if they say you’ve got to go from the lead lecture to the library, read up on it…(Steve)

Yeah, that’s… I’m going nowhere for that. (Barry)

I don’t think no one does that. I don’t see no one do that. (Steve)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I just enjoy the coaching assignment, because I had a genuine interest in it. Because it’s about coaching and what effect… coaching, is it hard, or is easy to control, and stuff. So I actually compared it to what I’ve been coached, or how I coach now…what affects me when I coach. But obviously my opinion doesn’t count. So I had to go and get literature that did count. (Steve)</th>
<th>Not reading up on the subject he is not interested in</th>
<th>Interest and learning</th>
<th>1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>FG 22</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just enjoy the coaching assignment because it interested him - coaching science</td>
<td>Enjoying the assignment because it interested him - coaching science</td>
<td>Interest and learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 26</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was just so stressful, because I’m trying to find points which I don’t have a clue about, and I’m writing – I’m writing</td>
<td>Finding it annoying to write</td>
<td>Interest and learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
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</table>
things down, and I'm like – that could be absolute, like… make no sense at all. But I'm just like – just putting it in there, because I'm just like – that's sort of like what I've read in the last hour. Not what I've learned over the last 6 weeks. And I just stressed me out, and I was panicking, what this is going to be like. So like – no, it's not going to be a good grade. But that's annoying me, because it's just like, I don't have any interest in this. And that was one of the modules which I didn't choose, but I had to because of the modules I'd chosen. Er, which again was annoying, but that's just how it works. (Daniel)

But now you can’t because we’ve realised that is what it is and that’s what it has to be and that’s what you’re going to do. It’s not like “Oh, I give up. I can’t be bothered.” (Fran)

But last year didn’t count, did it? You were only here to get 40% and just pass. (Steve)

The motivation changed because there were just lecturers saying your first year doesn’t count and the second year counts towards your degree – it’s just a massive change. I find anyway and I find it in my house as well; everyone’s trying a lot harder this year. Everyone’s in there and we’re all studying but last year we were just out drinking. (Steve)

It prompts you to explain everything you’re talking about and to go into more depth with the answer. If he gives you a closed question it’s just a yea or nay. But when it’s, as you said, an open-ended question, it’s prompting you to do it, which actually makes you better, because then when you come to write your essays you have to back up every single thing you say and you have to find who else has said it and how one thing someone has said and another thing someone has said can. (Fran)

If they…if they told me to read them and do the work, and you only get a tick in a box for it, I wouldn’t do it. But, because I get to discuss it, I know what I’m doing and where I am. I’m more about to do it because it’s going to be more relevant to what I learn. (Steve)

So – I think... just like, almost the way they’ve structured this year, with our seminars, they’ve forced us to do a bit more reading. Which I think is good. Like, you, you sort of...you have to. Because you’ve got to bring a certain amount of work with you, so you need to contribute to it. Definitely done a lot more reading because of that. (Tom)

I think it’s different for coaching science because we have this seminar that we have to engage in. I think every seminar we have this workbook that we have to discuss and... to do, to do and to discuss on. So I think it’s different. Because coaching science is half seminar, that we have to, that, to do that seminars actually, we have that work for that seminar. So I think it’s different. But, er, for example, learning in sport, if we don’t have that coursework that we have to submit, then I’ll just... do nothing. When we tend to... tend to have not much work to do, we tend to do nothing. And when we, when we have this work that we have in mind – ‘oh, I have to submit this, so I have to work for it.’ (Heather)

We always had a weekly task for Coaching as well, I think that did actually motivate me, because I could task. You had to go away and do it, but with Learning in Sport you didn’t really have anything to do to prepare for. So I was more motivated to go out and read something because I knew I had to. (Martin)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Engagement Type</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>FG</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>But I think for me it varied some weeks; so some weeks I’d just literally do it by finding the answers in the article. I wouldn’t bother reading the article; I’d just literally scan it until I found the answer and write that down. But other weeks I’d actually go through it properly and write some good answers. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Showing varied engagement with module tasks (some weeks reading the whole article, other weeks just looking for answers; scanning through conclusion)</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>And there was group discussion, so if you didn’t do anything and left the work to someone else to talk about, you just felt “Why am I actually here?” So you had social responsibility, sort of thing. (Martin)</td>
<td>Having a social responsibility to contribute</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>But in that as well, I’d hate sitting there and knowing someone else knows so much more about something that I don’t. So then you just feel as if you’re miles below them. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Having a social responsibility to contribute</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>For example, the coursework for the coaching science, the 2500 words...I only used one journal article, and then one book. And then I read it. And then just...it’s like – copy, paste. But I don’t...I don’t understand that a lot. But when it comes to 2nd year, er, I’m trying to I dunno...I’m getting...trying to understand about how the learning process is. Because, you know, if you’re worried about something, it doesn’t mean you gain that knowledge – so you have to write it down, and then understand again, you know, read it again, again and again. And then take out the key important points, and then compile with the...another one. So that’s what I do now, compared to the last year. (Heather)</td>
<td>Changing the way she carries out her studies.</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>You find yourself using it without actually knowing it. That’s the point where I think you’ll see improvement. But getting from the stage of learning the theory to that, it’s a long process. Very long process. And it’s so easy to sort of just sit back into your usual, I guess...because that’s your comfort zone. And obviously when you’re coaching, it’s...it’s not just...obviously you’re affecting other people, so it’s not just you. And if you’re trying out new stuff it might not work, and at the end of the day...you don’t want to coach a rubbish session – and if what you normally do works to a pretty good effect, then it’s just so much easier to stick with it. (Heather)</td>
<td>Putting theory into practice until it becomes subconscious</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Like, it was quite interesting, before going to university, thinking a sports coaching degree, I’ll come out knowing how to coach, or like...obviously I know how to coach because I was coaching before, but...well, enhancing our skills as coaches. But actually I think it’s quite different to that – it’s actually just giving you the theory of coaching. So you’ve just read into that subject of sport coaching, you haven’t actually...obviously that’ll help you develop as a coach slightly, but it depends how much you want to use the theory, into your own coaching. Which I dunno, I’m finding it difficult to put that theory into my coaching. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Being given the theory of coaching which will ‘help you develop as a coach slightly, but it depends how much you want to use the theory in your own coaching’</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Steve: Progressively throughout the year I’ve learnt many things that have improved my overall coaching from different types of coaching methods, when best to introduce them within a session, analysing my performance as a coach, reviewing it and learning. All these have benefited my own coaching has I practice theory into practical in my</td>
<td>Theory into practice resulting in becoming more confident</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>RL</td>
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250
coaching employments. Which over time have guided me into being more confident and willing to try other styles in order to get a certain massage across and allowing the participants to learn.

I remember that I have said in the previous focus group with you (Luciana) that Coaching Science is not really helpful for us, as future coaches, as most of the lectures we could not apply it to our coaching practice. However, for the past two weeks, the lectures which are on reflection somehow interest me. I started to understand why those lectures could be so beneficial to us before we actually become one of the coaches. In addition with the seminars that we attend weekly, my understanding on reflection has improved. To date, I actually use reflection everyday and come up with better action plans which I think really effective especially when I am doing any practical activities e.g. play Netball. (I cannot apply reflection to my coaching practice since I do not do any coaching at the moment). As a result, I found that I have improved my performance better every time I reflect my doings. (Heather)

Realising that the lectures she thought were not very helpful to coaches could be beneficial
Reflective practice
1 & 2
RL
18th Nov 2012

I think the...the reflective practice mod... er, part of the module is quite interesting. Because - I’m not sure from people coaching here – but like, I don’t think I’ve ever reflected over my… after a coaching. Like, I might have thought about it without… I might have subconsciously reflected on it. So I thought, oh, like, I could have spoken to that child differently today… but then, I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t actually finish a session and then go, OK, I’m going to sit down and I’m going to reflect over my… because that does actually, like... the theory backs it up, to say that that improves you as a coach. Because you can actually like reflect on your negatives, your strengths, and then move on from there. But… so I thought that, that was on a practical side, was quite helpful. (Daniel)

Finding reflective practice has helped them with their coaching.
Reflective practice
1 & 2
FG 21
29

Because you have these small groups for the seminar, so I think, yeah, a lot of people, actually. Different students, of course. Different students, different ideas. So – every day is different. I mean, every seminar is different...It is helpful, because you know, when we, you know, spread our ideas, sometimes we have the same ideas - I think, yeah, that’s a good thing, because we’re in the same... we’re in the same path. You know. And then when we receive these different ideas, I think it’s good that, you know, maybe we tend to think outside of the box. You know, like, why would he do this differently. So, yeah, I think. (Heather)

Thinking outside of the box
Seminars
1 & 2
FG 23
20

From a coaching point of view I definitely feel like I have improved just from having the practicals here. I think basically doing this course is a quick way to gain quality experience as a coach that progresses your coaching dramatically. I definitely feel I have become a more confident coach which is exactly what you want from the course. (Nathan)

Becoming a better coach as a result of practical sessions
Experiential learning
1 & 2
RL
7th Oct 2012

Learning and sport’s quite a good module, I think. Because that is actually, like – in coaching, you’ve got to know how your athletes learn. And I think that’s key. (Martin)

Enjoying learning in sport – especially seminars (e.g. cup stacking activity)
Experiential learning
1 & 2
FG 26
33
### Appendix 7. Thematic table (objectives 1 and 2) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’ve been to lectures and it’s all about gaining that understanding… The actual understanding of it, we gained from going to those lectures, so that was definitely a bonus for me. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Learning is about understanding</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 44</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think how you learn is one topic. What you learn is another topic. Then what you do about what you’ve learned is something else. So I don’t think you can simplify learning as just one specific thing. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Defining learning as a complex process</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 44</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it’s down to lecturers, make learning engagement for everyone, because everyone learns in different ways… I think in first year I just wanted the answers and – that’s it! I think it has to be quite complex for everyone, it has to be adaptable as well. (Steve)</td>
<td>Learning as exploring different avenues</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>For me, for a lot of the stuff we’ve learned about there’s no ‘right’ answer and there are still a lot of avenues to explore, by having those conversations, it’s the ability for us to come out with stuff that maybe lectures don’t even considering and stuff, like feedback. That’s definitely a part of it. (Tom)</td>
<td>Learning as understanding, not memorising…like being able to solve different equations in maths</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>FG 36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For me it’s always been being in a different situation and trying to still work it out. You know, when you did maths? Maths is always quite a good example, because you can write this equation out or this one – can you still do it? And if you can do both, kind of do all forms of it, then I knew I understood it. But if there was, say, if you reversed the equation the other way round, then I couldn’t link it up and fill in the gaps, and I’d kind of half learned it…You should be able to explain it in different ways, so it shows you understand all areas rather than just in one situation. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Learning as a combination of reading, taking notes and applying</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>FG 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m actually trying to see how it’s working in practice. (Heather)</td>
<td>Learning as a combination of reading, taking notes and applying</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>FG 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I probably agree with Nathan quite a lot but it’s got to be a combination of all of them. I don’t think you can just go out and practice (Martin)</td>
<td>Learning as a combination of reading, taking notes and applying</td>
<td>Conception of learning</td>
<td>FG 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know we get 20% for attendance – well, not even attendance, it’s contribution – but you can tell that people are making an effort to contribute because if now we wouldn’t learn as much. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Attending seminars for their learning</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s actually quite hard because you’ve got to come prepared for the lesson. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Attending seminars for their learning</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, you’ve got to actually do the work to understand it each week. And if not, you just literally – in our group the lecturer makes you sit on a table with the people who haven’t done the work and you’re a bit of an outcast. So I make sure I always know what I’m talking about. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Finding the need to understand before he starts writing his assignments apart from year 1 when it did not count</td>
<td>Strategic learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 37</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I refuse to just type. I have to do all the reading and understand something before I start typing. And I’ll have piles of paper with little things scribbled down that I’ve picked up and I have to understand something completely before I start typing. I think I’ve always been that way; maybe just in first year because it didn’t really count I chose to ignore that at times. (Tom)</td>
<td>I think having something to motivate you to still go to those lectures, and do well in your exams and things, having that extra little bit of grading or extra points towards your final degree, that helps a little bit. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Becoming more committed as the course progressed</td>
<td>Interest and learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me personally, if our first year had counted towards our final grade and we could have had first year and second year working on those kinds of modules and third year focusing on the dissertation, I’d have preferred that. (Barry)</td>
<td>I think it was started at the end of the second year. It would have been nice to kick in a little bit earlier but it didn’t happen. I actually read things now. So it would have been better if I’d actually done it in first year. (Mary)</td>
<td>Being more independent and showing signs of deeper approaches to learning</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I think obviously throughout the three years becoming more committed to the course and more committed to being there to learn and participating in classes and certainly from the first year, in the first year although I’d go to the majority of them, it was I’d go because I feel like I should, rather than I felt like I wanted to. (Barry)</td>
<td>I kind of understand independent learning but I think you’ve got to make a real conscious effort to engage in it and maybe I did occasionally, but most of the time we didn’t quite make that effort. (Tom)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think also now we’re in Year 3 we’re only doing two modules, whereas in first year we did everything! We did stuff like sport and society, which is interesting but I wouldn’t want to do a module in it. Whereas now we can pick our own modules. So yes, it’s more suited to us. (Nathan)</td>
<td>I think it was started at the end of the second year. It would have been nice to kick in a little bit earlier but it didn’t happen. I actually read things now. So it would have been better if I’d actually done it in first year. (Mary)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel it’s a good year; I feel it’s helped a lot this year because I’ve learned to think and do everything on my own, because I’ve had to and now I’ve got their help I feel I’ve got loads of help, rather than just being used to being spoonfed in college. So now I’ve got to third year I do feel it’s really good, but at the time, in first and second year, I hated it. I just thought ‘Well, they don’t even care, it doesn’t matter.’ (Tracey)</td>
<td>I feel it’s a good year; I feel it’s helped a lot this year because I’ve learned to think and do everything on my own, because I’ve had to and now I’ve got their help I feel I’ve got loads of help, rather than just being used to being spoonfed in college. So now I’ve got to third year I do feel it’s really good, but at the time, in first and second year, I hated it. I just thought ‘Well, they don’t even care, it doesn’t matter.’ (Tracey)</td>
<td>Recognising the perceived initial lack of support as beneficial</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now, at this moment while I was writing this blog to you, I realised that all achievements are just a short-term ones</td>
<td></td>
<td>Realisation that marks are</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>RL</td>
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</table>
and I should not be proud of them when the fact that I am still halfway to get through my 2nd year. Instead, I should appreciate of all the effort and hard work that I have put into them and to continue to working really hard in order to complete my 2nd year with excellence. It is now my fresh target to get a first-class degree in this year. (Heather)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>short term achievements through writing on the blog</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Mar 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like a much better coach as a result of learning the theory behind it.</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 42 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a better understanding of how he coaches as a result of being in the course.</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 36 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You definitely need a balance between the theory and the practical. I don't think you could have just one; because you need the practical to gain experience, obviously, to feel comfortable about it. But in terms of the theory – before I came here I thought I was a pretty good coach, and was quite confident. But my coaching now compared with how it was then is completely different and I would say I'm ten times better now, just because the theory makes you think differently and just taking into account different things that you’d just pass over without doing the theory, I think. (Nathan)

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</table>

I do have more of an understanding as much as I thought I knew everything before, I do think I could lead a session a lot better and not necessarily be able to do it but have more confidence in doing it, which would reflect in doing it. I understand everything a lot more, and just being better prepared. In the nature of the style of coaching I normally do, I wouldn’t necessarily be phased by a problem. Or I know going into leading sessions now, especially from advanced coaching, the science, I’d be a lot better equipped to deal with anything. I feel I could coach a multiple range of sports. I’m not just sitting on experience now, I’m able to understand how I think as a coach or how I was previously coaching and it further enables me to reflect on that. (Gavin)

<table>
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</table>

Now, compared to first year, my kids are moving up stages more quickly, because I understand their way of learning from using these theories. (Mary)

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I think my thinking has broadened and maybe I understand the reasons for doing certain things. (Tom)

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<th>Mar 2013</th>
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<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 36 10</td>
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</table>

I think you could definitely walk into a room and negotiate with someone that I want to do this for these reasons and you could maybe put your theory and your kind of techniques into practice a lot more easily, than if you're just sitting there saying “Yeah, I want to do this but I don’t really know why, I just think it works.” (Gavin)

<table>
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Before you might not have realised that was a good or a bad thing, whereas the theory’s actually allowing you now to reflect on your coaching and make you understand the positives and negatives. So it is good to have, definitely. (Daniel)

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I remember I used to be just like “You do that. You do that.” I used to be a dominant sort of person...and not justify why I was doing it, or ask any questions, so it’s a lot different now. (Steve)

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</table>

I’d say looking back it’s all done pretty well, because I don’t think you can start off in these little groups and do that the whole way through. I think you need to start off with a base knowledge, get everyone in, learn a little bit about it and as it’s gone over the 3 years, the group sizes have got smaller and smaller and the workload has got harder, so I think the way they’ve done it is probably fairly good. This third year has been so much more interactive than the previous 2 years. In my psychology lecture, we’re actually being sports psychologists, having to go through case studies and stuff. And it makes it so much more relevant, but we couldn’t do that if we hadn’t known the theory before. (Martin)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>short term achievements through writing on the blog</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Mar 2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding the background knowledge they experienced in year 1 and 2 was important for them to progress to more relevant practices (e.g. case studies</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 FG 35 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think the academic side of writing a good essay, if I get a good grade back I don’t think ‘Oh, that’s going to help me as a coach.’ But then you could flip that and think ‘Oh, I have a really good understanding of the knowledge or the theory we’ve had to do the work on there.’ But then at the time all you’re thinking about is writing the essay. You’re not thinking about how you could put it into practice. But then if you really reflect and look back on it, you can understand. ‘I do have a good understanding of that knowledge or of that theory. I can use it in my coaching now.’ (Daniel)</td>
<td>Coaching theory – a balanced approach is beneficial</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice 1 &amp; 2 FG 43 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s tough, I think a lot of the stuff – I think the main trouble with most of the theories is that they’re a lot harder to apply than you initially think, but I think it’s just more a persistence thing; you’ve almost got to … if it doesn’t work the first time, don’t give up. (Tom)</td>
<td>Discussing the challenges faced when trying to apply theories</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice 1 &amp; 2 FG 37 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be a balance, I guess. Kind of like theory as well as practicals. Because theory is like the introduction with the theories and everything, and you get to apply it; which is the practical. And then another theory which is followed by reflection so I guess it should be the balance for these two. So you know it kind of works for us. Because if we just had practicals it would be like just the player because we get to just play. Whereas if there’s only theory, it’s just kind of like just learning but we don’t get to apply it in practice. So I think it should be balanced. That’s my opinion. (Heather)</td>
<td>A balanced approach between theory and practice is beneficial</td>
<td>Coaching theory and practice 1 &amp; 2 FG 42 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think when I started coaching science I was a little bit of a fresh slate; I didn’t really have much coaching experience behind me. Now in year 3 I’ve got a lot more and I’m starting to think “Yes, but maybe I didn’t find it like that” and I’m much more likely to question the lecturer, because obviously their experience is going to be different from mine. So I’ve started questioning a lot more, I can actually see myself in what they’re trying to tell me. (Martin)</td>
<td>Questioning the lecturers a lot more due to the practical experience he acquired since he joined University</td>
<td>Experiential learning 1 &amp; 2 FG 35 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s all different all the time and I find it really interesting. That’s why I want to turn up every week. I don’t know if that’s with every module. (Steve)</td>
<td>Discussing in groups and not knowing how the seminar will be like makes it interesting and make students want to turn up</td>
<td>Group discussion 1 &amp; 2 FG 38 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also then it helps you understand it more, because it’s not just what you thought; it’s also what someone else thought about your thoughts. (Fran)</td>
<td>The value of discussions for learning</td>
<td>Group discussions 1 &amp; 2 FG 41 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve noticed this year in coaching science lectures, they will – I don’t know how it’s structured, but the first topic area is communities of practice, which basically is like little groups, and they’ve always reinforced that throughout the lectures now, so they’ve always got us in little groups and taught us in those smaller situations. So they’re trying to get how learning is based in seminars, into the lectures. Which is quite interesting. Because you don’t notice it until someone tells you what they’re trying to do. It’s good. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Creating an environment that reflects the topics being covered is very beneficial</td>
<td>Group discussions 1 &amp; 2 FG 39 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw data</td>
<td>Initial coding</td>
<td>Focused coding</td>
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<tr>
<td>He never gives you a straight answer. You ask him questions, he just argues the answer. (Steve)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>He's like, &quot;um, yeah, ah, well, there's this and there's that. And...&quot; (Gavin)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>He gave an answer, he goes, “Er, maybe”, then he argues it, and it's like, just give me a yes or no... (Steve)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>That could be... it's like, “ah, man, just say yes, please!” (Gavin)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty and frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You just need certainty. He doesn't sound stable at all. I don't know... scared! (Gavin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, you're more confused leaving than you were going in. (Steve)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're more confused, like, after you leave the lecture, because you don't know what it's about – because he never gives you a yes or no answer. (Steve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>For me to just understand something straight to the point, I'll be like 'yes, perfect!' and then someone from the other side of the classroom is like 'I didn't understand this' and I actually put my hands in my ears, repeating over it 'this is what it is, this is what it is, keep it on your head'...you understand whereas it came to revision and revising with other people, then the confusion started...like I thought I knew something then someone questioned me about something and I was like 'oh, I don't know!' (laughs). It's like 'I did before this person came along' and I will go to the teacher and explain actually not knowing what actually, like I'll say to them I'm stuck but I don't what part I'm stuck on now cos I'm so confused. I think confusion is the worst thing for me...I get too stressed over it and I'll read for hours and hours...if you are confused you read something and actually didn't go in at all (Mary)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty and frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their personal knowledge. Like, they've been a student, or a postgrad, or a PG.... whatever they are. They've got to know the course, so they've got their own knowledge on all the information to give people. Maybe that's one of the bonuses of going to a lecture – you get one or two statements that they... they say. (Steve)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing lecturers as principal source of authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er, I don’t like the subject of biomechanics anyway, but, like, coach science, like, it’s not that I’m really interested in what they’re saying - I quite like what they’re saying - but the way they deliver it, and the way they tell, and like, teach</td>
<td></td>
<td>Showing satisfaction with the information provided by</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
it to me, I really understand it. Because I don’t have to, like, really think about it. I just, like... because they go a lot slower, I understand it whilst I’m in the lecture, and then I don’t have to do anything else when I come out of it, then. (Tracey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturers when they resulted in understanding</th>
<th>Need reassurance - looking for the right answer</th>
<th>Intellectual development</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>VD</th>
<th>16th Oct 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I struggle with things (winks and looking to her right) like this [understanding coursework questions], I usually like go to someone [the lecturer] and like just tell them what I think (emphasis on her voice and slower pace) like what I think (brings shoulders forward) the answer is so that they can just confirm that is kind of right. (Mary)</td>
<td>Being able to make things simple and finding them relevant is important</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>28th Nov 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I miss the feeling of understanding and finding something easy. I like things to be easy.....I don’t think I am one of the people that make things difficult to push myself. If something is really hard then I make it easier or simple so that I can do it...and if I cant then to be honest I depending on how important I think it is I sometimes give up. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Being uncomfortable with uncertainty</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>9th Dec 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m losing the motivation for research process. Even though I said (looks up) at the start because step by step they are telling us what to do but it feels like it’s going on and on and on. I don’t understand what I’m actually doing now. I know my title (looks up) but I don’t know what to write about now. And I feel the more I think about something the more confused I get about it. I like to get things done, out of the way (leans on both hands, elbows on the desk)...everyone’s confused (Mary)</td>
<td>Looking for the right answers from the lecturer</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>9th Dec 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You just want them to just tell you the answers really. I know the whole point is for us to give them the answers (stares at the camera) but I work better with them giving the answers so I know the answers when it comes to the test. (Mary)</td>
<td>Having different epistemological foundations for different modules</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 12</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In psychology it's all about they think and how they learn and in something else its all about how they move...and it's like...its only coaching science really that says...you’ve got all these things and you use what you have to use and what you want to use whereas all the others are just like ‘not his is right and this is it and it’s all about this...which I just think ‘ahh...’ (Tracey)
## Appendix 9. Thematic table (objective 3) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I guess it’s a bit like coaching science in first year like, we all didn’t like the fact that there was no answers. Whereas now, like, I remember last time we were talking here, like – it’s quite nice. Like, you get to kind of put your own spin on it. but when, because coaching science is subjective, whereas learning and sport, for me, is more scientific, like, because you expect answers…Like – the muscular skeletal system. And stuff like that. And like, when it comes to stuff like that, like – I want rigid answers. Because that’s what, like, science is for me. (Tom)</td>
<td>Accepting there are no straight answers in modules such as coaching science but expecting to have ‘rigid’ answers for learning in sport as it is more scientific</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just wanted to be lazy, to be honest … and just get yes or no answers, just yes OK, I’m on the right track, I can do it. Because someone’s debating it, it opens your mind to both ends of the sort of debate.  (Steve)</td>
<td>Being lazy and wanting yes/no answers in year 1</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It gets you to read them, doesn’t it? Because you have to do them. Because you know you’re going to have to discuss them. (Steve)</td>
<td>Having a purpose for doing the tasks</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yep. Yep. (Barry)</td>
<td>Having different approaches used by lecturers can be hard</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each lecturer has their own sort of beliefs and views about teaching people. So you get some who just give you closed answers you get some who really have an interest in you learning and being open-answerer about everything, which makes it really hard for us.  (Steve)</td>
<td>Feeling comfortable with the lecturer</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This year I want to learn. I want to take this information in, and if I don’t maybe understand it, I better read up about it. From last year, if I didn’t understand it, I’d just go back to my room, play FIFA. That’s a big change like. Like, last year, if I said, ‘Oh, let’s play FIFA,’ all the people in my flat would say yes, because nothing counted. So we had no relevance to…. our motivation was, like, lacking. This year, if I go back to my house, there’s someone always doing work. So that motivation’s instant: ‘Oh, he’s doing work – what work is it? I need to do it!’ From last year, it’s just [\text{Wanting to learn in year 2} ]</td>
<td>Being strategic and assessment resulted in relativist approach</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 19</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>This year I want to learn. I want to take this information in, and if I don’t maybe understand it, I better read up about it. From last year, if I didn’t understand it, I’d just go back to my room, play FIFA. That’s a big change like. Like, last year, if I said, ‘Oh, let’s play FIFA,’ all the people in my flat would say yes, because nothing counted. So we had no relevance to…. our motivation was, like, lacking. This year, if I go back to my house, there’s someone always doing work. So that motivation’s instant: ‘Oh, he’s doing work – what work is it? I need to do it!’ From last year, it’s just [\text{Wanting to learn in year 2} ]</td>
<td>Being strategic and assessment resulted in relativist approach</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 19</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Utterly different. (Steve)</td>
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<td>I hadn't really thought there was a point where I thought to myself, 'OK, now I accept this' – I think that it's just kind of... now that you've mentioned it again, I kind of thought, well actually, we have just got on with it. Which... get used to it. (Tracey)</td>
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<td>Slowly tapping ourselves towards (Gavin)</td>
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<td>We're not going to be able to change, it's...the course isn't going to change for us, so we've got to work around that to learn from that, the way it's being taught. (Daniel)</td>
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<td>I dunno... dunno if I want... like, this year, I don't know if I'd want definitive answers. As well. (Tom)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Better accepting their role in the co-construction of knowledge</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>FG 21</td>
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<th>Feeling under pressure (e.g. when doing dissertation) could be a cause for wanting 'straight answers'</th>
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<tr>
<td>FG 41</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<th>Claiming he seems to be getting more confused as the content could be interpreted in so many different ways</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
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<tr>
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<td>FG 18</td>
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<th>Starting reading about the coaching process because he was confused</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>FG 19</td>
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<th>Need reassurance from others - looking for right answers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
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<td>RL</td>
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<td>20th Jan 2012</td>
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<th>Understanding why lecturers given open ended answers – prompts them to</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>FG 30</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>An argumentative side to everything. (Steve)</td>
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<td>It’s never-ending, you never get to an actual answer, because when we say this is what we came up with, this is our answer, you’ll find another journal which says “This, this, this and this…” and this is what we’ve come up with. (Fran)</td>
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<td>They’ll make a point and they’ll have a reference there but then you have to go off and read more about it, and you have to come to the conclusion yourself, which means reading and not just ...so they prompted the spark in your mind and they prompted the question but you actually had to find it. (Fran)</td>
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<td>I think most of them, because in Coaching Science for example, we did coursework on complexity and rational and we don't know what the answer is and then we come to ... this is why, this is why... So we are the ones who actually make the conclusion. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Er, I don’t... I don’t mind, like, not being given answers. But like you said before, it depends on the lecture for me. I mean, it’s – it just totally depends on the lecture. Like. And what I perceive the lecture to be. Like – I’ve come to realize this year...last year, it was a bit weird, like, I didn’t quite understand, but coaching – there’s not answers in coaching, there’s so many different ways of doing things. And it’s just about finding what’s the best way for you, but also having a large knowledge – so that you can find the best way for you, but also the best way for the situation that you’re in. (Tom)</td>
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<td>Dunno – we were probably still quite new to it, so it would have been quite weird. (Gavin)</td>
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<td>Yeah. Probably would have been quite annoyed, like. Just because like, school’s very, like – the whole, like, being engrained in school, like. The school sort of... er, you do this, this, this – get the answer. You know? It’s – it’s answer-based. (Tom)</td>
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### Appendix 10. Thematic table (objective 3) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>I told my supervisor I find it hard agreeing or disagreeing with someone...and he said “you’ve just got fight it and think through it.” In academic and, I suppose, in coaching terms you’ve got to critique everything and fight it. (Steve)</td>
<td>Accepting their role in the co-creation of knowledge</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>If they gave you just one answer which fits all, it wouldn’t work; coaching isn’t like that. At the start I was like, “just tell us the fricking answer!”…and he said you have to pick your own encounter, and now that makes perfect sense. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Accepting their role in the co-creation of knowledge</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 45</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>If you are moulded into a ‘robot’ coach, how is that going to help? How did the ‘big’ managers/coaches get to where they are? By being told what to do and how to do it? No, they were individualistic, having their own methods and approaches, being creative. (Steve)</td>
<td>Accepting their role in the co-creation of knowledge</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>11th Nov 2013</td>
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<td>So if you understand why it has the most value to you and why you think it’s better than anything, then I guess that’s all right; but if you just say “I’ll have this model or this theory” but you don’t really know why, then maybe you’ll miss out on something else. (Tom)</td>
<td>Accepting their role in the co-creation of knowledge</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>It doesn’t mean they are actually right (Steve)</td>
<td>Questioning the correctness of staff</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 33</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>For me, I probably don’t read enough and I don’t know enough about the subject, so I go into a lecture thinking that the lecturer is going to be right, because I don’t have enough knowledge to start to question him. (Martin)</td>
<td>Trusting that what the lecturers say is right – due to lack of knowledge</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 44</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>I ask if I want some reading and they usually go ‘Oh, OK.’ If you sit there doing nothing and don’t say anything to them, they’ll let you do it. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Asking for recommended reading from the lecturer and seeing the need to be proactive</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 40</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>I would do the same as the lecturer, if someone wasn’t bothered with me, I’d be ‘Right. Go and do it yourself.’ (Mary)</td>
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<td>Yes, there are loads of – not right or wrong, but I’m going to mark reflective practice saying we agree with it, we don’t agree with it, this is a critique, this is the best thing. I told my dissertation supervisor I find it hard agreeing with someone or disagreeing with someone. I find I don’t know what to think about it and he said ‘you’ve got to be impartial and just fight it.’ And I thought OK, but do I agree with it, or do I now agree with it? What do I do with it? Nobody’s told me. He said ‘Just have your own opinions but don’t put it in the paper’ and that confused me a bit more then. It’s hard to find if you’re right or wrong; it’s just to find your own perception of everything, but obviously in academic terms you’ve got to critique everything and fight it and … (Steve)</td>
<td>Getting confused when writing his dissertation – having to come up with his own perception (Steve)</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>You're confused but then you have a broader knowledge for the work and debating on it. (Fran)</td>
<td>Relating back to the module structure when different lecturers argued with each other and presented different views on the coaching process – beneficial for understanding</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 39</td>
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<td>Yes, I think I remember they did a similar thing with us last year with the coaching, and I think the way they try to get it across, I felt the way they did it actually did help me understand the two different side of the epistemology of coaching etc. So although they are having that sort of argument and I think they are bringing it down to more real-life situations to help you understand it a bit better, whereas if they just told you the two different things it might be a bit more difficult to understand. So I think it's quite good, how they do that. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Falling into the zone of frustration can become a barrier to instantaneous understanding</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 36</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>You're developing yourself by understanding it better but probably what I meant is if you fall into the zone of frustration or confusion, that's when it becomes a barrier to understanding that, because then when you get frustrated things just start to stop in the mind, I think. You shut down and then you get that “Oh, I give up! I'll think about it tomorrow. I might have a better mind-set.” Or you just give up! It's like – I've got a physiology essay to do; I've looked at it. I've put it down – that's my understanding now – “Ah, I'll look at that another day when I might have a better mind-set of it.” Because I was confused as to what it as about; but then I looked at it on another day and it was a bit better. (Mary)</td>
<td>Recognising they were lazy in the first year and did not do extra reading even when confused</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 36</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>In first year I don't think I did the extra reading, even though I was confused, I think in first year I was just lazy. (Mary)</td>
<td>There's no right or wrong answer in coaching – not being judged by the lecturers</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 35</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>The thing is though, in first year you could have not gone to one lecture and passed. I kind of wish I knew that (Gavin)</td>
<td>Actually when we have finally decided this is the best way, you have to remember you have to back it up, because we are the ones who decided and then we must give rationale. (Heather)</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 37</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Because in coaching there's no right or wrong answers, so I think that's good about it, because we know that what we're going to say, they're not going to judge it. So that's a good thing. (Heather)</td>
<td>Everyone has the right to their opinion and some answers are better than others and emphasising the need for a rationale and to consider personal perspectives – making a decision about what works for you and knowing why it works – commitment</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 33</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Sometimes I do think about whether what they say is right or wrong, because obviously they have a degree, but it doesn't actually mean they're right...So why are we thinking 'that guy there in the front is right'? That's what [lecturer's name deleted] said – “Why do you think I say stuff and who says I'm right? Because I stand in front of the class doesn't mean I'm right.” But we all think 'Oh yes, he says this, we write it down, he's right.' Why don't we question</td>
<td>Not assuming lecturers are right</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 33</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Because there’s a lot of stuff you learn, it’s quite subjective and you make of it so, I think there’s always going to be an element of doubt. Just whatever one you believe in and what has the most value to you it is. And then I guess trying to understand what has the most value to you. So if you understand why it has the most value to you and why you think it’s better than anything, then I guess that’s all right; but if you just say ‘I’ll have this model or this theory’ but you don’t really know why, then maybe you’ll miss out on something else.</td>
<td>Accepting doubts as part of learning</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>I think in Year 1 you don’t understand what learning at university is about; you think it’s like school where there is a set of answers, there’s right and wrong and you learn over the first year and maybe a bit in second year that it’s not about right and wrong; it’s not about black and white, and so things which maybe used to annoy me about lecturers actually you start to like, because you understand better what university learning’s about.</td>
<td>Understanding what learning is about and what used to annoy students (no right and wrong answer) is understandable now</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>You can start to think that people are wrong and form your own opinion better I think. I think I have a better opinion now than I did then because I just listened and if I did have an opinion it was for the wrong reasons. I wanted to do what was fun or something.</td>
<td>Having an opinion and not believing everything people say as they did in year 1</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 42</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Steve: It’s nice that we’ve stayed in our seminar groups because it gives the lecturer the time to get to know us and how we learn. So if we haven’t understood something we’ll ask, because we’ll feel that we can ask. Not like someone just standing up there and we feel we can’t ask, so we just leave it.</td>
<td>Knowing the lecturers makes them more comfortable in asking questions</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Yes at the time it was confusing… it was as if they’re just bombarding us with information, they’re telling us different things. What is it? But then the seminars after that were just fantastic, because they broke it all down, they explained that it’s up to you where you sit on that paradigm, and it just made everything so much clearer. It just gave you a massive overview of understanding of the coaching process. So at the time you were just in a lecture ‘Right, that’s one thing.’ Next week ‘You just said it was the other thing last week.’</td>
<td>Yes/no answers vs no straight answers – showing signs of intellectual development</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>I was slightly confused, ‘you’re all saying different things here. I’m slightly confused. Which one’s right?’ Then after in the seminar it was ‘Now it’s up to you to decide what you think, but it might change along the way.’ I think when I started coaching it was as if everything could be handled in that environment, but now I think that when you go into an environment you can’t expect anything. Everything happens unexpectedly. You can’t tell whether a kid’s going to cry or when a kid’s going to break his ankle or they’re going to ask stupid questions. You’re never going to know.</td>
<td>Yes/no answers vs no straight answers – showing signs of intellectual development</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>I think there’s one thing, they’ve made us come to realise that there isn’t ONE answer, out of all the stuff we do and especially up to now, how complex the coaching process is and being all the different adjectives they love to attach to it.</td>
<td>Realising that there are more than one answer</td>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FG 45</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>They forced that on us, in second year, saying there’s no more straight lines. Everything’s complex. But you say something and…</td>
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<td>‘How you see yourself, how you think you coach, what type of coach you are and then obviously how others see you but that shouldn’t really matter to be honest.’ (Martin)</td>
<td>Defining identity</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 13 FG15</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Half of it is how you see yourself and the other half is how people see you (Nathan). ‘Like how people perceive you. So if they are to sum you up what would they say…cos sometimes what you think your identity is and what other people see it as…is quite different.’ (Tom)</td>
<td>(FG 13 FG15)</td>
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<td>I’ve learned that being able to speak clearly, give my, give my instructions directly and for my athletes (hands on lips) to hear me I have to speak slower, more concisely and maintain eye contact with them (pauses, bites lips and looks down) and actually value what they are saying to me. (Martin)</td>
<td>Learning about effective communication (knowledge and understanding)</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>6th Dec 2011</td>
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<td>This is one of the most difficult things I find…to self-assess yourself…and you asked other people, like people you live with, has this person changed since you first met them? I think everyone would be like yeah… (Daniel)</td>
<td>Finding it hard to assess if they have changed</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 12</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>The perception of myself hasn’t changed much at all. Anything really I guess just maybe my head got a bit bigger stuff that I’m learning now I already know so it’s kind of like what’s the point of being here? (Gavin)</td>
<td>Feeling like he knows everything he is being taught</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>6th Dec 2011</td>
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<td>The only adaption I’ve done since coming to university, a big factor of being who I am still and will continue to be is, having a close friend from back home living close to me, together we keep ourselves “grounded” reminding ourselves who we are and not to change into a different person. (Steve)</td>
<td>Being cautious and grounded</td>
<td>identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>13th Nov 2011</td>
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<td>I dunno, there’s like… it seems to be quite a code of behaviour. So. (Tom)</td>
<td>Feeling like they have ‘code of behaviours’ within groups</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 3</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>I think even when I was at home, I liked being with my friends. So, like, I’d rather go to bed late, and be up with my friends, than go to bed earlier. Whatever. I just… I don’t know, I felt like… I’d miss out, or something. (Katie)</td>
<td>Being part of a group and trying to fit in</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
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<td>VD</td>
<td>16th Oct 2011</td>
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<td>Water polo socials, when they are saying... because it’s the start of uni it's like a thing that we have to do (sighs)... i know we get a choice but you kind of get bullied (forced laughter) so I don’t want that at the minute.' (Mary)</td>
<td>Belonging to a drinking culture – feeling left out if they do not drink</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 3</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>If you didn’t drink, then you'd feel, like... kind of left out. Possibly. (Martin)</td>
<td>Finding Uni life is fine... not bad but not that good!</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>6th Nov 2011</td>
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<td>Just, all the socials are centred around it, aren't they. (Tom)</td>
<td>Finding it hard to cope with peer pressure</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>7th Dec 2011</td>
</tr>
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<td>So far, the Uni life is treating me fine, I considered it as not that bad but not that good. I think it may be because I am still adapting to UK life which I find it quite challenging. From that challenge, I am developing to become independent and punctual. (Heather)</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>6th Nov 2011</td>
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<td>Belonging to a drinking culture – feeling left out if they do not drink</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
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<td>FG 3</td>
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<td>And it's like oh, I know first year is only foundation year and I shouldn't be stressing so much (looks up), that’s what people say to me, but I really wana try my best (leans on her head) and everyone says to me ‘come out come out, you don’t have any work to do you are a first year, it doesn’t even count towards the course (plays with her hair) but it must do, well, all the stuff that you do in the first year will go towards the second and third. I’m sure it does, but (sighs) I don't know (sighs). I just need to learn to say the word NO! (laughs) (Mary)</td>
<td>Finding Uni life is fine... not bad but not that good!</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss out on drinking</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er, you miss out on things, then, because the night that you actually have to do it, there’s always something better going on, and you could have not watched a DVD the night before and done it then, but... a couple of times, we’ve been going on a night out, and I’ve been like, “Right, OK, I'll be there in a minute, I’ll be there in a minute. And I've only stopped working at like half past eight, so then... a bit behind then...with drinking! (Tracey)</td>
<td>Missing out on drinking</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to make a good impression and do not feel an outsider</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think at the moment, you're kind of... we're still at the stage where we want to make a good impression, and not, like, be the one that's different. Like, for instance, if you wanted to get some sleep, and just went in your room, whilst everyone else was watching a film... (Martin)</td>
<td>Realisation that she does not need the security of being in one big group</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>20th Jan 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm much happier to go off and socialise in smaller groups now and we don't need the security of being one massive group. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Not having a Sports coaching identity (all courses blend together)</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a bit... it's kind of tough this year, because we're all doing the same stuff. Because first year you all do the same modules, pretty much. (Tom)</td>
<td>Not having a Sports coaching identity (all courses blend together)</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having different sides in identity</td>
<td>Multiple Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>6th Dec 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are not dramatic changes, they are just changes to adapt to your role. Some people cope with it well, some people don't...’ (Mary)</td>
<td>Changing to adapt to different roles</td>
<td>Multiple Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 14</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In certain situations you will definitely release some sides of you that people have never seen before. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Adapting to suit different situations</td>
<td>Multiple Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>6th Dec 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suppose that's who I am. I am the person who will adapt to the situation, wherever situation that I am in. I think it should be the same for everybody but maybe not (voice goes softer towards end). (Fran)</td>
<td>Adapting to suit different situations</td>
<td>Multiple Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>6th Dec 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I go to a different place, I might change, because it's a different place, and different experiences, a different environment... it just depends on that. I hope that if I go back home now or at Christmas time, people will think, “oh, you’ve changed!” But after about a week or so, I'll probably change back to who I was. Then I'll come back here and I'll change again, to who I was before Christmas. (Steve)</td>
<td>Changing through different experiences and different environments</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's just I enjoy it! Like, I enjoy coaching. Like, I always see it as like a different person, for me, like, it's another side of me. Like, I have 3 sides. Like, I have my sporty – like, being in my sport; being myself; and then coaching. And like, I love the coaching side. (Mary)</td>
<td>Having ‘three sides’ as part of her identity</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er – it's still there, but it's just... dunno. I'm not, can't say I'm a coach... I think everyone’s got different parts to their... facets to their life and personality and whatnot. And... dunno, there's a time and a place for it, I guess. Family barbecues, main thing is really, no-one wants to hear about that! (Tom)</td>
<td>Changing the strength of his coaching identity: ‘laying it dormant’ in different contexts when in a family orientated context</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just feel, at the moment, that I don't feel like I'm doing a coaching degree. Everything that I do, or everything – like, not everything I suppose, but – most of the stuff that we do, everyone... every other first year sports student does here. (Barry)</td>
<td>Not feeling like a sports coaching student as most of the things they do, every other first year student does</td>
<td>Student identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah – I kind of thought that as well actually. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Being rewarded by a lecturer</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>13th Nov 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall... I still have very mixed feeling about the coaching. I think that I would be able to fit in one coaching session a week if I wanted a job but I need to weigh up the pros of more experience in a higher profile coaching environment with the not enjoying the coaching because of the strict deadlines and standard that’s is forced upon the kids. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Having mixed feelings about coaching</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>28th Nov 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think one or two modules are just helping me to know where I am as a coach. As in coaching science – I think that's a good module. (Steve)</td>
<td>Being able to identify where he is as a coach by doing the module coaching science</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've never had someone tell me what to do down here, but where I come from, it's like, harder to stay in North Wales. And they just... if I do something wrong, they'll grab their child and just go. And I feel like, what? I'm only 18, I'm just learning how to do it. Down here, they respect you. I feel a bit, like they trust me, yeah. (Steve)</td>
<td>Feeling he is respected and trusted when coaching in Cardiff</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 1</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it easy to switch – like, I can drive to a coaching session, I can be in the car and be like, “Yeah, whatever.” I can get out of the car, I can start walking there, and I can think, “Yeah – OK. Now this is the coaching session.” And it's not really hard to get, like, into that. But I can just, like... (Tracey)</td>
<td>Finding it easy to switch into the coaching mood</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 1</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>But like, I feel like I've grown up a lot. Like, I didn't think I'd be able to cope without my mum and dad, because I'm really close to them, and then being away from home for longer than a week, I thought I'm going to struggle loads. But</td>
<td>Feeling like she has grown up as a person but not as a</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I've grown up loads, I've developed as a person... but as a coach, because I haven't been doing any coaching, whereas for the last two years I used to coach every week... (Tracey)</td>
<td>coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think coaching's kind of a bit of a performance. And a bit of an act. So you kind of... try and up your game. A little bit. (Martin)</td>
<td>Coaching as performance, as an act</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think it's quite hard to say right at this moment. Because I haven't completely had a lot of experience coaching, like, a group of people, by myself, and like, actually knowing my athletes. At the moment it's just been, like, practicals. (Martin)</td>
<td>Finding it hard to describe himself as a coach as he has not had much experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>My perception has become stronger since participating within the sports coaching degree course, knowing more information about the different ways and techniques of coaching. (Steve)</td>
<td>Coach identity affected by the degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching. On the plus side coaching is going well at the moment. I have now been given a regular group to assist and told next term I will be given a paid job and my own group :) I've also been given the chance to coach another group on another day of a different age group. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Having a good experience coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think as we're here doing a degree, it's quite high. Er... because we obviously want to go into... er, whereas it's not, like, a hobby. We wouldn't be here if it was just... if you just did it once a week with a friend. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Finding the coaching identity strong as they are doing the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because we're doing it all the time, you, like, think about all the things all the time. So, like you just said, even though we're not coaching or anything now, but when you're looking at people, &quot;oh – eye contact!&quot; [laughs] (Katie)</td>
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<td>I don't feel like... in fact, I feel like I was a better coach... because, since coming to university, I don't... I haven't really coached here. So I feel like I was a better coach before I came to university than... than what I would be now. (Barry)</td>
<td>Feeling like they are not as good coaches as they were before</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that at the moment I am putting most of my effort into my training, however, I think I need to concentrate on my work more because after training I'm always so tired I just want to sleep and not do it. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Being tired as a result of training and not doing the work</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to compete it's just I can't find the aggressive competitiveness and the need to win I used to have. This has knocked me a bit and with how things are at the flat it doesn't help me and me being on my own all the time isn't helping this. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Going through a bad time as an athlete</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I've done more than many people in my course...not to be disrespectful...but I managed to secure two jobs in Cardiff and I get paid in both. I didn't use the tutors to get the contacts, I just thought I'll create my own contacts.... (Steve)</td>
<td>Actively seeking opportunities early on in the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like today, before I just did this video I contacted a football leaders course so I'm going to do that hopefully in march (looks at camera) and I'm going to do a volleyball one probably sometime in November (looks at the camera and plays with her hair).</td>
<td>Showing signs of being proactive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 12. Thematic table (objective 4) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps different in different environments, I think. My friends see me as probably a sports student / [water polo?] player; people that I work with see me as a sports coaching student, like, teaching swimming.. er, parents see me as a coach, or teacher.. like, teachers back, who I stay in contact with, they see me as that, now. It depends, like… don’t know. Depends what environment you’re in. (Mary)</td>
<td>Assuming different roles in different environments – multiple identities</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each module I do now makes me represent myself as a different person. Like, if I do Sport Develop in a lecture I think I’m an officer; like I work for Sport Wales. And when I’m doing Coaching Science I feel like a proper coach. If I do PA I feel like a geek, looking at computer screens in a lab, just thinking “What?” Every module gives you an identity of different things. (Steve)</td>
<td>Feeling like a different person in each module</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I’m in the real world. When I’m not in the bubble of university. (Steve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>So within the university you feel that’s different depending on the module where you are …? (Researcher)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, the minute I leave university I feel I’m a coach; the minute I leave lecture rooms I know I’m a coach. But when I get bombarded with information I just sit there thinking “Do I work for Cardiff Sport or Sport Wales.” But once I leave I know I’m a coach; once I’m at home I’m a coach. Because I always get texts and stuff, doing work, doing work, coaching, coaching. So I know I’m a coach. (Steve)</td>
<td>Feeling like a coach once he is “in the real world…not in the bubble of university”</td>
<td>Multiple identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er, I feel like a sports coaching student…just because we’ve got rid of like.. don’t do biomechanics any more, don’t do psychology any more, I don’t do sports science any more – like, sort of – a lot of the modules I was doing that made me a generalised sports student, like.. (Tom)</td>
<td>Feeling like a sports coaching student (reason: modules they are doing and modules they are not doing anymore)</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like a coaching student this year; purely because we’ve had to coach practically while in the coaching lectures everything they say there’s a coaching example to relate back to coaching, so you’re just surrounded by the world of coaching and your coaching experience (Tracey)</td>
<td>Being surrounded by the world of coaching</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel like a coaching student, I feel like a sports student. My main interest is biomechanics, and that’s got nothing to do with coaching, really. Er…so, I’m going to do my dissertation in biomechanics. I’m still going to come out</td>
<td>Not seeing himself as a coaching student</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 25</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
with a degree in coaching, but I wouldn’t see myself as a coaching student (Nathan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Social identity</th>
<th>Code 1</th>
<th>Code 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There isn’t – yeah. I couldn’t tell you… I could tell you a few people who are on our course, and obviously I recognise everyone, but I couldn’t tell you what course they were doing. Because we’re all in the same lectures – it’s all mix and match. (Martin)</td>
<td>Not feeling they are the sports coaching group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed the small lectures…Because you felt, like, more as a group. Like, we were the coaching students, and…(Daniel)</td>
<td>Enjoying the small lectures - feeling more like the coaching students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You like, then take the time to speak to other people around you, and talk about what you think and what they thing, and…(Fran)</td>
<td>Finding it a nice experience when they had the opportunity to have lectures with only sports coaching students in year 1.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was nice to meet people who were just on sports coaching. (Fran)</td>
<td>Feeling like a sports student but not like a coaching student as his main interest is Biomechanics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel as a coaching student. I feel a sports student. Er, because I… my main interest is biomechanics, and that’s got nothing to do with coaching, really. Er…so, so like, I’m going to do my dissertation on biomechanics. So I’m still going to come out with a degree in, in coaching. I wouldn’t see myself as a coaching student. Well, I would, if you put it like that. But… more as a sports student. I have a broader range. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Arguing she would feel more like a sports coaching student if there was a module that differentiates them</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So if there is only one module that differentiates us, I think. Yeah, we’ll feel more like sports coaching students rather than sports students. (Heather)</td>
<td>Seeing themselves as a sports student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I still stick to my opinion last time, I think I …. As a sports student, not just Sports Coaching or Sports Development. There isn’t much difference between us. So for now, I think as a sports student, just a sports student. (Heather)</td>
<td>Lacking identity as an area of study – sports coaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I say I’m a sports coaching student to my parents, or to any other people I say what I’m doing, they say “Oh, you’re doing PE then. You’re going to be a PE teacher.” Society’s always put us in just one category, it’s just sport, not like sports students. (Steve)</td>
<td>Changing the way they speak as a result of being at Uni</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting drilled into that academic style of writing when you are writing and then you think I’ve got speak like this and it’s just going through your mind all the time and you just end up speaking like that as well (Daniel)</td>
<td>Identity change</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like a bit of a snob. Because I go there, and I’m…. I talk so much better. My... when I, before, when I came here I</td>
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</table>
talked like a chav. I don't even know if, I don't know whether you know what that means. But I didn't talk properly, I talked... there was loads of swearing, there was loads of slang... I didn't talk with proper grammar, and I didn't have big words in my vocabulary. But now... I use words that I've... people have to look up in dictionaries! My friends are like, "What does that mean?" (Fran)

Er – yeah, I'd say it's got a little bit bigger. Not you know, drastically, because I was… I was quite experienced before. But I can understand from someone else's point of view who hasn't done much coaching that… their circle would have got greatly bigger. Especially with understanding what they're doing. You know. How you coach might not be differently, but understanding how you're coaching might have changed quite a lot. (Gavin)

I feel a lot stronger as a coach. Because before, if a child was, like, misbehaving – I've had a couple of examples this year – if a child was misbehaving, I wouldn't like… have… it wasn't such a confidence… but I didn't like see myself like as high enough up to be like, “Actually, no – you can go and sit out.” or… I didn’t… I didn't view myself as experienced enough. I just thought, oh, I'm there, like, helping them. Whereas this year, I feel like – no, actually, I am your coach and you will, like, behave the way I think is… like, appropriate. (Tracey)

I see myself as someone who I like… I think I've got some good ideas. In terms of… like, rugby's a massive focus for me – like, rugby coaching – determined to make a career out of it... Er, I think I've become a bit more stubborn. Like, I'm really developing my own ideas, and… I dunno, coaching decisions and stuff, especially with rugby, and styles of play that annoy me, and I think 'who's taught you this?' like. That's not the way to do it. (Tom)

As for me, I think I would be a small circle. Because I didn't get to coach a lot, as in weekly, because I… and like, others, they get to have placement I think. We have placement. And volunteering as assistant coaches maybe. But I didn't get to do that – so yeah. My experience of coaching is less... (Heather)

I always reflect on stuff about coaching. So if something happens I reflect on it from a coaching point of view. I don’t know why. So, if something happens I think “How can I do that better next time if I was in a coaching environment? How would a coach behave?” So I represent myself as a coach every time. (Steve)

Because I didn’t have that much experience of coaching, so I think that my family and friends see me as a sportsperson; just a sportsperson, not yet as a coach. I haven’t changed anything much from first year...I actually agree with them but at the same time I still want to be a coach, so I’m still working on it. (Heather)
I still think I’m a coach; I’m in the sort of society that I want to coach. I grew up with people surrounded by football. I do have friends who don’t play football, but the majority of time I am surrounded by people who are based around football and who are coaches. So I don’t think it’s changed much. I just see myself as having the identity of a coach; how I dress is as a coach. I don’t wear stupid clothes; I wear clothes which represent a coach. I don’t know why, but it’s my identity. People see me as a coach, which…they’ll start a conversation about coaching, because if that’s how I come across, that’s my identity then. That’s made me really sure that’s my identity because the majority of the time people will ask me in a conversation, they’ll say “How’s your coaching then?” So it’s pretty sure that my identity is coaching. (Steve)

Another thing that highlights my current study now is Personal Development Planning (PDP) module. We are now being asked to look for any sports related job adverts that we are interested in. With that selected job advert, we are being asked to produce CV and Cover Letter. When this task hit me, it made me realised that I am lack of coaching experience. In comparison, by looking at others’ CV, it also made me realised that to be a coach, variety of experiences is essential and it is not ‘a cup of tea’ to have those many experiences. (Heather)

It was the work experience I did. And working within, like.. I always knew that I probably wanted to work… like, elite coaching was always the dream. But I never experienced so – do I actually like it? As soon as I got there, and I did a couple of days, it was like – yep. Definitely. This is my sort of stuff. And that clued it for me. (Tom)

Realising that experience and professional qualifications are needed to becoming a coach
Coach identity 4 RL 18th Nov 2012

Changing from year one by knowing where to go and how to get there
Coach identity 4 FG 24 25

Enjoying training and compromising going to lectures
Athlete identity 4 RL 30th Nov 2012

Prioritising training over studying – athlete identity
Athlete identity 4 FG 21 16

Like – because I’ve got other main goals and priorities I’m trying to hit, and… it’s just, always just like - so much focus going into that. And you kind of go, ‘Oh, this is not a priority.’ And if that’s not going well, you know, it kind of… it kind of overshadows everything else. (Gavin)
### Appendix 13. Thematic table (objective 4) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<th>Page or date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For me when I first came here, the main reason I wanted to come here was to train and I was still doing ok in the first year, so I spent my whole first year – I volunteered as a coach, I was just an assistant coach, as you said, counting kids and teams collecting cones etc. I wasn’t actually doing that much coaching – but it didn’t bother me. I did about 2 hours a week because I trained, and then training went downhill and I did really badly, so my second year, last year, I was thinking ‘I’m probably not going to do athletics.’ So I put more into coaching, then I got a paid job coaching and I’d done various different things, like summer camps, kids’ camps, and everything. Then over the summer just gone, I did a bit better in athletics so I’ve decided I want to go back to athletics now, so the coaching I’m doing now I don’t really agree with a lot of the structure, so I just turn up, get it done, get the money. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Identity constantly changing from athlete to coach and coach to athlete depending on experiences</td>
<td>Unstable identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s … base is a bad word. It’s like a core identity that you have and then the external bit around it, so to speak, changes depending on your environment or the situation you’re in. It can change over time, I think. I don’t think I have the same identity I had when I started here, but it doesn’t really change quickly; only over a long period of time. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Having a core identity that changes (slower) depending on the environment and context they are in</td>
<td>Unstable identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 42</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So in first year I was absolutely fine, I didn’t really care what I was doing, I thought ‘It’s ages away, I’ll just train, I’ll just be an athlete.’ Then in second year when athletics was awful, I thought ‘Right, OK, athletics may be over and I might need to think more about what I’m going to do.’ So I did a lot more coaching and I thought ‘Right, OK, I definitely want to coach.’ And now athletics is going well again, I’m thinking ‘I’m an athlete!’ (Tracey)</td>
<td>Showing that identity is not stable</td>
<td>Unstable Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came here thinking ‘I’m a coach. I know how to coach. I’ve coached kids, I’ve coached teenagers, I’ve coached disability.’ I came with a coach identity of ‘I know what I’m doing and I want to build on that and improve that and do more. And now it’s just non-existent… And I don’t know why. Maybe it’s because I haven’t really coached for so long and when I’ve coached now it’s just been for ten minutes for an assessment and it’s not actually … we haven’t actually put theory into practice to actually improve my coaching style. So it’s stayed the same; if not got worse. So it’s non-existent, so I don’t really see myself as a coach any more. (Fran)</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the start it was stable, because that was what I wanted to do and I was here to do a coaching degree and I think now, now we’re coming out into the big wide world and stuff, it’s very, very unstable. So I don’t know where I’m going… Maybe in a couple of years it will be completely solid and that won’t change for the rest of my life, but at the</td>
<td>Identity being affected by the environment</td>
<td>Unstable Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 44</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
moment it is very unstable and I don’t know where I’m going to go. I’ve got plans and ideas, but they might not happen. (Nathan)

The whole university experience. I think you’re never going to … your idea at the start is never going to stay the same because there’s so much that will have happened in those 3 years. So I think it would be impossible to just say “I’m going to do this and at the end I’m going to finish and that’s it.” (Martin)

As for me, I think I used to love coaching but since I learned about sport development I realised that Brunei doesn’t have that. I think I compare a lot with the UK system and the Brunei system and I think Brunei needs to develop more things, so that’s why I … OK, or I need to do this to make something big about Brunei because I think lots of people don’t know where Brunei is, that’s what I find. (Heather)

Coaching is not a clear avenue – it is likely that people can change their mind during the years at Uni (Martin)

Unstable identities  4  FG 35  5

I think right now my identity is as a coach, cos coach at the moment is my life, I’m here doing coaching, my job is coaching. So yes, but I don’t know if that will stay when I leave here, whether it will become something else and coaching will just be part of it rather than being the whole thing. Have to wait and see. (Nathan)

Seeing himself as a coach at the moment – due to doing Sports Coaching at Uni and having a job as a coach – however, not sure if this is temporary and this will stay after he leaves Uni (Martin)

Unstable identities  4  FG 35  6

Being students here we’re surrounded by coaches, so when you go out and get a ‘normal’ job, you might forget about coaching. In a school I used to go to, they used to say the drop off in pupils who are still playing sport by the time they’re 25, is absolutely crazy. Nobody still plays really. So I think it’s when you’re surrounded that you’re more interested. (Martin)

Not sure how stable their coaching identity is – seems to be temporary (Martin)

Unstable identities  4  FG 39  11

I think your identity now becomes one thing. I think it just changes all the time, you can’t really stick to one thought – ‘Oh, I’ve reached my goal now. I can stop becoming.’ Maybe an improved identity or a better one. I think you learn different things along the way. You never stop learning. (Steve)

Identity as temporary - Steve (Steve)

Unstable identities  4  FG 43  6

I would say right it’s a turning point, because you’re coming out of university and you’ve got to go ‘This is what I want to do’ and it’s the idea and it’s the kind of work I’ve been trying to work towards and now I’ve got to do it and I think you’ve got to come out and start doing stuff. I think everyone’s identity – well mine has definitely gone – right it’s make or break now! I’ve got to pull my finger out and just do it. So quite rocky, but I think the idea of it is fine, I’m not worried about it. It’s definitely make or break in terms of whether you do it or not. (Gavin)

Feeling his identity is a bit rocky (Gavin)

Unstable identities  4  FG 45  19

I think that was the idea, to learn what we were learning in lectures and then go out and do it…. But obviously if you’re an assistant, you can’t really go out and try it, I think that’s the problem. But it’s hard to get unqualified people to just go out and start coaching a group of kids. That’s pretty difficult. (Martin)

Challenges of being an assistant coach (Martin)

Coach identity  4  FG 35  12

I think in the last year because I’m managing my own team I think I’ve become my own identity in a way. But it’s all down to what I’ve done before in previous years, my previous experiences, theory, interaction with people – I think that’s moulded me into my own identity. (Steve)

Coaching own team as contributing to ‘own identity’ (Steve)

Coach identity  4  5

So that’s changed for me just from coaching back home, doing my degree, and then knowing that I’ve spent 3 years

Stronger coach identity as a Coach identity  4  FG 44  16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>FG</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>studying coaching, my identity as a coach back home has changed quite a lot, because now I'm not just seen as a little assistant coach Level 1, who can help set the cones out. Now I'm actually Level 2, running quite good sessions; and they want me to work for them, so that's quite good. So for me that's been quite a positive change. (Daniel)</td>
<td>result of how they think they are perceived as</td>
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<tr>
<td>Even though I have had a coaching job, I don't think it's made me any better as a coach. Because the job wasn't great. I wanted to create my own reputation and work myself up and being the head of the coaches and taking charge of coaches as well, rather than just being a number, which I've managed to do. So that's quite pleasing and I have created it in three years, the reputation of being a coach, which is quite nice. (Steve)</td>
<td>It's not just about having a coaching job. It is about having responsibility in a coaching job</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel because I know more I now know how much I don't know – if that makes sense! Whereas before, back home, it was just – I'd been coaching since I was 15 so you get the same age groups coming through; you're teaching the same things. They progress in similar way. Then they get passed on to a new coach and they pushed up even higher, so you're just taking them from this level to that level. It's repeating it and it's absolutely fine. And I thought 'Yes, I'm a good coach, I'm getting all these kids from this to this.' I thought 'I'm a good coach, I know how to coach. I've coached different ages etc.' Then I came here and I thought 'Actually I've realised how much I don't know as a coach.' So even though I'm a better coach now than I was then. Then I thought I was a good coach; whereas now I think I've got a long way to go in coaching. I know there's so much more that I could learn. So if I wanted to learn it then I know that it's there. (Tracey)</td>
<td>A moment of realisation – there is much more to coaching (knowledge and understanding) than initially thought</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came to university with the ambition of becoming a coach and finding my way through university to become a better coach and in my first week at university I was on my laptop trying to find coaching jobs in Cardiff - I didn't really think about my course; people were buying books about what was in the course and I was trying to find a job again, in the real world of coaching. .. It's quite strange that I've created a name for myself and that's what's the most pleasing for me. I've gone into the real world and coached, rather than just staying in these rooms and learning my theories all the time. (Steve)</td>
<td>Showing signs of agency and reputation</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you want coaches to be creative, in the courses for football they have at university they encourage you to be creative but if you go into the real world and be creative there, none of the instructors want you to be creative, they want you to do it their way, which discourages you from being a coach. (Steve)</td>
<td>Coaches being discouraged from being creative and being coaches</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You see, I think the lecturers are so much better, we'll have conversations with the lecturers and they'll talk to you about coaching and they'll talk to you like another coach, even though they're the ones who actually do see us as students! Whereas the employers who shouldn't really see us as students at all, they actually treat us more like children. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Being a student may impact on the coach identity</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My identity as a coach is non-existent now. I came in first year as an athlete but wanted to be a coach, but then during second year I was injured quite a lot so there was more coaching and then this year I'm not coaching at all and I'm just an athlete. I don't really have anything to do with coaching, or want to do any coaching! So yes, it's made me realise that I don't really want to coach, especially as a full-time job. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Coaching practice influences identity – how students perceive themselves</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This degree for me has been pretty influential is that I am – it's confirmed that I will want to coach at a high level and</td>
<td>Being different</td>
<td>Coach identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
then in terms of identity I think I see my route to coaching professionally, because I haven’t played at the highest level, I see my route as perhaps being an original in the sense that my coaching is academically informed (Tom)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing a passion for coaching as a result of the course – reasons: lecturers as role models – they are coaches and show their passion. Also realising there is stuff out there for you</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 33</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Yes, when I came to university I just enjoyed coaching and now it feels that it is a true passion of mine now and I really want to get into it. The course has developed me and my actual excitement for coaching, massively. Just the people who run the lectures, just seeing them and their passion for coaching and what they’ve done over the years, just excites you so that you want to get out there and do it. (Daniel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking the role as the coach instead of the assistant coach was key in developing his identity as a coach</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 35</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For me I think when I started going to get to be the coach, it was kind of a little bit of an extra boost and then I was giving my own sessions. I don’t think assisting is coaching at all, because you’re not thinking for yourself, really. So when I went from assistant coach to lead coach that’s when it kind of changed for me. (Martin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting a good placement in the second year has contributed to developing his coach identity</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 35</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For me, I think the placement you get in your second year makes a massive difference. Obviously some people had terrible placements and aren’t doing it in their third year, whereas I’m carrying on into my third year and getting paid and got double the hours I expected. So for me it was pretty ideal. (Martin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting recognition as a coach and more power and control helps with seeing themselves as coaches</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 35</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

MARTIN: I think it helps that you get a bit of recognition and then you get more power, control … a little bit! I think it can either boost your identity as a coach or make it worse, so I think in your case it’s obviously gone the other way whereas we liked it and it made it more of our identity. (Martin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting recognition as a coach and as a person – due to learning in the programme</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 43</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I think as a coach what’s changed most for me is what I’ve learned in lectures etc. So how I approach sessions, how I approach certain people and how I talk to people and I think I take that into every environment I go into. (Steve)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changing as a coach and as a person – due to learning in the programme</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 43</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
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</table>

…you think and see it with a whole different mind-set compared to how you coached before you came to university. So although the course has been quite theory-based, it’s actually helped quite a lot in a practical environment. (Daniel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience/jobs can count on how stable the identity becomes</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 44</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Even for me with this job, it’s only til September, because no-one coaches cricket from September to January, because that’s the off-season. So it’s nothing solid, so at the moment I’m like ‘OK, I’ve got something there.’ But I’m still thinking ‘6 months down the line in September I’m just going to be in the same situation as if I hadn’t got this job now.’ So I’ve just managed to prolong the process of panicking! (Daniel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having a strong coach identity</th>
<th>Coach identity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>FG 45</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I very much see myself as a coach. I think also I had two job interviews and the whole experience of having to …. It was pretty similar with both schools, you go in and you’re expected to coach 2 or 3 sessions that day, pretty short sharp sessions, you’ve got to coach and then you have to talk through your sessions and it seemed to come really naturally to me. I actually really enjoyed the whole experience. (Tom)
Obviously the degree type was sports coaching and then I came here not really wanting to coach that much, which sounds weird. Now I want to coach a lot more, so I suppose my identity has changed… I think the title ‘Sports Coaching’ – it had ‘sport’ in the name, so I’ll do it because it’s got something to do with … I can still train. Whereas now it’s my aim, I want to be a coach. (Martin)

Changing his ambition
Coach Identity
4
FG 45
29

Importance of experiential learning for identity development
Coach identity
4
FG 45
30

Mine was in the summer after the first year, I think, when I was lucky enough to get some really good experience, and just worked with some really good quality coaches. Most of the time I was just observing really, just really observing coaches and I thought they were so innovative. Obviously I’ve played rugby my whole life but watching them, I was thinking, it’s so simple but yet so innovative, a way to incorporate so many different parts of the game. Yes, I watched that and thought ‘Yes, that’s the kind of coach I want to be. (Tom)

By this year, being the Athletics captain because I was enjoying the fact that I wasn’t actually overseeing other things and doing coaching as well made me realise that I was not just here for doing the athletics, it’s more background stuff (Martin)

Setting goals and working towards them a bit more in year 3 - knowing what they are doing becomes more purposeful!
Designated identities
4
FG 36
4

A little bit easier. I guess it’s a bit more purposeful, so therefore it makes it – as I say everything drives motivation for me – so it becomes more purposeful when I know what I’m doing. (Gavin)

A little bit easier. I guess it’s a bit more purposeful, so therefore it makes it – as I say everything drives motivation for me – so it becomes more purposeful when I know what I’m doing. (Gavin)

Designated identities
4
FG 42
11

If you see yourself, if you have ambitions to be doing whatever, then you might change yourself to be more suited to that; which could change your identity and your career. I think, for me, when I came here all I wanted to do was to be a ski instructor and now I don’t want to, so I think if I still wanted to, I’d be …. I was going to say I’d be putting more effort into the coaching…Probably not what I do in the course but it might have affected my identity and the way I see myself. (Nathan)

A little bit easier. I guess it’s a bit more purposeful, so therefore it makes it – as I say everything drives motivation for me – so it becomes more purposeful when I know what I’m doing. (Gavin)

Designated identities
4
FG 42
11

These focus groups have helped, I reckon. They’ve helped us assess where we are. … Well, staying in touch kind of keeps you thinking about where you are and where you want to be. (Martin)

Focus groups have helped the development of identity
Identity
4
FG 45
23

My ambition would be more towards sport development officer but as well I can be a part-time coach; because initially I said “OK, I’m interested in coaching.” But now I’m contemplating between development and coaching but now I think

Changing their ambitions
Identity
4
FG 35
4
I’m more interested in development. So yes, that’s clearer now in my final year. (Heather)

I’m still undecided I think. I think this extra year now will give me time to decide on. I hope I’m going to get a placement in a school and see if I like teaching etc. because at the moment I’m not too sure I’d like teaching, I think I’d prefer coaching. I’d prefer coaching to teaching at the moment. (Martin)

I think before I came to university I was all about coaching and trying to become élite but now I don’t know if I’ll stay in sport. I’m not sure what will happen. (Nathan)

That’s a bit more of a reality check that actually I’ve got to look for a career rather than my dream job, which was that I was going to be a coach in the Premiership somewhere! (Barry)

So it’s a bit of a reality check, where you’ve got to think ‘Right, I need to make this decision. Am I going to try to really make it as a coach or am I going to look at going down some other path?’ (Daniel)

I think now we realise that coaching as C said, is a hard profession and isn’t secure. Whereas when you’re younger, when we first joined we just thought – well I don’t know about you lot, but I didn’t really think much into it, I just thought ‘I enjoy that, I want to earn money from it.’ (Nathan)

Changing goals as a result of a reality check + realisation of what they can do

I’ve learned from my development modules and we have these lectures where there are so many guest speakers and they talk about what they have done so far for development, and I think that changed my perception of sports that made my desire, my ambitions, stronger to become an SDO. So I think this programme really, really influenced my core. Yes it’s a pathway I’m going to choose. (Heather)

Developing ambitions from learning about sports development from guest lecturers

Well, I think final year sort of puts everyone on the spot, because you are only with sports coaching students for most of your lectures – for me definitely, because I did work experience, my only lecture each week was coaching. So I didn’t have any other lectures, like PA or a science or something like that. And obviously my house-mates are all doing sports science and they’re always together. So I do feel like a sports coaching student now in third year because I’m not even involved with anything that they do. The only things we did the same was the dissertation. (Daniel)

Felling like a sports coaching student in the third year

Felling like a sports coaching student in the third year
# Appendix 14. Thematic table (objective 5) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page or date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He interacts with his students. He... he talks to them, he’s, he asks them what’s going on, you know – how have you been, things like that. And, “I haven’t seen you in my lectures lately, where have you been?” You know what I mean? Like, you can tell that he cares about his students. (Fran)</td>
<td>Caring about the students as an important aspect of teaching</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 16</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it’s... if they’ve got the time, I know a lot of lecturers probably don’t have much time, but they don’t... if they give the impression that you could always come to them, then, even if you didn’t, you’d still feel happier - because you thought “well, if you needed to...” (Tracey)</td>
<td>Lecturers should show that they are available and care</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He knows who you are, as well. So...like, OK, he knows people that he shouldn’t pick to bring forward, and, like, talk to the class, he’ll know probably from me that I’ll get like a nervous version of me talk to everyone, if you pick me, so he knows I’m, like, a reflector learner - like, I prefer to watch other people, than myself...It feels nice, like, if they know you. So you learn better because they’ve got the knowledge of you, and... (Mary)</td>
<td>Claiming the importance of the lecturer-student relationship</td>
<td>The lecturer-student relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He gave us like lots of aspects of it so like he went to the stats side of it and then he got us to interact a lot. He put us into groups and give us something to talk about and feedback to him. (Katie)</td>
<td>Creating a sense of connection and responsibility</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it... I think it's because he doesn't complicate things. He explains it, yes, OK, he's got things on the board, but he explains... he explains it by word. You know what I mean. And he'll explain it in a way that people can understand it, and they'll relate to it, and they'll see it happening in their own life. (Fran)</td>
<td>Learning from interactive lecturers</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like the subject of biomechanics anyway, but, like, coach science, like, it’s not that I’m really interested in what they’re saying - I quite like what they’re saying - but the way they deliver it, and the way they tell, and like, teach it to me, I really understand it. So, it makes me like it more. Because I don’t have to, like, really think about it. I just, like... because they go a lot slower, I understand it whilst I’m in the lecture, and then I don’t have to do anything else when I come out of it, then. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Discussing lecturers and their preferences</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It just seems to be the lecturers that I prefer their style, are the ones which I end up paying most attention to. Which I suppose sounds obvious, but... er...” (Barry)</td>
<td>Engaging students by asking questions</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although physiology’s very factual, obviously... actually, that was probably one of the best lectures I’ve had, because it was really interactive and every three slides there was a task. And although he had the answers to it, there was a lot of interaction. And he sort of... even the people being quite quiet, eventually he just got it out of people. (Tom)</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>He is just interesting to listen to isn't he comes out with his quirky little sayings all the time and um and if you do switch off and stuff then you miss them and you miss the jokes that he makes… if you keep listening he keeps you interested and just because he's he is fun to listen to….“ (Barry)</td>
<td>Enjoying lecturer who makes lecture fun</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think there’s a level…like I totally agree with Tracey just said…like people who is just sat there…it’s a lot harder…you do lose concentration but there’s a level like…some lecturers who are trying to be too funny and then you just end up listening to their jokes and then you’re like ow I haven’t actually learned anything. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Having a balanced approach is important for learning as too many jokes may mean no learning is taking place</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do need an extra push (nodding towards the camera then keeps her head facing down)…I just been thinking about the (speaks faster and softer) amount of the work I’ve got do and its really really confusing’ (Fran)</td>
<td>Wanting extra support and an extra push from lecturers</td>
<td>Extra support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>1st Nov 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had a bit of a sulk because I didn’t like him when I first met him last week so i didn’t pay any attention in the whole lecture and then missed the following lecture because I needed tea and biscuits! (Tracey)</td>
<td>Views on the lecturer and engagement in sessions</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>24th Jan 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t mind what they’re like. Like, biomechanics, as I say, I like biomechanics, that guy literally, he’s completely monotone. He is so boring. But I quite…. I’m interested in what he’s talking about, so I listen. Whereas psychology, I can even remember who we have for them. (Nathan)</td>
<td>Interest in the content can affect engagement</td>
<td>Interest and engagement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 5</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>It makes me want to do the work more. If I had, like, an assignment, and I enjoyed going to the lectures, I’d like happily sit down and do the work, and get it over with. Whereas, like, research process. I just didn’t want to do it for ages, so I left it, and then wrote a load of old crap in the last, like, week. So I think it helps if you enjoy it to do the work. And obviously you remember more. Because if I don’t enjoy it, or like, don’t enjoy the lectures, I find myself, like, dunno, like. Clock-watching, and all the rest. (Katie)</td>
<td>If you enjoy going to the lectures, you will be happier to do the work – Katie</td>
<td>Interest and engagement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 9</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>When I was peer reviewing someone, he came around and he was like ‘why did you tick that?’ (Tom)</td>
<td>Finding the role of the lecturer in facilitating peer assessment very important</td>
<td>Being a facilitator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 15</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Raw data</td>
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<td>Having been in smaller classrooms all the time, nearly all of my lecturers I'd be able to say hello to and have a bit of a laugh and a joke with and I just sort of respect them more for it and see that maybe if they're making an effort to get to know me as a person, then I'd want to make a bit more of an effort in their class. (Barry)</td>
<td>Respecting the lecturers more in year 2 as they are making an effort to get to know him as a person</td>
<td>Exchange relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 31</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>I think they… they, you know, definitely give you a lot more attention. And a bit more of a chance. You know, they… they kind of know that you’re probably a bit more interested than you were last year. So they give you a bit – yeah, they kind of give you a bit more attention and a bit more respect. And kind of… draw things in a bit more, and…(Gavin)</td>
<td>Gaining more respect and attention from lecturers in year 2</td>
<td>Exchange relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 27</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>…like, if you’re going to be willing to give them your time, they’ll be willing to give theirs, sort of thing. So like, I mean, that might be why they get a little bit annoyed if you’re not in lectures. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Claiming the relationship between students and lectures involves an exchange</td>
<td>Exchange relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 21</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>The coaching lecturers, they actually seem, like, passionate. At the end of today’s lecture, [lecturer’s name deleted] was like – ‘I feel that I haven’t taught you that last bit very well.’ …You could tell that he was annoyed at himself because he hadn’t got the point across. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Feeling some lecturers are passionate about their topic and want them to learn – they care</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 26</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>It’s difficult to actually think about that; it’s like forming a friendship over time. It just kind of happens, really. It’s difficult to give a definitive answer, a straight answer to say this is the time when I thought he was a friend of mine. There were quite a few classes this year where I’ve wandered out of the classroom at the same time as the lecturer and chatted to them all the way down from the lecture room to where we end up going our separate ways, I go home and they go back to their office. (Barry)</td>
<td>Finding it hard to explain the moment when they felt they were forming a friendship with lecturers – it happened over time (Barry)</td>
<td>The lecturer-student relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 31</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Even though it’s a lecture, and they’re not coaching us, like, they’ll intro… like, say hi or whatever, and welcome us, and… just like get your attention straight away. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Arguing that the coaching lecturers get their attention from the start</td>
<td>Being a coach</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 20</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Lecturers? Er… just to provide us with, like, the necessary information. But like – teach it in a way as teaching, not as a researcher. To make it more understandable. It’s like, you find that from social cultural, they just… they’re researchers, you can tell. They’re not like coaching… coaching you understand, because they’re like…they’re coaches! [laughs] (Mary)</td>
<td>Wishing some lecturers were more like teachers than researchers to make it more understandable</td>
<td>Being a teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 24</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>He’s doing loads of research. Like, every lecture he gives is always, like, updated references with his name on it (Daniel)</td>
<td>The role of the lecturer involves being a researcher</td>
<td>Being a researcher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 32</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>I wouldn’t imagine him standing there in a seminar and telling us what to do in an hour. He’s trying to get us a sense of, like, responsibility for our own learning. (Steve)</td>
<td>Seeing the lecturer as a facilitator in the seminars</td>
<td>Being a Facilitator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 22</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back on lectures I am really enjoying coaching science seminars. Lecturer 1 and Lecturer 2 have a really good sense of humour and even if we are of task and talking about something different they come over talk about that with us then get us to relate it to coaching. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Seminars allow lecturers to be more personal.</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>30th November 2012</td>
</tr>
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<td>I think it depends on the lecturer that delivers it as well. Like, I’m doing physiology, and the first two sessions were really good, because it was the lecturer who was really fun, explained it really well…. and now, for the past two lectures on anaerobic stuff, er, it just…. He’s gone through it reading off the board, and it just – he’s been really boring about it. He’s not made it fun at all, so I’ve not really understood. (Mary)</td>
<td>Finding the lecturer makes the session good or bad Making it fun and explaining well helps them ‘understand the lecture’ whereas reading off the board makes it hard to understand’</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the seminars, they’re more relaxed. Like, you can have a conversation about something off-topic, and whatever, and you can just… it’s more of like a chat, rather than them talking to you. Which is good. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Finding lecturers are more relaxed in the seminars</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 21</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>I like the fact, just before seminars, we all get there a bit early, and he sits down with us, and just talks about – everything. Not just turns up and puts his laptop on and says ‘do this’…(Steve)</td>
<td>Interacting with students before the lecture starts helps students interact</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 26</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>I quite like it when they provoke answers out of you, but answer questions and stuff. (Tom) Yeah. Makes you think as well, like, coaching. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Liking the lecturers who ask questions and provoke answers out of students as it makes them think</td>
<td>Interactive delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 32</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>…Er, and the very first question – was quite a simple question, but just the whole place went silent. Er, and no one said anything. And I. I was like, I dunno, I felt almost like a responsibility to say something because I get on quite well with [lecturer's name deleted]. And like, I felt awkward for him, the fact that no one was answering quite a simple question. So I obviously said – I gave the answer. Said the answer. But, er, but like, with other lecturers who…I mean, yeah, there’s lecturers that I don’t get on with so well as, as with lecturer 1, and I’d have been quite happy to sit and enjoy the awkward silence. (Barry)</td>
<td>Feeling a responsibility to contribute in lectures if they like the lecturer</td>
<td>The lecturer-student relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 22</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>I kind of see him as a bit of a mate, a bit of a friend really. He obviously knows his stuff, which is great. He’s obviously very clued in to the topic area, but he’s also interested in what I’m doing. He’s someone I can have a conversation with and not feel as if he’s trying to teach me all the time, if that makes sense. (Barry)</td>
<td>Seeing the lecturer as a bit of a mate, a bit of a friend – very clued into the topic area and very interested in what he is doing (Barry)</td>
<td>The lecturer-student relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 31</td>
<td>9</td>
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Appendix 16. Thematic table (objective 5) for FGs (Focus Groups), VDs (Video Diaries) and RLs (Reflective Logs) in Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Initial coding</th>
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<td>They really want you to learn, they're there to offer you – lecturer 1, 2 and 3 [lecturers names deleted], for example, they just want you to understand, whereas the others just read off the board and say … Oh, I don't know … but they really push to get the guys engaged in it. (Mary) And not just engaged, mind; they really want to challenge you. They’ll ask you something and you’ll answer and it’s ‘And?’ You say more and it’s ‘And?’ They really push you to think quite deep and hard about it. So that’s the difference about them. (Tom)</td>
<td>Lecturers who want students to learn and push them</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 45</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>In first year, I think we thought ‘They’re not giving us any support, they’re not caring.’ but it might just have been that they were trying to make us think for ourselves. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Different conceptions of caring in year 1 and year 3</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it’s a lot more difficult as well to care for a group of 150 – 200 students in first year, whereas in third year it’s a group of something like 30 or 40. You get to know them a lot better, but you can’t care for that many students at one time. (Daniel)</td>
<td>Caring affected by the number of students in the class</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td>He definitely does it in different ways as well; because there are some people – like me with my dissertation tutor, he’s got a pretty professional ruthless this year with me, but with other people even when he’s a diss tutor as well, he’s really friendly taking the mickey out of them, it works in different ways. It’s quite impressive, you can watch one coach literally in the same environment. (Gavin)</td>
<td>Getting to know individuals and how they learn</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>If I know they care and I'm not really in the mood I feel bad, because they're trying really hard, so I feel ‘Oh, OK, I want to listen and I want to learn.’ Because you want to do it for them as well. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Caring makes students want to learn</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>So I didn’t try as hard in those two years, because of it. ‘Because I thought ‘Well, they don’t even care – so it doesn’t matter.’ Now I don’t know if they did it on purpose, but now I can see I do appreciate and I much prefer how they are this year and I don’t think I would appreciate it as much if they’d been like it all the way through. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Perception of caring can influence how much they try (Tracey)</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>The coaching science lecturers really want you to understand it and if you don’t, they’ll tell you then in a different way and they’ll tell you again in another different way and they keep going because they … yes, I feel like they care and they actually really want you to learn. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Caring is important for learning</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You came to university and it just seemed they didn’t care, because you weren’t used to it. Whereas now, you’ve built up that relationship to what you had with your school and college teachers, but I think it was just a shock because I’d never had to build up a relationship with a teacher, because it had always just been there and it had just been automatic, really. (Tracey)</td>
<td>Perceptions of caring have changed since year 1 when they thought lecturers didn’t care</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 46</td>
<td>20</td>
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I think we didn’t get the attention we think we’ve got and we just went ‘Wow! They don’t care!’ Like if your Mum and Dad don’t pay you attention – they don’t care! It’s the same. (Steve)

<table>
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<th>You have so much more respect for someone who also has a bit of time for me and his actual likeability is massive. (Barry)</th>
<th>Respecting lecturers who have time for students</th>
<th>Who the lecturer is</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>FG 41</th>
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<td>The thing is though, the lecturers I prefer and the lecturers I think are the better lecturers, they’re the ones who say there’s no right or wrong answer. So you might say something and they’ll be ‘Yes, that’s good. So if you just expand that to this bit, that’s an even better answer.’ So even if you say it slightly wrong, they’ll say ‘You’re on the right lines, but if you just think about it in this way that’s better…’ (Tracey)</td>
<td>Good lecturers are the ones who say there is no right or wrong answers</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 38</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Yes, I definitely with that. It’s become a lot more comfortable sitting in there. I don’t tend to think “Oh, what if he asks me a question? What am I going to say?” So, I think it’s quite comfortable, even in sport development, we can all stand up and say anything, we have a laugh and a joke, it’s quite enjoyable to turn up there. (Steve)</td>
<td>Creating a friendly environment where students feel they want to contribute</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 33</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>And also some days, you just don’t want to listen. It’s just one of those days, you don’t want to be there… but you feel like they have made the effort to make it interesting for you, so you want to listen, to respect them. (Tracey)</td>
<td>With those lecturers that are likeable, they feel like they want to be in the lecture and feel comfortable being there. It makes students make an extra effort to go to lectures even on the days they do not want to.</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 41</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Yes, you feel comfortable but you also get that – I find sometimes with certain lecturers, (mumble) when there is that awkward silence and no one answers, I think ‘I could say something here.’ And with them it’s more ‘I want to say something here,’ because it’s them. (Tom)</td>
<td>Lecturers as the creators of tasks</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 40</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>But the leader still dictates it and steers it and guides it in the way that he wants you to take up the task. So you seek his approval at the same time as giving you answers, because he’s the one giving you the task to do. Although you are, kind of, choosing how you do that task, he is still the origin of where that task came from and therefore the origin of whether you get it right or not, to some degree (Gavin)</td>
<td>Seeing lecturers as intelligent and people who learned, read and understand what they are saying instead of thinking ‘they are a brainbox’ as in year 1.</td>
<td>Who the lecturer is</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 33</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>I’m like “Wow! He’s intelligent!” and you tend to think yes, he’s practiced that, he’s learned it, he’s read about it and understands it and that’s how we’ve got to be. Instead of thinking “Wow, he’s a brainbox.” Because he’s done a load of research, studied it and understood it and that’s what we have to do as well. And we have to apply it to practice then. Somebody you aspire to be like. (Steve)</td>
<td>What a good seminar delivery means</td>
<td>Being a facilitator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FG 43</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>He has a method where it’s exactly that, he’ll in your subconscious he’ll probe questions which will literally open up your mind, to start a discussion on the table, and then he’ll just move to the next table. And you don’t realise it, but …. (Daniel)</td>
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I concentrate a bit more, just because I know they put the effort in to make us learn compared with any other module. I don’t think they’ve made an effort, I think that’s too harsh a thing to say, but they have more enthusiasm compared with other modules…(Steve)

They seem interested in it, which automatically makes you feel interested in it. (Daniel)

For me it’s some kind of humour, to engage us. If somebody is up there who hasn’t smiled all lecture and they could move around and talk to you, but if they’re not really interacting with you, I just think you’re not getting anything from them. You’re just getting facts and a blank face. So you might as well have a voice recording up at the front. (Martin)

A Coaching lecturer would have to make you think more, so somebody like [lecturer’s name deleted] prompting and asking you certain questions, making you think around the theory and around the subject. Whereas somebody for Biomechanics of Physiology or something like that is quite different ‘This is this.’ There’s no point talking around it. (Nathan)

To tell me what I need to know or tell me a bit of what I need to know and then if I need to know more, tell me I need to know more and where to find it. (Tom)

...scientific module, maybe it’s like ‘yes, tell me what it is.’ Because I think science is more specific, they have a specific outset but in terms of coaching, it is all ambiguous so it’s more like ‘Tell me what else’…(Heather)

The role of the lecture is still for me the same as in first year, for physiology – although it’s more complicated now, more complicated stuff you’ve got in there, but the way you’re assessed hasn’t changed. So last year we had an exam and a piece of coursework. This year we’ve got an exam and two pieces of coursework, effectively – a written exam, a piece of written coursework and then another oral exam – a viva. So the assessment is kind of the same, so it’s quite consistent, it hasn’t really changed. (Tom)

I think the role of the lecturer is to make you feel as comfortable as you can but still keep that learning environment, so there is still learning happening, because it is very easy to become too matey with someone and you don’t learn because you’re just being too jokey. They’ll have a laugh and have a joke, but then if they know the group’s getting away, they’ll crack down and they will be authoritative if necessary. (Daniel)

Having a balance between feeling comfortable with lecturers and learning

Lecturer as a friend

5  FG 33  19

Getting to know a lecturer a bit more as him rather than just as a lecturer or coach

Lecturer as a friend

5  FG 33  19

- **Engaging in lecturers as an exchange relationship**
- **Using humour to break down barriers**
- **The delivery reflects the knowledge a lecturer has**
- **Different expectations for lecturers that teach in different subjects**
- **The role of the lecturer in Physiology and Biomechanics is to tell students what they need to know and where to find extra information**
- **The role of the lecturer can be affected by the assessment modes**
- **Role of lecturers according to the mode of assessment used**
- **Role of lecturers according to the disciplines they teach**
- **Lecturer as a friend**
pushing their boundaries and becoming pally with them, but just make sure you’re comfortable with them and not being afraid of them, because they’re just like us but with a degree or a master’s. Or a PhD (Steve) made him respect him and like him.

They used to be just a scary figure at the front of the room, who would just be telling you the content. Now you can talk to them, you can go to them, they’re more like a tutor where you can go and personally I feel I can go talk to him about anything. But in the first year it was – ‘that’s the lecturer, don’t say a word!’ (Steve)

Lecturer as a scary figure, a brainbox in year 1 and now as someone they can talk to, like a tutor that you can talk to about anything and they will listen to them

Lecturer as a friend

Lecturer as a scary figure, a brainbox in year 1 and now as someone they can talk to, like a tutor that you can talk to about anything and they will listen to them

Tough one! For me, I guess I probably trust [lecturer’s name deleted] the most because he’s my dissertation tutor so I have a lot of contact time with him. He ran my seminar last year and I build up quite a good relationship with him and he was really helpful with my dissertation proposal, so he’s someone I guess I can count on. (Tom)

Trusting the lecturers they have more contact with

Lecturers’ role as making students think more broadly

Setting up an environment for learning

Interactive delivery

Lecturers’ role as making students think more broadly

Interactive delivery

I find they almost paint a picture…they almost tell a story to start with and it really engages you and the way they describe it makes it easy to learn, to paint a picture in your own head. Then from there you can break it down and understand it and learn about it and learning about, maybe the context, they will give their own. (Tracey)

Setting up an environment for learning

Interactive delivery

Involving students in lectures that are conversational

Interactive delivery

I think the three lecturers below him respect him and say how much he’s done for the coaching environment, especially with theory. So when he comes and takes a lecture, you’re like ‘Wow! This guy knows what he’s talking about.’ (Daniel)

Reputation is important for being seen as a good lecturer

Reputation

Learning from who lecturers are

Reputation