

**Cardiff Metropolitan University**  
**Cardiff School of Education**

**The Impact of the Caring Sports  
Coach to Affect Young People's  
Behaviour: A Study in  
a Disadvantaged Community**

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**BA (Hons) Education Studies/Sport  
& Physical Activity**

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## DECLARATION

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

Signed: Julian Symes (candidate) Date: 18/04/2016

## STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA Honours in Education Studies and Sport and Physical Activity

Signed: Julian Symes (candidate) Date: 18/04/2016

## STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to establish how the modern day caring sports coach can instil positive behaviour patterns, thus enhancing engagement and helping to combat antisocial behaviour in young people. For this purpose the representative study sample consisted of coaches and participants within a girls' community based rugby cohort in South Wales. Data was collected through a qualitative design frame consisting of extensive observations, coach interviews and a semi-structured focus group. Results suggested that coaches' facilitation of constructive environments elicited socially constructed intrinsic motivation and self-determination in young people, many of which displayed actualising tendencies, striving towards betterment. Conclusions advocate coaches understanding of the no-one-size-fits-all solution and commitment to go the extra mile engendered positive outcomes in engagement and behaviour. Recommendations for further research support increased empirical investigation to contest rationalistic approaches toward learning. Moreover, coaches and coach education are encouraged to engage in the contemporary practice of autoethnography in endeavour to simplify understanding as to why coaches do what they do.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

## 1.1 Introduction

Traditionally, the duties of the sports coach have been shaped by a sequential, rational-cognitive paradigm, steeped in regulatory controls that discipline participants (Foucault, 1979), culminating in a rigid approach to teaching (Lyle, 2002; 2007). However, more recent literature has reconceptualised the role of the sports coach as complex, contextual and socially driven (Jones and Wallace, 2005; Jones, 2007; Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; Denison and Avner, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Barker and Bailey, 2014) toward a more pedagogical role.

Noddings (2003) suggests the rationalist approach fails to consider emotions and conflicts, that determine learners' hopes and desires towards ultimate choices. Contrastingly, recent research is gaining momentum proposing a more holistic, person-centred approach as greater value in the coach-athlete (CA) relationship (Nelson *et al.*, 2014; Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009). The interpretivist no 'one size fits all' (Purdy & Potrac, 2014 p.14) procures its foundations in ethical virtues of the core components of caring, as described by Rogers (1957). Noddings (2003 p.7) states: 'As human beings we want to care and be cared for. Caring is important in itself' drawing parallels with 'going the extra mile, fulfilling multiple roles.' (Nelson *et al.*, 2014, p.102). Therefore, the implementation of caring can be neither underestimated, nor understated in the modern day coaching environment, or indeed, any pedagogical undertaking.

Students yearn for teachers who are welcoming and supportive, those who are willing to listen about home life, not just schoolwork, essentially, educators who are accessible during non-teaching periods (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994). This notion also carries high relevance within the coaching arena. It is a prerequisite then, to initiate research proceedings through exploration of the core principles upon which Carl Rogers' person-centred therapy is founded. Providing a robust and capable platform upon which to fasten the roots of good practice, origins of Rogers' humanistic approach anchors significantly within self-actualisation theory (Maslow, 1943) conceptualising that human tendencies must strive for completeness. Originally propelled by such experientially informed theoretical standpoints, the caring approach provides a welcome resurgence within contemporary pedagogical practice (Agne, 1999; Noddings, 2003; Jones, 2009).

Notwithstanding, many challenges face the modern day sports coach, most significantly the ability to engage and motivate young people to the intrinsic values of sport (Holt, 2009; Holt and Talbot, 2013). Contemporary diversity also suggests no one-size-fits-all in solution (Clemons *et al.*, 2011) to the conundrum that is a rising proliferation in obesity (WHO, 2015; Rees *et al.*, 2009) alongside sedentary and antisocial behaviour (Rutter *et al.*, 1998; Johnson, 2013) within young people.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Literature Review**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The following chapter highlights several key areas: the core conditions of caring that underpin the person-centred approach; the ability of the modern day coach to facilitate constructivist environments; and finally the potential reward of utilising an autoethnographic approach. Initially, the necessary core conditions of caring constitute vital and fundamental requirements upon which the coach can form any type of connective relationship with participants. Entwined within the persona of both coach and athlete are the beliefs in self-actualisation, the inherent tendency that, upon satisfaction of basic physiological and psychological needs, humans strive for hierarchical betterment. Although dated, these innate qualities have been much overlooked within research into why human beings do what they do. Pursuit towards personal betterment leads to the much sought after goal that is a motivational climate helping cultivate positive attitudes within learners. The contemporary movement away from traditional teacher-led, to the arguably more engaging person-centred approach in effort to effect positive behavioural patterns, is explored. In facilitating this concept, moral integrity and ethical behaviour of the coach must be carefully deliberated. Closely allied to person-centred teaching is the application of constructivist learning environments and the complexities that accompany this empowering practice. Advantages and disadvantages of CA feedback are subsequently scrutinised, before finally investigating the modernistic notion of autoethnography. With roots steeped in reflective practice, the impact of autoethnographic storytelling is explored as a movement toward helping simplify the rationale of practice for modern day sports coaches.

## **2.2 The Core Conditions of Caring**

Carl Rogers, 'the most influential psychologist in American history' (Rogers *et al.*, 2013 p. xxiii), theorised several core conditions that must exist in order for a genuine caring relationship to materialise. Rogers' influential beliefs in psychotherapy emerged through experimental, scientific techniques exploring the deeper aspects of human personality. Although dated, Rogers' humanistic writings are still viewed as radical in nature (Nelson *et al.*, 2014a p.527).

Firstly, 'genuineness' (Rogers, 1951 p.97), more commonly termed congruency, suggests educators should not simply *don a coaching hat* for sole application within the sporting environment rather, reasoning and discourse should be a constant and therefore spawn from an authentic lived persona. It is imperative that congruency be borne out of both personal life and mindful reflective practice (Yip, 2007) to inform professional social interactions. Secondly, the key notion of unconditional positive regard (UPR) or 'prizing' (Rogers, 1951 p.97) provides a platform that observes all learners as equal and should be considered thus, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, ability, social class or emotional state. Minor discrimination and negative preconceptions must be set aside, providing holistic advancement for all stakeholders. Finally, empathy must occupy the forefront of all discursive interaction, as the human element is of paramount importance. Rogers (1951 p.98) suggests that the 'therapist' should sense fear, confusion or anger within an individual as if it were their own, yet remain emotionally unattached. However, Rogers (1957) specifies that the precondition of at least a minimal psychological relationship must exist, between the educator and learner, for without this connection positive change cannot occur. Rogers' conclusions culminated through many years immersed in psychotherapeutic research with 'delinquent and underprivileged children' (Rogers, 1961 p.10) in attempt to define clear and measurable conditions to effect personality change (Rogers, 1957). Crucially, core conditions of caring are sufficient only if implemented over a sustained period of time in order to achieve 'constructive personality change' (Rogers, 1951 p.96). Concurrently, Holt (2009 p.19) discovered that positive youth development (PYD) only occurs through intensive engagement that is sustained for more than a year. This highlights the considerable limitation of short-term or superficial engagement. Critical points of investigation are subsequently generated, regarding the reliability of short-term study findings. Personal experiential practice confirms this, endorsing the requirement for numerous positive interactions over time to develop trusting CA relationships, essential for achievement of the *buy in* process. A recent study by Claringbould *et al.* (2015) states some young people prefer tough, discipline orientated coaching methods, accepting their role as subordinate athletes (Foucault, 1979). Yet, Ianaro *et al.* (2013) suggest the coach, whilst remaining confident, should modify dominant behaviour with interpersonal sensitivity.

In order to understand the nature of human behaviour it is essential that certain underpinning mechanisms should be observed. The following section explores the underlying theory of 'self-actualization' (Maslow, 1943 p.382) upon which Rogers believes human personality is founded.

### **2.2.1 Self-Actualisation: A Directional Process**

Rogers and Yalom (1995 p.118) state: 'In human beings... there is a natural tendency toward a more complex and complete development.' This conceptual rise to constructive accomplishment is an active process, gained through either internal or external stimuli for betterment, or even survival. Rogers and Yalom (1995) analogise this directional process by comparing people whose lives have been excessively warped, to root vegetables that despite being stored in the darkest of environments, will produce shoots that reach upward to any available source of light, no matter how distant. This 'actualizing tendency' (Rogers and Yalom, 1995 p.118) bears the hallmark of person-centredness in that people will strive in their own perceivable ways, toward growth and 'becoming' (Maslow, 1943 p.382). Maslow (1943) proposes that upon satisfaction of physiological needs, individuals strive for further psychological contentment, whilst Hill (2000) concurs that self-actualisation is an integral part in the development of a person's potential. This requirement sits at the apex of the pyramidal ascension of human needs (Payouhandeh, 2013) and refers to the desire to become all that one can, reaching ones potential. In essence, the 'desire for self-fulfilment' (Maslow, 1943, p.382). A distinct drawback to the actualising tendency is the suggestion that group experience is not effective in the creation of something that is *not* already inherent, however, Rogers and Yalom (1995) advise that constructive outcomes *will* occur through provision of the core conditions of caring. A study conducted by Ivtzan *et al.* (2013) discovered that levels of self-actualisation grew with age, mainly due to the impact of society, work and family issues. In the teenage psyche, gratification is more immediately sought through the acquisition of extrinsic rewards, than having to strive toward self-actualisation (Leoke and Dalton, 1988). This conclusion is contentious as experiential practice has identified that CA relationships with teenagers, when optimal, promote aspiration toward betterment. Specific to the present study Hall and Hansen (1997) advocate females achieve higher levels of

belonging and self-esteem than their male counterparts. Thus, actualisation through valued relationships and continued development of abilities is achieved. However, generational transformations may render such conclusions inconsistent as this was a mid-1990's study. Nevertheless, specific to the studied cohort, provision of a safe and nurturing environment by the sports coach was found paramount to loving rugby, achieving fulfilment and feelings of positive accomplishment (Dong *et al.*, 2013). In order to achieve self-actualisation, intrinsic motivation is deemed a fundamental requirement.

### **2.3 Motivational Climate and Theories**

Rogers and Yalom (1995) believe that motivation is initiated through a continual struggle toward fulfilment. However, basic tenets of human requirement must be satisfied before more hierarchical needs are sought. Rogers *et al.*, (2013) suggest that personality change cannot occur in the absence of self-motivation, a key component for sustained engagement in learning throughout modern times. This prompts investigation to how intrinsic motivation can be activated within learners that are perceived as devoid of this trait. Bandura (1977 p.108) describes intrinsic motivation as an 'elusive construct... [the] performance of activities for no apparent external reward.' Therefore, facilitation of person-centred learning environments gain further momentum for learners to experience perceptions of competence (Rogers *et al.*, 2013). Such environments, sequentially increase 'self-efficacy' [self-worth] and internal confidence (Bandura, 1997 p.3). Deci & Ryan (2008) propose that an important facet of motivation is energisation of the learner's thought process, leading to vitality and subsequent positive engagement. Should the coach draw out this state of 'mindfulness' more autonomous engagement will ensue (Deci & Ryan, 2008 p.184). The coach who provides exhilarating environments elicits mindfulness, thus activating intrinsic motivation within learners. This macrotheory of human motivation termed 'self-determination theory' (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2008 p.182) applies to a broad range of life concerns, significant aspects for the sports coach being, the ability to enhance vitality, behaviour and well-being. In tandem with SDT, Wolters (2004) advocates the coach should structure practice on mastery, as opposed to performance, orientation. Study results indicated increased levels of capability, producing more adaptive outcomes,

therefore sports coaches should facilitate structured environments that are supportive of autonomy-supportive mastery achievement goals (Amorose and Anderson-Butcher, 2006; Gillet *et al.*, 2010; Jõesaar *et al.*, 2012). This approach places prominence on personal technique within set tasks, in contrast to the narrow objectivity of performance goals toward results (Ames, 1992). SDT, alongside positive psychological engagement can also produce ripple effects, rendering young people more likely to be physically active during further recreation time (Standage, Duda and Ntoumanis, 2003).

Deci *et al.* (1999 cited in Readdy *et al.*, 2014) urge that intrinsic motivation can be undermined by performance-dependent incentives and extrinsic rewards. This prompts the sports coach to carefully consider the introduction of such measures in order to entice compliance. Supported by personal experiential practice, tangible rewards become constant expectations for athletes, thus counteracting the advantages of intrinsic motivational techniques. From the developmental concept of self-actualisation through facilitation of a positive motivational climate, 'client-centered therapy' (Rogers, 1951 p.4) is formulated. Congruent with person-centredness, connective fusions of these concepts enmesh closely to professional health care practice.

## **2.4 The Person-Centred Approach**

Carl Rogers' pioneering person-centred therapy was gradually developed through experiential practice, forming an antithesis to the accepted psychoanalytical approach of the mid twentieth century (Rogers, 1961). Non-directive counselling convinced Rogers that it was the client who knew best (Mearns and Thorne, 1988). Such an approach can be applied to the coaching arena. According to Rogers *et al.* (2013) the person-centred approach can impact positively on the CA relationship, augmenting interaction with elevated levels of competence and autonomy for learners. Rogers' theoretical perspective helps make sense of problematic behavioural situations yet, advise educators that critical reflection-on-practice to be a key consideration in the athlete-centred approach (Nelson *et al.*, 2014a). Specifically, when an individual *has a bad day*, tensions and dynamic variables can lead to perceived outcomes of failure (Jones and Wallace, 2005), rendering it crucial that attentive observation and listening

are exercised by the coach. This notion is echoed in a study to develop a valid framework (Christie and Camp, 2014). Effective provision of person-centred practice was confirmed to be a continual challenge for practitioners. Applying Mezirow's (1991) action of critical reflection and evaluation process, the significance of learning and listening together, as opposed to imposing one's personal expert and legitimate power was ascertained.

The omission of set structures within the person-centred approach is indeed a challenge for the educator (Mearns and Thorne, 2007) and can become problematic to learners who display reluctance to communicate, balk at autonomy, or prefer command and task orientated content. Rogers (1951) however, dismisses concepts of client-centred approaches as rigid or static, specifying its dynamic concepts account for flux and fluidity that are integral to human relationships. Gatongi (2007) advises the non-judgemental person-centred practitioner must not guide learners toward intended solutions or suggest better ways of problem solving, even if behaviour deteriorates drastically. This concept poses great difficulty for educators who have definitive learning outcomes, suggesting solutions to be negotiated with relevant hierarchical stakeholders, or seeking further professional assistance to issues considered outside the coach's jurisdiction. Application of the person-centred approach requires high ethical standards, therefore moral principles are an important issue to investigate.

#### **2.4.1 Moral Education**

Noddings (2003 p.171) believes moral education is a 'community-wide enterprise' where the ethical fulfilment of others is of utmost importance. This equates to a shared responsibility that if implemented thoughtfully, will perpetuate young people to consider others in a positive, ethical manner. Educators must recognise learners' attitudes nonjudgmentally, expressing UPR throughout pedagogical engagement. The master educator will employ caring within practice, modifying requirements in action, according to the attentiveness and capability of the learner (Agne, 1999 cited in Jones, 2009). Critical reflection is required to challenge established rationalist thinking (Knowles, Katz, & Gilbourne, (2012), consequently, learners must be made aware that they are of far greater importance than the subject matter (Noddings (2003).

It is imperative for the coach to understand and maintain high moral integrity in the role to which they are appointed, caution is advised to those who fail to adopt appropriate moral standing can espouse unethical conduct (Joosten *et al.*, 2013). Norm-transgressing behaviour (Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010) can be inadvertently transferred by coaches who are driven by performance achievement goals (Wolters, 2004) to encourage contravention of rules. Consequently, unsportsmanlike conduct can be transferred to and from parents and spectators (Bach, 2006), thus actively promoting antisocial behaviour, leading to irrecoverable outcomes in the CA and parental relationships.

The following section centres on shared responsibility, exploring strengths and limitations of facilitating constructivist learning environments to inspire motivation and engagement within learners.

## **2.5 Constructivism: An Empowering Approach to Learning**

Ennis (2000) argues sports educators should embrace a social constructivist perspective within practice to capture the imagination of disengaged young people to become more interested in physical activity. Practices should be designed to focus on 'community, caring, enhancing the game play of all students' (Ennis, 2000, p.248). Likewise, a six-month succession of interviews Rogers and Freiberg (1994 p.6) discovered that students have a good understanding of 'structure without rigidity', the subtlety between independence and complete licence. Teachers who facilitated environments that evoked freedom for expression, rather than being disorderly, were embraced. Such studies increase momentum for the notion that students want choice and opportunities to express their pupil voice and also accept responsibility for their actions.

Arguably, deep learning is better achieved through educators' facilitation of trusting, constructivist learning environments, whilst remaining the 'more capable' other (Vygotsky 1978, p.86). Constructivist settings can provide the breeding ground for genuineness that is crucial within caring. Rogers and Freiberg (1994, p.11) further champion the innovative development of 'Person-centred Learning Communities.' Rogers *et al.* (2013) uphold that empirical data displays a strong correlation between learners' positive perceptions of the educational values of teachers' facilitative

environments. This effect draws direct parallels to Hattie (2009); Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) whose longitudinal and extensive meta-analyses discovered that person-centred teaching methods were integral determinants within the most effective teachers. Exemplifying this interconnection, a recent study (Rodriguez (2015) advocates how a novice educator implemented sociotransformative constructivism (STC) (Rodriguez, 1998; 2002) to redress an existing culture of low expectation and engagement through increasing 'athlete agency' (Barker and Bailey, 2015 p.41). Existing narratives of despair were transformed to that of heightened engagement and achievement. This further strengthens the argument for employing a constructivist approach to effect positive outcomes within coaching. Such practice could enhance facilitation of positive directional growth and personality change. Strobel and Hyslop-Margison (2007) outline the significant value of negotiated conclusions and knowledge established through social constructivism.

However, considerable challenges may be encountered in the endeavour to persuade young people to cognitively engage in problem based learning (PBL), if not delivered appropriately. Constructivism requires the delegating of power to the learner, consequently, if implemented without considered planning, empowering approaches can produce chaotic outcomes (Jones and Wallace, 2005). In order to cope within the dynamic coaching arena, unabatingly inherent complexities and ambiguities must be embraced by the truly constructive coach (Jones and Wallace, 2005; Jones, 2007).

Further potential drawbacks for the constructive coach are the requirement of a flexible and resilient persona. Empowerment is not for those of a fragile disposition as malfunctioning exercises must be swiftly curtailed and speedily modified to more workable routines (Jones and Wallace, 2005). Additional caution for the coach is the potential to lapse into complete relativism, thus requiring immediate application of more traditional command teaching styles (Strobel and Hyslop-Margison, 2007). Such chaotic sessions can result in health and safety issues, accordingly, Rogers' theory advocates it unreasonable to 'impose freedom' (Rogers, 1969 cited in Nelson *et al.*, 2014a p.522) upon those for whom it is not welcomed, therefore instruction and guidance must be provided for those learners. Abramson (2013 p.56) expresses dissatisfaction that the constructivist revolution has 'tossed aside' traditional behaviourist perspectives that many learners expect from more knowledgeable others.

Similarly, Mouchet *et al.* (2014) highlight the subjectivity of coach discourse and behaviour to be situationally contextual in relation to impact on athlete performance.

### **2.5.1 Implementation of Feedback**

Positive feedback is a critical determinant for feelings of competence. It informs athletes of efficacious goal attainment, enhancing personal active pursuit for success in performance (Rogers *et al.*, 2013, p. xix). The timing and frequency of feedback is as crucial an element in the CA relationship as in any pedagogical activity, the shaping of discourse as important as what is transmitted. Hattie (2009 cited in Rogers *et al.*, 2013) proposes feedback is integral within constructivism, accordingly, believing it is *the* most powerful determinant for success in performance and attainment. Arena (2003) advocates the humanistic value of constructive feedback to positively impact upon self-esteem, suggesting praise for endeavour, rather than public denunciation or reprimand for performance. This is particularly meaningful as adverse, negative feedback can be perceived by recipients as criticism, apportioning blame and distrust to intended targets. Studies conducted by Raver *et al.* (2012) propose that destructive criticism impairs CA alliances, even spawning anger from its recipients. Emotions prevent intended messages from being perceived, or indeed appraised, rising to the possibility of causing permanent damage in the CA relationship. Byra (2004) recommends frequency of feedback should be a key consideration for the coach. Moreover, to include ample opportunity for reciprocal feedback, presenting opportunities to provide a 'pupil voice' (Russell *et al.*, 2007 p.3) to enhance the CA relationship. These junctures allow active listening opportunities for coaches to identify understanding through valuable interactions with participants (Lorimer and Jowett, 2009). A subsequent study suggests perceptions toward thoughts and feelings relating to successful outcomes in the CA relationship, are subject to gender differences (Lorimer and Jowett, 2010). Conclusions propose a great amount remains unexplored regarding empathic accuracy in the CA relationship. The caring coach should continually reflect upon feedback to formulate structure for coherent discourse with peers. Such practice constitutes a welcomed contemporary approach termed autoethnography.

## 2.6 A Call for Autoethnography?

Autoethnography enhances sociological imagination by inspiring learners to engage in critical thinking about experiential learning, united to lived experience (Cook, 2014). Contemporary discourse within coaching is so rationality-dominant that expression within practice is remarkably limited, resulting in coaches struggling to adequately convey their knowledge (Jones, 2009). This is a key stumbling block regarding communication, technical terms being misconstrued by coaches and learners alike. Coach education courses traditionally convey complex terms that many coaches use to exhibit and confirm legitimate power. Young people misleadingly express comprehension to such recitations as not to appear confused, particularly within group settings. In contrast, the autoethnographic perspective engages all stakeholders to help clarify otherwise obscure issues, prevalent within the enigmatic coaching arena (Adams and Holman Jones, 2011).

*'Crucially for coaching, autoethnographies can be a way of bringing the unconscious to the surface by engaging the self in reflexive conversations... Autoethnography can also help us unmask the many ambiguous faces of coaching.'*

*(Jones, 2009 p.379)*

Autoethnographic approaches help unlock sociological understanding of coaches' discourse in subjective and astonishing ways (Sparkes, 2002). Specifically, those enigmatic light bulb moments of instant recognition that appear to be interpreted through almost mystical means.

Conceivable limitations to autoethnography propose educators to be mindful they are 'cultural billboards' (Spry, 2001 p.719) ubiquitously on display for interpretation to individualistic views, within their audience. Furthermore, akin to reflective practice, autoethnography challenges individuals to embark on painstaking and time consuming reflexive data recording, to inform descriptive narratives (Delamont, 2009). The most significant disadvantage for autoethnographers is the potential disclosure of intimate information, rendering vulnerability to potential denunciation (Ellis, 2004,) augmented with evocative, indisputable ethical issues (Cook, 2014).

## 2.7 Summary

The literature review identifies three key areas outlined within this chapter. Core conditions of caring; the person-centred approach; constructivist learning environments; and ultimately the enriching concept of autoethnography to identify an aperture in research regarding the present study. The concept of caring is enjoying a renaissance resonating within contemporary education studies, emanating from Abraham Maslow's theory of self-actualisation. Underpinned by Rogers' (1951) client-centred perspective the person-centred approach relies greatly upon caring, placing learners as the primary concern. This humanistic approach considers the person holistically, drawing upon the theory of self-actualisation for the development of self (Hill, 2000). Practical implications for the sports coach advocate the implementation of caring to produce positive directional tendencies for learners. Motivational climate, a key element of self-actualisation, suggests challenging practice elicits interest and engagement. Therefore, goal orientation should emphasise a mastery, as opposed to performance, approach. Feedback should be morally and ethically informed, providing balanced two-way discourse, to enhance CA relationships. This builds trust and an increased likelihood of young people making positive life choices.

Provision of person-centred environments feature constructivist approaches to learning. In facilitating these appropriately, much considered reflection in and on practice is required, to embrace unexpectedly chaotic outcomes. Constructivism can be consequently challenging for novice coaches, identifying that some young people prefer a didactic approach (Rogers, 1969), hence, contingency must be made for this potentiality.

Finally, autoethnography endeavours to decipher, in understandable terms how coaches think. Story telling through self-narrative assists coaches, and fellow professionals, in comprehending why they do, what they do.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodology**

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of four significant areas: The rationale for the study, inspired by personal ontological and epistemological perspectives; secondly, the qualitative inquiry required to drive the methodological position of the study, including several autoethnographical assignments; thirdly, research methods used; and finally, the process of collection, interpretation and analysis of data required to address the aim of the study, within which ethical considerations are outlined.

The previous chapter identifies a gap in research pertaining to the sports coach affecting behaviour and engagement through application of the core conditions of caring. Coupled with Maslow's theory of self-actualisation, perpetuate the person-centred principles, crucial to formulating the persona of the caring coach. Facilitation of constructivist values to empower learners, provision of considered feedback, and stimulation of a positive motivational climate, inform the composition of three research questions:

1. What challenges are encountered in efforts to engage young people in sport?
2. How can the caring sports coach help to protect against antisocial behaviour in young people?
3. What further strategies can be implemented to engage and nurture positive behaviour patterns in young people?

The purpose of this study focuses on the ability of the sports coach to elicit behaviour patterns within young people through application of a caring approach. It was therefore important to draw upon the review of literature supported by personal professional experience to inform composition of the research questions. Previous coaching experience [from 1995 to 2013] was devoid of academic theory due to being informed by 1990's coach education. However, empathy along with congruency and positive regard *were* the driving force behind personal coaching practice. These factors prompt

explanation of a personal ontological and epistemological standpoint that drives the methodology for this study.

### **3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Research Perspectives**

Relating to how a person views the world, ontology refers to what is believed as reality (Guba, 1990) the ontological perspective for the sports coach prompts the question, what *is* coaching, what does it look like in practice? The coach who considers coaching the sequential transmission of information, delivered through repetitive drills, in effort to achieve singular rigid outcomes (Lyle, 2002; 2007) adopts a realist ontology. Alternatively, practitioners who consider individuals as separate entities, deeming there is no inevitable objective or truth, position their ontological standpoint within the paradigm of relativism. Personal coaching experience has cultivated an acceptance that no two CA interactions are the same, supporting the relativist ontological viewpoint. As a relativist coach and researcher, all meaning is regarded equally valid according to individual philosophical, cultural and sociocultural standpoint (Packer and Goicoechea, 2000). This notion is important in affecting developmental change in young people (Dreeben, 1968). Equally, athletes' ontological perspectives are formed from basic building-blocks that drive personal perceptions as recipients of coaching (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012). Ontological standpoints therefore form individualistic realities to why a person chooses to participate in organised sporting activity. The nature of meaningful reality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) further leads to construction of epistemological meaning (Crotty, 1998).

In regard to how a person knows what they know (Crotty, 1998; Feder, 2008), epistemology ranges from that of objectivity, to the opposing paradigm of the subjectivist perspective (Guba, 1990). My personal epistemological viewpoint provides a philosophical grounding, aimed at obtaining reliable and legitimate knowledge, to discover valid resolutions to the research questions (Maynard and Purvis, 1994). Practice delivered by the coach should be interpreted holistically (Denscombe, 2010), considering not only pedagogical, but also social and cultural aspects (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009). Experience for both coach and participants must be educational and ultimately enjoyable as 'the person is also an emotional, political, spiritual and cultural being' (Cassidy *et al*, 2009 p.11). Years of personal experiential practice deem the

pedagogical aspects that perpetuate coaching as complex and ambiguous. Socio-cultural factors skew practice toward non-linear trajectories, leading to pluralistic outcomes (Hardman, 2008). Such multiplicity situates the coaching process firmly amidst the paradigm of interpretivism (Jones *et al.*, 2014). This profusion of intricacy advocates the necessity of a variety of means to answer research questions. Therefore, my personal philosophical standpoint impelled the methodological approach to be that of sociological and qualitative in nature (Crotty, 1998).

### **3.3 Research Methodology: A Qualitative Approach**

The present study of human experience, eminently sociological in nature, proposed the employment of qualitative enquiry in endeavour to derive answers to the research questions (Marvasti, 2004). Theoretical perspectives within this research required a qualitative methodology to both inform and underpin meaning (Sapsford, 2007). The socio-political, rather than scientific, relationship between researcher and coaches (Silverman, 2006) emerged, whereas the accord between researcher and young people in the study group was somewhat sociocultural in nature (Wells, 1999). Research methodology considered the holistic nature of all studied participants, reaffirming the person-centred no 'one size fits all' (Purdy & Potrac, 2014 p.14) as carrying particular significance. Subjective interpretation was therefore considered the most advantageous approach to unlocking understanding and knowledge from within both coaches and learners (Guba, 1990). Cronin and Mandich (2015) propose that learning, ergo behaviour and engagement, can only be inferred and not directly measured, notwithstanding, behavioural patterns *are* constructed and modified through learning (Walker, 1984). The ambiguous and sometimes contradictory reality of sociocultural research rendered qualitative enquiry to produce more reliable conclusions than a quantitative methodological pursuit (Denscombe, 2014). Much deliberation eventuated in reflexive qualitative inquiry (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009) of a grounded theory pattern, befitting an exploratory small-scale study of human interaction, thus allowing research to be conducted with an open mind (Denscombe, 2014). Personal adoption and subsequent adaption of methods through discovery led to diverse research, recording ideas as they occurred (Charmaz, 2006). Constructive theory positioned research firmly in the domain of interpretivism, the flexible guidelines

allowing sense-making of sometimes hidden meaning in the CA relationship (Charmaz, 2006).

### **3.3.1 Utilising an Autoethnographic Approach**

Autoethnography was introduced as an endeavour to illuminate observed behaviour by means of a descriptive self-narrative (Adams and Holman Jones, 2011) thus increasing flow for the reader. Having formed positive relationships with the coaches: Rob, a community sports development coach; and Gareth a community based rugby union coach, autoethnography offered a means of making sense and eliciting deeper understanding of the rationale behind observed practices through 'lived experiences' (Denison and Rinehart, 2000). Paradigmatically antagonistic to the traditional rationalist ideal, autoethnography permitted construction of meaning as opposed to following a 'paint-by-numbers' (Jones and Wallace, 2005 p.120) approach to research practice. Findings aimed to nourish sociological sensitivity and a deeper intensity to how the coach and athletes perceived situations and dilemmas that were encountered (Jones, 2009). Two significant observed events formed autoethnographical narratives which illuminated real life practices of the sports coach (Appendix M-N).

### **3.4 Research Methods**

In order to obtain the most credible data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Denscombe, 2014) for this study, strategic methodological triangulation (Mason, 1996; Drouin *et al.*, 2015) was implemented to corroborate different sources of information, regarding engagement and behaviour (Mason, 2002). Answers for research questions were sought through extensive, unobtrusive observations (Jones, 2015), focus group and concluding interviews with coaches. Integration of methods provided an effective and comprehensive representation of collected data (Drouin *et al.*, 2015). Initial snapshots of natural CA interactions provided an insight to how athlete engagement helped combat antisocial behaviour. Subsequent observations greatly supported practical implications of study research within the literature review, including strategies to promote positive behaviour in athletes. Findings perpetuated the design of data for the focus group and were integral to informing construction of pertinent questions for the

eventual coach interviews. The interviews provided further personal insight to the challenges coaches face in their practice. The latter part of the process produced much unanticipated data luring research to be more intrinsically linked to novel theoretical perceptions (Charmaz, 2006).

### **3.4.1 Observations**

Non-participant observation allowed a high degree of directness, data being recorded as it happened in participant's 'natural settings' (Creswell, 2014 p.185), negating the reliance of recall from study participant (Jones, 2015). For this reason observations of CA practices formed the initial research method. Creswell (2013) considers the implication of behaviour, language and interaction between individuals within culture-sharing cohorts, through extensive study, a quintessential method. A candid view of 'naturally occurring' (Silverman, 2006 p.21) interaction between participants within the sample group was sought, therefore venturing into unobtrusive locations were a key consideration (Jones, 2015). The validity of this approach was to leave only footprints (Oakley, 2012), rendering CA interactions to be uninterrupted by awareness of an off-putting presence. However, a distinct disadvantage was the lack of auditory information, although happenings were apparent, some were not clear to why they were occurring (Jones, 2015).

### **3.4.2 Semi-Structured Focus Group**

The second research method took the form of a two-part semi-structured focus group involving the athletes only. Questionnaires were considered however, the high attendance rate of participants rendered this a far more concise and efficient method of data collection. Silverman (2013) stresses concern regarding the reliability of information collected during semi-structured interviews as personal assumptions should not impart on the interpretation of open-ended questions. Accordingly, observations informed wording of prepared statements to be accurate and specific to participant's behaviour, engagement and also thematic aspects within the literature review (Creswell, 2014). Further observations developed reflection, resulting in several edits before printing the final statements for the focus group. During the

categorisation of this data, I assumed the role of moderator, available to help explain issues and clarify statement wordings. Following this, participants were encouraged to answer open questions with freedom to express views (United Nations, 1989), thus eliciting a more candid view of the young athlete's perspective. This task was recorded in audio format to present a reliable appreciation of the dialogical element within the cohort, as advocated by Silverman (2006). A few days were allowed to pass before analysis of audio was undertaken as not to be flawed by emotion, preconceptions or bias (Yin, 2013).

### **3.4.3 Interviews with Coaches**

Face-to-face interviews helped gain qualitative insight to the perceptions, feelings and experiences of coaches (Creswell, 2014). Both Rob and Gareth were encouraged to deliver autoethnographic narratives perpetuated by historical interpretations (Gratton and Jones, 2010), to establish why they do what they do (Jones and Cushion, 2008). Semi-structured methods posed challenges as to when to probe further, deviating off script, or not (Gray, 2014). However, focus remained explicit to the research questions and the key themes throughout. Qualitative open questioning was implemented to encourage spontaneous 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1991 p. 50) to decipher, in understandable terms, how the coaches thought. This provided insightful data to the CA relationship (Macdonald *et al.*, 2012). Coach methodology behind methods elicited several un-researched revelations.

### 3.5 Sample Group

**Figure 1** below represents the exploratory sample frame (Denscombe, 2014), chosen to provide purposeful, ‘information-rich’ data (Patton, 2002 p.46).

<b>Participant(s)</b>	<b>Position/Role within Study</b>	<b>Rationale for Selection</b>
<b>Gareth</b>	A community rugby union coach with 12 years’ experience.	Coaches all ages and gender including adults from grassroots level to players within regional clubs throughout Wales.
<b>Rob</b>	A 5x60 sports development officer.	A university graduate who coaches children in several high schools in South Wales.
<b>Under 15 (U15) Girls Rugby Squad</b>	Participants in the rugby union squad working with Gareth.	Representative of studied population, many with no previous rugby experience and considered disengaged in a community measured as an area of multiple deprivation (Welsh Government, 2014). Many players joined the rugby squad through a community sport project.
<b>Under 18 (U18) Girls Rugby Squad</b>	Participants in the rugby union squad working with Gareth. Many since joining U15 squad.	Many are previous members of the U15 squad having continued their engagement for several years to U18 level.

**Figure 1. Sample frame**

### **3.5.1 Ethical Considerations**

Initial considerations regarding research methods were in strict adherence to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines before pursuing active participation of human subjects. Dissertation tutor advice prompted several revisions of the ethics form before formal 'Ethics Committee approval' (Denscombe, 2014 p.306) (Appendix A). Parental consent (Appendix C) and child assent forms (Appendix D) were designed sensitively, as is appropriate for the procedural ethics regarding young people (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Withdrawal rights (BERA, 2011) were concisely explained prior to presenting to all study participants (Denscombe, 2014). To add to the narrative, age appropriate pseudonyms were assigned to all individuals that are referred to by a name (Connelly, 2014). This protects personal involvement against long-term repercussions (Denscombe, 2014). Previous work placement had been the catalyst for the present study, my supervisor acting as the gatekeeper (Creswell, 2014). An initial meeting with Gareth months' earlier, allowed time to understand the proposed project, therefore preparing the athletes for my arrival. This was important as the studied cohort could be considered a 'vulnerable population' (Gray, 2012 cited in Palaiologou, 2012 p.48).

### 3.6 Procedure

Figure 2 below is a concise account of research method procedure including timescale and details regarding the three methods of data collection.

Research Method	Time/Length of Study	Details
<b>Coach/Participant Observations</b>	Weekly/twice weekly observations spread over a 3 month period.	Observations of coaching sessions and matches involving the coach with several teams including the studied under 15 female rugby cohort.
<b>Focus Group</b>	<p>30 minute session. Takes place after 2 months of observations.</p> <p>Part 1. Placement of structured questions (15 minutes).</p> <p>Part 2. Open questions to each group (15 minutes).</p>	<p>Semi-structured focus group involving the researcher and n=20 members of the under 15 female rugby squad only.</p> <p>Players form 3 groups of 6-7 persons of choice and arrange prepared statements into 3 pre-arranged columns namely: agree – not sure – disagree.</p> <p>Researcher moderates proceedings.</p> <p>Photographs are taken of the 3 columns of statements only.</p> <p>Researcher asks open questions regarding the placement of statements. A digital audio recording will be made during this section.</p>
<b>Interviews</b>	30 minute interview with 2 studied coaches. To take place after the focus group.	Semi-structured interviews explicitly linked to research questions.  Some open questions are designed to elicit an autoethnographic insight to coaching philosophies and practice.

Figure 2. Procedure of research methods

All data was subsequently collated and analysed to produce eventual findings which were explicitly linked to the research questions, thus informing eventual conclusions.

### **3.6.1 Lessons Learned from Pilot Study**

A preliminary small-scale pilot study was carried out approximately one month prior to this study as a pre-test for the semi-structured interview guide (Yin, 2013; Janghorban *et al.*, 2014). For authenticity the interviewee was a sports development officer working within a disadvantaged community in South Wales

(Glesne, 2006). The questions, although open and thematically linked to the literature review, lacked explicitness to research questions (Yin, 2013). Limitations identified a shortfall of inquiry regarding interviewee background history, and justification as to why they do what they do. Refinement of the interview guide produced a line of qualitative inquiry more credible to obtaining resolutions to the research questions (Janghorban *et al.*, 2014).

### **3.6.2 Problems Encountered and How They Were Overcome**

As a novice researcher it took time to overcome procedural challenges before initiating actual research methods (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, many weeks of observation materialised before the focus group and interviews, thus allowing time for interpretation of learned patterns within behaviour, language and beliefs (Harris, 1968). Critically, the essential requirement of sustained and long-term immersion within the field of study to collect extensive data was not possible in the allotted time frame. Therefore, I seized upon as many opportunities as possible to observe the cohort to beget a compensatory, micro-ethnographic study. On a personal note, being a mature student rendered problematic issues few and far between, however the present study could prove more challenging for younger researchers due to the possibility of 'going native' (Creswell, 2013 p.96).

### **3.6.3 Data Gathering**

Initial data for this study was gathered through initial 'naturalistic observations' (Arthur, 2012 p.166) of coaches delivering sessions and managing teams in competitive

matches at several indoor and outdoor venues. Data was recorded on traditional clipboards and digitally, on handheld mobile devices (Franklin, 2012) [Apple iPhone5 and Apple iPad]. Written notes were subsequently transcribed to MSWord documents prior to coding (Appendix G). During the subsequent coach interviews and focus group, data was recorded in digital audio format on the iPhone with an iPad tablet present as a backup device (Weare, 2004). Coach interviews (Appendix K-L) and the U15 girls focus group (Appendix H-J) were meticulously transcribed prior to coding (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.7 Analysis of Data**

The present study focused on the exclusive gathering of personally inferred qualitative evidence, therefore, thematic analysis was deemed to provide the most efficient outcomes (Boyatzis, 1998; Creswell, 2013; Denscombe, 2014). Raw data from the research methods was thematically analysed, then unambiguously colour coded (Lewins and Silver, 2007) using MSWord text highlighting option. Accordingly, each research method (Appendix E-L) features the same designated colour key for transcribed themes. This thematic method eased the organisation-to-narrative challenges described by Creswell (2013). Data was systematically reduced and choreographed (Miles and Huberman, 1994) using triangulation (Mason, 1996) of observations, focus group and interviews, to ensure reliability and logical flow in accordance with that of the literature review. Interpretation through personal perspectives hence, elicited construction of contextual 'detailed description' (Creswell, 2013 p.184) to establish meaning (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the assignment of qualitative methodological perspectives. This was informed by experiential practice and personal ontological and epistemological standpoint to address the research questions within the timescale effectively. Copious data was gathered via a triangulation of research methods, specifically: observations, featuring autoethnographic accounts; a focus group with the U15 sample group; and ultimately coach interviews. Ethical considerations were of

maximal importance throughout procedure of all research methods including the pre-research pilot study, which helped refine interview guides. Extensive data was gathered throughout the research methods and meticulously analysed prior to colour coding. This unequivocally enhanced the organisational writing for the forthcoming results and discussion chapter, which thematically addresses study findings and proposed theories from the literature review.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Results and Discussion**

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter systematically communicates the key findings from all applied research study methods (Nelson *et al.*, 2014b), structure consisting of three hierarchical categories explicitly linked to the research questions stated in the previous chapter. Within each category, sub-sections focus on the analysis of key themes in synchronisation with the literature review. Comprehensive research methods revealed the emergence of unexpected themes therefore, these discoveries are discussed accordingly.

## 4.2 Challenges Encountered in Efforts to Engage Young People in Sport

The primary concern for the sports coach is getting young people to actually turn up to sessions (Holt and Talbot, 2013; Allin, 2015), particular significance relating to the sedentary behaviour (Ramchandani *et al.*, 2015) much prevalent in disadvantaged communities. This affirms such barriers as the location of activities, lack of parental interest, adverse peer pressure, not forgetting young people's perceived interest in the activity itself. Rob, a community development coach in South Wales suggests there is no encapsulating panacea to engage young people toward sport:

*"There is no single answer, no one-size-fits-all in getting them involved...  
As it does rely on voluntary participation you do have to coax some in."  
(Rob)*

Again, the no one-size-fits-all analogy not only applies to development of coaching approach (Purdy and Potrac, 2014) but also the design of appropriate youth development programs targeting continued existence of high-risk behaviours (Hartmann, 2003; Chesser *et al.*, 2011). Commendable role models such as Rob and Gareth facilitate supportive environments that empower young people, through achievable goal-setting, to make positive directional choices that help shape future lives (Witt and Crompton, 2003; Chesser *et al.*, 2011).

Experienced rugby union coach Gareth alludes to the difficulties encountered during the initial organisation of the girls' rugby venture regarding participatory numbers and a suitable location for practice:

*“The numbers, the activity started with was in a school environment... so it was an after-school activity to start it which was non-contact, because the school it was in didn’t have a field, it was on AstroTurf. Initially numbers were low and probably in and around 10 and sometimes as low as 7 for the under 15’s.” (Gareth)*

Gareth highlights the limitation of how using a particular school environment deterred prospective participants, from surrounding schools, and how the acquisition of a neutral venue increased attendance:

*“The significant change was... when it went to a community setting with a field, so we can do contact, when it went to a neutral venue being not a particular school that someone’s not part of, obviously that seen significant numbers rise to where we are typically now. I’d say we don’t see less than 22.” (Gareth)*

Gareth’s dogmatic approach helped alleviate the typically low levels of participation within this setting (Allin, 2015) by recognising the cultural problem, thus providing training locations that granted equality of access for a broader range of participants (Stevenson, 2013).

#### **4.2.1 Going the Extra Mile**

It is particularly evident that coaches who go the extra mile (Nelson *et al.*, 2014) reap the rewards of overcoming challenges of trust and perceived commitment from their athletes:

*“We’re not just there for training and you’re not just there for the games. A coach is there for 24/7... you’ve got to go above and beyond.... it’s more than just delivering an hour training session... more than just turning up at a game and walking away when the final whistle goes.” (Gareth)*

Supporting Barker and Bailey (2015), this illustrates how Gareth’s willingness to go beyond coaching duties to impact on the shaping of young athlete identities. Particular significance of this approach evokes the CA relationship toward positive transformation in athletes’ habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) in disadvantaged communities.

Achieved through the CA interactions during training sessions (Barker and Bailey, 2015) reconstruction of past and present educational and domiciliary experiences are instrumental in shaping individuals' current and future practices (Maton, 2008 cited in Grenfell, 2008).

#### **4.2.2 The Physicality of Sport**

The physical element within sport and its implications for the studied cohort was an unforeseen theme and therefore, made conspicuous by its absence from the literature review. Rugby union is an increasingly fierce encounter between teams of players indefatigably endeavouring to triumph in the physical contact element (Liston *et al.*, 2006; O'Reilly, 2016). Suggesting rugby, of all sports, as a vehicle to engage disaffected young people towards development of community sport engagement seems curious. When engagement focusses on teenage girls, could easily be construed as physically dangerous (Young and White, 1995). However, through leadership and guidance of a caring coach this is the reality for many female participants within a South Wales community project.

Observation of several matches involving under 15 (U15) and under 18 girls (U18), the physical element became all too apparent as a personal autoethnographic account reveals:

*... Another injury! That's 3 in the first 15 minutes allowing an opportunity for coach to speed onto the pitch to offer both instruction and much welcomed water to his players... Into the second half and every play, it seems, results in at least one player prostrate with injury on the bright green 3G pitch. Another home player is aided by two colleagues as she hobbles dejectedly from the action. That's 5 to date....*

During a subsequent U15's training session a parent, alluding to the girls' toughness, mentioned a player being knocked unconscious. Upon questioning, Gareth confirms that Emma was carried from the field by stretcher to an awaiting ambulance, believing to have passed out for a few seconds. For two weeks Emma was instructed to rest, adhering to head injury protocol, and upon resumption of training was only permitted to participate in ball skills, with no contact whatsoever. Emma's mother disclosed to

Gareth her daughter's worries about returning to rugby, Gareth subsequently reassuring her she didn't have to do anything that she didn't want to. Consequently, Emma resumed training and played the following, and every game since.

During an observed match, Laura suffers a knock to the head and is physically sick on the pitch. Again, Gareth must substitute Laura following to guidelines regarding concussion (Gardner *et al.*, 2014). As Gareth patrols the touchline during the subsequent play, Laura shadows him pleading to be reinstated. Gareth explains his actions sympathetically, Laura understands his correct justification but is inconsolably disappointed. Such themes, not outlined in the literature review are key findings regarding the coach's empathic social support (Johnston and Carroll, 1998; Jenkins, 2006) and help in rehabilitation regarding psychological effects (Magyar and Duda, 2000; Brewer, 2010) when injuries incur.

These incidents are testament to the coach's UPR and empathy. Gareth discloses to me his honest and knowledgeable appreciation of player abilities:

*"I recognise players that I believe are not ready for contact, typically the ones that give a poor attempt to tackle and for these I generally limit game time so they can build up to it." (Gareth)*

Therefore, it is not always the case that players are averse to the physical contact inherent within rugby union, this research suggesting such paradoxical findings. Prior to endgames during training sessions, the players to a person, implore the coach to allow contact. However, Gareth rarely permits it, understanding to the possibility of concussion or neck injury (Swain *et al.*, 2011). Unsurprisingly, the ensuing focus group found all players in agreement to the preference of contact over non-contact during training sessions, thus exemplifying the contrasting perceptions of risk and safety between adults and young people (Backett-Milburn and Harden, 2004).

Interestingly, observation of this cohort over the four month period and not witnessing one moment of over-aggression or malice encapsulates the respect for other teams and unity amongst the players. Both fascinating and refreshing to witness, an example CA banter occurred during a recent training session. Gareth is emphasising the point of running straighter lines toward taking the contact:

*Gareth: "If you see a girl in front of you looking a bit uneasy on Sunday, what are you going to do?... Look her straight in the eye and run straight at her... What is she going to do?"*

*Player: "Shit herself!" Laughter rings out.*

Interactivity of this level is synchronous of Holt's (2009) lengthy and sustained intensive CA engagement, thus reinforces Rogers (1957) minimal precondition of a psychological connection in the CA relationship.

#### **4.2.3 Young people want to strive for betterment**

The studied cohort, despite many residing in disadvantaged surroundings, appear to actively strive toward positive directional tendencies. The physical and sociological benefits of rugby union, in close unison with a caring and virtually omnipresent coach, go a long way to offering many tenets toward Maslow's (1943) perceived self-fulfilment. Findings from the focus group was validated by all participants stating they really try hard in rugby to be as good as they can be. Accordingly, everyone believed that playing sport helped confidence in other parts life and would love to play sport as a career. For this cohort the rewards are seemingly intrinsic, supporting pronouncements by Rogers *et al.* (2013), the pinnacle of motivation surmounting to playing a match at a professional stadium in the capital city. These factors contradict Leoke and Dalton's (1988) dated findings that teenage gratification is acquired through earning extrinsic rewards, implying the unpredictability of generational ideals.

Whilst observing the U15's, a parent initiated a conversation regarding the organisation during training:

*"You should have seen 'em at the beginning, they couldn't even catch the ball." (Harry)*

Further dialogue from the players during the focus group:

*"We won by loads but he was still like... Not unhappy but some things we have to do better... And there's room for improvement as well... I wanna make everyone proud." (U15 players)*

These extracts epitomise the journey toward self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943) as the players and coach embark on the continual strife toward betterment in sport and as the last comment suggests, life.

### **4.3 The Caring Sports Coach Can Help Protect Against Antisocial Behaviour**

A key concern for people in reportedly deprived or disadvantaged residencies is the persistent problem of antisocial behaviour (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998; Johnson, 2013). However, the diligent coach can ‘serve the best interests of the children themselves and the community at large’ (Standing Committee for Youth Justice, 2015 p.2) through their continued practice.

#### **4.3.1 Sport Orientated Schemes within Communities**

The focus on social inclusion through community regeneration is a concerted effort in advancing public good, inextricably underpinning positivity in broader community effects (Coalter, 2007). Rob alludes to the distinct advantages of the 5x60 program (a nationwide scheme to encourage all ages to actively participate in 60 minutes exercise 5 times each week):

*“The program... operates a lot of evening sessions when they are more likely to be causing a nuisance in the community... it gives kids something better to do, an environment where they can socialise without hanging around shops... Also they’re becoming engaged in different sports, some that they wouldn’t have... and of course the credits give them opportunities to, to go on to become leaders themselves. This gives them sense of belonging and ownership.” (Rob)*

Accordingly, Gareth’s U15 rugby training sessions take place during various evenings throughout the week depending on the availability of pitch space. It is worth noting that there is only one sports pitch that serves the whole of the community’s rugby teams, of which there are several. Matches also generally transpire on Sundays, helping keep the players focussed and trouble free on Saturday nights:

*“Discipline is obviously a massive part, and particularly with a lot of young people I’ve... supported. They come from dysfunctional families where discipline is not the first and foremost. But, setting barriers, setting sort of guides, young people in my experience young people relish that, they wanna be sort of given that sort of guidance and that bit of structure which is not currently in and around their lives.” (Gareth)*

Gareth confirms the lack of structure for many young athletes in their home life and although he doesn’t have access to actual figures regarding crime rates, he reflects on how the community sport scheme has positively impacted on behaviour within the male population:

*“2 years ago when we started the youth, which were boys of aged 16 to 19, it was the first activity that was present in that particular community for some 12 years and a lot of the boys who were hanging around the shops, smoking cannabis and drinking and things... took up the opportunity of the rugby and obviously they stuck with it... for the duration of the year. There was noticeable changes in people where they were turning to gyms and thinking more about they’re sort of health and well-being, and wanting to get fitter, stronger for rugby.” (Gareth)*

In response to whether rugby had improved overall behaviour on and off the field of play, the U15 focus group presented some unpredictable conclusions:

*Player 1: It hasn’t given me more, or less... On the field I get more discipline than I do off the field.*

*Player 2: Yeah, yeah exactly.*

*Player 3: To rugby it has but not to other things... People don’t help you improve your behaviour, you improve your behaviour yourself.*

*Player 2: Yeah I agree.*

*Player 4: I don’t, I disagree ‘cause in rugby I enjoy doing it, in other things I don’t so that makes me misbehave.*

Such findings suggest that for these young people behaviour patterns are consciously negotiated. Most participants are fully aware of their deviant behaviour and it is

reproduced through expression of predetermined, symbolic markers as signals of cultural identity (Jones, 2002). The indiscipline that some of the young athletes openly discuss are deliberate and fractious undertakings in rebellion against societal norms, that attempt to control and homogenise them (Millie, 2008). The contrasting enjoyment and satisfaction that neoliberalist asset based community development (ABCD) (MacLeod and Emejulu, 2014) programs provide is a much overlooked construct of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). ABCD bears the hallmarks of caring and person-centred approach, celebrating strengths, rather than striving to improve a person's deficiencies. It is therefore essential to discover how the coach negotiates the buy in process for young people.

#### **4.3.2 Environments that Espouse Self-Determination and Motivation**

Initial observations of Gareth coaching the U15's exhibited an abundance of positivity centred 'on motivation rather than criticism' (Arena, 2003 p.11) engagement, and enjoyment from all participants. The intrinsic motivation displayed by the players continued from indoor, through freezing outdoor temperatures, to springtime match days. The environment facilitated by Gareth elicits determination from the athletes in the form of controlled and autonomous motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Drills and set plays delivered by the coach focus heavily on the mastery of technique however, there *is* evidence of performance orientation in relation to rugby matches (Wolters, 2004).

Gareth's coaching approach contributes positively toward basic psychological needs, well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2008) and actualisation of self-fulfilment (Maslow, 1943; Hill, 2000) within the athletes:

*"Recognising that everyone has got a strength and telling them that strength... I believe that's enough then to motivate them, to... strengthen the other things that perhaps might be lacking." (Gareth)*

When questioned on the difficulty in motivating young people who have an absence of structure in their lives:

*"That's the one big thing for a lot of young people, you know they may not be having attention at home you know... they're not doing well*

*academically... having a little bit of structure, having someone giving them a little bit of attention, setting them challenges. I think in my experience they sort of relish and sort of rise to it.” (Gareth)*

This notion is echoed by a U15 player:

*“He’s always looking for improvement, there’s always something we gotta improve on.”*

Players in the U15 focus group were unanimous that coaching methods motivated them and are self-determined, striving to do well for both Gareth and themselves. Many of the U15 players believe that Gareth’s punitive forfeits and shouting, although scarce, were a further indication that he cared for them (Claringbould *et al.*, 2015). Due to reliance upon voluntary attendance in the 5x60 program, Rob explains the crucial necessity to facilitate a comfortable and enjoyable environment, where participants can try out new skills and games, free from the pressure of competitive performance.

#### **4.3.3 Perplexities of Person-Centred Coaching**

Both Rob and Gareth allude to key elements of person-centred approaches in their coaching practice, however they are ultimately bound by the responsibility for provision of structure that is absent in their athletes lives (Van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2004). This, somewhat contrasts belief that non-directive counselling to be the best approach (Rogers, 1961; Gatongi, 2007). In response to the enigma of what coaching actually is, Rob discloses:

*Counselling is massive as I am seen as a role model or even a father figure... sometimes for guidance or even a source of confidence boost to an individual... It is the behaviour not the person that’s the problem (Rob).*

Challenging the behaviour, not the person, is a key concept within behavioural intervention schemes and personally witnessed in community regeneration. The extra help and support that some people need is delivered through the person-centred approach to promote social inclusion (Carnaby *et al.*, 2011). Concurrently, alongside the primary concern of player safety within sessions, Gareth often follows up on those who have been injured with phone calls or home visits, to check on personal progress,

discussing concerns or issues with parents. Gareth does exude a great deal of empathy with his players, individual participant questions are answered calmly and in an unhurried manner. Congruency to Rogers (1957; 1961) person-centred approach doesn't go unnoticed by the players who believe Gareth cares about them in training and matches, always finding time to talk and acknowledge their opinions on how they play. At this juncture, CA discourse of how and what is communicated is investigated.

#### **4.3.4 Effective Feedback in the Coaching Arena**

In regard to enhancing behaviour through transference of constructive feedback (Arena, 2003), Rob identifies himself as an observant coach who reflects in-action (Schön, 1991) allowing thinking time to determine the type and timing of feedback is required for his participants (Byra, 2004):

*“Honesty is important with children who are particularly hard on themselves, those who give up easily.” (Rob)*

Gareth's methods uphold his belief in his congruency whether coaching under 7's or senior men's squads. Such consistency in CA relationships affords the odd moment of humour during U15 girls training:

*“Run it straight, draw the player, then pass... Otherwise you're gonna end up in the river... With the rats!” (Gareth)*

Critical reflection is highly evident in Gareth's quiet, pragmatic approach, frequently explaining not only what, but why they are doing it. Feedback is a two-way process supporting Russell *et al.*'s (2007) allowance of ample opportunity for pupil voice. A plethora of open questions often form continuity chains eliciting reciprocally constructed learning outcomes through CA discourse (Vygotsky, 1978). The U15 girls focus group clarify this comprehensible discourse, harmoniously agreeing that Gareth explains things to them in a way they understand.

So, how else can a sports coach draw out positive outcomes in young people?

#### **4.4 Implementing Further Strategies to Engage and Nurture Positive Behaviour**

One might expect, in particular prevalence to disadvantaged communities, positive outcomes would require a wholly teacher-led approach, to compensate for inherent deficiencies in structure for many young people (Strobel and Hyslop-Margison, 2007). The actuality, however, reveals numerous examples of empowerment within CA interactivity.

##### **4.4.1 Constructivist Environments that Embrace Structure without Rigidity**

A striking instance occurred in the very first U15 observation. Acknowledging my presence, Gareth walked towards me leaving 27 girls unattended, upon doing so, the athletes formed 3 groups, each performing a separate routine, accordingly led by a U15 player. During the subsequent interview Gareth recalls this event explaining the gradual building up of trust, leading to his athletes developing and enhancing ownership (Ennis, 2000). Gareth further describes the noticing (Mason, 2002; 2015) of natural leaders who instinctively embrace responsibility, ascending them to the role of peer mentors.

A distinct advantage of democratic empowerment is outlined by Rob who allows participants to write suggestions for the following week's activities on a notice board. Frequently, this results in a huge increase in attendance, some turning up simply to watch or even commentate. Adversely, disadvantages are potentially chaotic outcomes that Jones and Wallace (2005) advise caution to:

*“Sometimes too much ownership results in possibly [participants] being biased towards their friends and they make rules that favour themselves in the games.” (Rob)*

Whilst observing the U15's an unexpected constructivist edged comment was revealed by a watching parent:

*“It's more about the way you are with them, not knocking what they teach on these coaching badges but you got to let them get out there and get the experience, it's all about letting them play.” (Joe)*

More surprisingly, Joe had fondly recollected his rugby coach as a coercive disciplinarian, oft the norm for his era. Such a revelation provides fitting testament to Gareth's coaching, the resultant U15's focus group reinforcing CA togetherness, and creative problem solving within rugby. During training Gareth reaps the benefits of personal job satisfaction through the hard constructivist miles he has invested. The U15 girls happily form a game of touch rugby whilst Gareth retrieves resources from the lock up... Then, a passing drill, one player displays autonomy by looping around for a second pass, another loops back inside for a pass... Try!.. A line-out move results in autonomous decision making with passes that flow toward another try:

*Awesome!.. Hang on girls, I've got to see that move again to check that I'm not dreaming! (Gareth).*

Allowing greater athlete agency (Barker and Bailey, 2015) invokes the expansive freedom of expression enthused by Gareth. Highly congruent with that of Rogers and Freiberg (1994) autonomous engagement is explicitly supportive of mastery orientated constructivist environments (Amorose and Anderson-Butcher, 2006; Gillet *et al.*, 2010; Jõesaar *et al.*, 2012).

#### **4.4.2 Autoethnographic Awareness**

Throughout the present study I endeavoured to provide an innovative perspective on the role of the sports coach. This notion is mainly due to the enlightenment that academic study has bestowed upon my sense-making of previous professional coaching experience (Welton, 1993). Two significant events (Appendix M-N) have illuminated the trials and tribulations of the caring sports coach through autoethnography (Adams and Holman Jones, 2011). However, little evidence of coach's autoethnographic storytelling has ensued from this study:

*"I used to make session journals but now tend to rely on the know-how gained from the experience of learning." (Rob)*

Rob apportions blame to the inevitable time constraints (Delamont, 2009) and higher priority administration duties of a full-time 5x60 officer, whilst Gareth has been led by Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) coach education. Currently amidst his Level 3 qualification, this undertaking likewise requires much organisational application.

However, a glimmer of an autoethnographic practice emanated during the U15 focus group where a few girls alluded to Gareth's storytelling about how he learned things.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Discussion has highlighted critical discoveries on how a caring CA relationship helps overcome challenges, whilst provision of a motivational climate elicits multilateral self-determination, engagement and belief in attaining self-betterment. Sport orientated schemes, when given time, provide a platform upon which to build a positive motivational climate to engage young people and thus, reduce antisocial activity. For any of this to occur though, essential caring leadership is required, namely, facilitators who are willing to fulfil multiple roles and possess the mindfulness, disposition and vitality to empower young people. Finally, increasing the awareness of autoethnography to provide easily understandable knowledge for conveyance to the coaching community is a viable consideration for sports educators (Sparkes, 2002; Jones, 2009).

# **Chapter 5**

# **Conclusions**

## **5.1 Introduction**

The final chapter focusses on key findings in explicit context to the research questions: Initially, the challenges facing coaches to engage young people; secondly how the caring sports coach provides engagement rich environment to stimulate a motivational climate; thirdly, clarification of the coach's role in protecting against antisocial behaviour.

The final two sections highlight the limitations of this research and ultimately recommendations for further research in this particular field of study.

## **5.2 Key Findings and Unexpected Outcomes**

Qualitative study findings elicited how the coaches overcame challenges of participation and engagement through dogmatic approaches, to ensure participant retention. Understanding the notion that there is no one-size-fits-all to panacea to practice, both coaches actively endorse facilitation of constructive, yet supportive, environments. Research methods revealed high levels of empowerment based structure without rigidity, trusting young people to accept responsibility for their actions. Such freedom to learn resulted in an abundance of intrinsic motivation within all participants. For many motivation extended beyond mere engagement, to self-determined passion for their sport. Elements of person-centred coaching were conspicuous within CA discourse, allowing ample opportunity for pupil voice and effective reciprocal feedback. This ensued in coherent rapport featuring moments of effervescent laughter.

Coaches understand their roles extend beyond the realms of the coaching arena, accepting that going the extra mile, fulfilling multiple roles is integral to their position. The social inclusion within studied community orientated programs and schemes, when organised through caring leadership, espouses indications of reduced antisocial behaviour and palpable evidence of self-actualisation within young people.

A key unexpected outcome of this study was the willingness of participants to engage at startlingly high levels of physicality, revelations starkly illuminated within descriptive narratives of injurious outcomes.

### **5.3 Limitations of this Research**

- A categorical drawback of research for the present study was the inherent lack of long-term engagement deemed imperative for informing truly ethnographic research. This suggests research study should be sustained for at least a year's duration. Inflexible seasonal timing for implementation of research methods also produced negative contributory factors, several events being cancelled and venues changed, due to adverse weather.
- Despite the sample group for this particular study being considered a suitable fit and representative of the intended target population, sample size and narrow locality suggests conclusions cannot be generalised to be definitive to the entire population of young people.

### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

- The plethora of advantages that appropriately assigned caring educators bring is distinctly palpable. As societal and pedagogical undertakings transform toward socially constructive endeavours, further research is much needed to inform nullification of antiquated rationalistic approaches to learning.
- The dearth of autoethnographic, indeed, any reflective documentation by the studied coaches was not an unexpected revelation. However, when referred to as storytelling, autoethnography resonated clearly in coaches understandings and should therefore be embedded within coach education to enhance teacher-learner relationships, thus providing simplistic and memorable learning experiences.

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# Appendix A

## CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

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

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

Some parts of this form have been completed for you (in **bold**). Once you have completed the form, print it out and sign the declaration. Your dissertation supervisor will check with you that the form has been completed correctly and sign the declaration. *A copy of the completed ethics approval form must be included in your dissertation.*

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Participant recruitment or data collection must not commence until ethics approval has been obtained.**

### PART ONE

Name of applicant:	Julian Symes
Supervisor (if student project):	Kieran Hodgkin
School:	<b>School of Education</b>
Student number (if applicable):	St20031753
Programme enrolled on (if applicable):	<b>BA (Hons) Educational Studies</b>
Project Title:	<b>The Impact of the Sports Coach to Affect Young People's Behaviour through the Implementation of Caring</b>
Expected Start Date:	<b>February 2016</b>
Approximate Duration:	<b>3 months</b>
Funding Body (if applicable):	<b>N/A</b>
Other researcher(s) working on the project:	<b>N/A</b>
Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?	<b>No</b>
Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?	<b>No</b>

In no more than 150 words, give a non technical summary of the project

The study for my dissertation focusses upon the ability of the sports coach who, through adopting a caring approach, can impact on the behaviour of young people. Through several years experiential knowledge my hypothesis is that the sports coach can elicit positive behaviour patterns through a referent approach. The study alludes to many theories that suggest why this should occur and the subsequent methodology is entirely qualitatively driven. 2 key research questions emerge:

1. How can the sports coach reduce aggression and protect against antisocial behaviour?
2. What strategies can be implemented to promote positive behaviour patterns?

I will be watching several coaches in action. The key focus will be viewing coach-athlete interactions in the most disadvantaged areas of Cardiff and the Rhondda-Cynon-Taff area.

Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:

Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain	<b>No</b>
Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples	<b>No</b>
Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)	<b>No</b>
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)	<b>No</b>

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form

**DECLARATION:**

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

**STUDENTS:** I confirm that I will not disseminate any material produced as a result of this project without the prior approval of my supervisor

Signature of the applicant:  
Julian Symes

Date:  
20/01/2016

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

Name of supervisor:

Kieran Hodgkin

Date:

3/02/2016

Signature of supervisor:


**Research Ethics Committee use only**

Decision reached:

Project approved  
Project approved in principle  
Decision deferred  
Project not approved  
Project rejected

Project reference number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Signature:

Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant:  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

## PART TWO

<b>A RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	
A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?	<b>No</b>
A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used <sup>1</sup>	
N/A	
A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project	
<p>The proposed methodology will be a qualitative approach and consists of 3 methods of data collection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Observation of coaches in action to determine their coaching approach, style and methods.</li><li>2. Semi-structured interviews with several coaches.</li><li>3. A short focus group to establish young people's thoughts and feelings in response to qualitative questions. This will be carried out with a girl's rugby team at the conclusion of an indoor training session. The children will be made aware of the choice to decline to participate. Those who do will be given the option to withdraw at any stage of proceedings. Assent forms will be explained and given to each participant. The focus group will consist of a simple task of 3 or 4 groups arranging statements (concerning coaching issues) into 3 columns namely: <p style="text-align: center;">Agree – Agree nor Disagree – Disagree.</p>Subsequently open questions will be posed to establish reasoning for each chosen order. These questions will be recorded as a digital audio file which once transcribed will be deleted. Photos will only be taken of the arranged columns of paper statements and will not feature any children.All data will be collated and analysed to produce eventual findings. This will be directly linked to the research questions to inform eventual conclusions.</li></ol>	
A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?	<b>No</b>
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research	
N/A	

## B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

<sup>1</sup> An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here

**B1** What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?

Research methods module and observational (and practical coaching within) placements. Professional coaching since 1994. Teaching (assistant) experience with children of all ages 2009-2013.

**B2 Student project only**

What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?

**All supervisors have experience of supervising undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations.**

**C POTENTIAL RISKS**

**C1** What potential risks do you foresee?

**Instructions: You must complete this section. Tick all the boxes that apply.**

**Preliminary questions:**

No

Yes

1. Does your study involve human participants?

2. Could the study be potentially harmful to you as the researcher in any way?

✓

If you have answered **no** to these questions you do not need to answer any of the subsequent questions on this form. You simply need to sign both this form and along with your supervisor complete form two. These need to be included as an appendix in your dissertation.

If you have answered **yes** to **question 2** your project must be submitted to the School's Ethics Committee for review. The procedures for this are outlined in pp.15-16 of the Cardiff School of Education's Research Ethics guidelines

If you have answered **yes** to question 1 and **no** to question 2 please complete the following questions:

Yes No

1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to

 

give informed consent - other than children. (eg. people with learning disabilities)?

✓

2. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge

 

and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)

✓

3. Will the study involve discussion of participants partaking in activities that are

 

deemed sensitive (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)?

✓

4. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?

✓

5. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?

✓

If you have answered **yes** to any of these questions your project must be submitted to the School's Ethics Committee for review. The procedures for this are outlined in pp.15-16 of the Cardiff School of Education's Research Ethics guidelines.

Yes No

6. Does your study involve participants under the age of 18 years?

✓

If you have answered **no** to question 6 and **no** to questions 1-5, you do not need to answer any of the subsequent questions in this section (C1).

If you have answered **yes** to question 6 you need to answer the following supplementary questions:

Yes No

6 (a) Will your research take place in a public place (schools, youth clubs or other statutory setting)?

✓

If you have answered **yes** to question 6(a) you need to complete the following:

I am aware that I must gain the following **before** I begin my research:

Yes

- a. Gate-keeper permission (e.g., Headteacher, Youth leader, Sports coach);
- b. Consent from parent(s) or guardian(s);
- c. Consent from the children or young people

✓

✓

✓

While conducting my research I commit to:

Yes

- a. respecting and protecting the confidentiality of the school, all participants and groups;
- b. minimizing any possible risk or disruption to the ongoing life of the school, participants or groups.

✓

✓

Yes No

6 (b) Does your study involve participants under the age of 18 years outside of a public place (schools, youth clubs or other statutory setting)?

✓

If you have answered **yes** to question 6(b) you must complete the following:

- I am aware that I must include the following:
- Yes
- a. Consent from parent(s) or guardian(s);
  - b. Consent from the children or young people

**C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?**

It is the duty of all supervisors to familiarize themselves with this protocol and ensure that all research carried out by their supervisee follows the ethical codes. If the supervisor has any concerns in relation to the ethics of a research project s/he should follow the procedures outlined in the School of Education Research Ethics Handbook.

It is the duty of both the researcher to familiarize him/herself with this code and with the guidance and support of her/his dissertation supervisor to ensure that all research carried out conforms to the guidelines set out in this code of ethical conduct.

It is the duty of both the researcher and supervisor to ensure that all aspects of this code are adhered to.

This ethics approval form must be completed prior to research being undertaken and enclosed as an appendix in your dissertation when submitted.

Yes  
**Student:** I have familiarized myself with the Cardiff School of Education  
 Ethical Guidelines ✓

Yes  
 I have discussed the ethical implications of the research with my  
 dissertation supervisor ✓

Yes  
**Supervisor:** The proposed methodology within this research project does not  
 violate any of the ethical codes outlined within the Cardiff School  
 of Education Research Ethics protocol ✓

# **Appendix B**

## **Letter of Consent for Dissertation Study Research**

**Dear**

Dissertation Title: **The Impact of the Caring Sports Coach to Affect Young People's Behaviour in Disadvantaged Communities**

Principal Investigator: **Julian Symes**

### **What is the project about?**

An investigation of how the sports coach can reduce antisocial behaviour and promote positive behaviour patterns within young people.

The research is likely to focus on the following areas:

- What methods and theories the coach uses in the teaching of sport to young people?
- How they use them?
- Why they use them?
- Issues which affect their effective use?

### **Your institution's involvement in the project**

I would like your consent to conduct research involving a member of your staff, Mr Mark Hutton. He will be asked to allow me to observe and interview him. I would also like him to help me facilitate a short focus group.

### **Research Focus: Aims and objectives**

This is a study to explore the interactions between the coach and young people during coaching sessions. The research will consist of myself observing the coaching sessions, an interview and a short focus group. This will involve a task where the participants will be in small groups. The task will be to arrange statements relating to coaching into order of priority. This will be followed by short open questions relating to why they chose the particular order of importance.

The findings will be used for two purposes:

1. To establish how the sports coach can reduce aggression and protect against antisocial behaviour?
2. To discover what strategies can be implemented to promote positive behaviour patterns?

### **Do I have the right to withdraw from the project when I want?**

Yes, your participation is voluntary and you and your member(s) of staff are free to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty and without giving any reason. If you choose to withdraw after data has been collected, but prior to any possible publication, your data will be destroyed and not included in the study.

**Will anonymity and confidentiality be guaranteed?**

Yes, the results will be studied together and any reference to individual responses that are used in any output resulting from this project (such as my dissertation) will be made anonymous, making it impossible to determine the identity of a school or individual. Access to the data will be restricted to the researcher, my supervisors and markers.

Once again, thank you for your participation in this project. I look forward to working with you. Could you please complete and return the consent form below to the address below:

Mr Julian Symes  
Cardiff Metropolitan University,  
Cyncoed Campus  
Cyncoed Road  
Cardiff  
CF23 6XD

Informed consent will be sought separately from the member of staff in addition to this request for your permission to conduct the research.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Symes

# Appendix C

## Participant Information Letter

**Dear Parent/Guardian**

I would like to invite your child to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like your child to participate, it is important that you carefully read this information letter to gain a full understanding of the research project and what it entails. If, having read the information, you are happy for your child to participate I would kindly ask you to please return the form attached at the back of this information sheet to myself Julian Symes, or your child's coach Mark Hutton.

### **Title of Research Project:**

The Impact of the Sports Coach to Affect Young People's Behaviour through the Implementation of Caring

### **What is the research project about?**

The study is aimed at finding out whether a sports coach/teacher can positively affect young people's behaviour by using a caring approach both during and outside of the coaching sessions.

### **Who is conducting the research?**

Myself only

### **Why has your child been asked?**

I would like to ask their views on the coaching sessions for the U15 rugby and also their opinions of previous coaching and PE sessions they have taken part in.

### **What is involved?**

I would like to conduct a short focus group session. This will involve the children working in small groups arranging statements on slips of paper into the order they agree or disagree. This will be followed by questions from myself as to why they chose to agree or disagree.

### **Will the information be recorded and what happens to it?**

I will record the findings as an audio file for which I will transcribe the dialogue for my study. Once this task is completed the audio file will be deleted and destroyed.

### **What will happen if I or my child changes their mind?**

- Participation in the research is absolutely voluntary and your child can decide to withdraw from the research at any time.
- If your child wishes to withdraw we would really appreciate it if you could let me know as soon as possible using the contact details below or the school can also inform me.

- Participation will be terminated with immediate effect and any data already supplied will be destroyed.
- There are absolutely no penalties for withdrawing from the research.

**Are there any risks involved in taking part?**

No, there are absolutely no risks at all.

**How will you protect my child's privacy?**

- The school name will be anonymised.
- If your child is selected to take part in the group discussion session, I keep their personal details separate from both the transcripts.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect your child's identity.
- Any data collected will be kept on a password protected computer.

**Contact Details**

If you have any queries regarding the project or your child's potential participation please do not hesitate to contact me at **Cardiff Metropolitan University** using the contact details below:

**Julian Symes**

**Cardiff Metropolitan University,**

**Cyncoed Campus**

**Cyncoed Road**

**Cardiff**

**CF23 6XD**  
response.

Or on my mobile phone number: 07450330563. I look forward to hearing your

**Consent Form**

**Name of Participant (Child's name):**.....

**Name of Researcher: Julian Symes**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please carefully read each statement, tick the boxes if you agree to each statement and sign and date at the bottom of the form. Many Thanks.

- 1. I confirm that I have read the information letter for the project. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

- 2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and withdrawal is allowed at any time.

- 3. I am happy for the data collected to be written up for my dissertation

**Signature of Parent/ Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix D

## ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Cardiff Metropolitan University  
Cyncoed Campus  
Cyncoed Road  
Cardiff CF23 6XD

**Study Title:** The Impact of the Caring Sports Coach to Affect Young People's Behaviour in Disadvantaged Communities

**Person leading this study:** Julian Symes

---

If you want to, you can be part of this research study. People do research to try to find answers to questions.

### **Why am I doing this research study?**

The reason I am doing this research is to find out if at all, the sports coach can reduce antisocial behaviour and increase positive behaviour patterns within young people.

### **Why are you being asked to be in this research study?**

I would like you to give your honest views on what you like and dislike about your sports coaches and PE teachers and the sessions they teach you.

### **What will happen during this study?**

This study will take place at Tylorstown Leisure Centre and will last no longer than 30 minutes (which is the length of an episode of Eastenders).

During this study I would like you to work in small groups to place comments on coaching into 3 lists of: agree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree. This will take no longer than 10 minutes. I would then like to ask some questions as to why groups placed comments in a particular list.

**During the study I would like to record the audio conversation on a mobile phone or other suitable device and I would like to take photographs of the lists only. No people will appear in photographs.**

Check the line that best matches your choice:

It is OK to make an audio recording of me during the study

It is not OK to make an audio recording of me during the study

### **What are the good things that might happen in this study?**

People may have good things happen to them because they are in research studies. These good things are called 'benefits.' The benefit of this study is that you might enjoy finding out what you and your team-mates like and dislike about coaching.

### **What are the problems that might happen in this study?**

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Some problems might happen that the researchers don't know about. It is important to let the researchers and your parents know if there is anything that you don't like about the research study right away. Sometimes things that bother one person don't bother another person at all, so you need to let me know when something is bothering you.

### **Who will be told the things I learn about you in this study?**

Your name will not be in any report of the results of this study.

### **Who should you ask if you have any questions?**

If you have questions you should ask me. If you or your parents have other questions, worries, or complaints you should call Cardiff Metropolitan University on 029 2041 6070

### **What if you or your parents don't want you to be in this study?**

Your parent/guardian need to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent has already given us permission.

### **What if you change your mind?**

You may stop being in the study at any time. If you want to stop, just tell me and I will allow you to stop right away. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you. You can ask questions at any time.

**ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Title of Study:** The Impact of the Sports Coach to Affect Young People's Behaviour through the Implementation of Caring

**Principal Investigator:** Julian Symes

If you sign your name on this page, it means that you agree to take part in this research study. You may change your mind any time for any reason.

\_\_\_\_\_

Sign your name here if you want to be in the study

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Print your name here if you want to be in the study

I have explained this study and answered questions of the child whose name is at the top of this form. I informed the child that he or she could stop being in the study and can ask questions at any time. From my observations, the child seemed to agree to take part in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Assent

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Assent

# Appendix E

## Interview with a Rugby Union Coach (Semi-Structured Interview)

- 1) Please tell me about what sport you did growing up and how you got into rugby union.

*Then: possible questions...*

- 2) Can you describe how you felt when you first went to a rugby training session? How did you feel that day and getting ready to go?
- 3) How does the way you felt when you first started playing rugby influence the way that you coach and treat the athletes?
- 4) Who were your heroes and role models in sport?
- 5) What do you think makes a caring coach?
- 6) How do you think that sport can help young people strive towards betterment, not only in rugby but life in general?
- 7) What methods do you use to motivate players who have become disengaged from school or may be just having a tough time at home?
- 8) One of the first things I noticed was the empowering approach with the players. How did you initially get them to work things out on their own? (in small groups).
- 9) Do you change the way you coach and give feedback according to age and whether they are male/female players?

# Appendix F

## Focus Group Exemplar

This will be a short study that can be facilitated through my association with the staff in the People and Work Unit, with whom I completed my year 2 work placement.

The focus group will be of no more than 30 minutes in duration and will consist of an initial group task that will consist of:

1. Allowing the participants to form 3 or 4 small groups.
2. Each group will receive an identical batch of questions (on individual strips of paper) relating to teaching styles and methods relating to the sports coach.
3. Photographs of the placement of questions will be taken, no children will appear in these.
4. Open questions will be asked to each group as to their reasoning behind particularly ordering. This will be recorded in digital audio format and in accordance with recommendations stated in the ethics and consent forms.

### **Note:**

The focus group will not take place until the participants are familiar and comfortable with my presence at their sessions (initial session 2/2/2016).

\*As not to influence data I would require the coach NOT to be in attendance for the actual data collecting part of the study.

# Appendix G

## Dissertation Observations

### Themes:

Core conditions of caring	Person-Centred approach
Self-actualisation	Constructivism/Empowerment
Motivational climate	Feedback

### Research Questions:

1. What challenges are encountered in efforts to engage young people in sport?
2. How the caring sports coach can help to protect against antisocial behaviour in young people?
3. What further strategies can be implemented to engage and nurture positive behaviour patterns in young people?

### Comprehensive School - 2/2/2016

*Coach: Gareth (pseudonym)*

- Girls U15 Rugby – All 5 schools represented.
- Immediate impressions focus on coach as a facilitator
- Instant engagement from all 27 participants, self-motivated in unison with the coach. Testament to previous sessions.
- All players happy demeanour, working to the best of their ability.
- Good rapport with coach and other participants.
- A young lad was kicking a spare ball across the session, the coach was not at all perturbed by this even though it was an obvious distraction.

### *Critical Moment:*

Coach left the girls to come across to speak to me. The players immediately formed 3 groups and began a reciprocal coaching session apparently without prompting. Led by a player, each group performed different routines/plays.

## Local Leisure Centre - 9/2/2016

### Girls U15 Rugby

#### Coach:

- Explained, asked questions to establish understanding.
  - Stopped – explained tactics sited a previous match – attempt to get players to move infield from the touchline as in previous matches they have been pushed out of play.
  - Explained why he was setting up a drill the way he did.
  - Players all having fun and not worried about making mistakes such as dropping the ball during the plays.
- Girls performed a complex drill the first time of asking.
- Equity of engagement is apparent throughout session.

#### Comments:

- 'concentration' 'focus'
- 'What would you rather do than make a forward pass? Take contact, hold onto the ball.'
- 'You can go on Facebook after.'
- 'Everyone involved, come on!' (Received a positive response from children).
- 'If you hate this girl in front of you, smash her, take the contact.'

#### Open Questions used:

- 'If' 'what' 'where' 'why'

#### My actions:

As an observer I adopted a stealthy position in the recess where the equipment is kept at the end of the sports hall as not to influence the session.

#### Overall Impression:

Girls of all shapes and sizes as might be expected for rugby. Confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy high in all participants. Intrinsic motivation in abundance. Friendly and a little physical banter (at end of session). 'A lively but well behaved group of young people.'

### **Interlink Session – The Community [pseudonym] Listening Project:**

This is an interesting insight on conducting a focus group. I sat in on a table of 5 girls who asked each other questions in order to complete the booklet. Interestingly the 3 tables of girls concentrated on the task for about 30 minutes.

*Interesting audible responses:*

Life in the community [pseudonym]? Entertaining, good, OK, not a lot to do, boring, nothing to do.

What would you like to do? More social things.

What career would you like to do? Several opted for public services (army/health care). A few chose physical education.

### **Community Home Pitch - 16/2/2016**

#### **U15 Girls Rugby**

Questions and observations to look for:

#### **Core conditions of caring**

Congruency/Genuineness:

UPR:

Empathy:

**Person-centred Approach** (allowing autonomy):

- Coach conferred with girls as to how they think they should play.
- Took time to quietly explain further to individual girls prior and during the exercises.

**Constructivism:**

**Motivational Climate:**

- Coach continually encouraged the group throughout the drills, 'let's be more vocal.'
- Girls were happy to lay down on the wet muddy pitch to demonstrate tackle positions for clean out moves.
- During a passing-tackling with body pads drill the coach called out scores of 3/10 then gradually increased scoring as girls displayed determination to do better.

### Feedback:

- Coach called out a prompting question and the girls replied in unison, 'ready, ready... Up!'
- Coach used lots of 'what' questions.

### Autoethnography/Reflective Practice:

#### Interesting comment from a parent (father):

*'It's more about the way you are with them, not knocking what they teach on these coaching badges but you got to let them get out there and get the experience, it's all about letting them play.'*

(Father of an U15 girl whose coach had been a very tough and unscrupulous ex-military professional).

#### Further relevant comments from the coach:

'We need to be learning every session now.'

'What's that opportunity called?' A. 'An opportunity to smash 'em!'

### Community Home Pitch - U15 Girls Rugby – 25/02/2016

9 days on from the previous quagmire of a pitch this was a cold but sunny evening and despite the pitch being heavily sanded, it had also been rolled and had dried to provide a decent surface.

The coaching content featured much more expansive set plays from the coach.

1. Scrum > running with ball > go to ground > recycle ball and go again.
2. Line-out > (then as above).
3. Receiving high lofted ball in own half the as above again.

All the players seem to know their exact starting positions on all the set plays without prompting from the coach. This allowed him to concentrate on the finer points of play. On breakdowns the players re-set to further set positions. The coach continually encouraged as throughout play.

The following session featured each player tackling 3 body pads in a row, about 5 yards between each pad. Every girl ran into each pad with full force.

The next was a full play: Line-out > rolling maul, as the pack moved forward the girls shouted '1-2-1-2-1-2.' The ball was then passed across to the other side of the pitch to result in a great try.

Following this move the players clapped their efforts. The coach exclaimed, 'show me that move again to make sure I'm not dreaming!'

The end game featured full contact play. There was a lot of gutsy full on tackles that brought players to the ground. Many girls displayed excellent handling skills and ran in some pacey tries. One larger athlete displayed great pace running in a couple of unstoppable tries. At the conclusion the girls formed a tight knit circle around the coach immediately forming a group hug with arms around each other's shoulders. As coach fired a sequence of open questions that formed a continuity chain for the next question. The girls answered vociferously appearing to be revelling in the challenge of the upcoming match.

### **Parent comment**

*'Following my remark upon how organised the play appeared: You should have seen 'em at the beginning, they couldn't even catch the ball'*

\* There was also a story mentioned that the last time they played the team they face on Sunday, one particular girl was knocked unconscious and an ambulance had to be called. This is an interesting story to find more on as she has not been at all deterred by the incident.

**Observation:** only a couple of fathers watch the training session. The mum's tend to drop the girls off then leave.

### **Coaches Comments:**

Drills: 'speed it up' 'urgency!' 'bang, let's go!' 'you gotta react' 'see it starting to work now, patterns of play'

'Question and answer time' 'what's this called?' 'what are you going to call that pod?' 'what about?' 'who?' 'what was missing?' 'the difference between winning and losing Sunday is what?' (urgency!) 'where do you need to be backs?' (up with play) 'can we have the backs carry the ball now? Course we can!'

### **Person-centred points:**

'[name] tell me if they're doing it right or wrong'

Answered individual questions to participants face on and in an unhurried manner.

### **Self-actualisation:**

Following the Interlink focus group session where many of the girls alluded to life in the community as being boring with nothing to do, the last two weeks training sessions have highlighted that this particular study group really do want to 'strive towards betterment' embracing the actualising theoretical aspect.

### **Community Home Pitch - U15 Girls Rugby - 3/3/2016**

After putting on their boots the girls immediately formed their own warm-up, without prompting, as the coach was still talking to me. Coach informed me of a girl Ann [pseudonym] who was participating in her first session. Ann did appear a little nervous and detached from the main group during this initial warm-up. She lagged towards the back during the proper warm-up running around the pitch appearing to run alongside a friend. She listened attentively to the coach during the ensuing stretches.

Coach asked all 'what' 'why' and where' questions to elicit learning tonight.

Emphasised, 'this is where we put the hard work in!'

Ann soon engages well with the activities.

### **Drill – Running in a try (in 4's)**

Coach asks others watching what they thought of the preceding group's move (evidence of peer assessing). More questions, 'what did you think of that?'

'What's missing from this drill? A. Opposition.

'What are we looking to do? A. Draw the player.

### **Example of coach's humorous discourse:**

*'Run it straight, draw the player, then pass... Otherwise you're gonna end up in the river... With the rats!'*

**Regarding running the straighter lines into the contact:**

*'If you see a girl in front of you, looking a bit uneasy on Sunday, what are you going to do?... Look her straight in the eye and run straight at her... What is she going to do? (a girl replies) 'Shit herself!' Laughter rings out.*

Unusually there appears some inattentive behaviour as the coach is speaking... Suddenly the coach stops his narrative and reprimands the group:

*'Seriously girls we need to listen, do we want to learn?'*

A minute or so later some girls continue to chat, coach blows on his whistle:

*'Right, run to the other side!'*

Without hesitation all the girls perform their punishment. On their return coach emphasises the deal that the girls signed up to:

*'Are we here to learn or is this just a social get together?'*

The group all agree to try harder. Much better application of the tasks ensue. Coach calls a drinks break finishing with:

*'Well done some good stuff in there.'*

The key theme tonight is urgency and the coach keeps reminding the players by asking them what was missing during many plays. Coach finishes with a hurried game scenario then stipulates they be at the ground at 10am for Sunday's 11am kick-off. Coach re-introduces me. I speak for a few seconds then hand each player an assent and parental consent form. Every girl says thank you.

### **Matchday - Community Home Pitch – Sunday 13/3/2016**

During the match a player, Laura, suffers a knock to the head and is physically sick on the pitch and has to be substituted by Gareth. As he paces along the touchline during the subsequent play, Laura shadows him pleading to be reinstated. Gareth explains his actions sympathetically. Laura understands what he's saying is correct but is inconsolably disappointed.

**Ann scores a try on her debut!**

At the final whistle the applause, hip-hip hoorays and handshake tunnels epitomise the positive regard and respect that is the whole ethos and etiquette of rugby.

### **Community Home Pitch – U15 Girls Training - 22/3/2016**

This is much more of a sunny spring day. Girls form a game of touch rugby whilst coach retrieves resources from the lock up. The girls are in a jovial mood as a big match is looming.

Coach works on speed and strength first running them up & down the slope then holding onto partner's shirt tails & letting go halfway.

Passing drill. One girl displays autonomy by looping around for a second pass. Another loops back inside for a pass.

A move breaks down and a player questions the coach as to why. Coach emphasises the good point made and asks the cohort how to rectify the situation, then the move is played out as a demo.

A line-out move results in autonomous decision making with passes flowing into a resulting try. Coach "Awesome! Hang on girls, I've got to see that move again to check that I'm not dreaming" Awesome Autonomy is the theme tonight.

## Appendix H - Focus Group 1

Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree
The coach cares about me in training and matches because he always has time to talk to me about how I play.	I feel that I can voice my opinion on things I believe in during rugby.	Since I started rugby I don't get into trouble in other parts of life.
If I had a problem outside of rugby I think the coach would understand and I could talk about it.	The coach has helped improve my behaviour in other parts of my life.	I only go to rugby because my friends do, I'm not really bothered about learning the skills.
Playing for the rugby team has made life in the community more exciting and given me more confidence to go on to better things.	The coach cares about me because he doesn't shout and explains things in a way that I understand.	When the coach explains things they often don't make sense.
The coach cares about me and how I play more than the result of a match.	The coach always tells me what to do and doesn't allow me to work things out for myself.	Playing for the rugby team is boring and it hasn't helped my confidence as a person.
The coach shouts at us sometimes and that shows that he cares.		The coach doesn't seem to have time for me, I don't think I could ask him about things that I don't understand.
The coach allows me and the other players to work together to be creative and solve problems in rugby.		All the coach cares about is the result of the match and not how we play.
The coach makes it easy for me to get motivated for rugby.		I find it hard to get motivated for rugby as the practice is boring.
I am determined to do well in rugby because I really like it.		I am not determined at all, I only try because the other players do and I think that is what the coach wants me to do.
The coach explains things to me and the players in a way that we can understand.		The coach wants everything done his way, I don't think that my opinion makes any difference to what he thinks.
The coach sometimes explains things through telling little stories about how he learned things.		
Some of my other coaches and PE teachers haven't really cared about me.		
I prefer contact to non-contact in rugby training.		
I really try hard in rugby because I want to be as good as I can be.		
I really try hard in rugby because I want to do well for the coach.		
If I could I would love to play sport, maybe rugby, as a career.		
Playing sport helps my confidence in other parts of my life.		
The coach makes it easy to get involved in rugby.		
Since playing rugby I still find it difficult to stay out of trouble in other parts of life.		

\*The players (n=20) were asked to form 3 groups in order to complete the task. They preferred to form 2 groups of 10 so I was happy to proceed. One girl commented, 'We didn't wanna leave anyone out' referring to their particular peer group of friends.

All participants engaged within the tasks, appointing one member to read out the statements prior to placement into agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree - Disagree. Many girls were very opinionated and this transpired within my post-task questioning.

## Appendix J - Focus Group 2

Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree
The coach cares about me in training and matches because he always has time to talk to me about how I play.	Since I started rugby I don't get into trouble in other parts of life.	The coach sometimes explains things through telling little stories about how he learned things.
Some of my other coaches and PE teachers haven't really cared about me.	Since playing rugby I still find it difficult to stay out of trouble in other parts of life.	I only go to rugby because my friends do, I'm not really bothered about learning the skills.
Playing sport helps my confidence in other parts of my life.	When the coach explains things they often don't make sense.	The coach doesn't seem to have time for me, I don't think I could ask him about things that I don't understand.
I really try hard in rugby because I want to do well for the coach.	The coach cares about me because he doesn't shout and explains things in a way that I understand.	I am not determined at all, I only try because the other players do and I think that is what the coach wants me to do.
I really try hard in rugby because I want to be as good as I can be.	The coach shouts at us sometimes and that shows that he cares.	The coach always tells me what to do and doesn't allow me to work things out for myself.
I am determined to do well in rugby because I really like it.	The coach has helped improve my behaviour in other parts of my life.	The coach wants everything done his way, I don't think that my opinion makes any difference to what he thinks.
If I could I would love to play sport, maybe rugby, as a career.	Playing for the rugby team has made life in the community more exciting and given me more confidence to go on to better things.	I find it hard to get motivated for rugby as the practice is boring.
I feel that I can voice my opinion on things I believe in during rugby.	If I had a problem outside of rugby I think the coach would understand and I could talk about it.	All the coach cares about is the result of the match and not how we play.
The coach makes it easy for me to get motivated for rugby.		Playing for the rugby team is boring and it hasn't helped my confidence as a person.
I prefer contact to non-contact in rugby training.		
The coach allows me and the other players to work together to be creative and solve problems in rugby.		
The coach cares about me and how I play more than the result of a match.		
The coach makes it easy to get involved in rugby.		
The coach explains things to me and the players in a way that we can understand.		

# Appendix K

## Interview Transcription with a Studied Sports Coach

### Key:

Human participants: R: = Researcher      C: = Coach

### Themes:

Core conditions of caring	Person-Centred approach
Self-actualisation	Constuctivism/Empowerment
Motivational climate	Feedback

### Research Questions:

1. What challenges are encountered in efforts to engage young people in sport?
2. How the caring sports coach can help to protect against antisocial behaviour in young people?
3. What further strategies can be implemented to engage and nurture positive behaviour patterns in young people?

R: Can you please tell me about what sport you did growing up and how you got into rugby union?

C: Um, so growing up typically I done no sport um, obviously that was in around weight issues so nothing was done in school er, nothing done socially outside, within, you know with friends or anything and rugby union. I completely didn't get into it till my late teens, so 16 or 17 when I was invited by a friend to go along for the first time.

R: So can you describe how you felt when you first went to a rugby training session, how did you feel?

C: Very... Nervous, I guess um, having not been before, very self-conscious over obviously my weight, which obviously proved a factor. Um, really just uneasy, uncomfortable within a new environment, my first experience wasn't particularly very good um, just because poor fitness I guess, I couldn't run around as much as everyone

else who had been doing it I wasn't as fit as everyone else. Um, so um, I did go back but it did take a bit of persuasion really.

R: Yeah, so it wasn't an instant... Attraction to it?

C: Aww no it wasn't an instant attraction but um, I guess something was there and I did go back um, you know, recognised probably that some of my friends were doing it, but I did struggle initially.

R: So, how has the way you first felt when you first started getting into the rugby influence the way that you coach now and you treat your athletes?

C: Um... I guess the first thing is obviously making people feel comfortable um, obviously that was my biggest issue and concern, so giving people the opportunity to feel comfortable within the environment. First and foremost um, I think is the important thing, making people feel at ease, no pressure, and that, you know thinking about it perhaps was one of the reasons why I didn't enjoy my first experience myself it was a bit of pressure having to do well um, but I think I've related to that now and reflected and it's more about, obviously particularly with younger ones it's enjoyment... And if that experience is good being the coaching or the weather for example, it makes all for a better experience for people wanting to come back.

R: So, who were your heroes and role models in sport?

C: Um, I didn't have any.

R: Who did you admire in rugby?

C: I didn't so typically like um, before I got involved being 16 or 17 I remember when 6 nations games used to be on for example, well I'd be sleeping on the settee so I never had any role models in sport. I guess until I started playing myself and watching it more and more um, I never had involvement in any other sport particularly don't watch or you know football or tennis so I wouldn't know what who the sort of players are growing up.

R: What do you think makes a caring coach, what would you say the factors are?

C: A caring coach, I think the factors involved in that is your players' safety, you know the players' priorities are first and foremost. So when I think about, you know even now um, guys that I coach now who've had injuries on the weekend, you know it's

always that sort of follow up, it's that personal sort of caring sort of approach, you know we're not just there for training and you're not just there for the games. A coach is there for 24/7 um, and obviously what contributes to that is the relationship that you build up within players and likewise you know what the turnaround for that is... Is you know they recognise that you're always gonna be there for them, but you expect them to give you everything and be there for you as well.

*R: That's really good. So it's a phrase that always comes up, 'going the extra mile.' Do you think that sums up what you need to be a coach?*

C: Umm, yeah I think that if you want the best from your players and the best from the team I think you know that's evident that you've got to go above and beyond. Like I said it's more than just delivering an hour training session um, you know it's more than just turning up at a game and walking away when the final whistle goes. You know, it's everything in, around and between really like player welfare and supporting them in giving them advice, perhaps healthy nutrition, the training plans. Even down to you know, even having to give advice in and around sort of personal issues. So you're someone whose always there and always around to give advice or support.

*R: Yeah, so how do you think that sport and rugby in particular can help young people strive towards betterment, not only in rugby but life in general, do you think it can provide a platform?*

C: Oh, for sure 'cause I think it sets values, it sets a structured approach, you know when um, when people are to turn up on time when you're there. You give 100% effort or you're expected to give 100% effort you know for that short period of time you know. Always like to create aspirations so people can go on from the social thing. Say, you know, give aspirational guidance where they can push on if they choose to representative teams, regional even national sort of progression. Discipline is obviously a massive part um, and particularly with a lot of young people I've worked for, with, supported. They come from dysfunctional families where discipline is not the first and foremost. But, setting barriers, setting sort of guides, young people in my experience young people relish that, they wanna be sort of given that sort of guidance and that bit of structure which is not currently in and around their lives in most cases.

*R: Yeah, do you think it sometimes follows that kids who don't have much structure in their lives actually like coaches um, that actually do almost... They are a little bit tough on you sometimes.*

*C: Aww yeah I, and I think from my experience a lot of them relish that challenge. Um, you know relishes someone who is a little bit pushy, giving them attention you know and that's the one big thing for a lot of young people, you know they may not be having attention at home you know... they're not doing well academically, for a lot of youth boys that I've worked with previously. You know I've been coaching 12 years. They're not in and around jobs, they're not in learning so, you know having a little bit of structure, having someone giving them a little bit of attention, setting them challenges I think in my experience they sort of relish and sort of rise to it.*

*R: You've kind of mentioned it, but what methods do you use to motivate players who have become disengaged from school or maybe just having a tough time at home, any specific motivational techniques?*

*C: I think, what I generally try to work with is recognising that everyone has got a strength and telling them that strength, and I think that's where rugby is really good because it caters for every type of person. So you know, and everyone has got a strength so whether they strong, whether they fast, whether they fit you know and rugby caters for every individual. So every individual has got one of them strengths and I think if you motivate an individual and sort of praise them for that one strength, I believe that's enough then to motivate them to obviously contribute to gain and sort of strengthen the other things that perhaps might be lacking.*

*R: One of the first things I noticed when I very first saw a session of yours, when you walked out of the session and came towards me and I, from my coaching experience, 'oh my God don't turn your back!' but I noticed the empowering approach that you had with the players. How did you initially get them to work things out on their own in small groups?*

*C: I guess we built up to that um, you know with little bits every training session, but inevitably from the outset you have told players, you know you've got a sense of responsibility and trust and I'm trusting you should I need to walk off the field and go to the toilet, should I need to walk off and deal with a parent. I'm trusting you to obviously take ownership of, of the sort of session. And within the group you will have*

natural leaders. Within the group you've got the captain who can take responsibility for the session and then I've also got some senior young volunteers. So under 18's player who support my under 18's so that sort of peer mentoring is in place so it's just making best use of all of them but inevitably it's giving them responsibility and giving them the trust I'm telling them that you're sort of doing that, and a default activity all the players know is just to fall back on a game of touch rugby where there's no contact, where there's no sort of guidance as regards to learning new skill, so the default activity is there, 'right set yourselves 2 separate teams and off you go. And so there's a starting point.

*R: Do you change the way that you coach and the way you give feedback according to the age and whether they are male or female players?*

C: No, I don't think I do I sort of standardise myself and I think that's come through the learning of experience of 12 years of coaching plus obviously alongside that is the courses you gain, the WRU [Welsh Rugby Union] being Level 1, 2 and now I'm on my Level 3. They guide you and build you into that so there's a lot of questions and answers you know, do we enforce the learning? So my approach doesn't change regardless, but the number of questions you may ask and the... The depth of the specifics about the question would change but the questions and approach I would say are still the same for when I coach under 7's to probably when I coach senior men's with under 18's in between, under 15 and representative. East Wales under 18's I've coached so it's the same throughout.

*R: How do you think the sports focus through Dynamic Communities has affected, if at all, antisocial behaviour from young people in the community?*

C: I would say yes, obviously it's hard to measure but I've got examples of... Typically 2 years ago when we started the youth which were boys of aged 16 to 19 it was the first activity that was present in that particular community for some 12 years and a lot of the boys who got engaged for the first time were the ones who were hanging around the shops, smoking cannabis and drinking and things. And these took up the opportunity of the rugby and obviously they stuck with it and were encouraged to stick with it for the duration of the year. There was noticeable changes in people where they were turning to gym's and thinking more about they're sort of health and well-being and wanting to get fitter, stronger for rugby. So I guess in the next instances things

would have improved in them areas. The other thing to probably add to that is where I've been fortunate in the Dynamic Communities role, which has been engagement in the community, is also complemented the rugby and likewise. So if I was only a rugby coach for one night a week, or two nights a week and a Saturday training I don't think I would have had such a big impact or relationship than being in and around the community for 24/7. So I think the Dynamic Communities role has brought... Has given me more empowerment to make a big difference because the amount of time or contact time that I have with the young people outside of the rugby activity.

*R: So what was the under 15 girls' rugby team like when you first started coaching them, I mean was there a nucleus or were there just a few to start?*

*C: The numbers, the activity started with was in a school environment to start, so it was an after-school activity to start it which was non-contact, because the school it was in didn't have a field, so it was on astro-turf. Initially numbers were low and probably in and around 10 and sometimes as low as 7 for the under 15's. But I think that because it was in one school and typically the Rhondda is made up of 5 secondary schools that sort of flexibility to go back to school, to a different school for some was a challenge. So numbers were steady in and around the same but the significant change was when it went to the community. So when the school activity finished, when it went to a community setting with a field, so we can do contact, when it went to a neutral venue being not a particular school that someone's not part of obviously that seen significant numbers rise to where we are typically now. I'd say we don't see less than 22, probably say as an average 22. You know, numbers have been higher, we have had a few drop off but the under 15's girls there's no different to where the under 18's girls were when I first started because that started in a school environment. It was in a Welsh medium school with numbers of about 6 or 7. It was when the girls identified it and the need and the opportunity to play contact and then taking it to a field to do that, that's when you know Team Pink was born and the fact was we saw 28 on the first session. So it's a typical example of the way under 15's have gone as well.*

*R: So finally is there anything that you want to add, anything that I haven't covered?*

*C: No, I just think perhaps to add is there are recognised patterns um, if there'd just been one activity, one team it might have left itself open for... You know things might have been different but I think having been through the process of and under 18's*

team first, girls' an under 15's team and recognising the patterns are exactly the same, and it comes down to obviously I guess a good coaching approach, flexibility, keeping the fun factor but obviously bringing in the competition element. It's all important you know, we train, we strive to be the best we can to get the results that we inevitably want which is... To win, but it's done within an enjoyable environment where you know you can have a bit of fun as well.

# Appendix L

## Focus Group Audio Transcription

Key:

Human participants: R: = Researcher      C: = Coach

Themes:

Core conditions of caring	Person-Centred approach
Self-actualisation	Constuctivism/Empowerment
Motivational climate	Feedback

Research Questions:

1. What challenges are encountered in efforts to engage young people in sport?
2. How the caring sports coach can help to protect against antisocial behaviour in young people?
3. What further strategies can be implemented to engage and nurture positive behaviour patterns in young people?

R: Do you think rugby has given you more or less discipline?

P1: It hasn't given me more, or less... On the field I get more discipline than I do off the field.

P2: Yeah, yeah exactly, I wanna, I wanna like disci[inaudible].

R: In disagree you put all the coach cares about is the result of the match and not how we play.

P1: He always, always, always goes over what we've done good.

P2: The game [2 weeks ago] we won by loads but he was still like... Not unhappy but some things we have to do better.

P3: He's always looking for improvement, there's always something we gotta improve on.

R: So again on behaviour, 'the coach has helped improve my behaviour in other parts of my life,' you said not sure. Does anyone agree with that or disagree strongly?

P1: No, no

P2: No, no way.

P3: To rugby he has but not to other things... People don't help you improve your behaviour you improve your behaviour yourself.

P2: Yeah I agree.

P4: I don't, I disagree 'cause in rugby I enjoy doing it, in other things I don't so that makes me misbehave.

P1: Yeah.

R: Fair play, 'the coach cares about me more than the result of a match,' you said agree.

P1: ... And the game we just had the coach is like 'there's no man of the match, we all played well together as a team...'

P2: And there's room for improvement as well.

R: You disagreed with this as well, 'I find it hard to get motivated for rugby as the practice is boring.'

P1: Training's always, there's always something to do in training.

P2: Training's a laugh.

R: And also you disagreed with this, 'I only go to rugby because my friends do I'm not really bothered about learning the skills.'

P1: I wanna be here.

P2: I'd go to rugby if I didn't know anyone... [inaudible].

R: Ok, one more, let's look for one... 'I try really hard in rugby because I wanna be as good as I can be for me?'

P1: Yeah

P2: Yeah

R: Do you feel you want to do it for yourself, or for the coach?

P1: [inaudible]... I wanna make everyone proud.

# Appendix M

## Training Session - 9/2/2016: A Personal Autoethnographic Reflection

*This was a wet and very cold February evening, I applied my longest, warmest scarf, bobble hat and gloves but within minutes I was freezing! The rugby pitch was heavily sanded in places whilst other areas resembled a mud bath. My preconceptions (from personal playing experience) were that this session would definitely be cancelled but waited for confirmation from the coach. Upon arrival at the desolate venue I had sat in the car staring at my mobile phone waiting for the buzz as the apologetic text message from the coach would surely appear. I had attempted ringing him but his phone was engaged, no doubt calling everyone to explain the cancellation of tonight's session. At 4.50pm to my surprise, a few girls appeared outside the padlocked gates that signified the entrance to the rugby pitch. Gradually more arrived and were in high spirits, some were showing off brand new boots and wearing brightly coloured kits that would be more suited to a warm sunny climate. It became apparent that there was no question... The session would proceed!*

*As the warm-up got underway it was clear that all participants were committed to giving their best, and to a person there was enthusiasm and laughter throughout the session. The level of engagement from all participants was loudly audible for the entire session, raucous laughter ringing out during much of it. The happy atmosphere was encapsulated toward the end of the session when many of the girls pleaded for contact to be allowed for the concluding game scenario. At the end of the session the girls filtered past me, caked in mud, even their faces, some barely recognisable from those that walked through the gates ninety minutes earlier. Yet still they laughed and eulogised about the preceding session.*

*There appears a high level of caring from the coach for these girls to have bought in to his philosophy. All participants are approached empathically and with positive regard. Having observed this coach with different age groups his manner and session delivery remains congruent to all. Throughout my observations I have not heard one utterance of displeasure nor any negative body language from a participant. It is evident that the willingness for all participants to 'go the extra mile' is testament to the coach's equal ability to do the same for them.*

# Appendix N

## U18 Girls Rugby at Professional Club Stadium in the Capital City - 21/02/2016

### **An Autoethnographic Commentary**

*Following the warm-up coach circumnavigates the pitch to establish the optimum vantage point, eventually settling behind his team's posts. He appears pensive as his team attempted to soak up the early physical onslaught from the opposition. Eventually the incessant pressure results in a try... The girls immediately retreat behind the posts for his unflustered guidance. Another injury! That's 3 in the first 15 minutes allowing an opportunity for coach to speed onto the pitch to offer both instruction and much welcomed water to his players. I can't help observe and smile in awe of the resplendent girly pink kits in stark contradiction of the brutal all-round commitment.*

*Into the second half and every play, it seems, results in at least one player prostrate with injury on the bright green 3G pitch. Another home player is aided by two colleagues as she hobbles dejectedly from the action. That's 5 to date. Finally, the hosts close in on the try line, have they scored? Difficult to see from here... No, again they pass the ball across... Intercepted! A pacey girl, must be a winger, runs the full length of the field to score a fabulous try. Coach remains impassive, he isn't one to allow his heart rule his head. 0-9, the West Walian visitors are as efficient as they are relentless! 0-12. Coach, still calmness personified, attempts a few words of consolation as the visitors miss yet another kick. Finally, the home team surge forward along the right flank, one last chance to score? Coach opens his vocal chords... Vociferous encouragement accompanies his players' attempt to break through but alas, it is all in vain. The final whistle. 0-15... A rout!*

*This rugby really isn't for the faint hearted, particularly the parents of those involved. It is not a diluted version of the men's game in any shape or form. So many surging runs have met with human battering rams as tackles are punctuated with breathless 'oohs' from the watching crowd. However, not a suggestion of extra-participatory aggression or an angry syllable has been uttered. Coach advances slowly as not to disturb the all-embracing handshakes and maybe to ponder the many hours of reparatory practice the training ground must surely witness.*