Reflective Practice and Consultant Effectiveness: An Examination of Sport Psychology Practice

APPENDICES

BRENDAN CROPLEY
APPENDIX 1
Examples of completed reflective narratives for Study 1

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Goal Setting
DATE / LOCATION: 30/04/04 / UWIC Private Office
CLIENT: Player ‘B’
DATE OF REFLECTION: 3/05/04 REVISED COMPLETION:
REFLECTION NUMBER: 10

1.0 Description of Experience

1.1 Phenomenon – Describe the here and now of the experience (where, when, what)

The meeting took place in a private office at UWIC and lasted for 2 hours 10 minutes (1700 – 1910). The consultation was intended to address issues of goal setting as well as completing a goal setting exercise in attempts to educate the client and formulate a goal setting programme to improve the client’s motivation and self confidence. Moreover, it was important for us to briefly discuss the performance profile completed in the previous session. This was so that the client could begin to realise the importance of the profile and see how it fits in with not only goal setting (each quality on the performance profile acting as a process goal) but with the wider “performance enhancement” picture. We were also able to add other qualities to the profile that had surfaced since our last meeting.

I had completed a goal setting session with a different client previously that day, which gave me some experience of delivering the material and gave me an indication of what to expect from the session. In this previous session, however, the client had to leave early and we therefore didn’t complete all of the work. I was able to reflect, initially, on what we had done though and I was pleased with the way that I had delivered the educational material and guided the client in generating an initial goal setting programme. This meant that any worries that I had experienced before this first session had gone during the second session and I was generally more confident. Furthermore, I didn’t have to worry about the location of the consultation, as I did with the first consultation, because I knew that I could have use of my supervisor’s office, which provided an ideal location for the conducting of such a session.

1.2 Causal – What essential factors contributed to this experience (why)?

Essential factors that contributed to this experience were:

1) My second experience of conducting a goal setting session, both being conducted on the same day. I was therefore able to reflect briefly on the first session and realise that I did have the knowledge required to perform effectively. I was also more familiar with the material and had greater experience of the best way in which it should be delivered.

2) Previous meetings with the client had given me a good indication of his personality and ability to listen, learn and work. I was able to prepare for these individual characteristics to some extent in attempts to get the most out of the individual and the session.

3) It is the end of the season and I was concerned about what short-term goals the client should set because he should be focusing on resting for a few weeks, so I was unsure as to what would happen here.
1.3 **Context – Who are the significant background actors in this experience (who)?**

My supervisor had a part to play on two fronts. Firstly, he reviewed my plans and the content for the session. He provided me with various articles for reading and examples of applied goal setting practice. This gave me a better grasp of the theory and application of goal setting and allowed me to prepare to the best of my ability. Secondly, he allowed the use of his office for the consultation. From previous experience with the client I was aware that he tends to respond better and feel more comfortable in the privacy of an office environment.

I had met the client on two previous occasions and a rapport had started to develop. This made meeting the client easier as I knew that any apprehension that he might have had previously should have passed. Also the client was more forthcoming and willing to share personal information and experiences.

1.4 **Clarifying – Put it back together and establish what the key issues are in this experience that I need to pay attention to (what will I reflect on)?**

The key issues from this experience that I need to pay attention to are:

1) Could I provide an effective service in terms of completing an initial goal setting programme?
2) Could I help to educate the client as to the principles and importance of goal setting and the value of performance profiling within goal setting and the performance enhancement process?
3) Could I improve on the first session and keep the client interested for the length of the consultation?

2.0 **Reflection**

2.1 **What was I trying to achieve (goals)?**

Ultimately I was trying to achieve a successful consultation where the client gained a better knowledge of goal setting and started the process of developing a goal setting programme focusing on SMART process, performance, and outcome goals in long, medium and short term proximities. I wanted to administer the ‘Perceptions of Success Questionnaire’ (Roberts, Treasure and Balague, 1998) in order to gain indication of their client’s levels of task and ego orientation, as well as gaining experience of such instruments. I also wanted to involve the client more in the educational stage of the consultation. It emanated from the initial reflections on the first goal setting session that I talked a lot during the initial stages of the consultation and should have involved the client more so that I could maintain his focus and concentration. This would ultimately lead to the client learning more about the principles and importance of goal setting.

2.2 **Why did I intervene as I did?**

I had several examples of goal setting sessions available to help guide the way that I planned for the session. I also read through the goal setting chapters in three recognised applied sport psychology publications, in order to draw out necessary theoretical information that I required, to explain to the client what goal setting is, why it is important, as well as information on SMART goals, types of goals (process, performance, outcome) and goal proximity. The client also influenced the way that I ‘intervened’. I wanted to achieve a good balance between difficulty and understanding. Specifically, providing theoretically ground goal setting information in a way that this particular client could understand and relate to. Certain parts of the content were developed through discussion with my supervisor who thought it important to ask several questions about each of the goals the client set.

I decided not to administer the POSQ because the consultation had gone well and the client had committed himself to the session fully. I thought at the time that the client wouldn’t have appreciated being asked to complete a questionnaire so I decided against it.

2.3 **What internal factors influenced my actions (thoughts, feelings, previous experience – details of the relationship with the client)?**

Before the session (up to 4 days before) I was both cognitively and somatically anxious, due to my inexperience of conducting such a session. I was worried about my ability to deliver a goal setting session and wasn’t sure about what goals the client should set or how may. Yes, I knew the theory behind goal setting but the nerves were generated by trying to apply this knowledge. This worry would
cause butterfly sensations in my stomach. In order to act against these I made sure I met with my supervisor as well as preparing well and brushing up on my knowledge through direct reading (see 2.5).

In attempts to control my thoughts and feelings, I concluded that I could only “do my best” and the experience would be a learning one. Fortunately, I had two goal setting sessions on the same day so I was able to gain some experience of conducting a goal setting session before completing this session. This improved my confidence and reduced any nervous thoughts and feelings that I experienced before the first meeting. Moreover, as the session progressed I settled down and felt more comfortable. Client attitude, input and feedback also allowed me to relax further.

2.4 What external factors influenced my decision-making?
I knew that I was able to use the private office for as long as I needed it so I didn’t have to rush anything or be too wary of time. I was in a better position, due to the first goal setting session I conducted that day, to predict a time for the session but I knew that the client was available for longer than would be required which helped me to feel at ease and not under pressure to get results quickly.

2.5 What sources of knowledge did/should have influenced my decision-making (scientific, ethical, professional etc.)?
In preparation for the meeting, and in light of the objectives of the session, I wanted to be sure that my knowledge and understanding was up-to-date. Therefore, I read the relevant chapters in: Williams (Ed.) (1993) “Applied Sport Psychology” and Hardy, Jones & Gould (1996) “Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport”. I also wanted to go over some applied examples of goal setting in practice. Therefore, I familiarised myself with examples provided by my supervisor and read the relevant chapter in Andersen (Ed.) (2002) “Doing Sport Psychology”. In terms of ethical knowledge I was pleased that I was able to conduct the consultation in a private office because I would be asking the client to share personal information and would have been concerned if the meeting had to be conducted in a public place. Being a student at UWIC the client may also have known people in the canteen (location we would have conducted the consultation had the office not been available), which raises several professional issues.

3.0 Consequences of Actions

3.1 What were the consequences of my actions for: myself; the client; others I work with (learn/realise – cognitive component)?

a) MYSELF: Even though I feel that I had prepared well in terms of content of the session I was unsure as to what the outcomes of the session should look like. Specifically, would I have the knowledge and skills to be able to facilitate the client in setting beneficial goals? I just tried to follow certain rules for setting goals (e.g. SMART goals) and the quality of the outcomes will be discussed during feedback with my supervisor. Conversely, having brushed-up on my knowledge of goal-setting theory I felt confident in educating the client, to some degree, as to the importance of goal setting, SMART goals, goal types and goal proximity, especially after my previous experience. Once in the consultation itself I was able to flow, answering any questions where necessary, and delivering in a way that the client was able to understand.

b) CLIENT: Having arranged the meeting at the end of the day meant that the client could give his full attention to the consultation. I knew that the client was conscientious and therefore knew that he would work hard to talk about his experiences of goal setting as well as creating good goals. I think that the client enjoyed learning about goal setting, which he did express at the end of the session, and unlike the previous client could maintain his concentration through a 25 minute education stage. The client was in line for selection for the Wales U21 world cup squad, so he thought it essential to set short term goals in order to focus his training and increase his chances of making the squad.

3.2 How did I feel about this experience when it was happening?
I was far more confident at the start and throughout this consultation than I was when I had completed my first goal setting session. The client’s attitude also enabled me to relax further and feel more comfortable with the content that I was trying to deliver. I was also less concerned about the outcomes of the session because during the first session (different client) the client had come up with some good goals, taking on board what I had said to him, despite me being worried about what the outcomes should
look like. I was therefore positive that the client in this meeting could produce the same, if not better, quality as long as I guided him in the same way as I had done previously. I had built a good rapport with the client and initial conversation (what we had been up to) took any ‘edge’ that may have been present, off the session. I was focused on doing a “good job” which helped me to maintain my concentration. Furthermore, during the education phase the information and content flowed, which gave me more confidence as I realised that I actually knew more than what I had lead myself to believe.

3.3 How did the client feel about it (consultants’ subjective opinion)?
I am sure that the client enjoyed the session. I spoke to the client at the end and he said that he had found the session interesting and expressed that he had learnt a lot. This manifested itself by the client adding ‘the ability to set SMART goals’ to his performance profile. He scored himself as a ‘3’ before the session and a ‘5’ at the end of the session, which he thought would increase after he had had chance to practice setting goals and experience goal achievement. Throughout the session the client demonstrated a positive attitude, willing to join in wherever possible and share personal experiences.

3.4 How do I know how the client felt about it?
Behavioural cues, body language, the flow of conversation, and the type of conversation (e.g. joking and sharing experiences). Also from brief discussion at the end of the interview concerning how the client found the session, what he had learnt and whether or not he enjoyed the meeting. It is also my intention to receive written feedback from the client.

4.0 Alternative Tactics

4.1 Could I have dealt with the situation better?
I could have dealt with the situation better by: adapting the education phase to incorporate client participation rather than me talking and the client listening; and focus on daily goals more (this will be the focus of the next goal setting session when the client starts pre-season training)
I feel that I prepared well and delivered the necessary material, but to improve the session as a whole I need to address the above issues.

4.2 What other choices did I have?
I should have prepared the education phase by using a “question and answer” technique which would have demonstrated the client’s knowledge and how much he had been listening. It would have also involved the client more in the early stages. I should have also prepared to talk about daily goals because of the client’s Wales U21 squad selection situation. This would have helped the client to gain the benefits from goal setting and achievement on a daily basis.

4.3 What would be the consequences of these choices?
See above.

5.0 Learning

5.1 How do I now feel about this experience?
I am pleased to have conducted such a consultation. There are specific issues to emanate from the experience that I can address. For example, I should have been prepared more holistically in case the client makes me aware of an unforeseen circumstance (the need for daily goals in this situation). Again this has shown the idiosyncratic nature of consultancy and now I am happy to have more knowledge in my armoury of how to cope with certain situations. This will make me more confident for future consultations of this nature.

5.2 How have I made sense of this experience in light of past experiences (what changes will I make to future practice)?
1) I will involve the client more in the education phase using question and answer techniques.
2) I will ensure the client realises the potential duration of the session prior to its commencement.
3) Further changes maybe necessary following consultation with my supervisor.

5.3 Action (how will I implement changes)?
I will gain feedback from my supervisor concerning the quality of the session and discuss areas that I can improve on and the ways in which I can do this. I will also address the issues that I have highlighted when preparing for the next goal setting session. I feel that it is also important to go through professional practice literature to see how others have reported conducting such sessions.

POST REFLECTIONS FEEDBACK

Reflections on Reflection: Again I wrote this reflection by hand before transcribing it to computer and found the process a lot easier. I find myself thinking about the experience in more depth because the written copy acts as a springboard for me to be able to add detail to the experience and really evaluate how the experience went as a whole.

Meeting with Supervisor:
  Supervisor Comments on Results
Looks pretty good for your first attempt - I'm sure you will agree that with sessions like this the better your preparation the more structures and efficiently they will be. What you have now is a really good template. My advice is now that anytime you read anything in goal setting see if you can come up with a way of examining it in a goal setting session. Essentially add it in to this template but think carefully where you want it to go.....so if you want to explore the area of control and goals a little more carefully then this would go in the control section. For example, I often explore thoughts and feelings (facil, debil, intensity, frequency and relevance) related to goals with differing degrees of control (particularly with the brighter clients). Overall I think its a great start. You will simply adapt this and refine it as you go along.

Other Feedback: See client feedback form
APPENDIX 1
Examples of completed reflective narratives for Study 1

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Confident Building Consultation: Self-Talk
DATE / LOCATION: 14/05/04 / UWIC private office
CLIENT: Player A
DATE OF REFLECTION: 16/05/04 REVISED COMPLETION: 21/05/04
REFLECTION NUMBER: 13

1.0 Description of Experience

1.1 Phenomenon – Describe the here and now of the experience (where, when, what)
This was the second consultation that I had conducted on that day, both focusing on confidence building with particular emphasis on positive self-talk and thought control. Furthermore, focus was placed upon verbal persuasion techniques in the form of self-talk to help the client build and maintain his self-confidence. This consultation was held in a private office at UWIC, which was thought to be the best location due to the nature of the session involving several tasks for the client to complete. This location also reduced the likelihood of being distracted, which was important due to my lack of experience in delivering such a session. As previously, the client was punctual and the meeting started at 1400, finishing at approximately 1600 (2 hour duration).

The session was intended, firstly, to help the client understand what confidence actually is and for me to gain his views on what confidence means to him. Further, we discussed times when the client had felt particular confident and times when the client did not feel confident at all, exploring the self-talk that accompanied these thoughts and feelings. This ‘orientating process’ allowed the rest of the session to focus specifically on the client making it more idiographic in nature. Specifically, rather than just applying a standardised set of self-talk skills they could be modified to account for certain individual characteristics. Tasks for ‘affirmation statements’, ‘self-efficacy and success lists’, ‘changing self-talk’, and ‘thought stopping’ were used and completed by the client. Moreover, in order to help the client become more aware of his self-talk the idea of using a ‘self-talk’ log was introduced. The instructions for completing this were discussed and then the client was asked to take the log away and complete it ready for discussion the next time that we met.

1.2 Causal – What essential factors contributed to this experience (why)?
1) This was the second confidence building session that I had conducted on that day. However, I didn’t really have time to personally reflect on the first consultation before the start of the second. For the most part, therefore, I wasn’t really helped from the first experience, although I was more familiar with the general content of the session during this second consultation.
2) I was able to speak briefly with my supervisor in between the sessions but this was just to discuss how I think things had gone. My supervisor suggested that from my reports it sounded as though the first consultation had gone well, which gave me more confidence in my ability to deliver effectively going into the second consultation.
3) The client had spent the previous week completing coursework and preparing for exams. I was unsure, before the session, how this would affect the concentration levels and input from the client.
Therefore, I was slightly apprehensive about the depth of the content and wondered whether or not to reduce the theoretical side and concentrated on the tasks.

4) The client has a chance to be selected to represent his country at the U21 World Cup early next month and has expressed, during the goal setting session, a need to be able to improve and maintain his self-confidence. I was therefore even keener to perform well and help the client to learn the necessary tools required to be able to achieve this goal. Focus was placed on verbal persuasion techniques because of the short time period I had to work with the client before the selection date and the squad left for the tournament.

1.3 Context – Who are the significant background actors in this experience (who)?

Despite already having completed one confidence session prior to this consultation and briefly talking to my supervisor about it, I wasn’t able to highlight any areas that I needed to address before conducting this particular consultation. My supervisor did express, for example, that the protocol that I had planned for the session may have involved too much theory, which may cause the client to lose concentration. However, both knowing the client and not having any time to alter this meant that I rolled with what I had planned. Comments concerning the first consultation from my supervisor did, however, help to improve my confidence prior to this consultation. Furthermore, the client himself and the situation that he was/is in (attempting to make the U21 World Cup squad) did focus my thoughts and motivate me to concentrate on performing well.

1.4 Clarifying – Put it back together and establish what the key issues are in this experience that I need to pay attention to (what will I reflect on)?

The experience involved:
- Talking about confidence and how it can be defined, exploring the clients’ views on this. Exploring the experiences of the client the types and amount of self-talk that he currently uses.
- Indicating the various ways that confidence can be improved and signalling a focus on verbal persuasion techniques in the form of self-talk for this particular session.
- Completing a variety of self-talk tasks to educate the client and teach him a number of self-talk techniques, which he could go away and practice.

2.0 Reflection

2.1 What was I trying to achieve (goals)?

As well as gaining from the consultation personally in terms of improving my experience of such sessions and working on my general consultation skills, I wanted to help the client learn several self-talk tools which may help him to improve and maintain his self-confidence. The main goal for this session, therefore, was to guide the client through a number of exercises, ensuring that he understood the techniques and underlying principles throughout, giving him the tools to practice and utilise the techniques over the following week of training with the national squad. These techniques, his understanding of them and his ability to use them could then be assessed, reviewed and discussed during the following session.

2.2 Why did I intervene as I did?

I followed the same protocol used in the previous session conducted on that day because as far as I was concerned it gave me the best opportunity of achieving the goals of the session. Indeed, as previously mentioned my supervisor had suggested that the first consultation appeared to have gone well, so I didn’t want to “mend something that wasn’t broken” so to speak. However, certain items in the protocol were developed as the session progressed due to the idiosyncratic nature of consultation. For example, any issues that the client or I deemed of particular importance were discussed in more depth. The order of the exercises also changed because of the way that the consultation progressed I felt that it would be beneficial to work on different skills at different times during the consultation.
2.3 What internal factors influenced my actions (thoughts, feelings, previous experience – details of the relationship with the client)?

After brief discussion with my supervisor concerning the first session conducted on that day my confidence had improved and the negative thoughts that I had experienced before the first session, concerning my ability to conduct such a session, were reduced. This meant that during the session I felt more comfortable with the material and guiding the client through the tasks, which allowed me to chop and change the order of the exercises with the minimum of fuss. Previous meetings with the client had allowed a rapport to develop. I therefore put pressure on myself to perform well because I knew what the client wanted to achieve and that he had expressed a need to improve and maintain his confidence in order to achieve this. However, I don’t think that this extra pressure had any debilitative effects. Instead it helped me to focus on my performance and concentrate on what I could do to help the client and achieve the goals of the session.

2.4 What external factors influenced my decision-making?

Fortunately we were located in a private office so I was able to set the room out so that the client had ample desk space to complete the written tasks and also view work from previous sessions (e.g. performance profile, goals). Following from recommendations learned on the BASES counselling workshop, I was also able to set the chairs out so that the client didn’t feel confronted and could comfortably break eye contact whenever he wanted, helping him to work on his answers. We were also not constrained by time, which meant that we had as long as necessary for the client to feel comfortable and confident with the skills before ending.

2.5 What sources of knowledge did/should have influenced my decision-making (scientific, ethical, professional etc.)?

In preparing for the meeting I made sure I read a number of chapters to ensure my knowledge was up to scratch in both theory and application of confidence and self-talk (Cognitive Techniques for Improving Performance and Building Confidence; Bunker, Williams and Zinsser, pp.225-231 in Applied Sport Psychology, Williams ed.) (Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport; Hardy, Jones and Gould, chapter 3, pp.43-71) (Sport Psychology; Cox, chapter 8, pp.236-271). In terms of ethical and professional knowledge I was concerned about one issue. This was only my second time conducting a confidence building session and my performance would affect the client either positively or negatively. Although the client had signed a disclaimer saying that he understood that I was a trainee sport psychologist I felt obliged to do the best I could. I therefore, ensured that I had prepared properly and fully giving myself the best chance to perform well. I also made it explicit that benefits from learning these skills would depend on the clients’ willingness to practice and constantly review these self-talk mental skills as he would technical and physical skills.

3.0 Consequences of Actions

3.1 What were the consequences of my actions for: myself; the client; others I work with (learn/realise – cognitive component)?

MYSELF: I was more confident after the first session, especially after receiving feedback from my supervisor in between the first session and this consultation. I enjoyed this experience more, probably as a result of the way that the consultation progressed, my improved confidence, and having gained some experience of conducting such a session earlier that day. I was, therefore, more comfortable with the material and confident enough to change the order of the protocol, which again added to the flow and quality of the session. The pressure, which I placed upon myself because I was aware of the clients’ situation, further focused my thoughts. The session went well, which was supported by comments from the client at the end of the consultation. This was pleasing as I knew that the goals of this session had been achieved, again helping to improve my confidence.

CLIENT: I hope that the client has learnt a number of the theoretical principles involved with building and maintaining confidence so that he has a better understanding of the techniques we addressed. The practical exercises were organised in a way where I would only guide the client, thus empowering him to come up with the answers. This also meant that the self-talk could be personal to the client and
include statements that he truly believed rather than statements that I wanted him to believe. By completing these tasks I hope that the client has gained the necessary tools to perform the self-talk techniques in practical situations (this will be assessed over the next couple of sessions).

3.2 How did I feel about this experience when it was happening?
See 3.1

3.3 How did the client feel about it (consultants’ subjective opinion)?
The client appeared eager to complete the session in terms of going through everything in-depth and was very conscientious when completing the exercises. He took his time to go over everything thoroughly and asked questions whenever necessary to ensure that he understood what was asked of him. This indicated to me that the client enjoyed the session and was focused on improvement. I spoke to the client at the end of the session to gauge his initial impressions. He said that he had found the session interesting and that he had been introduced to some new ideas and ways to improve and maintain his confidence. He also said that he was looking forward to trying the techniques in attempts to improve his confidence in practical situations (training and/or competition).

3.4 How do I know how the client felt about it?
Behavioural cues, body language, and the flow and nature of the conversation between the client and myself. I was also able to find out how the client felt from the verbal feedback post-consultation. It is also my intention to receive written feedback from the client.

4.0 Alternative Tactics

4.1 Could I have dealt with the situation better?
I really need to discuss the outcomes of the session with my supervisor before indicating whether or not I could have dealt better with the situation. This is because of my lack of experience of delivering this type of consultation. However, heeding the suggestions of my supervisor made during the brief discussion in-between the two sessions, I could have reduced the amount of theoretical information that I discussed with the client. The majority of this came in the early parts of the consultation and if I hadn’t been working with such a conscientious and motivated client I may have lost the clients attention and concentration, reducing the chances of conducting an effective consultation. This is something that I really need to address and develop for subsequent consultations.

My ability to conduct such sessions will clearly develop with experience. This can be gained through actually conducting sessions and also through reading and discussions with my supervisor and other practicing sport psychologists.

4.2 What other choices did I have?
I could have broken the theory down and instead of including the theory into the preparation booklet I could have had it on separate sheets and then introduced it at specific times during the consultation if necessary. This would link nicely with specific lines of conversation (e.g. talking about improving self-efficacy, bring in models and theories – if necessary) and help the flow of the consultation. This may also be a better way for the client to learn because he would be able to associate the different personal experiences that we discuss with the actual theory rather than attempting to take in everything in one go. Indeed, different people learn in different ways and this needs to be addressed when preparing to consult with each individual client.

4.3 What would be the consequences of these choices?
See 4.2

5.0 Learning

5.1 How do I now feel about this experience?
I am pleased mainly because of the positive feedback that I received from the client. I placed pressure on myself to consult effectively and it seems that I have achieved the goals of the session. As with every consultation that I have conducted I am pleased to have had the opportunity to reflect on it and gain experience from the incident. I feel better prepared to be able to cope with the idiosyncrasies of clients in the way that I consult as well as more confident in delivering a confidence building session.

*I had a review session with the client today. We discussed all of the skills that I had asked the client to go away and practice. The client suggested that he found a number of the skills of particular use and expressed that he would be able to develop them through further practice. This made me happy because I had helped the client to adopt certain skills that he found useful and would hopefully help to improve his performance, ultimately. Again his ability to use the skills in competition will be reviewed in a month.*

**5.2 How have I made sense of this experience in light of past experiences (what changes will I make to future practice)?**

- I will address the way that I prepare for all consultations and attempt to generate a protocol specific to the individual in attempts to conduct a session conducive to that clients learning.
- I will make sure that theory is only used where necessary and not include it in the main body of the session. I will still prepare the theory but I’ll have it on separate sheets ready to bring into the session at the right times.

**5.3 Action (how will I implement changes)?**

Further discussion will take place with my supervisor. I am also keen to talk to other practicing sport psychologists about how they approach such a session. It may also be beneficial to speak to the client. He knows that I’m undergoing supervised experience; that I’m training, so I could discuss the pros and cons of organising the consultation in different ways. Some information concerning this may be gained from the formal feedback form that I have issued to the client to complete.

---

**POST REFLECTIONS FEEDBACK**

**Reflections on Reflection:** Now that I have had more experience of reflecting on my experiences using this particular method I feel that it is important that I meet with my BASES supervisor and my PhD supervisors to discuss ways in which the model can be developed. This model provides an excellent framework to guide reflections and has enabled me to make sense of my experiences highlighting important areas that need to be addressed if I am to improve as a consultant. However, I tend to find myself answering sections in other areas. I don’t think that it’s because of my lack of knowledge of what to write in each section, but in order to answer each section fully you should cover some of the latter sections. This has to be discussed with those more familiar with the model.

**Meeting with Supervisor:**

**Other Feedback:** See Client Feedback Form
APPENDIX 1
Examples of completed reflective narratives for Study 1

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Performance Profiling
DATE / LOCATION: 26.10.04 / Players Lounge
CLIENT: Professional Football Youth Academy
DATE OF REFLECTION: 28.10.04 REVISED COMPLETION:
REFLECTION NUMBER: 17

1.0 Description of Experience

1.1 Phenomenon – Describe the here and now of the experience (where, when, what)
This was the second time that I had met with the group and the purpose of this consultation was to conduct a performance profiling session. The coach had made it clear at the end of the previous consultation that he wasn’t keen on completing “team” performance profiling or ‘team’ goal setting because it “may give the players ammunition to challenge different members of the coaching staff”. Thus, the idea was for each individual within the group to conduct their own profile for their specific position.

Consistent with what had been discussed and planned before the start of this period of sport psychology support, the session was conducted in the weekly time slot of Tuesday mornings (9.30 – 11.00). However, as with the first consultation I was informed that this session would have to be finished by 10.30. Fortunately the players were ready to commence with the session early so we started at about 9.15, giving me an hour and 15 minutes. After my last experience I had prepared myself for difficulties with time and wasn’t too concerned about this.

The session was conducted in the player’s lounge of Ninian Park allowing an ideal setting to complete the performance profiles. There was plenty of space for players to work on their profiles and ideal facilities for the use of an OHP, which I used to present the profiling instructions. I made sure that everything was set-up and ready for the players when they arrived so that a) we would be ready to go straight away and, b) a professional, organised environment was created.

1.2 Causal – What essential factors contributed to this experience (why)?
From my reflections on the first consultation that I had with this group I realised that the sessions would have to be practical and interactive to help the players’ concentration and increase the amount of information that they would be able to take in (give them chance to contextualise the information). Having previous experience of conducting performance profiles I knew that the session could easily be made interactive. This allowed me the fortune of not having to think too hard about how I could adapt the session to capture the players’ imagination and formulate good performance profiles.

In previous performance profiling sessions I had identified that I may have influenced the client too much when attempting to elicit an exhaustive list of qualities. I was keen to work on prompting the players to generate their own qualities rather than influencing their thoughts by giving them examples of what qualities they might include.

As with the previous consultation one of the academy staff attended the session. He helped me to organise the room before the start of the session by spacing tables out and setting the chairs up so that
everyone could see the OHP. He also helped to monitor the group when they were completing each section of the performance profile.

1.3 **Context – Who are the significant background actors in this experience (who)?**

One significant person in this experience was an individual within the group who had missed the first session (Introduction to sport psychology). Upon arriving at the room where this consultation was to be conducted he said to other members of the group, “What the bloody hell are we doing here when we could be playing football.” This comment made me determined to alter his thinking before the end of the session and make him realise that this period of sport psychology support would be beneficial to him by helping him to improve his performance.

My supervisor had a role to play in this experience by reviewing the session that I had planned and ensuring that I had made the material understandable to players of different intelligence levels as well as thought provoking and appealing. Just having my supervisor check over my plans and offering suggestions gives me a great deal of confidence and satisfaction. Confidence in knowing that the material I have is good and the quality of the session therefore lies within my control; and satisfaction because I know my hard work and hours of preparation have paid off.

The coach also played a role in this experience. Despite him expressing his thoughts after the previous consultation, causing me to change the plans that I had for the period of sport psychology support, he was very positive from the moment that I arrived at Ninian Park. I informed him of what I had planned for the session and the reasons for conducting a performance profile. He seemed very interested and happy that the group would be producing something tangible that could help them within their training and competition. This made me feel at ease and gave me the chance to relax before starting the session.

1.4 **Clarifying – Put it back together and establish what the key issues are in this experience that I need to pay attention to (what will I reflect on)?**

The key issues from this experience that I need to reflect on are:

1. The developing rapport and professional relationship with the group.
2. The effectiveness of the session in terms of the players understanding why we conduct performance profiles and how they can help them individually.
3. My ability to make the session into more of a workshop by involving the players’ thoughts and opinions in each stage of the profile.
4. The structure of the session in helping players to achieve the goals that I had set them during the consultation.

2.0 **Reflection**

2.1 **What was I trying to achieve (goals)?**

I wanted to build upon the rapport that had started to develop, all be it slight, in the first consultation. If I could help the players to understand the utility of completing an initial performance profile and the benefits that can be gained from reviewing the profile on a regular basis they may actually start to think of the sessions in a more positive manner.

I also wanted to conduct the session in a manner that could be understood by all of the individuals and thus give everyone an equal chance to create a good initial profile. In light of the previous session I wanted to ensure that I provided examples and clarity where necessary, but basically to give them the tools to go away and conduct the profile by themselves. When you conduct a profile with an individual client it is easy to control the session in terms of gaining clarification on what the client means by each of the qualities, and ensuring that depth is gained via an exhaustive list. In this case the group comprised of 18 individuals who played in a variety of positions. I wanted to gain the same results as I would if I had consulted with each player individually.

2.2 **Why did I intervene as I did?**

Performance profiling is an excellent method for helping performers, coaches and teams to achieve their potential. This method is also widely used and acknowledged in the literature as an integral part of a complete mental skills training programme. I used this profile to make the client start to think about the
qualities he requires as a performer and to highlight that a number of them are psychological in nature, which I can aim to help him improve. It also provides a base for a mental skills training programme to be developed with specific strengths and limitations being highlighted.

For this particular consultation I decided that the profile should be broken down into seven sections. This was because the players would complete the profiles on their own without any direct supervision from me and I didn’t want them to become lost with all of the instructions at the beginning of the session. Basically this allowed me to control the quality of the profiles as well as breaking the session down into small chunks, which I realised from the first consultation with this group was a necessary method for maintaining player concentration and interest. Section 1 involved the players generating an exhaustive list of the qualities of the ideal performer in their position. I also informed them to think about professional footballers in general in order to generate a more comprehensive list that covered all aspects of the game. In trying to help them with this list I also referred them to specific players and asked them to consider things that they are particularly good at or things that people have said that they need to work on. The second section involved the players indicating which category (technical, tactical etc) the quality falls under. The third section involved the players rating the importance of the quality on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (very important). After this section I told the players that now they realise that the profile should include all qualities and not just those that are of utmost importance they should review section one and add more qualities where they feel necessary. Sections four, five and six involved the players rating the ideal (aspiring to), their self score, and the best self-score they had ever been respectively on a scale of 1 to 10. Finally, section seven gave the players the chance to give a brief description of the qualities that they included in their profile.

Conducting the profile stage by stage allowed me to ensure that all players completed the profile to some extent within the time period available. I would then have the opportunity to look over each profile and make suggestions where necessary about the way forward. Although this restricted the players in terms of what they could do, I had to control them to some extent or else the session would not have been effective at all. I have decided that further time would be spent addressing the profiles and the players will be given the chance to review their initial attempts.

2.3 What internal factors influenced my actions (thoughts, feelings, previous experience – details of the relationship with the client)?

I realised from my previous experience with the players that they some of them found it hard to concentrate for long periods. I made sure that the information that I gave them was chunked and broken up by exercises for them to complete, enabling them to maintain their concentration and interest.

One of the players had mentioned his dislike of being in the session, before the session had even begun. This made me feel determined to alter his perceptions and make him realise that perhaps these sport psychology support sessions could actually benefit him as a player. It is important to note that this player had missed the first consultation, which was a relief because if it had been someone who had attended that session (Introduction to the importance of sport psychology) I would have had to question the quality of my presentation.

I was also determined to improve on the previous session in terms of building a better rapport with the players. I was confident that if I shared my own personal experiences, asked for their experiences and demonstrated my extensive knowledge of the game, the group would begin to accept me and open up to me.

2.4 What external factors influenced my decision-making?

I knew that performance profiles could take a long time to complete properly and was certain that time would play a part in this experience. This helped me to decide the way that I would conduct the session by controlling the time each player could spend on each section. This allowed all players to complete the initial profile with the allotted time.

I knew that there were the facilities for the use of an OHP and decided to use this because I only required a few slides and it was easier, quicker to set up and less hassle to organise. The room that we were in for the consultation was also suited more for the use of an OHP in terms or the location of sockets.

There was enough space in the room for tables to be spread out. This was done because I thought that it would be beneficial for the players to work in small groups, helping each other where necessary, but providing some privacy if the individual wanted to work on his own. If I had kept the whole group together I thought that there would have been more distractions, more copying and less individual thought and effort.
2.5 What sources of knowledge did/should have influenced my decision-making (scientific, ethical, professional etc.)?
I had prepared by reading papers by Butler and Hardy (1992) and Jones (1993) to give me an insight into the applied work of performance profiling. However, because I was working with such a large group, which contained a wide variety of personalities and ability levels I realised that I would have to alter the performance profile protocol slightly to ensure that everyone understood each section of the profile and was given chance to complete it properly. I also reviewed the reflections I had conducted after completing previous performance profiling sessions to highlight any important issues that I would need to address in this consultation.

In terms of ethical and professional knowledge, I briefed the players explicitly before conducting the profiles about how the information would be used, who would see the information contained within the profiles and that if they wanted, the information would not be shared with anyone apart from their coach.

3.0 Consequences of Actions

3.1 What were the consequences of my actions for: myself; the client; others I work with (learn/rerealise – cognitive component)?
Myself: I realised that some of the players are academically capable and can grasp new ideas and concepts quickly, where as there are a number of players who are in contrast to this. I think that I have to address the issue of how I deliver future sessions so that I can make them challenging enough for the brighter members of the group and not too difficult for the other members of the group. This performance profiling session worked well because individuals generated the answers and motivated themselves. Clearly giving personal examples and demonstrating my knowledge of the game effects players at all levels positively and this is something that I need to maintain for future sessions.

The client (group): The players appreciated the interactive nature of the session and were able to concentrate and work on the profiling task for the entire session. Players seemed to be interested in the technique of performance profiling and started to demonstrate the characteristics of actually wanting to receive sport psychology support, rather than viewing it as time they would rather spend playing football.

3.2 How did I feel about this experience when it was happening?
As the experience progressed I became more confident due to the way things were going. All of the players appeared to work very hard towards the profiling task and really think about what was being asked of them. A number of players asked clarification questions, checked their ideas with me, and asked how they could improve certain aspects of their profile. Others demonstrated a clear interest in sport psychology by asking how we would work on different mental skills. This demonstrated to me that many of them were starting to come around to the possibility that sport psychology may be beneficial to their games. I began to feel really positive and relax, becoming myself rather than this person I was trying to be in attempts to “do things right” and achieve the aims of the session. By relaxing and being myself I didn’t have to think about what I should be doing in order to achieve the aims of the session, it just happened naturally. The information I provided flowed, and I was able to answer questions by providing examples in the language the players were accustomed to, which I think the players appreciated.

3.3 How did the client feel about it (consultants’ subjective opinion)?
I think that the clients enjoyed the session a lot more. They began to understand the purpose of a performance profile and were keen to compare themselves against an ‘ideal’ to see what level of ability they had achieved so far. They were definitely able to concentrate for longer periods and liked the fact that the session was interactive and practically based.

3.4 How do I know how the client felt about it?
Behavioural cues, body language, the flow of conversation, and the type of conversation. Also from brief discussion at the end of the consultation concerning how the clients found the session, what they had learnt and whether or not they enjoyed the meeting. The clients also appeared to be conscientious in their work and this symbolised to me a desire to do well.
4.0 Alternative Tactics

4.1 Could I have dealt with the situation better?
If I had had more time to conduct the session I could have clearly dealt with the situation better by giving the players more time to complete section one (qualities) and section seven (description of each quality). This would have given me the chance to go around each individual and discuss their profile with them in more depth, thus creating a more exhaustive list of qualities. I could have split the profiling session over two weeks giving the players a greater chance to generate depth in their profiles. It is my intention, however, to comment on each of the profiles and go over these comments at the beginning of the next consultation. During this time, players will be given the opportunity to add more qualities or change their self-scores if necessary.

The performance profile itself was four pages long and I decided not to staple each complete profile together because the column headings were only printed on the first page. By not stapling the pages together players would not constantly have to flick back to the first page to remind themselves what they should be putting in each column. However, despite separating the profiles by placing one portrait followed by one landscape, players did not take all of the profile so everyone ended up with random sheets, rather then one complete profile each. This took an extra five minutes to sort out and confusion at the start of the session, which detracted from the professionalism of the consultation. In future I’ll make sure that the column headings are available on every page so that the profiles can be stapled from the beginning.

4.2 What other choices did I have?
See above.

4.3 What would be the consequences of these choices?
See above.

5.0 Learning

5.1 How do I now feel about this experience?
Having had this experience I feel more positive about the period of work that I am scheduled to complete with this client group. After the first consultation that I had with them I did start to have negative thoughts in terms of whether or not it would be beneficial for me to carry on. However, seeing how interested a number of the players appeared to be during this session and the quality of thought that came from almost everyone has given me a more optimistic outlook on the situation. As long as I am able to learn from each of the experiences that I have with the group and implement change to address this learning, I’m sure that the quality of the work will improve due to the player’s growth in interest.

5.2 How have I made sense of this experience in light of past experiences (what changes will I make to future practice)?
- I’ll make sure that all handouts (performance profiles in this case) are stapled before giving them out so that there is no confusion about what sheets they should have and how many sheets they should have. In this case I must make sure that the column titles of the performance profile are printed on every page so that the client(s) do not have to keep referring back to the first page when completing the profile.
- Explain each section of the performance profile better and ensure understanding before sending the client(s) off to complete the specific section that were are working on.
- Having reviewed some of the profiles as I walked around the group during the session I have realised that I may need to give players further prompts to help them think about the qualities of the ideal player. I will ask more rhetorical questions and ask them to consider a number of players in general. I will be more specific with my instructions and make sure that I provide plenty of examples without trying to influence the players too much, after all this is their profile and they have the final say, but a few well placed examples would help their thinking.
- Again I think I can work on improving the way that I attempt to elicit an exhaustive list of qualities from clients without directly influencing them. Although I think that I have shown improvement...
from the first time that I conducted a performance profile to this one, I think I can work more towards an ideal technique for this method.

5.3 **Action (how will I implement changes)?**

- I have planned to talk to other accredited sport psychologists on their views about how a performance profile should be conducted and to discuss any tips they may have about how to be successful. This will allow me to generate in depth information and create a ‘hybrid model’ of performance profiling technique. Further, learning from others experience will also help me to increase my effectiveness as a consultant, particularly within this specific area of support.
- I will review the reading that I completed prior to this session and make sure that I fully understand all of the issues that are discussed. If anything has missed my attention I can bring it up with my supervisor.

---

**POST REFLECTIONS FEEDBACK**

**Reflections on Reflection:** I had a brief look back over some of the first reflections that I completed in this format to see how things have evolved. It is clear that this process is making think more and more about my experiences, helping me to rationalise with the happenings of situations, what they mean and why they occurred. This is allowing me to look past ‘the obvious’ and discover the underlying reasons for why things went well, or went wrong. In turn this is allowing me to indicate a more rigorous plan of action and the methods by which I am going to implement this plan.

**Meeting with Supervisor:**

**Other Feedback:**

**PhD Supervisor**

1. **Again relating to the structure (and with one eye on your reflections being used as data) I think it would be useful to more clearly make links from one reflection to the other. For example in 1.2 you do mention that as a consequence of your reflection on the last session you wanted to make it more interactive. This is good, but it would be good to see this relating explicitly to one your outcomes in 5.2 in the previous reflection. What do you think?**

2. **In section 1.3, would it be useful to mention the rest of the group of players here. I know they aren’t ‘background’ actors as they are very much in the forefront but they aren’t really discussed at all and are critical to understanding the session.**

3. **2.2. – the way you did your PP with the big group was excellent**

4. **2.3. – were there any nerves at this session? You mention feeling confident – does that cover everything?**

5. **Section 2.5. – good to see mention of ethical knowledge. It seems to me that ‘personal knowledge’ is also important here (knowing yourself and how interact with others) – you made use of this type of knowledge to help build rapport and you even mention later that you felt you were actually being yourself in the session. Where do you think your knowledge of football and infrastructure etc would fit?**
6. In the 3.0 Consequences section – is there room to consider the coach?

7. What happened with the PPs at the end of the session? Did you or the players keep them?

8. I was thinking when I was reading the section 5.2 that we maybe need to modify it to also include things that you would do again. It is all focused on things that could be improved. It seemed you did a lot right and well but at the end we are focusing only on the things to be changed. What do you think?

9. There is a guy at Portsmouth who did or is just finishing his PhD all on performance profiling. His name is Neil Weston – not sure if he has published anything but might be worth following up.

This is slightly aside from reflections but more SP issues. Do you think you are being realistic in your goal to convince them all that SP is important and useful? I think it is a commendable and challenging goal, but is it achievable? Could an unrealistic goal have contributed to your feelings of anxiety?

I remember Dan Gould talking about the ‘one third, one third, one third principle’ when conducting initial sport psych workshops. One third of the room just do not want to be there, one third of the room are maybe a bit interested, and one third of the room are interested and open to taking stuff on board.

Also – is there anything additional you could do to give yourself cues to be more interactive and ask questions? I quite often put ‘what do you think’ or a ‘?’ actually on the slide so it reminds me and makes it clear to them that you are asking questions
APPENDIX 2
Focus group protocol for Study 2

Exploring the Relationship between Effective and Reflective Practice in Applied Sport Psychology

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Focus Group Number:

Date:

Duration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of years accredited</th>
<th>Number of times re-accredited</th>
<th>Research history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Introduction / Set Up

- Introduce researchers and how the idea for the study was formulated.
- Recap on why the specific participants have been selected and identify confidentiality and participant rights.
- Today we are going draw upon all of your knowledge and personal experiences as sport psychologists to firstly discuss the term effective practice. Current research provides us with an understanding of the characteristics that make-up the effective consultant but there is no clear definition available. Secondly, I would like you to discuss how you attempt to evaluate and improve your own work, as well as the concept of reflective practice and its use as a tool for personal and professional development.
- Information gained from this discussion will help to improve our understanding of the specific factors that contribute to successful applied outcomes, as well as considering the importance and implementation of reflective practice.

Any questions so far? Please do not hesitate to ask questions as we proceed if things aren’t clear or you would like to discuss any issues in further depth.

Format

We are going to progress through a number of sections to keep the discussion relatively structured. However, each section is not mutually exclusive and there will be opportunity to re-visit information and build upon the information derived in one section during the next.

1. A general discussion between yourselves on the topic of effective practice.
2. Generation of a working definition of ‘effective practice’ – THIS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE DUE TO THE VARYING NATURE OF ASP SO MORE THAN ONE DEFINITION MAY BE NECESSARY
3. Discussion regarding your current knowledge, understanding, and beliefs about reflective practice.
4. Finally, how you have attempted to evaluate and improve your practice. So maybe your experiences of adopting reflective practice, or other methods, and how this has influenced your philosophy and approach to applied sport psychology.
5. In this section we will discuss some important related issues and there will be an opportunity to re-visit anything that you want to discuss further.
6. Conclusion
Importantly, before we start let me reiterate that it is vital you draw upon all of your knowledge and experience as applied practitioners dating back from when you started supervised experience up until the present day. This is so that we are able to better understand how the effectiveness of your practice has developed over this time and the methods you have used to do this.

Section 1

For the next few minutes I would like you to talk amongst yourselves about what **effectiveness** and **effective practice** means to you as an applied practitioner.

Probe:

- Use information generated from the discussion to further the conversation
- How would an athlete answer this question?
- What are the goals of applied sport psychology?
- Do these differ depending on the type of support that you are offering?
- How does effectiveness differ from competence?
- What methods are currently available to make us aware of and develop our effectiveness?

NOTE: SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT MAY BE USED IN THE DEFINITION COULD BE JOTTED ONTO A FLIPCHART TO HELP FUEL THE DISCUSSION

Section 2

- We would now like you to generate a working **definition** of effective practice.

- Literature generally refers to goals of applied practice, but does this encompass all of the factors that influence how successful support has been?

- Can a definition be developed that encompasses all of the work that we do, or do the specificities of the definition alter depending upon the type of support that we are offering?

- It is important that the definition distinguishes between competence and effectiveness.

WRITE THE DEFINITION DOWN ON THE FLIPCHART SO THAT IT CAN BE VIEWED BY ALL
Appendix 2

Section 3

- *Moving on slightly, literature concerning the evaluation of applied sport psychology support has suggested that consultants adopt reflective practice as a method for self-evaluation and improvement. I would like you talk amongst yourselves about your current knowledge of reflective practice and the role it has to play in professional development.*

MAYBE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE SOME POINTS REGARDING WHAT REFELCTION IS ON THE FLIPCHART TO AID THE FLOW OF THE DISCUSSION (e.g., self-awareness; knowledge-in-action; making sense of experience; critical thinking; empowerment; enlightenment).

**What are your beliefs and attitudes to evaluation, improvement, and reflection?**

**Probe:**

- What do we currently understand reflective practice to be? – How has it been introduced to you?

- How do you evaluate or reflect on your practice?

- It is said that reflective practice creates self-awareness, how can that be used to improve the effectiveness of the service we offer? – *Only use this if the subject of self-awareness comes up!!*

- Reflection is said to generate knowledge-in-action what does this mean to you?

Section 4

- *Building on what we have just discussed, we would like you to consider and share your personal experiences of evaluating and improving your own work. So what measures, steps, or procedures have you taken?*

**Probe:**

- Are there are particular instances that have stood out where you have decided to thoroughly evaluate your practice because of the significance of the incident?
  - How has that influenced your future evaluative practices?

- What aspects of professional development have you undertaken?
  - How have these influenced your practice?

- What factors have been most influential in the way that you have attempted to evaluate and improve your practice?
Appendix 2

– What are the implications for the practice of others?

Section 5

Finally, some important issues related to what we have talked about.

• Do you feel the lessons learned and reflected upon from one key incident actually transfer to another situation, which may or may not be similar in nature?

• Are there any types of incident which you were not able to learn from & why? (Repeating the same mistake).

• What is your opinion on whether you have to actually experience the incident in person rather than being educated/briefed/told about it?

Section 6

That just about concludes the focus group. Before we finish is there anything that you would like to add concerning the discussion or the definition that we have created?

Thank you very much. I’d just like to remind you that your answers will be treated with the strictest of confidence and will be reportedly anonymously. If you would like a copy of the transcript please feel free to contact me.

That’s the end of the interview, thank you very much for participating.
APPENDIX 3
Copy of exemplar transcript Study 2: Focus group interview

Focus Group #1 Transcript

Time: 9.30 – 11.10
Duration: 1 hour 42 mins
Date: 01/12/2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Years Accredited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Re-accredited (one time)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Accredited</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Supervised Experience</td>
<td>3rd year SE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BC: Hopefully you’ve had chance to look over the preparation booklets. It’s nice to see that some of you have brought them and read through them.

A: I didn’t want to come here and be prompted by them it’s going to come off the top of my head.

BC: Ok, I like that xxx, if you’re going to say anything say it from the heart is it? Ok so what we’re basically going to do, the study’s sort of done in two sections basically. The first section is looking at what effective practice is within applied sport psychology. The literature basically shows us at the minute that there are a number of different characteristics demonstrated by the effective consultant and it also shows us how to measure effectiveness or how to evaluate the effectiveness of sessions but it doesn’t actually tell us what effectiveness is. I am aware that obviously effectiveness might depend upon your role within the situation in which you’re working but hopefully we can just try and explore what effective practice actually is today and try and hopefully come up with some form of definition or points towards a definition. The second part then is going to look at how you tend to evaluate or reflect on your work in order to try and improve your effectiveness as consultants. So obviously you’ve been brought in because of your expert knowledge and I’ve tried to get a range of views and experiences so that we can have a good discussion about important factors.

Before we start can I just ask you to make sure that you try and draw on all of your experiences that you’ve had from the start of supervised experience up until where you are now so that we can get quite a good range of information? If you’ve got any questions as we go along don’t hesitate to ask and I’ll try to answer them as best as I can. I have got some prompts here on the flipchart just to help us with the conversation. I will try to put some points down as well as they’re brought up but if you do have any questions then just ask.

So what I would like us to do start with is have a general conversation about what effective practice actually is or what is effectiveness within applied sport psychology, what do you guys think effectiveness relates to?

A: Ok do you want me to start off?

BC: Yeah…

A: I think before you start looking at the outcomes you’ve got to look at what are the criteria you’re trying to assess, so what is effectiveness, or what are your intervention goals, what are you trying to achieve with this person? And that’s based on your philosophy, delivery and modus operandi. So are you looking at personal growth and development with this person or is it very basic short term performance enhancement, injury rehab or whatever, or is it something very specific outcome that you’re trying to assist, or it could be more fluffy type developmental perspective? That will then determine how effective I presume what you’re doing is.
BC: Ok so like it’s that identifying the goals and trying to achieve those goals?

A: I’ll give you an example. If you are working with a squad or a team and you’re asked to work with someone because of a specific issue that has arisen during performance or a competition and you sit down and chat with them then it maybe to try and resolve that issue to help them try to alleviate their performance issue. Whereas if you’re doing general profiling of your performers over year to year with the squad or a team and you’ve got some longer term issues that are to do with getting their life in order outside of sport like career options, helping them become more confident individuals. So effectiveness there would be have I…from my philosophy it would be, “Has this individual become more confident, have they become more autonomous have they developed as a person?” That would be a macro-level of effectiveness in the long-term as opposed to a short-term, “Has this person come out of the session and we’ve fixed this problem or are they moving towards improving or reducing the problem?”

BC: OK, what do you guys think?

C: Well one of the key elements for me was in the professional limits of the practitioner as well. So for providing effective practice it has to be something that the practitioner is also comfortable with – meeting the needs of the client so like they then meet the needs and objectives of that particular situation.

B: Yeah, I think it depends on why you’ve been brought in to work with them, so it’s being really clear. I think only when you’re clear about that you can be effective. So once you’ve established the needs of the client or client group then you’re set, because if you help the client or client group achieve those needs then that’s the only way you can be effective I think.

A: Effectiveness is obviously in the eye of the beholder because if your coach or the person who is employing you their effectiveness is maybe what happens on the pitch. If you are a physio they’ve brought you in to get them back - rehab. Clients goals maybe something completely different to the coaches goals and your goals, if you’ve got an humanistic philosophy or existential approach maybe to become a better independent person, this guy would be totally irrelevant to what a coach wants. Effectiveness…you can’t just say was I effective or not because it’s very specific to who’s judging or evaluating you.

B: I think you have to declare who your client is. You might be brought in by the union but you’re working with the athlete so for me my client is the athlete. So you’ve got to declare and be clear about and say to the union ‘my job is to support the athlete, that’s what you’re paying me to do, so I don’t answer to you.’

A: Yeah and if they’re not happy with that then you wouldn’t be happy to work under those conditions.

BC: So how do we think an athlete would answer the question ‘what effective applied sport psychology practice is?’ Would they say the same things then or…

B: I think it depends where they’re coming from. If it was in general I think most of them would say to optimise performance or enhance performance because they probably might not know some of the issues that you might work with them with.

A: If you look at the medical model of practice and science it would be ‘if you go to see a doctor you want to get better’. So if you adopt the medical approach and you go and see a sport scientist with an injury or psychological issue you want to come out better. So that ‘better’ maybe a better performer or resolve the performance issue. If you’re looking broader at a counselling perspective then it would be different so all the athlete would be focused on is performance I would imagine and that’s what they’d want.

BC: Ok

A: But then with athletes it’s not just about performance…
BC: No, so it depends then…what we’re saying is that it’s difficult in order to tie down what effectiveness is because it is dependant on the situation and you as an individual practitioner, and obviously the goals of the situation with which you are working…

A: Context specific!

BC: Context, ok. What about competence then and effectiveness? What would we say the main differences are between the two terms? Are they the same, are they different? How do you view competence and how do you view effectiveness?

C: I think you need to have competence in order to be effective, that’s how I view it. Because if you’re working outside of your competence levels you’re not going to be as effective as someone else who has that level of competence. But realising and addressing that issue and where appropriate passing it on to someone else so that they can provide a more effective service to the athlete.

BC: So what are you saying competence actually is then? The ability to…

C: I don’t know…kind of…

A: Let’s go back a step. I can competently deliver a performance profiling session as an athlete, but it could be totally ineffective because as an athlete you don’t want to do performance profiling. I can competently tell you about goal setting and do that but it may not be effective. Yeah, I can have a 30 second talk to you on the bus going to a game which will do the job. Now in terms of competence the quality of what I say or do may not be purely scientific or grounded, but it may be effective in that sense.

C: That goes back to meeting the needs of the athlete. It depends on what the goal is, delivering the right things to meet the goals.

A: Yeah, and there’s congruence between the athlete’s goals and objectives and the practitioners goals and objectives and there’s congruence there I’d imagine you’d get a perceived level of effectiveness from both sides.

B: Yeah.

A: So competence is about the ability to execute the task I’d say. If I was a competent performer, a competent darts player I’d be very good at throwing my darts and hitting the target. Effective darts player wins the match whether they do it competently or incompetently.

BC: Ok, good example. So if we’re competent then what’s going to determine whether we’re going to be effective within that session? What are the main characteristics?

B: The perceptions of the client. I think for me a client achieves their outcomes what I set out to do with you and if they are satisfied with your interaction then you’re effective. So I might have delivered something fairly incompetently but if the athlete perceives it as being really effective than that’s important.

BC: Ok, that’s quite interesting really. So from a purely sport psych point of view competence may not be the most important issue but effectiveness is?

B: I think if you look at some of the competencies that organisations put out and suggest ’you have to have all of these things’ some people don’t have them but are amazingly effective. So I don’t think they are that highly related sometimes.

A: Just from experience, supposedly I’m labelled as an experienced practitioner, a lot of the time it’s how you interact with people, your interpersonal skills.

BC: Right, ok.
A: I haven’t delivered workshops for a while, I would say my goal setting workshops are five years out of date, probably could be updated and more competently delivered. But I feel very comfortable talking to someone one-to-one, I feel I could empathise with them and do that. So it’s the personal counselling type skills that may determine, which I would see would determine effectiveness. It’s not what you say but how you say it essentially.

B: Mmm (agrees), and the client’s belief that you could be effective you know, they respect you and have positive experiences and they’re more likely to buy into what you say even though something you say might not be theoretically driven or whatever, but it’s conceptual for the client.

A: You look at good leaders, you’d do anything for a good captain or a good coach, you know you’d jump off a cliff for them if they asked you to. So it’s the efficacy for who’s delivering the message and that comes back to respect and if you show empathy for them.

BC: So clearly developing a rapport and gaining that trust and respect between the sport psychologist and client is key to effectiveness. Would you agree?

C: Yeah definitely.

A: I mean that’s almost the glue to being effective. The start of effectiveness is identifying the goals and objectives; you’ve got agreed set of goals and objectives so you know what you want to get out of that. Then you’ve got separate agreed common criteria to evaluate them. So if you both know that ‘our job is to help you do this’ at the end of it the client will know that ‘you haven’t really achieved this so I don’t think my consultant is effective’. Whereas as a consultant you could say ‘we both agreed these goals we haven’t achieved this and that’s down to me’. I think that’s quite key to that but there’s a process to effectiveness that requires all the skills and attributes that you have as a practitioner.

BC: Ok, great. Just to move on a little bit, do you think then that current accreditation standards or current processes that are in place for the development of sport psychologists focus specifically on effectiveness or competence?

C: Competence.

B: Yeah.

BC: Competence?

A: I went through BASES quite a long time ago but I think it reinforces competence.

C: It involves giving yourself a rating on basically how competent you are in each of the areas and there’s not an awful lot that assesses or evaluates how effective you are it’s just a matter of filling in the right number of sheets to say that ‘yes I’ve completed x number of workshops or x number of clients’, but there’s no measures of effectiveness there.

B: I know some very effective sport psychologists who have been rejected from BASES accreditation so you can tell it’s not congruent really.

C: Its like based on number of contact hours and you could be working solely with a team for a long period of time and be incredibly effective with them yet if you haven’t worked with a lot of individuals on a one-to-one the you’re already at a loss in terms of what BASES think.

BC: Ok, good…go on xxx.

A: To draw an analogy with learning and students, vocational based learning is about ticking boxes and demonstrating skills and yet higher education supposedly is about developing deeper learning, cognitive based where you go away and you learn about topics and then you link areas together. It’s not easily demonstrated or ‘tick boxable’ but you can be effective...an effective learner and comprehend a lot more through that process rather than just ticking boxes.
Appendix 3

BC: Ok, right, we’re going to move onto this a bit more later on but just to start thinking about this what sort of methods are available, or what methods have we undertaken in order to try an develop our effectiveness? Because what we’ve said previously is that effectiveness may be more important than competence in achieving our goals.

B: The main thing I use is getting feedback from the client and that’s sometimes quite informal. You have review sessions to see how it’s going, and you get to feel how they perceive your support. Also from my earlier stages it was written feedback from them. They filled out evaluation sheets and open ended questionnaires where they could write down anything they wanted more of or less of and things like that.

BC: How often did you do those evaluations?

B: When I was working quite heavily with a client group I would do that at least four times a year formally written, but probably every month I would ask them how they felt it was going and if they needed any changes or whatever.

BC: Ok, do you guys do that?

C: Yeah mainly I probably use more informal feedback on a more regular basis, purely because of the nature of the team that I’m working with are rubbish when it comes to putting pen to paper and putting things down formally. So it works better to get informal verbal feedback. Also personal evaluations talking about what went well and what things could be changed.

A: Depending on the client group and governing bodies, obviously you have to invoice governing bodies every so often for your fees so when I actually invoice them I build an evaluation into that. I have a debrief with the employer or whoever’s in charge and then do something formal with the CEF or something like that. I do more one-on-one’s with players just having a chat after a course of a six week intervention, sitting down and asking ‘is it working, what can we do better in that sense?’ So it’s layered really depending on the level of evaluation you are looking at, but with coaches it’s formal, with the players it’s informal. You started the question ‘what’s helped…?’

BC: We’re going on to talk about this but I just wanted to know what sort of methods are available, what have you…?

A: I’ve videoed a couple of sessions and evaluated using that video feedback. When I was doing my training I used to have a peer training group we used to feedback to each other on how well we were doing on our experiences and things like that and I just used to pick the brains of my two supervisors who are quite good applied psych’s.

B: Yeah I would say that a massive thing for me is that when you’re starting out sometimes it’s really difficult to know if you’re doing the right thing so having really good mentors; I had a really good mentor who I could even ring them half way through a session to get some advice. I think in terms of your earlier development it was so critical for me I think.

A: You’re not being spoon fed but you are being led through the experience.

BC: That’s quite interesting…

A: The other thing is just watching people present and watching different…

B: Yeah

A: When you’re doing your SE you’re trying to develop a persona, who are you going to be as a consultant? You are trying to develop your consultant style and that’s going to be influenced by who’s supervising you, who you see presenting; you knick bits off people who you like and then you decide want you want to be or who you want to be like and you form your own style eventually and that changes throughout your career. Eventually you end up thinking ‘well I am
myself and I’ll do what’s best’, so that’s an ongoing process of change all the time, you feedback on what you did and the way you wanted to do it.

BC: Ok, good, so just to move on then, based on what we’ve talked about have you got anything else to sort of add on to the effectiveness versus competence…no, are we happy?

A: Yeah, I think it all depends on what level you’re looking at effectiveness on. Are you looking at purely at a critical level in terms of outcomes, or are you looking at effectiveness as a process. That will obviously mean your study is dictated by the bounds of that, you could go on different levels to really look at it. The perceptions of effectiveness and competence as opposed to physically measuring levels of competence and effectiveness.

BC: Well bearing that in mind then what I want us to try and do now is come up with some point that will lead us towards a definition. Now clearly when I came up with this idea I realised that gaining a working definition or a neat, tidy definition it was going to be difficult. I assumed that, from my experience, the sorts of things to come out have come out, so if we can have a go at coming up with some sort of definition some of the main points etcetera, I’ll put them up on the board and we’ll just try and work from there really. So if we start with what xxx was saying about the levels…so what are your thoughts really of some of the things that should be included in this? Obviously we’ve talked about a lot of things that you might want to include in already.

A: Are we just looking for bullet points to say these are similar…

B: Yeah the key things…

BC: Yeah it’s probably best to go with bullet points of the key things and then if we can put into a nice definition then great.

C: Meeting the needs of the client.

B: I think we’ve talked about rapport and gaining trust, and I don’t really think you can be effective if you don’t have that relationship.

A: We could be very brief and say that if you meet the aims of the client that’s effective practice, but could you say client slash…’I’m thinking in terms of performance…the client may be happy if they perform better…it comes back to ‘what’s the goal of the…’ ‘what’s your brief’ almost. Because you can have a brief that the coach wants to help this player really hard and get back on the field and yet the player is not physically fit to go back on the field, they don’t want to go back on the field but because it’s a pro sport you’ve got to try and help them. So you’re at a conflict between what your employer wants and what the athlete wants. I know you shouldn’t have that when you set you’re client goals but…can you see where I’m going with that, I think I’m going around in circles?

BC: No, no I do understand. So basically you can be effective for one person but not the other.

A: Yeah.

B: I think you’ve got to be really clear about who it is you’re working for. You might get paid by someone, but who are you working for? That person has got to be central and key.

A: Yeah, I think that at the end of the day an effective practitioner is someone who achieves the client goals, which are clearly articulated.

B: And I think that you’ve got to ensure that the person who is paying the bill is clear that you’re doing it for them so you might end up pissing them off and not playing their game but that’s about your boundaries as a practitioner I guess.

A: Satisfies the needs of all the…

C: All the parties involved…
A: All the parties concerned.

BC: You’re almost trying to do too many things then aren’t you? Because this might not just be performance, it could be improved athlete well-being then if you look at it from that situation.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: You know I think you’re talking about applied sport psychology, and playing devil’s advocate I could say ‘what’s applied sport psychology?’ you know…

BC: Yeah.

A: And you could talk about performance enhancement or personal growth and development, I could ask you to define those two and then I’d say ‘that you improve performance and that would improve growth’, because applied sport psychology is such a generic term.

B: Mm (agreement).

BC: So we need to incorporate that when we’re considering effectiveness…

B: Mm (agreement).

A: I mean any definition there has to be…you have to operationalize your terms don’t you?

B: Mm (agreement).

BC: Yeah. So do you think it would be two different definitions depending on…

A: No, no, it’s a ‘slash’ isn’t it – performance slash well-being.

B: I think if you’re saying that you want to meet the needs of the client, if you’re client who your client is and you know what their needs are, whether it be well-being or improved performance, then you work directed to that.

BC: Right, OK.

C: It’s identifying that…

B: Yeah, I think once you’ve done that then you know how to assess effectiveness because you know what your definition is or what you want to achieve.

BC: So this sort of thing here ‘clarity of roles, who are we working for identification of that’ and making sure everyone understands is a precursor to you being able to work effectively.

A: Yeah…effective practice that meets the needs of the client when goals and outcomes are clearly agreed by both parties, or something like that. You can put those extra lines in to say that ‘needs are met when agreed goals from both sides are achieved’ or something.

BC: I’ll get this down so we can have a look at it and then we can play around with it then. So if you want to say that again xxx.

A: Sorry, I’m rambling at the moment…effective practice is achieved when the client’s needs are met…

B: It needs a bit about ‘agreed by all’.

A: Yeah…

C: By all parties concerned.
A: …where…

B: Client needs are met, goals are clear and agreed by all.

A: Yeah. Where the goals needs are…sorry…

BC: Effective practice is achieved when client’s needs are met...

A: When the goals are agreed by both parties, or something like that.

B: Clear and agreed…

C: By all parties concerned.

B: Yeah.

A: Predetermined goals…

C: It’s a working definition…

B: Yeah.

BC: So effective practice is achieved when client’s needs are met, where goals are clear and agreed by all stakeholders.

A: Nice…

B: I think that is then the precursor for being effective. That’s what you need to have in order to start being effective and then I think you need to establish relationships with your client. So once you’ve…you might not even speak to the client really, they might say ‘this is the goal of the union or governing body’. You know, you probably say to the client ‘what do you want out of it?’ and then you do some management of that and that’s the starting process. Then you can be effective once those things are in place.

A: You mentioned that naughty word ‘process’ now, because then you have to talk about the different processes there are don’t you! Effective practice is the successful process of achieving the client’s needs or the prearranged...

B: …which are established, clear, agreed by all involved, you establish rapport then you engage in process that achieve those goals…attempt to achieve those goals.

BC: That sounds a lot better actually.

A: Thanks xxx (researcher).

BC: Can we say that again?

B: Effective practice is…so you’ve got the first bit, then you’ve got the client’s needs…maybe not…

A: Effective practice is a process whereby the client’s needs or the agreed goals between the client or the client’s goals you agreed are met…

B: Yeah, the client’s goals are clear, agreed by all…

A: …where clearly agreed client’s goals…Effective practice is a process…

BC: Yeah I’ve got that bit.
B: Yeah, so that’s the…the beginning bit is where goals are clear and agreed by all. So you’ve got effective practice is a process whereby the goals are clear and agreed…

BC: I’m not being funny this is like one of those permanent markers it’s making me feel a bit high…agreed and?

C: By all stakeholders.

B: And then the process then of actually working with them. The first thing I think you need to be effective is establish an effective working relationship with your client.

C: Yeah, and it’s only then that the next bit can begin.

B: Yeah, so part ‘a’ is a process, so you’ve got client goals are clear and agreed. Part ‘b’ would be that you establish a relationship with the client so that you can work with them effectively, and then you actually engage in the…

A: Activities.

B: …activities to achieve their goals.

C: Excellent handwriting xxx (researcher).

BC: I’m going to have to go for the red again, is that alright?

A: That came out very nicely then xxx (participant).

BC: So effective practice is a process where a) clients goals are clear and agreed by all stakeholders, b) rapport is developed, or a relationship is developed, and c) activities are undertaken to achieve goals. Sounds excellent! OK so…

B: And then actually I think you’re only effective once you actually achieve the goals so activities are undertaken to achieve them and then you actually do. So you can attempt activities to achieve the goals but if you don’t then you’re not effective.

BC: Anything else…anything else?

B: And then you reflect on all that…and consider your effectiveness for your next engagement.

BC: I like that…goals are achieved…what did you say?

B: And then…

BC: Reflection.

B: …reflect on that entire process in order to make your next experience more…

A: Yeah.

C: Effective.

B: …effective.

C: Yeah because you can keep doing that over and over again but if you don’t reflect on it and make the appropriate changes then you’re not going to develop in your effectiveness.

B: Yeah, and the goals will always change.
BC: Ok, so effective practice is a process where a) clients goals are clear and agreed by all stakeholders, b) rapport is developed, c) activities are undertaken to achieve goals, d) goals are achieved, and e) reflection then occurs to improve the process.

A: OK, activities are undertaken to achieve goals, without using the word effectively, suitable activities are undertaken to achieve goals is it?

C: Appropriate?

A: Appropriate activities.

C: Relevant?

A: Because you could do activities but it might not...it might be a long way...

B: But if you’re doing it to achieve the goals it doesn’t make any sense to say that they’re appropriate because you’re...

A: Yeah.

B: I know what you’re...

C: Only if they achieve the fourth part...appropriate, relevant...

B: Appropriate activities are undertaken to achieve goals.

C: It’s being specific isn’t it so...

A: Yeah.

C: ...you probably do need to have that in there.

BC: Well I’ll tell you what we’ll do, we’ll leave it like that now and what we’ll do we’ll revisit at the end and if you have any thoughts as we’re going along from some of the things we’re going to be talking about then we can revisit it. I’ve kind of run out of paper there so we’ll have to wait until we get back...so I think it’s starting to look quite good actually because we started with a few bullet points and we started thinking maybe we can’t define this and all of a sudden we’ve come up with quite a neat definition. So are we sort of happy to move on or do you want to add anything else?

A: No, just going backwards, can you clarify effective practice is it to anyone in particular or is it just the overall event?

BC: Effective practice of applied sport psychology.

A: OK, so it’s not effective practice to me as a consultant or to the clients.

B: A global view.

BC: Yeah because that’s the problem because research has been done to say an effective consultant will have such and such characteristics. Research has also been done to say in order to evaluate effectiveness these are the four indicators that we need to measure. But what actually is effective practice? What actually is effective applied sport psychology? And the problem is that a lot of the accreditation guidelines focus on this thing that we talked about called competence and they don’t really establish what effective practice is. So you know at the end of three years of supervised experience you might be competent in being able to deliver a certain amount of mental skills, but are you an effective sport psychology consultant where you’re able to help the client to achieve their needs or goals? Well maybe not because maybe you haven’t learnt how to develop a rapport, or a good rapport, with a range of clients and therefore 1) you may not be competent in that area but you’re certainly not going to be
Appendix 3

effective. So if we can actually identify what effective practice actually is in applied sport psychology we can start to look at how we can develop it.

A: Do we need an evaluative element in that definition then? You talk about a reflective practitioner, they evaluate what they do.

B: We did say reflection / evaluation.

BC: Right OK.

A: Because if I’m effective I know I can get the job done essentially, but a part of getting the job done is evaluating what do to it and reflecting on it.

B: That’s what annoys me about BASES is that they want you to have multiple experiences with different client groups, but that says to me that you go to a client group, you deliver something and they don’t ask you to come back, you don’t work long-term with them. Whereas someone who works within a national governing body, for six years for example, where you’re engaged and you’ve worked with these people long-term, but that’s not seen as competent. But surely they’re the ones who are…they are asked to come back, they’re valued.

C: Mm (agreement).

A: The nature of the work…the effective sport psych practice is long-term work with single client groups or individuals because psychology is about long-term changes and development and you have to build a rapport with someone. So going in and delivering and coming out again and not doing anything it’s ineffective.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: You probably find that with the hockey, you get through to them now after a while…

C: Yeah, three years down the line.

A: …you have to persevere with that and what BASES has said is ‘go and sample a couple of things, deliver your skills…’

B: I understand perhaps the need for individuals and groups because there are different elements that will present themselves. But if you can work long-term with an individual and a group, surely that’s enough.

C: Yeah, sounds like you have to have about five or six groups and individuals rather than one or two teams and one or two individuals over a long time. Because the impact you can make…

A: If you’re working with a group you might have individual consultations off that anyway aren’t you?

B&C: Yeah.

A: So it covers…Whether you just work with one team or one governing body over a sustained period of time.

C: So I guess what BASES are trying to say in their defence is to try and prevent creating sport specific sport psychologists. But then that is not necessarily a bad thing because…

A: Well what do you need to be a good sport psychologist? Do you need to understand the sport? Do you need to have played the sport? Some would argue yes…

C: But the thing is…yeah…you’re naturally drawn to the sports that you have the knowledge of for a variety of reasons including being able to develop a rapport because you’ve got that…

A&B: Yeah.
BC: Right.

A: Did you get all of that?

BC: Yeah, I was listening. Anyway, what I want to do is focus on this last part, ‘e’. We’ve got at the minute ‘reflection then occurs to improve practice’. Xxx you said you wanted to include some evaluative element.

A: Just effective practice has an evaluation because you then take that forwards and reflect on it to go to your next consultancy with…or if you’re talking at a general level if I’m effective I always evaluate what I do and that informs the next consultation or the next client I deal with.

B: Mm (agreement).

BC: OK.

A: That is effective! If I don’t learn what from what I do then I’m not an effective practitioner.

BC: So if we say something like ‘evaluation and reflection then occurs to inform future practice’?

A: It’s a process isn’t it so yes! Yeah.

B: Sounds good.

C: Yeah.

BC: Right I’ll leave that up there than and we’ll move on if that’s OK with everyone?

C: Yeah.

B: Yeah.

BC: Right, so basically what I want to do now is move away slightly from effective practice and now start to look at our evaluative and reflective practices that we’ve used as sport psychologists during our time from supervised experience up until the point in which we find ourselves now. So to start off with let’s just try and get a general understanding of what reflective practice actually is and then we can start to talk more specifically about your experiences. So I would like you to sort of talk amongst yourselves about your current knowledge of reflective practice or evaluation methods or evaluative methods and the role that it has to play in professional development. So what are your beliefs and attitudes to evaluation to improvement and reflection? Xxx?

C: Oh great I’ll take it on first. I think in essence it’s reflective practice in itself is the boy learning ultimately from your own experience but not saying like you can’t reflect on the practice of others as well in order to inform more effective future practice. I think like xxx (participant) was saying it helps you to develop your philosophy as well if you’re constantly reflecting back on what you’ve done and what your stance is on things…does anyone else want to chip in?

A: Reflective practice helps you develop as a practitioner, helps you as a professional…it’s an integral part of professional development because you are constantly evaluating what you’ve done, what needs to be done, what could have been done better, and that helps you grow as a practitioner. It may cause you to go and seek some professional training, further assistance etcetera, etcetera. So it’s just an ongoing process of being a psychologist or a practitioner.

B: I think, not an issue I have with it but I always struggle because you think about what happened and it’s only from your perception, so especially when you’re working with athletes you think ‘what happened, this is what I perceived, I wonder how they perceived me’. I know a lot of times it’s not really that accurate. So what I try and do is, after you’ve had your informal chat with them, you think about how did I perceive the situation, it’s interesting how they perceived it, and then I can move on and think why did that happen, why did they perceive it
that way, and then what would I do differently. And again, what would I do differently, as xxx said, it’s about I might not have a certain level of knowledge but what would I do differently in the future I may need advice from someone else to say ‘well how would I handle that differently’ because I don’t have the knowledge. I may have to go to courses or talk to a mentor or something and find that out. I think in isolation it can get you so far, but I think when you actually engage with other people in your reflection that’s when it moves you forward.

A: Yeah, it is part of the day-to-day part of being a practitioner, it’s the part of the process where you become a better practitioner…effective, competent or however you want to define it.

B: I think that it’s something that people engage in very naturally, perhaps not all people but I know as athletes, coaches, scholars you’re always reflecting on how things went, what could have been done better so I think you do it naturally. Perhaps in an applied context you might try and formalise that process a little bit.

BC: OK, do you think it’s more beneficial to be a formalised process then? Is that what you’re saying?

B: For me it is.

BC: Right, what do you guys think about that?

C: Yeah because although we kind of, as xxx (participant) said, reflect naturally, it just takes it to that deeper level if you actually make the physical effort to sit down and formalise it and think about it a little bit more because it means that you’re putting some sort of conscious awareness to it and taking more time and potentially more effort as well to actually review and evaluate and generate more knowledge, or seek more knowledge appropriately.

B: Mm (agreement).

C: Because if you just think about it in the car on the way home it’s helpful but it’s just scratching the surface really, it’s not taking it in any depth.

A: It’s a cognitive skill, you know, some of us are naturally very good at mathematics, some of us develop and can understand stats really easily and some of us can’t. Some of us are good reflective practitioners, others aren’t, some people need to work on it, some people need it structured and formalised. So there’s a quality element with reflective practice, so you can sit there after your session, drive home and reflect that’s one level. But if you formalise it you will get a better quality of reflection out of that and obviously you know that from all the talks you’ve done about it. So I perceive that reflection, as you say, is a natural process with human beings, we appraise what we do, but it’s formalising that and making it more professional, and the more professional it is the better you are at it.

BC: OK, so how have we been introduced to it then…how have we been introduced to reflective practice?

A: Some kid kept harping on about it with his Ph.D. study…

C: For me I think it came out through becoming a requirement for SE with BASES, because it became part of the new framework and stuff, it was an extra element that had to be covered and until it was pointed out to me in that context I might not have necessarily come across it in a formal sense. But then obviously being introduced to it through likes of yourself (interviewer)…

A: Eminent researchers in the field!

C: Yeah.

B: I had a different experience; I got introduced to it as an athlete so…
BC: Oh right, OK.

B: …we used to engage in a lot of reflection on performances using videos and stuff like that and then action planning based on what we saw. So I was introduced to it in a different way and then I found it really helpful so I’d apply it to coaching and then more formalised probably through the SE and stuff like that.

A: Probably reinforce that through playing days using video debriefs or post-session debriefs with videos, and then in coaching as well you do the same thing, you literally sit down, analyse the session ‘that bit didn’t go so well, I think I rushed that bit, or I left too much time. Right, OK’… you’ve got your book of drills or sessions that you do, you modify them, you write them down and you keep a diary through that sense. I think it’s not just one area, you’re encouraged to write down accounts and courses that sort of thing, as an athlete you’re encouraged to keep a diary anyway to reflect on the quality of your sessions – what went well, what didn’t go well – going back to school with your school PDP stuff, your school records where you’ve got to write down what you’ve achieved this year and what your goals are for next year. It’s an inherent process, but I think explicitly relating it to sport psych it came through the athlete and coaching background.

BC: I think the problem for me is that a lot of people will take part in some form of reflective practice but they may not call it reflection or they may not understand it as reflection and what reflection can…or the benefits you can actually get out of reflection, which is one of the reasons why I selected the participants I selected for this study because obviously you’ve got some idea of what reflection is and hopefully you are using it some form of way in order to help you to improve your practices. But, do you think that we need to make a more formal educational process within SE or within sports psychology so that the understanding of reflection can be developed and therefore everyone can gain the benefits out of reflection? Or do you think that this cognitive process that people go through can be beneficial whether the actual process is understood or not?

A: Is that purely from a consultant point of view or from a client point of view?

BC: Well from a consultant point of view but…yeah!

C: I just think that sometimes if something’s pointed out to you like quite explicitly you’re more likely to take notes about it. You might know that something’s happening or you need to make improvements but until somebody actually encourages you or forces you to do something about it, so maybe formalises the process, then you kind of just let it go along in an unstructured, informal way. So if somebody actually directs your attention to it and asks you to make a conscious effort to work on a certain area then I think you are more likely to.

BC: Right, OK.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: To draw an analogy with mental skills, or use of mental skills with athletes, some athletes could get to the top if they don’t believe in sport psychology because they didn’t need any of that because they are naturally, you know, they all use mental skills they’re just not explicitly aware of that. The argument is that all these people who don’t learn it implicitly and haven’t got it naturally we have them and we’re getting more people to that level. The same can be drawn with the consultants, a lot of people use it implicitly and they’re good reflective practitioners through less experiences or just through whatever, the environment, but if we make it more explicit and formalised are we going to bring a lot of people who aren’t very competent or less competent up to the level. So you could argue that it’s a numbers game and yet the whole quality of our industry in the UK or whatever will be enhanced by that.

C: It’s like heightening awareness as well about what the issue is and like you say people may use things implicitly but to actually rightly or wrongly try and label something it automatically increases your self-awareness about it.
A: It’d be interesting to see who actually has never done any reflective practice because you probably wouldn’t get many people…

B: No.

A: …because it’s so implicit, but as you said the level of formality to it…I think it’s one of those ideas that making it more formal you’d get a better learning experience and makes you more effective then.

B: I think you really only engage in it fully in your third year of BASES and I think that’s quite an issue because you don’t get to develop the skills and get feedback on the reflective skills. So I think that could be improved to get people starting to reflect as deeply as you do in your case studies earlier on because that’s when you really need to reflect the most. I think if you formalised the process, or a process that works for you, I think a problem when you’re an applied consultant normally you’re quite isolated so I’ve found using other people in my reflection forced me to seek advice or even just talk through things with people and I found that effective for me because otherwise I’d only be sitting there with my own thoughts and ideas about it and I didn’t feel as though that was effective reflection because I didn’t know what I could have done different…

BC: OK.

B: …and so having someone involved in my reflection that I felt was…probably made me more effective.

A: You’re limited by your thoughts if you don’t have anyone to speak to.

B: Mm (agreement). And sometimes it wasn’t necessarily a person, sometimes I had to go away and read something or…

A: Speak to your dog?

B: Yeah…I don’t know…I felt…because it’s quite isolated I think as an early practitioner I found having people in that loop of reflection the most powerful way of increasing my effectiveness.

A: I think that goes back to the element of supervision doesn’t it! That element of having a formal supervisor and the supervisor is aware that part of the process of effective supervision is reflective practice will encourage the trainee to reflect more, or think more critically about their work…the supervisor just oversees things…I went to the presentation with xxx (sport psychologist) in Aber’ and it was a classic example of getting graduate level students into reflective practice, the role models of practice in terms of with the client…but that’s come from counselling theory and counselling training, so yes it is being done effectively in mainstream psych or clinical psych, so perhaps formalising it will enhance the effectiveness.

BC: I suppose it almost relates back to our definition of effectiveness ‘what are your goals of reflection? What are you trying to achieve?’…

A: Yeah.

BC: And, how do you understand the process, or what is actually reflection itself? So in order to try and…my issue is that the same as xxx (participant B) said that through the three years of supervised experience it’s almost thrown in as an add-on of this competence that we have to have but does it mean that we’re an effective reflector? Well maybe not because what may happen is that you just go through and evaluative process where you’re able to say ‘well this is what went wrong, this is what went right, this is what I’ll do next time’, but you don’t really understand the underlying reasons and as xxx (participant C) you don’t really start to understand yourself more in terms of your philosophies or applied practices and therefore are you really reflecting? Like you say it comes back to the role of the supervisor in terms of helping to develop those skills and if we’re saying at the bottom of our effectiveness definition of applied sport psychology is that reflection needs to occur in order for us to be effective or
improve our effectiveness then why hasn’t reflective practice been taken on board more explicitly by…

A: Mm (agreement). I’ll throw a curve ball in here because if you’re in clinical psychology you train in one field, you’re either psychodynamic or humanistic, and it’s an implicit process. Sports psych models are very generic, if you say that reflective practice is bolted on because if sport psych was just psychodynamic it would be implicit, so we wouldn’t be having this discussion because it would be part of it. Because there’s so many different models and ways you can do sport psychology it is bolted on I think and that is a strength or a weakness if you like which ever way you look at it.

B: Mm (agreement).

BC: But still using reflection can help you to understand from which ever…

A: Yeah but in clinical psych if you go down one of those fields you go beyond just ‘what did I do right? What did I do bad’, it’ll be really looking at yourself as a person…

BC: Yeah.

A: …‘who am I and how to I contribute to the ball game?’ and it goes a lot deeper than just ‘well I should have said this or I should have said that today. Next time I’ll do that’. I think the whole…because it’s one theme, one area, it goes into a lot more detail and each of the different psych fields, humanistic, CBT, they make you explore yourself as a person and that’s that deeper reflection then I think.

B: My supervisor never spoke about this and gave me reflective practice, but we did it after every session…

BC: Right.

B: …and I would be expected to come with my thoughts and feelings, what I thought I would do differently, what was effective, what wasn’t. He never said we were engaging in reflective practice so you said people do it implicitly and giving labels to things might help that but I think…

A: But that’s good practice because you had a good supervisor.

B: Yeah…well he wasn’t a big fan of BASES but he did things well.

BC: Well that goes to what we were saying then, does it have to be formalised as long as the goals of reflective practice as such, i.e. development and improvement of effectiveness, are being achieved?

A: You can argue that there are different ways to get to the same outcome aren’t there!

BC: Right.

A: I think if you go back to reflective practice styles are you better at informally doing it or are you someone who really likes to write everything down so do it that way.

B: I think you’ve got to find a method that suits you as long as it reaches the goals of improving your effectiveness. Some people can just sit in a car and make themselves more effective just by thinking about it. I certainly don’t have those skills; I need to discuss it with people. You’ve got to find a way that works for you I think.

BC: So there’s been a lot of stuff said about the value of reflective practice and the evaluation of different methods that we go through, how does it actually improve our practice? What are the specific things that it does to allow us to improve our effectiveness? What are your thoughts on that?
A: Defining effectiveness what’s on there (flipchart)?

BC: Yeah.

A: Because you’ve got to be careful about saying what helps us to improve our effectiveness…

BC: Our effectiveness as a consultant within applied sport psychology.

A: OK, so…

BC: It maybe how does it help us to develop the characteristics that we need to be effective?

A: So you could say ‘how does reflection help me to achieve my congruence of goals with my client? How does it help me improve my rapport?’ those sorts of angles.

C: I think it’s generally changed or encouraged, or changed me I think, because if you reflect and evaluate on your experiences and don’t make the appropriate changes in order to improve your effectiveness generally, then its redundant isn’t it. I think one of the key things is that it encourages you to potentially make those changes.

B: Or to open the door to the possibility for changes.

C: Yeah.

A: Reflective practice is…your goal is to seek out new solutions to problems…

B: And it helps you to identify where your strengths lie as well because it’s not always about ‘what did I do badly?’ I mean I probably reflect more on when I’ve had a really good session because I think about what was it that made it good and how could I repeat that, so it’s not just saying ‘I had a crap session I’ll think about why’.

BC: So it increases the awareness that you have of yourself as a consultant…

B: Yeah.

BC: …’what can I do, what can’t I do?’

A: I mean it basically relates to motivation doesn’t it! It focuses your effort and intensity of your motivation towards change, as you said isn’t it, and it raises self-awareness on a higher cognitive level and all sorts of facets.

BC: What about understanding of what and what doesn’t work actually in particular sessions with particular clients? So does it help you to understand the situational context within which you’re working?

B: I think from your own perception it does unless you engage in discussion or you get someone else to give you feedback as well.

BC: Right, OK.

B: I think that’s the thing I struggle with the most, you know I can see if something went really well and I talk to sports psychologists who actually work with a team I’m involved in as a player and they think they’re being effective but with regards to the athletes they’re not so if she was to go away and reflect and think ‘oh I’m really working well and I feel effective’ but if she actually engaged in some feedback from the client then she would get a completely different story so.

BC: Right, OK.
A: You’re looking at a grounded theory approach where you develop a personal construct approach where you’re developing your view of the world and the way that you practice and keep on finding that you’ve got theories about how the way things work, if I deal with Joe Blogs who is a quiet person I need to adopt this method, and if I get someone who’s an outward goer then I’ll just sit back and relax and prompt and feed in. So you’re developing all of the time these models of practices in terms of what you need to do and the mechanisms. So if you’re looking at that sort of level it working out the different strategies stored in the long-term memory and the decision making processes and that, particularly within cognitive psych, a horrible type level…that’s another thing!

BC: OK, good. Right is there anything else that you wanted to add on to that before we move on and start talking about your personal experiences? NO…everyone happy to move on?

B&C: Yeah.

A: Well your trying to get the mechanisms obviously and what’s happening with this reflective process…

BC: Because the literature spurts on about reflection is magnificent because this is what’s happened, but we don’t really understand the process as to why it happens, what mechanisms are in place in order to enable you to understand yourself better, or understand the practice better, or understand how to go and work with a specific client, or deliver a certain session a certain way, or how do you understand these changes, or what takes place for you to make the right changes.

A: So the knowledge structures in change.

BC: Mm (agreement).

B: I think some people just don’t give a toss like athletes I know just don’t think about the game afterwards and that’s…for them to engage in it you’d be forcing them to do something that they just absolutely detest so I find that quite difficult.

BC: Yeah.

A: Are they able to articulate, say in the next team session, what needs to be done?

B: Yeah, some people just…I don’t know whether it’s a cognitive ability or…I don’t know why but some people I don’t think are doing it.

A: Yeah, but they…athletes must be reflective to be able to make the decision on which strategy…I’m sorry to be arsey…I know what you mean though, they won’t sit down and discuss things because this is what happened during the game…

B: yeah, ‘why do I need to talk about it?’ you know ‘why do I need to discuss it? Let’s just go out and train’.

BC: Do you find that that’s different as well for when you’ve played well and won and when you’ve played poorly and lost? Do you think more reflection takes place when you’ve actually done poorly and lost?

B: Definitely.

A: When you’ve lost you have an inquisition, when you’ve won you have a party. That’s the old adage.

BC: Because that’s quite an interesting view isn’t it, shouldn’t we also reflect on when we’ve done well and won to try and understand…
B: As a coach I do the same process regardless of outcome, but as a player being coached by other people that definitely is the truth.

BC: Because I know if we win on Saturday there’s no way I’m going to be reflecting because I’m not going to have time because obviously I’ll be refuelling my body with high carbohydrate drinks…

B: Engaging in full recovery and things like that.

BC: Yeah, that sort of stuff.

A: Yeah it’s not the normal procedure to reflect on good performances. But even with a good performance you might be reflecting on the weaknesses within that rather than focusing on what you did well, you just focus on the other things.

B: Yeah, yeah.

BC: OK, so despite xxx (participant) mentioning that he thinks he’s already talked about this what I want you to do is try and consider and share some of your personal experience of evaluating and improving your own work, so what sorts of measures, steps or procedures you’ve taken in past in order to try and progress your effectiveness, or improve your effectiveness. Are there any particular instances that stand out where you’ve definitely gone away and gone through a formal process because you thought that you had to because of what happened and how’s that helped?

B: Shall I start?

BC: Yeah, if you like, go on then.

B: OK, actually the first time I did it as a consultant was when I was in my third year at university, undergraduate, and we had the option in the sport psych class to work with an athlete. It was very supervised, apart from your sessions when you were on your own but you had to write reports after each session about how it was, what went well, what would you do differently, so that process of reflection was quite an integral part of that experience. So we had six sessions with an athlete that we chose and we had to write reports after each and we got marked on it. So that was the first time that I really engaged with working with an athlete and also used reflection to try and help me improve my effectiveness.

BC: OK.

B: And then I’d say my supervisor for my Ph.D. was pretty integral in setting up processes to evaluate my effectiveness, giving me ideas where I’d go and see and a client, and the biggest thing he taught me was don’t be afraid to kind of after you’ve received information from someone take time away and reflect then about what you could do in terms of your intervention. So even if it was the case of calling him in between the gathering of information and then going back and saying ‘what would you do?’ so that was quite key. And then another one was working with an Olympic athlete who had lost all of her moves nine months prior to Athens and the goal was to get her into the final at Athens, well that was the perceived goal, and I spoke to her just about every day for nine months, so that was just an intense learning experience because it was so constant and so intent and having a mentor who was also a clinical psychologist could help me with some issues that I didn’t really understand.

BC: Did you reflect on all of those sessions when you were speaking to that athlete, or did you just reflect after certain periods, or afterwards…

B: Informally after every session and formally if issues came up that were a little bit out of my remit I would talk to my mentor who was a clinical psychologist because there was loads of issues with her mother being her coach and relationship issues and stuff like that that were a little bit outside my area of expertise. Then formally we would evaluate my support to her every month.
BC: OK, so quite a…with the reflections sort of more on the critical incidents would you say?

B: I think I reflected every time we were engaged…

BC: Is that the general practice for you?

B: Yeah.

BC: Is that the general practice for us all? Or do we reflect on incidents that we think are more critical in terms of the outcome of the situation?

A: I think you’ve got the…what I try and do after a session is to try and physically get everything written down, basically describe what went on in the session just to provide a relatively objective account, literally what happened, what did we talk about and then to take a reflection out of that based on those things, what were the key things from the description of the event, what were the key things that came out of that, and then to try and identify areas where what were the goals and targets that we identified to work on and then a section on what do I need to read up on, or what do I need to be aware of and things like that for the next session. It all relies on your ability to describe the situation and how you interpret what went on…

B: Mm (agreement).

A: …and then learning builds from that. it’s challenging yourself ‘did that actually happen’.

B: I believe that.

BC: So do you do it as soon as you can after the…

A: I try and do it as soon as I can afterwards.

B&C: Yeah.

A: It’s not always the case, but I always try and plan an hour or a half an hour after a session for me to come back, but there’s not always the scope to do that.

BC: No, I mean I find it quite difficult to reflect straight afterwards because I find that my thoughts are skewed by my emotions from how I perceive the session to have gone.

A: I think it’s important to get down what actually happened, describe what happened…

BC: Right, OK.

A: …so that you can recall everything. Your reflection is something that the next time you’ve got a meeting with a client you can actually pick that up the day before and sit down and look at what happened and then pick the bones out and make your comments then. So it’s getting the information, I think once you lose that information if you leave it a couple of days you lose the finer detail.

BC: See I’m quite fortunate with that because I live in xxx (town) I’m always driving to sessions so on the way home I always start to reflect just naturally, but I do find it difficult to make sense of the situation. I can tell myself what happened and I remind myself constantly, and I go over and over it, and then a day or two later I actually sit down and go through what I would suggest reflection is.

B: I think it’s important to get all stages of that. I mean your emotion after a session is quite important as well ‘why am I pissed off?’ or ‘why am I elated because it went well?’ I think it’s important to get the degree of as soon as you’ve finished well how do you feel? Then once you’ve had time to kind of get over your tiredness or your emotions ‘how do I perceive it now?’ and it’s interesting to see the changes from point A to point B, and then after speaking to someone.
A: It’s almost triangulating the process. You’re looking at what happened post-event, maybe some transference going on or something like that which has caused you to get pissed off, or it’s gone really well so you get that down and speak to your supervisor or someone because of the nature of those emotions and the consultancy, reflect on that and then literally you’ve got the varying degrees of views on there.

C: I think I find it easier, or in the early stages of when I started to reflect, to reflect on critical incidents. But now I’ve kind of developed as a reflective practitioner it’s easier to look at the bigger picture from a more holistic perspective and not just take out the things that went really well or really rubbish, just because I think they’re initially easier to recall. But as I say as you kind of develop the skills to reflect I think personally it becomes easier to think about the whole situation rather than just individual aspects.

A: I think you’ve got two things there where once the session’s finished you record the session and you’re also thinking about the actual client and whatever advice you gave during that session, what you’re going to do next time as well. So you’re still thinking about diagnosis in terms of the interventions and how you’re going to structure that, and your reflection can make sense of that, it can affect that. so a lot of the time it’s just saying ‘right, ok, what are the key critical incidents that we need to work on?’ so you’d actually be in prescription mode and then come and reflect on the session once you’ve sorted out what you need to do with it.

B: Yeah, I’m definitely like that. I think ‘how effective was my suggestions?’ and then I think ‘how effective were my interactions with them?’ so I kind of try and do it in two parts I guess.

A: You know, ‘were you on the button? Did you come up with the right things?’

B: …at the right time’

A: Did they go away understanding what they had to do? and then you can think sort of ‘what kind of session was it? How did we react to each other regardless of the intervention you gave?’

BC: Is that the process that you guys go through all of the time or does it depend on the significance of the specific situation as a whole?

A: It’s different, if you go and do a workshop and you’re just delivering a workshop to kids you know you’re not going to get a great outcome out of it, let’s say it’s a one off or something like that. You know you go in and deliver and you just might reflect on ‘how was my presentation style?’ or something like that. If it’s a squad you’re working with and they need continuity there then you’re obviously going to consider things in a bit of detail and ‘how is this going to effect the next time I work with them?’

B: I think you’d always do it…

A: Yeah.

B: …it’s just perhaps you might do it a little more deeply if you know that you’ve got continual exposure to that person.

BC: OK, that’s quite interesting! Same?

C: Yeah I think I probably reflect too much on the intervention and that’s what I understand as I’m getting better at it, I’m starting to look at the bigger picture, I’m starting to develop that ability.

BC: OK.

B: I think that’s a huge thing because at the start you’re not sure if the intervention’s right…
B: ...so earlier on you think I’ve really got to reflect on the interventions because I need to ask my supervisor if it was the right one or should I have done something different. Whereas when you become more confident you know the intervention that you suggest is going to work, well hopefully, then you start thinking about more wider issues like your interaction with the client.

C: Yeah.

B: Even if it’s relatively even narrower you’re still initial sessions, prior to you doing stuff, you’re still going to identify the quality of the intervention and then try and change, so you’re still...you’re focus is on I’ve got to get this right for this person, I’ve got to get them…

A: The delivery.

B: …the delivery right and get them doing the specific stuff and then you can take that step back.

A: If we just follow that theme for a second then, how do you think that influences what we just said about how you develop your skills? How do you think that influences the way that reflection should be introduced at a training level? So we’ve got a three year process of supervised experience, supposedly, obviously some people will be given some sort of exemption…

C: I think a more structured approach to begin with can be helpful. Like you (participant) were saying that you were encouraged to write a report after each meeting and that’s a good way of introducing people to it and to actually encourage them to actively be involved in reflection, and then on specific things and specific topic areas. But then allow it to become less structured and something that’s tailored to the individual practitioner’s needs say into the second year of SE and then the third year…

BC: So it’s like a tapered process?

C: Yeah.

BC: Right, OK.

C: I think personally that would have worked better if I was given a very structured outline, this is how you reflect and these are the things I want you to reflect on, then I’d have that general knowledge to begin with and I’d be able to broaden the information I reflect on.

BC: That’s quite interesting because where do we learn about the sorts of information that we should be attending to in order to reflect effectively?

B: The people who guide you initially, that’s been my experience.

A: Again it comes down to the supervisors.

B: Yeah and coaches and all the people who give you bits of information about how you think about things, and then once you’ve got those pieces of information you mould them into a framework that works for you. But you need, well I think having those strong people guiding you is important.

A: Again it’s the quality of supervisor training and at the moment there isn’t any. They tried to set up some supervisor training days but nobody attended because of the time commitments and that, but if you build in, perhaps you build into the SE model supervision in itself. So in your third year you have to have some supervisory experience of a neophyte and that teaches you the basic supervisory skills. It’s common practice in academia isn’t it?

B: Yeah.
A: The first thing you do with a fresh faced Ph.D. student is give them some dissertations to supervise and they learn how to provide them with supervision.

C: Yeah...but likewise that’s where if you don’t have a strong mentor, supervisor, or someone that’s particularly interested in reflective practice so it can potentially impact on you as well then because you’re not encouraged then from the start to actually engage in that process and it can delay that whole process.

BC: So if I was to ask what factors have been most influential in the way that you’re tried to reflect or evaluate on your practice is that what you’re saying? These significant others, or is it an educational process as well?

A: Define educational processes.

BC: Is it a process where we’ve been through some form of professional development or…

A: i.e. BASES Accred?

BC: Yeah.

A: Has BASES Accred forced me to reflect or have I done it through other means?

B: BASES hasn’t done it for me.

BC: OK, so…but the things that have influenced the way that we reflect, so methods or the processes or why we actually reflect…

A: I think people have talked to coaches or have had good mentors or significant others, they’ve learnt or inspired to…

B: And they’ve given you experiences enabling you to develop those skills.

A: I mean it could be formal or informal. You could be inspired by what Alex Ferguson for Man Utd or you could be working under a great local coach like Ian Mitchell something like that…

C: I’d say mines been more influenced by other people and like hearing about it within an education setting because I didn’t ever think I engaged in any reflective practice…

A: Do you mean through publications or just…

C: Yeah publications and interests and talking to peers…

A: The professional practice literature.

C: Yeah, that’s where I’ve got my knowledge on reflective practice from.

A: I mean again my formal knowledge…

B: Formal knowledge yeah.

A: …has come through Ailsa’s work really, before that you were just told to go and give the CEF to people and that was that, that’s all you had to do for the BASES hurdle. But the majority of what you actually did, there’s a difference between going back to competencies and effectiveness, effectiveness you tend to learn it off the people around you and your supervisors and competencies tend to come from training sources.

BC: So how significant then have your processes or methods been in helping you to address and improve your effectiveness? Are there any particular instances that have stood out where you’ve gone away, reflected and you feel that you’ve definitely learnt something that’s helped you in all of your following experiences?
B: Yeah, definitely I think just with the particular athlete I was working with because there were some urgent issues that were border line clinical and as it’s completely outside my realm, so whenever I engaged in reflective practice on my own I didn’t have the knowledge to say ‘this is what I would do different’, so I had to go engage with someone else who had that knowledge. The guy taught me so many different ways to approach situations, even in terms of interventions, I was happy with my rapport and communication style and everything but just in terms of broadening my knowledge of what possible ways I could get this person to move forward it was unbelievable.

A: I was at a major championships quite early in my career in terms of my training and I didn’t have anyone to speak to there or people back home, and that was a very negative experience. The fact that I couldn’t literally…and then there was someone else in the championships but I didn’t realise she was there and in hindsight I would have done…now before I go to a major championship or anything I always have someone who I can speak to on the ground or back home and that’s something that wasn’t really advised to me. I thought I was very well prepared and that was the one thing that I missed the most, it was a very negative experience to have. There was a lot of shit flying about, I was asked to do a lot of roles that weren’t sport psych roles and then coming in after working all day trying to get the athletes ready and stuff, sitting down just being really tired and depressed to some extent with things that weigh you down. I think that link to speak to someone on the side would help and that came to me in that reflection. That would be one thing that I would say is crucial and I’ve learnt from that and now on wherever I go I have someone...

BC: Did you go through a formal process after the championships of...

A: Yeah, it took a long time. Initially I didn’t want to go anywhere, I didn’t want to think about it because I was so pissed off about it and put my on a downer about the profession ‘bollocks to this, I don’t want to do this again’. Looking back now I think that was part of a learning experience, but it made me realise what I do and don’t want to do and how I want to work with people, which wouldn’t have happened…everyone says when you go to a championship or you go in and work with a governing body set your conditions out but it’s not as easy as that...

BC: No.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: …because there are certain politics that make you sometime concede some of your values, but it’s something that I can now look back and laugh about. It’s great, I learnt a hell of a lot from it and I know I wouldn’t go into it again, but it could have been sped up or helped at the time by having someone there.

BC: Excellent.

A: But that’s the traditional way everyone learns isn’t it! You learn through your mistakes and if you’re astute enough you realise what went well and what went badly and you move on and you arm yourself up to not face that again. But it could prevented…I mean BASES could definitely prevent that.

BC: Yeah, well it relates back to what xxx (participant) said earlier about reflection helping you to learn from your experiences and I suppose in order to learn and move on we have to have the experiences.

A: Yeah, you either…it’s a stressful situation you either go into your shell or you come back fighting. Some people go into their shell and never come out again in sport. But I think that’s a sink or swim philosophy and that’s not what we want to develop athletes or practitioners, it’s giving them the skills to be able to develop rather than just become more ineffective.

B: I also think that when you start out you shouldn’t be given a situation where if you do screw it up it really has a major impact on the athlete. Early experiences should be quite straight
forward so that you are perhaps focusing on the way you deliver things, your communication, your confidence things like that. If you’re put with an athlete who’s having some kind of major issue you don’t want to screw that up because it’s not just you that’s affected.

A: Basic workshop stuff, basic psych skills and techniques training that are ongoing programme development delivery rather than…

B: Mm (agreement), because they give you all the competencies you get evaluated on, they should say that this is what you should be focusing on in your first year and developing these types of skills. I think you have to be a very confident person to be able to go into a situation with a depressed athlete or an eating disorder athlete and know how to manage that. I think that’s a very serious issue.

A: Yeah, reading a book about eating disorders…

B: Yeah.

A: …it may tick the competency box but…

BC: Yeah, because at the start of supervised experience you don’t really know your arse from your elbow. You only have a certain amount of competency. You might have learnt a little bit about goal setting in level three applied sport psych or on a masters course and you can go on and deliver a goal setting session. But if you were to work with an athlete who’s got specific issues or specific problems where a basic mental skills intervention isn’t going to work…

B: Mm (agreement).

BC: …then do you have the skills to deal with that, and then do you have the skills to reflect and learn from that?

B: If you reflect and say ‘I really screwed that up, I didn’t help them at all, in fact I probably made them worse’ that’s fine for you because you can learn from that experience but the client’s screwed up maybe, potentially.

A: And also you don’t just become a wonderful practitioner over night its gradual process…

B: Mm (agreement).

A: …and so the level of reflection will increase with the level of challenges that are going to be thrown your way in that sense. So yeah perhaps you just do PST stuff in the first year and deliveries and you don’t do any problem-based stuff. Essentially most of the stuff we deal with is the equivalent to PST stuff anyway so perhaps you should degrade your evaluations based on what you do with them…

C: But then BASES are given you these grades of competencies that you have to cover and it’s saying that you have to be able say that you’re at that level and in effect then they’re trying not to…you know they’re saying that we have to develop a certain amount of competencies but in so many different areas that are we really getting…

A: My personal opinion is you shouldn’t be allowed to practice SE until you’ve done a counselling course because unless you can deal and interact with someone then everything else falls by the wayside.

B: Yeah.

A: And once you’ve got your basic set of skills counselling will teach you an element of reflection in itself…

C&A: Mm (agreement).
Appendix 3

A: …in whatever style of course you go on and I think that’s almost…

C: There’s no real pre-requisite for that…

B: If you look at the definition you could say ‘right if one of the key things is establishing goals with the client, how do we get taught to do that?’ That’s a very delicate process especially when you’re dealing with national governing body heads and technical directors and stuff like that. you come in as a fresh faced 23 year old just out of university and you’re expected to go in and manage a national governing body…

A: You start by thinking that you can do it because you’re in the sport…

B: Yeah…so if you think about those things perhaps they (BASES) need to structure it so they say that being an effective practitioner you need to have these skills not tick competencies like that.

C: Mm (agreement).

A: Yeah, and it’s the framework again that generic…whatever we’re doing whether it’s sport psych or it’s counselling or marriage guiding those are a key framework then you just slot the learning into that and that environment is how you develop the specific competencies.

B: That’s true.

BC: So just to recap then, the processes that we’ve undertaken have enabled us to learn and practice sports psychology more effectively. Is that what we’re essentially saying?

A: Mm (agreement)…informal processes.

BC: Yeah because they’re the ones that can’t be taught without learning from experience.

A: Mm (agreement).

BC: Is everyone happy with that yeah?

B: Mm (agreement).

C: Yeah.

A: If you say so.

BC: I’m not saying anything, you tell me.

A: No…

BC: You’re the boss today.

C: Can we have a toilet break?

BC: Yeah if you need one not a problem.

BREAK

BC: So the last two sections I’ve just got a couple of questions basically related to some things we’ve been talking about. Do you feel that lessons learned and reflected upon from one key incident actually transfers to another situation or can actually transfer to another situation, which may or may not be similar in nature?

C: Yeah because it might not be an identical situation but there could be elements that are quite similar or the way that the athlete maybe communicates what the issue is to you can remind
you of another situation. So yeah they don’t have to be identical for you to learn from them and bring something different to it.

A: Yes because it adds to my bank of experience and knowledge of different situations and scenarios and if you’re looking at the literature on the nature of expertise we’ve got a pool of knowledge and instructions and we’re able to understand how these fit together…

BC: Right.

A: …you know we can fit round pegs into round holes and things like that so that just adds to my…

BC: So it’s about developing this armoury of knowledge…

A: Yeah, knowledge base that says to me ‘I’ve been there before, these sorts of symptoms have happened before’.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: It’s like a prescribing…you can go and see a doctor with a bad head, a million and one different diagnosis and he just probes and probes and probes until he gets into an area of certainty and he goes with that. I think effective reflection helps you to get into that area of certainty quicker.

BC: Right, OK.

B: Mm (agreement). You know we talked about when you reflect you might reflect on the intervention and how successful that was and then you also reflect on your interaction with the client, how successful you delivered it, so I think you can take away the intervention from the specific incident and you can actually use the skills you learnt from all that you’re reflecting on; your interaction with them and the effectiveness of the way that you delivered it, timing of it etcetera, to give you confidence in subsequent situations.

A: See you could take cognitive effective behaviour out of things, you can take a purely effective outcome from a session that went really well - I had to deal with a difficult population; a sport you’re not familiar with, young kids, old people, different race, different you know disabled something like that and go ‘confidently I executed it and I’m happy about my contribution’ and that’s all you take.

BC: Yeah.

A: A cognitive level ‘right, they said that, they said this, I’m going to do this next’…

BC: So it’s understanding you and the situation and gaining that awareness?

B: Mm (agreement)…and confidence as well I think, a lot of…as you’re learning through the process the more varied experiences you have the more likely you are when you’re faced with them that you’re confident that you can deal with them. I think that’s a massive thing, being confident that you can, not cocky or arrogant about it but whatever happens I can deal with it. Sometimes you need to know your limits but…

A: It’s thinking on your feet a bit…

B: Mm (agreement) yeah, yeah…and the more you have experiences of thinking on your feet and coming up with things that you didn’t really know you had but you then mix two interventions together and it works or…

A: That’s because you start off your first ever session with everything written down with everything you’re supposed to be saying and then you can eventually literally just go in and chat to people. And you get thrown a curve ball and instead of ‘shit’ panic talk consistently to
try and get something out, you just sit there and go ‘alright’ and you can bounce it back to the client…

B: Yeah, or even having the confidence to say ‘can you give me 10 minutes to think about it’. That’s the thing I learnt very early on not to be afraid to say ‘ok I’ll take information from you know but I need time to give you an effective response’…

A: Yeah.

B: …and having the confidence to do that, because when you first start you think ‘well they’re going to think that I don’t know what I’m talking about’, but actually you’re paying them respect by getting that time to think.

BC: OK, so are we happy with that then so we can move on quite quickly?

B: Yeah.

BC: Are there any types of incidents that we think we’re not able to learn from or we haven’t been able to learn from? I mean you see it all the time within sports performers where they make exactly the same mistake and is that because they haven’t learnt or…

C: Or is it because they haven’t reflected on it and triggered that change? Do you know what I mean?

BC: Yeah.

C: You can learn from every experience…

BC: Right, OK.

C: …positive or negative, it’s whether you chose to learn from it and chose to implement a change as appropriate.

A: I’ll give you an example, I gave a lecture the other day, I didn’t think it was particularly great but I knew it wasn’t going to be great because I had reduced preparation time.

BC: OK.

A: I can either then chose to go in the next time and change the lecture around and improve that or I can just go in and do the same again. So I’ve got a choice in that. If I haven’t got time again I’ll just go in and do the same again because I know I’m just achieving an outcome, but if I want to be more effective then I can go in and do that type of thing, and there’s a choice element to that process. As a performer you’ve got a million and one things you can work on from a match or a game, you have to target what you think is the most important to develop.

C: It’s also about having the desire to, you know because you can sometimes, if we keep it in the sporting context, make the same mistake over and over again, you know if you’re not willing to accept that issue then if you’re happy to keep making that mistake then you’re not willing to become more effective. Sometimes you’re not aware of the reasons why the errors are occurring and therefore don’t know how to change them. By reflecting you can improve your self-awareness and understand how to change appropriately.

A: But even with all the will in the world you can train a certain skill but if you can’t improve on it you can’t improve on it so its competency…

B: Yeah, sometimes I think yeah it is a competency thing, ‘can I physically or mentally change that about me?’ and I think that’s where as a consultant getting information from other people, getting advice from other people, when you…sometimes you think ‘oh, that wasn’t very effective but I don’t know how to change it’, if you don’t go and seek advice then you’ll always make the same mistake because you are limited by your knowledge.
A: Yeah.

B: So I think that’s the biggest thing.

A: But that’s different from knowing your limitations and not doing…knowing who to speak to but not doing anything about it…

B: Yeah.

C: That desire isn’t it!

A: Yeah, your motivation and things.

BC: So it comes down to the desire and the competence to be able to?

B: And resources as well. Like, you know, you said you didn’t have someone to speak to when it was really critical to and I think having key people that you know, I can speak to them about it and ask them what they would do it that situation. I think it’s just like an athlete who’s trying change things, they’ll need some input from perhaps a coach to say ‘technically you’re doing that wrong’.

BC: And I suppose it comes down to understanding then of what’s going wrong and why it’s going wrong, or why it’s going right?

B: Mm (agreement).

A: Go back to the expertise literature on sports performance with successful athletes; they’re experts on their game and their sport. They know what to do; they know who to go speak to – ‘yeah I know I’ve buggered up with this today, I know this guy’s a good coach on that element of a match so I’ll speak to him’. So it’s not only understanding what went wrong but understanding how to get the information to change.

B: So a lot of the gymnasts know that their arms are in the wrong place so that’s why they fell off, but do they have the skills to be able to change it and how do you do that. You know you need to break the skills back down.

A: It’s a skill at the end of the day so it’s transferable.

BC: OK, just to finish on then from this section, what do you think about whether a person actually has to experience a situation in order to learn fully from it or whether they can learn from someone else?

B: I think you can learn but I think the level of learning is lower than learning when you actually experience it. I think you can learn from other people but perhaps it’s most meaningful when you’ve experienced it.

C: Yeah because you can only sympathise then with the situation, you can’t empathise with it.

A: I’ll give you an example, I went to the Winter Olympics a couple of years ago, just went to loads of sessions and read all of the literature about doing psych at the Olympic Games and I’d been to workshops just to have the training. I was anal about getting everything together, these things could happen, I thought I was fully prepared for it. So I went in with a certain level of preparation but literally going in there gave me a another complete perspective on it.

B: Mm (agreement).

A: There are a lot of things that I prepared for that helped me deal with it, but there were these other things that I just wouldn’t have been able to prepare for that actually cam up. Equally I’ve seen my old supervisors present and thought ‘that hasn’t gone down very well, that’s
ineffective!’ but what they told me about it after the session they thought it went well. Sitting there as an observer…I think it’s what you try and achieve with your reflection processes…

BC: OK.

A: …you know you try and achieve general principles about things, you can go and watch presentations of my experiences of working at the Olympic Games or something, but if you really want to develop certain skills with that perhaps you have to do it yourself.

C: I think you can take that into the context of everyday life. Until you’ve experienced it or until you’ve been in that situation you don’t know what it feels like or you don’t know how you would react…

BC: Yeah.

C: …or what sort of impact it would have on you. You can say ‘yeah, I appreciate what you must be going through’ but until you actually experience it, you take a lot more from it if you actually experience it.

BC: So informs your…

A: It’s like a penalty isn’t it! Can you practice penalties? Can you get penalties to almost simulate the level they would be taken at? You can argue that you can get to a certain level of simulation but it’s nothing like the real thing, so I would argue that that’s the same principle. Nothing beats the real thing but you can probably get close to it.

BC: So speaking to others can help to generate your knowledge and inform decisions but it’s not going to help you to actually practice when you’re out there.

A: If you look at that workshop again where xxx (sport psychologist) talked about the case study stuff they did when they did…it took it in turns to be the client and the practitioner and they found those very helpful role plays…

B&C: Mm (agreement).

A: …that was very, not as good as, but that was a different level of cognitions than just sitting there and watching a presentation – ‘next time your client says this do that’, it’s live and needs different types of skills and I think that will produce different types of reflection; simulation training.

BC: OK, anything else to add to any of that that we’ve just mentioned?

A: No.

BC: OK, so just to finish on then if we want to revisit the definition; if I read it out and then if you’ve got any other comments or anything that you think needs to be added…we’ve got ‘effective practice is a process where a) client’s goals are clear and agreed by all stakeholders, b) rapport is developed, c) appropriate activities are undertaken to achieve goals, goals are achieved, and e) evaluation and reflection then occurs to inform future practice.

A: You can refine some of these and say ‘b) rapport is developed…suitable level of rapport’, I mean you can be anal and go into specifics about that but that’s up to you with that because you could just say ‘well, I met a client today, she said hello and we had a little chat, but it was superficial, so we had a rapport but we didn’t have an effective rapport or a good level of rapport’.

B: And you don’t want also the other extreme where…

A: Yeah.
BC: So do we need to add something in there then?

A: You could argue appropriate client goals, appropriate rapport, appropriate activities, relevant goals are achieved.

BC: I’m going to have to get on the synonyms part of Microsoft Word…

C: Yeah.

A: That’s the fine tuning of this thing isn’t it! Because you could argue the case that just doing these things that comes under a certain level…

B: In essence I think its fine.

A: Yeah the essence of it. I mean are you looking to develop a working definition off the base of this? Or are you going to put it through the mill as it were with other people?

BC: Well that’s the question now you see. Do we show this to other people and allow them to develop it or do we get them to develop their own and then amalgamate the two?

A: Develop their own, then present them and then they thrash them against each other.

BC: Or we thrash them against each other because obviously…

B: Come on team.

BC: Ideally what we’ll do is we’ll have three different definitions and then we’ll sit down as a whole group of nine people and myself as well, ten people, and come up with one that we’re all happy with. I think the nine people who would be in the room are suitable enough to be able to develop a definition that’s acceptable.

A: Mm (agreement)...you’re the core thread to all these groups, you know the essences of each group, so you present the cases, or you put them together how you perceive it.

BC: To be honest I think I’m just going to publish this to be honest.

A: Yeah.

B: The buck stops here.

A: With my qualitative hat on you’ve experienced all of this so you’d be the most knowledgeable person to come up with an integrated definition, plus it saves work for us.

BC: It’d be interesting to see what other people say and it’ll be interesting to see how different it is to this.

B: Yeah.

A: In my opinion it’ll be very different.

BC: I do quite like it.

A: You seem to be experienced in the stuff you’re involved in. The essence is right, but others will comment.

BC: Well it’ll be more of an amalgamation than anything else so…good. OK, well just to finish off is there anything else that you want to add or are you happy? I’m happy, are you happy?

A: I think that was a lovely interview and I think you’ve a very great interviewer, and very good focus group facilitator.
Dear all,

My name is Brendan Cropley and I am currently undertaking a Ph.D. at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff under the supervision of Dr. A. Miles, Prof. S. Hanton, and Dr. A. Niven. The focus of my research is on the development of effective practice within applied sport psychology. Specifically, I am examining the role of reflective practice as a tool that can be used to help practitioners develop the effectiveness of their consultancy.

Although research has examined the characteristics of the effective sport psychology consultant a number of authors have commented that there is still a distinct lack of literature that considers the specific factors of service delivery in applied sport psychology that might contribute to successful outcomes. Thus, as part of the current study being conducted I have completed two focus groups that have examined a definition of ‘effective practice’ within applied sport psychology consultancy. Having collated and synthesised the data from the two focus groups a clear definition has emerged. I am now seeking social validation of the definition as well as your expert opinions regarding how fitting this is as a definition for effective practice.

I have attached the definition for you to ponder and hope that you have some time to send any comments regarding:

1. Anything that clearly stands out as being overlooked in the definition that you feel should be added.
2. Any positive comments regarding the definition and what it encompasses.
3. Any thoughts on the wording or structure of the definition.
4. Any other comments you may have.

I appreciate that you all have busy schedules, but it would be greatly valued if you could spend some time responding to my request. If you would like any further information please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time and efforts once again.
APPENDIX 5
Sampling procedure pre-screening questionnaire for Study 3

Participant Questionnaire

This is a sampling questionnaire designed to measure your suitability to take part in an upcoming intervention study. Specifically, the investigation will examine whether or not the development of reflective skills allows practitioners to develop their effectiveness through the improvement of a range of characteristics associated with effective service delivery.

The study entails a reflective practice training programme designed to develop your ability to successfully reflect on your practice. It is thought that being able to do this allows practitioners to make sense of themselves, their work, and the environments in which they work. Thus, reflective practice can help a practitioner understand how to address and improve the service that they provide.

The intervention will focus on the support that you provide to one particular client. For some of you this will mean the one client with whom you are currently working, be they a team or individual. Others may be working with a range of clients. In this case I ask you to select a client with whom you have weekly contact and will continue to do so over the next three months in order for the intervention to take effect. Therefore, could you please answer the following questions with this in mind.

Once you have answered this questionnaire I will contact you either via email or telephone to discuss in more detail what the study entails. I thank you for taking the time to consider your answers and complete this booklet, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Faithfully,

Brendan Cropley M.Sc.
Ph.D. candidate (UWIC)
Appendix 5

Participant Name:  
Age:  
Current Job and Employer:  

1. **What is your current professional status? (Please tick one)**  
   
   Accredited: □  
   How many years have you been Accredited? _____  
   
   Supervised Experience:  
   Year 2 □  
   Year 3 □  

2. **Are you currently working as an applied sport psychologist with a client(s)?**  
   
   Yes □  
   No □  
   
   2.1 If yes, is the client a team or an individual athlete? (If both tick both boxes)  
   
   Team □  
   Individual athlete □  

3. **In what capacity are you currently working with client(s)? (Select as appropriate)**  
   
   Performance Related  
   Personal/Interpersonal Development  
   Injury Related  
   Mental Skills Training  
   Counselling  
   Other  
   
   3.1 If ‘other’ please specify  
   
   ____________________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________________  

323
4. How long have you been working with your current client(s) for?
   
   0-1 Month  □  2-4 Months  □  5-6 Months  □  6+ Months  □

5. Do you believe that the support will continue into 2008?
   
   Yes  □  No  □

5.1 If ‘no’ why is the support likely to end?

6. Have you been introduced to the process of Reflective Practice?
   
   Yes  □  No  □

6.1 If so, where were you introduced to it and how? (e.g., literature, BASES guidelines)

7. On the following scale rate your current knowledge of reflective practice
   (Please circle one)
   
   No Knowledge  Knowledgeable of Practice  Very Theory and
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

8. Do you currently reflect on your practice?
   
   Yes  □  No  □
8.1 If so, how often do you reflect on your practice?

Every session ☐ Once a week ☐ Critical incidents only ☐
At the end of a period of consultancy ☐ Periodically throughout ☐
Other amount ☐ Please specify:

9. When reflecting on your practice what methods do you tend to prefer to use?

Structured models of reflection ☐ Reflective Diaries ☐
Learning journals ☐ Reflective conversations ☐
Reflective groups ☐ Unstructured methods ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _______________________

10. Have you received any formal training on Reflective Practice?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10.1 If so, please give brief details if the training

____________________________________________
____________________________________________

11. Rate your current ability to use reflective practice on the following scale
(Please circle one)

Low

 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

High

12. If you were to participate in this study would you be happy for your client to be interviewed concerning how effective the support that you have provided has been?

Yes ☐ No ☐
13. Do you think that your client would be happy to be interviewed on this subject matter?

Yes □    No □

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 6
Baseline reflective structure for Study 3

Reflective Practice

Instructions for Completing Reflections

Over the next few weeks I would like you to reflect on one critical consulting experience per week. This experience could be any of your consulting experiences you have had during that particular week.

Please could you structure the reflections using the pro-forma outlined below (next page). You don’t need to worry about framing your reflections in established theory, just use your current knowledge of the process in order to reflect on your experiences.

Please feel free to use these reflections as part of your CPD portfolio or your accountability to the SE programme, however, when you have completed the reflection please email it to me ASAP. I will be in touch in the next few weeks to let you know about the next stage of the study, but for now use this document to take you through the reflective process.

Thank you for your time and good luck!

Brendan Cropley
Appendix 6

Reflective Practice Pro-Forma

NAME:

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION:

CLIENT SPORT:

DATE OF REFLECTION:

REFLECTION NUMBER:

1. Identification

2. Description

3. Significance

4. Implications
APPENDIX 7
Post-intervention reflective structure for Study 3

Reflection-on-Practice

NAME:

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION:

CLIENT SPORT:

DATE OF REFLECTION:

REFLECTION NUMBER:

1. DESCRIPTION – What happened? Contributing factors?

2. FEELINGS – Client’s and own thoughts and feelings

3. EVALUATION – Goals, What was good and bad about the situation?

4. ANALYSIS – What sense can you make of the experience? External influences?

5. CONCLUSION – What else could you have done? Making sense of the experience

6. ACTION PLAN – If it arose again what would you do? Is learning required?
**Consultant Performance Profile: Instructions**

Below is a table containing a range of characteristics associated with applied sport psychology practice. I would like you to work through the performance profile as you would take a client through a profile (only in this instance I have highlighted the characteristics for you). Please can you complete this ASAP and email it back to me during your first week of participation. You will get a chance to review the profile in a couple of week’s time, but I will let you know when you should do this.

Importantly, you should rate yourself on the characteristics at your **perceived current level of ability** rather than the level you may have been at previously, or the level you aim to be at in the future. Further, it is important that you are honest as this will provide a better insight into your current levels of practice as well as identifying areas that could be improved (just as a performance profile would for a client). In this sense please feel free to use this profile in your own practice as you please.

**Importance of the Quality:** In this column I would like you to rate how important you perceive this characteristic to be to your applied practice. This should be done on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being of little importance and 10 being of the utmost importance.

**Ideal Score:** In this column I would like you to rate an ideal score on each characteristic. This should be thought of as a marker of excellent practice and can be used as a target for you to achieve. Again this should be done on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being low and 10 being high.

**Current Self-Score:** In this column I would like to rate you current level in each of the characteristics. You can use the ideal score in order to frame your current practice and allow you to get a clear view of your current practice. Again this should be done on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being low and 10 being high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of the Quality</th>
<th>Ideal Score</th>
<th>Current Self-Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Ideal Score</th>
<th>Current Self-Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

330
### Consultant Profile: BASELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Importance of the Quality</th>
<th>Ideal Score</th>
<th>Current Self-Score</th>
<th>Difference Between Ideal and Self Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Friendly</td>
<td>Personable</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Easy Going</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ability to develop a rapport/working alliance with the client</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Easy to talk to</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Capacity to relate to the athlete</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Good communicator – verbal</td>
<td>Good Communicator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Good communicator – presentation skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ability to listen</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Capability to use appropriate sports-related language</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Available – flexible to meet client needs</td>
<td>Provider of a good practical service</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Ability to provide an individualised approach to consultancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Effort</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ability to improve client understanding of the support by clearly outlining your role</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Knowledge of a range of sports</td>
<td>Knowledgeable and experienced in sport and sport psychology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Experience in a range of sports</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Knowledge of sport psychology theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Importance of the Quality</td>
<td>Ideal Score</td>
<td>Current Self-Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Knowledge of sport psychology – applying theory to practice</td>
<td>Knowledgeable and experienced in sport and sport psychology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Knowledge of ethics and codes of conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ability to apply ethics and codes of conduct in practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>Honest and trustworthy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
<td>Exhibits professional skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Approachable – athlete can relate to the sport psychologist</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Perceptiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ability to adapt in practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sensitive to the intensity of the session – meeting the needs of the client</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ability to implement a professional philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dedication to actively seeking feedback from clients and stakeholders</td>
<td>Exhibits professional skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Capacity to demonstrate empathy to the clients’ situation</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Capacity to use reflective practice to learn from experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 9
Copy of the modified version of the Assessment of Consultant Effectiveness instrument (ACE) for Study 3

Assessment of Consultant Effectiveness (ACE) Form

In order to improve the service that you are provided with I would like you to take some time to complete this form. It is important that you give your honest opinion whether it is positive or negative. Please rate your sport psychologist on each of the characteristics listed below. Any additional comments or suggestions are also welcome.

1. The sport psychologist was generally a nice person and good to have around
2. Clear goals were set for the support and agreed by the sport psychologist and myself
3. The sport psychologist was easy going and was able to fit in
4. I found it difficult to open up and talk to the sport psychologist
5. The sport psychologist was willing to listen to me
6. The sport psychologist individualised the sport psychology to fit my individual needs and concerns
7. The sport psychologist was hard working and made an effort to help out
8. The sport psychologist had good knowledge of sport psychology
9. I didn’t think the sport psychologist really understood the demands and nature of my sport
10. I felt I could trust the sport psychologist
11. A good rapport was developed that led to a positive working relationship
12. The sport psychologist made their role and who they were working for clear
13. The sport psychologist knew when to switch off from sport psychology
14. I felt the sport psychologist got to know me and understood me
15. Activities were completed that allowed the goals of the sport psychology support to be achieved
16. The sport psychologist helped me to develop a deeper understanding of myself on my sport
17. The sport psychologist presented information in a clear and easy way to understand
18. The sport psychologist was always very positive
19. The sport psychologist helped me to deal with my problems constructively
20. I found it difficult to get hold of the sport psychologist when I wanted to see them
21. The sport psychologist treated me as a person and not just an athlete
22. The sport psychologist provided feedback on the sessions we had
23. The sport psychology was well timed so that it didn’t start too close to competition

24. I felt that I didn’t have enough sport psychology for it to be beneficial

25. The sport psychologist gave me the skills to become mentally tough and deal with situations on my own

How effective was the consultant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindered / Interfered</th>
<th>Helped A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How could the support that you’ve been provided with have been improved?
## TEST OF PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES (TOPS)

Each of the following questions describes a specific situation that you may encounter in your training and competition. Please rate how often these situations apply to you on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I set realistic but challenging goals for practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I say things to myself to help my practice performance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. During practice I visualize successful past performances</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My attention wanders while I am training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I practice using relaxation techniques at workouts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I practice a way to relax</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. During competition I set specific result goals for myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When pressure is on at competitions, I know how to relax</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My self-talk during competition is negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. During practice, I don’t think about performing much - I just let it happen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I perform at competitions without consciously thinking about it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I rehearse my performance in my mind before practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I can raise my energy level at competitions when necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. During competition I have thoughts of failure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I use practice time to work on my relaxation technique</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I manage my self-talk effectively during practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am able to relax if I get too nervous at a competition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I visualize my competition going exactly the way I want</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am able to control distracting thoughts when I am training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I get frustrated and emotionally upset when practice does not go well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I have specific cue words or phrases that I say to myself to help my performance during competition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I evaluate whether I achieve my competition goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. During practice, my movements and skills just seem to flow naturally from one to another</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. When I make a mistake in competition, I have trouble getting my concentration back on track</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. When I need to, I can relax myself at competitions to perform</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of the following questions describes a specific situation that you may encounter in your training and competition. Please rate how often these situations apply to you on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. I set very specific goals for competition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I relax myself at practice to get ready</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I psych myself up at competitions to get ready to perform</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. At practice, I can allow the whole skill or movement to happen naturally without concentrating on each part of the skill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. During competition I perform on ‘automatic pilot’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. When something upsets me during a competition, my performance suffers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I keep my thoughts positive during competitions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I say things to myself to help my competitive performance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. At competitions, I rehearse the feel of my performance in my imagination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I practice a way to energize myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I manage my self-talk effectively during competition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I set goals to help me use practice time effectively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I have trouble energizing myself if I feel sluggish during practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. When things are going poorly in practice, I stay in control of myself emotionally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I do what needs to be done to get psyched up for competitions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. During competition, I don’t think about performing much - I just let it happen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. At practice, when I visualize my performance, I imagine what it will feel like</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I find it difficult to relax when I am too tense at competitions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. I have difficulty increasing my energy level during workouts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. During practice I focus my attention effectively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. I set personal performance goals for a competition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. I motivate myself to train through positive self-talk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. During practice sessions I just seem to be in a flow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I practice energizing myself during training sessions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. I have trouble maintaining my concentration during long practices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. I talk positively to myself to get the most out of practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. I can increase my energy to just the right level for competitions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I have very specific goals for practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. During competition, I play/perform instinctively with little</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscious effort</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each of the following questions describes a specific situation that you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may encounter in your training and competition. Please rate how often</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these situations apply to you on the following scale:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. I imagine my competitive routine before I do it at a competition</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. I imagine screwing up during a competition</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. I talk positively to myself to get the most out of competitions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. I don’t set goals for practices, I just go out and do it</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. I rehearse my performance in my mind at competitions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. I have trouble controlling my emotions when things are not going</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well at practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. When I perform poorly in practice I lose my focus</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. My emotions keep me from performing my best at competitions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. My emotions get out of control under the pressure of competition</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. At practice, when I visualize my performance, I imagine watching</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myself as if on a video replay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflective Practice

• Difficult to define but common idea that reflection is:
  Looking back and making sense of your practice,
  learning from this and using this learning to affect your
  future action

• It is about making sense of your professional life

• Reflection can be used to serve a number of purposes:
   Technical
   Practical
   Critical

APPENDIX 11
Intervention material for Study 3: Tutorial sessions

Understanding and Using Reflective Practice

Tutorial 1

Brendan Cropley

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

Session Plan and Aims

• Introduction
• Understanding what reflection is and is not
• Framing reflection within sport psychology and
  adult learning
• Benefits of RP and how to get them
• Doing reflective practice - models
• Reflective writing and questioning

Introduction

• Study plan and aims
   Tutorials
   Reflective Support
   Feedback on Reflections
• Timescales
• Reflective practice - your current experiences
   Problems
   Issues arising
   Questions

What is Reflective Practice?

Q. What do you think reflective practice
  actually is?

Q. What factors are involved in the process?

Activity:
List the differences between reflecting on an
experience and evaluating an experience

What Reflective Practice is NOT

• It is not just about thinking about what you do
• It is not a toolbox to help you get through
• It is not something to be bolted on to PD
• It is not private, self-indulgent naval gazing
• It is not something you do on a part-time
  basis

Reflective Practice

• Difficult to define but common idea that reflection is:
  Looking back and making sense of your practice,
  learning from this and using this learning to affect your
  future action

• It is about making sense of your professional life

• Reflection can be used to serve a number of purposes:
   Technical
   Practical
   Critical
If you were asked to reflect on an experience that you have gone through how would you go about it, and why?

- **Cyclical model of reflective practice**
- Reflective questioning to aid your writing

---

**Reflective Practice**

- RP offers a framework from which we can examine and learn about *doing sport psychology*
- It creates a link between the application of professional knowledge and practice to raise into consciousness *intuitive or craft knowledge*

---

**Knowledge-in-action**

What are the different types of knowledge that we would have to take into account in this situation?

- **Empirical Know.** - Weinberg & Locke & Burton etc
- **Values & Prejudices.** Should children train at this level of intensity?
- **Experiences.** - Of introducing GS before/ or not?
- **Aesthetic Know.** - 'Reading' the situation – is it a good time/ are there other issues?
- **Ethical Know.** - Consent/ Where can you work with this child and have confidence?
- **Personal Know.** - How to build rapport/ relationship with athletes
- **Social Norms.** - What are cultural influences?

---

**Benefits of Reflection**

**Q.** What benefits have you found so far?

**Activity:**

Write down the benefits and how you think these are gained through reflecting on your practice

- **Benefits of Reflection**
  - Building on **ACHIEVEMENTS**
  - Being **CREATIVE**
  - Being **CRITICAL**
  - A **DISPOSITION**
  - A **TRANSFORMATORY PROCESS**

---

**Doing Reflective Practice**

If you were asked to reflect on an experience that you have gone through how would you go about it, and why?

- **Cyclical model** of reflective practice
- **Reflective questioning** to aid your writing
Summary
• What have you learnt today?
• What will you do differently tomorrow? How will what you have learnt influence future behaviour?

What do you need to do now?
1. Keep a diary of all incidents during the week
2. Produce an in-depth reflection using the specific model once a week

Reflective Writing: Guidelines
What types of information should be included in reflections?
• Anything that you think is important at that particular moment in time
• Must try and think objectively in some situations
• Thoughts, feelings and actions involved in the situation in order to represent it truthfully

Reflective Writing: Guidelines
What format should reflections take?
• Journal type format
• Structured by Gibbs (1988) model and associated questions
• Reflections do not have to be written in academic language or with appropriate grammar
• Should be written in a creative and interpretative manner that can be used to express your thoughts and feelings

Facilitator / Mentor
• Reflection can be aided through conversation of an experience
• Talking to someone else may provide a different perspective and help you to come to terms with what actually happened

During the study I will be available whenever you want to talk to me about reflection or an experience you've had

Reflective Questioning
See attached sheet for associated reflective questions

Gibbs (1988) Six Stage Model of Reflection

Description
What happened?

Feelings
What are you and the client thinking and feeling?

Evaluation
What was good and bad about the situation?

Analysis
What sense can you make of the situation?

Action Plan
What else could you have done?

Conclusion
What will you do differently tomorrow? How will what you have learnt influence future behaviour?

Reflected on the case and was asked to create a reflection to be used for the rest of the day. The task was to reflect on the experience and what could have been done differently.
Activity 1
• Consider the development of a structured diary format
• This should allow you to quickly make notes of key aspects of important experiences you have during the week
• Think about what information should be included to aid later reflections

Activity 2
• Using your consultancy experience this week reflect using the new pro-forma
• Utilise the questions we have discussed to help structure your reflection
• Consider what you are actually getting out of the process and why
• We will discuss this and any other issues you have in the next tutorial

Session Plan and Aims
• Recap
• Activities to develop reflective writing
• Critical incidents
• Timing of reflections
• Reflective conversations
• Study related tasks and activities

Recap
• Reflective practice is not something you do on a part-time basis
• Reflection used to understand practice and to generate craft knowledge that improves our effectiveness
• Gibbs cyclical model with associated questions can be used to guide and structure reflections
• Importance of using a mentor to help reflect on an experience is clear
Discussion of Activities

• Findings
• Issues arising
• Points for discussion
• Development of diary and reflective framework

Developing Reflective Skills

Activity:
1. Write for 3-4 minutes without stopping an account of something that did not go quite according to plan
2. Narrate/summarise this incident to the tutor
3. Now write a reflective statement on the incident using the following prompts:
   a) What happened?
   b) What action did you take?
   c) What external factors impacted on this event?
   d) What alternatives did you have?
   e) What would have been the consequences of these alternatives?
   f) What lessons can be learnt?

What to Reflect on

• Critical Incidents? HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THEM?
• Can be any situation that you deem to have some personal importance or significance - something you want to learn from and improve, or bank the experience for re-creation of outcomes
• Reflections should be conducted once per week
• Reflections must be conducted on incidents arising from working with the same client throughout the study period
• Issues concerning your effectiveness and the effectiveness of your practice

When and Where to Reflect

• Sunday?
• Can reflect anytime after the incident has occurred
• Best to find time when you have a spare couple of hours to focus specifically on the reflection
• A comfortable, quiet location should be used

Aiding Recall of Incidents

• Diaries can be kept that briefly outline all incidents experienced
• These should include the main factors arising from that situation
• Use of mental imagery to replay the incident
• Imagery can also be used to recreate thoughts and feelings experienced
**Reflective Conversations**

- Revisit the writing task you have just completed
- Let us work through the experience again, but this time together, using the cyclical model and reflective questioning

---

**Gibbs (1988) Six Stage Model of Reflection**

- **Description**
  - What happened?
  - Feelings
  - What are you and the client thinking and feeling?

- **Evaluation**
  - What was good and bad about the situation?

- **Conclusion**
  - What else could you have done?

- **Analysis**
  - What sense can you make of the situation?

- **Action Plan**
  - If it arose again, what would you do?

---

**Study Information**

- Diary to be kept each week
  - Incidents experienced (brief description)
  - Meetings / conversations with PP supervisor
  - Any reflective activities undertaken
- 1 full reflection to be completed using Gibbs model and associated questions each week
- The diary and reflection should be sent via email to Brendan once it has been completed each week

---

- You can email or call Brendan for any advice or feedback on reflections or professional practice
- Brendan will also provide a mentoring role so that reflections can be discussed
- Any questions?
Participant Name: 

Week Beginning: 

## WEEKLY REFLECTIVE DIARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultancy Experiences</th>
<th>Contact with Supervisor / Mentor (Nature of contact)</th>
<th>Reflective Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Experience</td>
<td>Location of Experience</td>
<td>Nature of Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
APPENDIX 13
Intervention material for Study 3: Reflective questions

Reflective Questioning

Questions to be used in association with Gibbs’ (1988) cyclical model of reflective practice in order to structure and guide reflections-on-practice.

1. DESCRIPTION – What happened?
   - Describe the here and now of the experience (*where, when, what*)
   - What essential factors contributed to this experience? (*why*)

2. FEELINGS – Client’s and own thoughts and feelings
   - What internal factors influenced your actions? (*thoughts, feelings, previous experience*)
   - How did you feel about this experience when it was happening? Why?
   - How did the athlete feel?
   - How do you know what the athlete felt like?

3. EVALUATION – What was good and bad about the situation?
   - What were you trying to achieve?
   - Why did you intervene as you did?
   - What were the consequences of your actions?
   - Positive aspects and Negative aspects?

4. ANALYSIS – What sense can you make of the experience?
   - What external factors influenced your actions? (*other people, organizational factors, time*)
   - What sources of knowledge did/should have influenced your decision making?
   - Why did the situation happen as it did?

5. CONCLUSION – What else could you have done?
   - Could you have dealt with the situation better?
   - What other choices did you have?
   - What would be the consequences of these choices?
   - How have you made sense of this experience in light of past experiences and future practice?

6. ACTION PLAN – If it arose again what would you do?
   - How will you implement the learning?
   - Is further learning required to improve practice?
   - How will action as a result of learning influence practice?
Appendix 14
Social validation interview protocol for Study 3

The Influence of Reflective Practice on the Effectiveness of
Applied Sport Psychology Service Delivery

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name: ............................................................

Participant Number: ............................................................

Age: ............................................................

Professional Status: ............................................................

Contact Number: ............................................................

Interview Date: ............................................................

Start Time: ......................... Finish Time: .........................
Appendix 14

**Intervention: Social Validation Interview**

**Introduction (Not Recorded)**

It has been well publicised within a variety of fields, including sport psychology, that reflective practice allows practitioners to access, make sense of and learn from their experiences. Such processes are thought to generate knowledge that can be used to alter attitudes, behaviours and practices in attempts to improve the overall quality of service being provided. However, the majority of this research is anecdotal in nature and hasn’t considered how a development of skills in reflective practice may then influence the quality of applied practice.

Over the past few months you have engaged in a rigorous process of implementing more stringent methods of reflective practice into your applied work. Initially you were not guided in any particular way and given the opportunity to explore your consultancy experiences in a relatively unstructured manner. Following formal tutorials, mentoring and feedback on your reflections you then instigated a reflective approach that questioned you more specifically in attempts to help you consider the experiences you have had, the things that could be learnt from the experience, and how this learning could be implemented to improve practice. You have also been asked to collect a variety of information from your client, as well as periodically completing specific pro-forma, which has provided some valuable information concerning the quality and effectiveness of the support you have provided.

This interview will look to examine your experiences over the period of this study and focus on the way in which your reflective practices and the effectiveness of your applied work may have been influenced as a direct result of participation.

**Participant Information**

- Purpose: to collect data for my PhD. You can have a copy of the final study upon request
- Not a typical social validation interview as I’m primarily interested in examining potential links between reflective practice and effectiveness
- Use of a Dictaphone: required to make sure all information is collected accurately and so that a transcript can be produced. You’ll be sent a copy of the transcript to review to ensure it is accurate as far as you are concerned and provides a true representation of your experience
- Confidentiality
  - anonymity throughout the transcript
  - quotes from transcript to be used but all identifiable factors will be removed or changed
- Right to withdraw and not answer any particular questions
- Last section will allow you the opportunity to comment on the interview and the interview process
- Request for honest answers
- Orienting instructions
  - preparation booklet should have prepared you for the types of questions you’ll be asked
  - if you’re not sure of anything please let me know

**DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT IN TIME?**
**ARE YOU HAPPY TO START THE INTERVIEW?**
Section 1 – Overview of Service Provided to the Client (Context)
I would like to start by giving you the opportunity to provide an overview of the type of work that you’ve been completing with your client over the past few months…

1) Could you outline the types of service that you provided (e.g., counselling, mental skills training, fire-fighting)?

PROBE:  
  a) Why did you act like this (influencing factors)?
  
  b) What was your professional philosophy during this support (constant or variable)? What are your core values?
     b1) Why was your philosophy like this?
     b2) How far were you able to put these values into action?
  
  c) What sort of supervision did you receive over this period?
     c1) How did this supervision influence your practice over this period?

2) Considering the service you provided, overall how successful do you think it has been?

PROBE:  
  a) What has lead you to believe that the service provision was as un/successful as this? – EVIDENCE?
  
  b) How do you think that your client would answer this question?
     b1) Why do you think they would answer like this?
  
  c) Are there any particular aspects of the service or your practice/behaviour that you would change to potentially improve this level of success?
     c1) Why do you think these would have improved the service?
  
  d) What aspects of your practice do you believe were particular strengths of yours?
     d1) Why do you think that these were strengths?

Thank you for that information! I think that this brings us to a point where we can move on to talking more specifically about your reflective practices, and how they may have influenced the effectiveness of your practice.

Section 2 – Pre-Intervention Reflective Practice
I would firstly like us to talk about your reflective practices prior to the training and support that you received during the period of this study. In particular I would like to
talk about the methods, your reflective focus, how you found the process, and the impact you feel that it may or may not have had on your practice...(have a copy of the reflective model used during this phase).

1) How did you use reflective practice during this period of consultancy? For example, what did you focus on; what did you use reflective practice for?
   **PROBE:** a) What lead you to use reflection in this way (WHY)?

2) What problems did you have with using the particular method?
   **PROBE:**
   a) Knowledge, understanding, time, memory recall
   b) What influence did these have on the way in which you reflected?
   c) How did these problems influence the quality of your reflections?

3) Despite any problems you may have had, how did being encouraged to reflect on your practice in a more structured manner influence your practice?
   **PROBE:**
   a) Benefits for practice?
       b) Development of knowledge, self-awareness, behaviour?

4) Why do you think the reflective process being completed during this period resulted in these developments?

5) During this stage did you speak to anyone regarding the content, structure or quality of your reflections (e.g., colleague, supervisor)?
   **PROBE:**
   a) Why did you seek this help?
       b) What influence did these conversations have on your reflective practices?
       c) Did anything else happen during this stage that may have influenced your reflective practice?

6) Is there anything else that, during this stage of the service you were providing, may have had an impact on how effective you were as an Applied Sport Psychology Consultant?
   **PROBE:**
   a) What were these influences?
       b) How did they influence your practice?
       c) How did they influence your reflective practices (provide focus, added to the process)?
Appendix 14

Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience of reflective practice during this time prior to receiving any formal training and guidance in its use?

Ok, I would like us to move on to specifically considering the impact of the formal training and support you were provided with and how this influenced your reflective practices and consequently how your practice may have changed as a direct result of this…

Section 3 – Post-Intervention Reflective Practice
Let us examine how you found the training you were provided with… (maybe a good idea to have the formal training and support they were provided with on a flipchart!)

1) (GENERAL) With specific emphasis on the education and support you received, how did your reflections change as a consequence of this training?

PROBE:
   a) Changes to knowledge; changes to understanding of the reflective process; benefits gained from the process; time; structure
   b) Consider thoughts, feelings, emotions and perceptions of RP
   c) Why do you think that these changes occurred?

2) How did the focus of your reflections change as a result of the training?

PROBE:
   a) Content of reflections?
   b) Depth of reflections?
   c) Why did this focus change?
   d) What influence did this have on the outcomes you gained from RP?
   e) Did your focus and use of reflection change throughout the training, as an influence of the mentoring and support you received?

3) (SPECIFIC) How beneficial did you find:
   - The tutorials?
   - The feedback on your reflections?
   - Reflective diary use?
   - Reflective questioning incorporated into the process?
   - The mentoring service?

PROBE (each aspect):
   a) What influence did it/they have on your reflective practices?
   b) How effective was it in influencing your knowledge, understanding and ability to reflect on your experiences?
c) Why do you think this?
d) How/why could this service have been improved?
e) How would these improvements have benefited you?

4) So to recap, how did things change as a direct result of the training and support you received, with specific reference to your reflective practices?
PROBE:  
   a) Do you think you became a more able reflector? Why?  
   b) Were you better able to examine what was good/successful about your practice? How?  
   c) Were you able to develop a better understanding of how to improve practice by implementing reflective learning? How?

5) What problems did you have with reflections during and after the training you received?
PROBE:  
   a) How these changed from before the training – link the benefit of the training

That’s great, however, just to make sure that I’ve got the information right let’s just reflect what you’ve said here…(go through and make explicit the links between their development and the individual and collective benefit of the training and support they were given).

6) What has been the biggest influencing factor on the way in which your reflective skills have developed over the period of the study?
PROBE:  
   a) Why would you say this?

Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience of reflective after receiving formal training and guidance in its use?

Ok, we’ve talked in some depth about your reflective practices, the training you received and the impact that this had on the way in which you were able to reflect. I would like us now to focus on the way in which the development of your reflective skills may have impacted on your effectiveness as a consultant.

Section 4 – The Influence of Reflective Practice on Effectiveness

1) Has your practice changed in any ways over the period of this study?  
   Could you provide some examples?
PROBE:  
   a) When/why did these changes occur?
b) So have these changes occurred as a direct result of developing your skills in reflective practice? Could you provide some examples?
c) How has a process of reflection and a development in your reflective skills influenced your practice?
d) Would these changes have occurred naturally, or by using less structured methods of reflection? Why?

2) What benefits do you perceive that you received from adopting a more stringent, structured reflective process following the training you were provided with?
PROBE: a) What have you learnt through reflective practice?
       b) Have you been able to implement this learning in order to influence behaviour? How? Why?

3) (GENERAL) To what extent has developing your reflective skills influenced the effectiveness of your practice? Could you provide some examples?
PROBE: a) Have you noticed a link between an improvement in your reflective skills and a greater focus on the effectiveness of your practice?
       b) What has lead to this belief?
       c) Why has this link occurred?

4) (SPECIFIC) What influence has the development in your reflective skills had on the development of your consultant characteristics associated with effectiveness?
   - Personable skills - ability to develop a working alliance
   - Communication skills
   - Knowledge and understanding of sport and sport psychology
   - Professional skills – use of mental skills; approachable; decision-making
   - Practical skills – application of theory to practice in context
   - Your philosophy – understanding and implementation

PROBE (each factor): a) How has improved reflective skills lead to a development in this characteristic?
       b) Have you focused specifically on this characteristic or has it developed as a natural consequence of more structured reflective processes? Why?
       b) How has developing this characteristic influenced your practice – your effectiveness?
5) Has developing your reflective skills enabled you to provide a service that achieved, or worked towards, the goals of practice?

PROBE: a) How has this happened?

6) So to recap, as a consequence of developing your reflective skills do you feel as though you have developed characteristics associated with consultant effectiveness and thus the effectiveness of your practice overall?

PROBE: a) Main factors associated with this?

That information has allowed a more in-depth understanding of the way in which the training of reflective skills is linked with improvements in the effectiveness of practice, particularly when considering characteristics associated with effective consultants.

Is there anything else that you would like to add about the way in which formal training in reflective practice influenced the effectiveness of your practice?

Ok, I would like to move on to some more general questions regarding reflective practice and the effectiveness of Applied Sport Psychology support…

Section 5 – Developments in Reflective and Professional Practice

1) What has been the biggest influencing factor on the way in which your effectiveness has developed over the period of the study?

PROBE: a) Why was this the biggest influence?

2) What things have you focused on personally in your consultancy work, in terms of the characteristics that you wanted to bring to the service delivery in order to provide the best possible service?

PROBE: a) Has reflective practice allowed you to evaluate how well you were able to implement these factors?

b) What have you learnt about the implementation of these factors?

3) Has receiving formal training and support in reflective practice allowed you to address areas of your practice that require improvement?

PROBE: a) How has this happened?

4) Has receiving formal training and support in reflective practice allowed you to make sense of and build on your strengths as a consultant?
Appendix 14

**PROBE:** a) How has this happened?

5) How will your reflective practice change now as a direct result of participating in the study?

**PROBE:** a) Why?

6) Based on your experiences what advice would you give to trainee and professional practitioners in terms of implementing and gaining benefits from reflective practice?

**PROBE:** a) Why? What influence would this advice have on their practice?

**Section 6 – Reliability and Validity of the Interview: Conclusion**

*This just about raps up the interview, however, before we finish, let me ask you some final questions…*

1) How satisfied were you with the intervention and support you received during the study? Why?

2) Would you regard changes to your reflective practice and professional practice as significant as a result of participation?

3) During the study itself, were you coerced at any time in terms of your practice and behaviours beyond the scope of the study?

4) How would you rate your experience as a participant? Fair?

5) How did you think the interview went?

6) Did you feel that you could tell your story fully?

7) Did I lead you or influence your responses in any way?

8) Do you think we failed to discuss any important factors?

9) Have you any comments or suggestions about the interview itself?

*Thank you for your time and efforts in participating in this study and this interview!*
Appendix 15:  
Social validation interview preparation booklet for Study 3

Applied Sport Psychology: Implementing Reflective Practice

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and subsequent interview that I will be running to gather data for my Ph.D. research.

The following booklet will introduce you to the topics that you will be asked to discuss in the upcoming interview. This booklet is also intended to help you start to think about your practices and the way that they may have changed over the period of the study. It is also aimed at promoting thought that considers the influence that developing your reflective skills may have had on your applied work, as well as on both personal and professional development more holistically. Hopefully this booklet will help to prepare you to discuss your experiences and offer any thoughts that you have concerning issues pertinent to the study.

Background to the Research

It has been well publicised within a variety of fields, including sport psychology, that reflective practice allows practitioners to access, make sense of and learn from their experiences. Such processes are thought to generate knowledge that can be used to alter attitudes, behaviours and practices in attempts to improve the overall quality of service being provided. However, the majority of this research is anecdotal in nature and hasn’t considered how a development of skills in reflective practice may then influence the quality of applied practice.

Over the past few months you have engaged in a rigorous process of implementing more stringent methods of reflective practice into your applied work. Initially you were not guided in any particular way and given the opportunity to explore your consultancy experiences in a relatively unstructured manner. Following formal tutorials, mentoring and feedback on your reflections you then instigated a reflective approach that questioned you more specifically in attempts to help you consider the experiences you have had, the things that could be learnt from the experience, and how this learning could be implemented to improve practice. You have also been asked to collect a variety of information from your client, as well as periodically completing specific pro-forma, which has provided some valuable information concerning the quality and effectiveness of the support you have provided.

In attempts to link all of the information that you have collected the interview will concentrate on examining your personal experiences over the period of the study and
identify any factors that may have influenced the quality of your work over the aforementioned consultancy period.

**Interview Format**

In the interview you will be asked to discuss a number of issues relating to your philosophy as a consultant, your reflective activity and the way this may have developed, and the influence of reflective practice on your professional consultancy. Importantly, all information discussed will be about you and your practice during the period of this study. You will not be asked to talk in any detail about specific client issues, and in this sense confidentiality will be upheld throughout. In preparation for the interview I would like you to think about the following points (please feel free to make any notes under each section):

- What kind of services have you provided to your client over the period of the study?

- How successful do you think the services have been?

- Did the effectiveness of the service you provided improve at any stage during the period of the study?

- What factors have had an influence on the quality of the service that you have provided?

- Are there any particular aspects of your service delivery that you thought were particularly beneficial?

- Are there any particular aspects of your service delivery that you thought were potential weaknesses and would consequently change?

- How beneficial did you find the use of reflective practice, and did this change over the period of the study?

- What problems did you have with reflecting on your experiences, and how may these have changed?
• What benefits did you gain from engaging in reflective practice, and how may these have changed over the period of the study?

• What factors had an influence on the way in which you reflected over the period of the study?

• Has the development of your reflective skills directly influenced the way in which you practice and the effectiveness of this practice? If so, how?

Importantly, it is necessary for you to draw on all of your experiences over the period of the study in attempts to identify any links between reflective practice and the development of applied sport psychology services. I appreciate you taking your time to not only participate but to also prepare for the study. This will make the interview process quicker, easier, and more fruitful. If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me before the interview date.

Thank you once again,

Brendan
Appendix 16
Copy of exemplar social validation transcript Study 3: Participant C

Social Validation Interview Transcript

Participant C

M Right, so basically the first section, I'm going to focus on an overview of the service that you provided to your client basically so we can start to put into context some of the changes that happened. So I'd like to start by giving you the opportunity to provide an overview of that type of work so could you talk about the sorts of service that you provided, so was it counselling, mental skills, training, fire-fighting, that sort of stuff?

Yes, no problem, I think initially it did start off with the intention of being mental skills training, so for performance enhancement at the end of the day. But given the nature of some of the issues that the golfers was having it ended up having to be a lot more sort of counselling and social support, especially in the initial sort of stages of the support that I was offering. So in terms of kind of the benefit that that had, although I personally think it wasn’t directly, you know, a performance enhancement strategy or intervention that I was providing, it was having, you know, an impact on performance because it was, you know, of benefit to the golfers themselves and that was obviously helping the golfer field that there was some sort of support in place for them during what was quite a difficult time for them personally. Do you want me to talk about any of the details?

M No, no, I mean, that's fine, it just helps me put it into sort of context. I would be interested in you just sort of outlining why you approached with the mental skills training sort of approach to start off with, was that something that you decided upon with your client or…?

Um, I think the nature of the job that I do is, you know, as a full-time Applied Sports Psych is to provide performance enhancement strategies and intervention, so it is purely performance based and we’re measured against performance outcome and for the measurable objective in terms of performance gains, so I think the initial request through golf was to provide support to a range of different golfers who only did the work on, you know, ex-science at ed, so my initial approach to working with this athlete who had shown an interest and a desire to work on, you know, visualisation in particular, but then as a result of this talking with that athlete and realising that there were other issues going on at the time that were actually of more importance and needing prioritising so to speak in order for it to be able to, you know, deal with it, you know, things on a daily basis was more important that what was happening out on the golf course at that moment in time, so…

M So when did that change in sort of focus occur and sort of what lead you to make that change in focus?

I think the initial, all the athletes see like an induction, and it would have been around sort of September, early October, and I was actually involved in that induction process where a performance profile was carried out and that was like, part of just my input to the session, it was a quick and easy way for me to get a brief overview of what each of the golfers needed at that moment in time and whether or not they were a priority. So, you know, right from the word go it was like you say, you know, mental skills from the offset. And then what I did as a result was to follow up with the prioritised golfers of which the one that I ended up working with was, you know, a priority to work with. And I think it was just, the shift then came during our first sort of consultation, when I realised that there was something else not quite right and didn’t, I think the first reflection that I did pre-, you know, any intervention that would have like been after, that would have been during probably the initial meeting that I had with this, following doing the performance profile. She
had initially said she wanted to work on, like, blocking out distractions and improving her visualisation skills and I think that was detailed in the first reflection.

M  So would you say that sort of reflecting helped you to decide the best course of action then in that circumstance?

Yeah, because, the error that I made detailed in, I think it was one of my other reflections, probably the third of fourth, was that I tried to push the mental skills, you know, even though I need that this was an area that needed to be done on it, and I think through reflecting it helped me step back and say actually, why is she here, you know, and it’s something that I’m at fault, sometimes you’re hearing things and you know what you should be working on or what, but it’s difficult to what the athlete wants and needs to work on so I think it was through taking that initial information from the profile and then sitting and sitting down and talking to her about these personal issues that she’s having that made me realise that that actually was the more important thing to work on and yeah, if I hadn’t reflected on that I probably would have just battled on with trying to work on the distractions and visualisations again.

M  Okay, that’s good, so we’ll come back and talk a little bit about the benefit of reflected practice a little bit later on at that sort of particular point in time and how that helped you, but I was just wondering what sort of professional philosophy that you adopted during that period of support?

I think very much the, like, here’s a problem try and solve it, so it was totally, you know, like, you know, CBT in my approach.  And I think that is almost, expect good, rightly or wrongly of, like, in the line of work that I am, but given the measures that we’re measured against in terms of our progress, what was the problem and did you have an impact on it? Yes or No.  You know, did it have an impact on performance in a beneficial way, yes or no.  So I think I was always very much of that sort of philosophy but I think going through situations like this and making more use probably of, you know, reflective practice, it was helping me realise that I was starting to probably take a bit more of a humanistic approach as well.  So, you know, starting to say, ‘Well, what are the problems?’  And helping the athlete sort of come up with their own solutions rather than me just trying to, you know, fix things all the time.

M  So how were you able to put those sort of humanistic things into action then, was that, I mean, did you base the understanding that you needed to develop that philosophy in some particular way based on what you’d done with the client or was that a personal sort of preference based on getting to know the client a little bit?

It was probably a bit, I would say that it was probably a shift in my personal development in terms of not wanting to be just a problem-solving Sports Psych, you know, not just to teach them mental skills and using it for performance enhancement.  I think I wanted to be able to provide a slightly more rounded service for, you know, where the athletes could use me to help them come up with their own solutions, so I think it was through me suddenly realising that you can’t just solve things, that there isn’t, you know, a text book example of how to deal with an athlete who suddenly, you know, develops alopecia, you know, what it was, and really, in terms of just, there was no answer as to what, you know, what are you supposed to do in that situation.  So I think, I wouldn’t say I was forced into having to shift my approach, I think it was something that I naturally needed to do, you know, and felt the need to do and that’s why it sort of happened.

M  Were there any particular influencing factors then that sort of led to that decision for you to think that, yeah, actually I need to change, I need to adopt the different philosophy, different approach maybe?

I think my almost rational for doing it, because I have to report back to someone on how many sessions I am offering an athlete, why am I giving them this much time, and I think I needed to find a rationale for providing, you know, more of the counselling support, because the initial argument was that’s not helping, but I think I initially then decided to make that change and rationalised it and justified it by saying that if the athlete’s going to be better able to cope with these personal things then they are not going to interfere on the golf course, or they are not going to have such a massive, you know, impact on the course if she’s not, what would happen, you know, if she’s not dealing with it and then going out and playing.  So although they were saying, ‘Well, she just can’t come there to talk to you,’ my argument was, ‘Well, if that’s what’s going to
help her offload, rationalise and come to some sort of decisions about what her options are and how she’s going to deal with it and develop coping strategies, that inevitably is going to have a positive influence on her golf.’ Because it’s not just, you know, through competition, it was her not being able to go out and train for having all these thoughts about what was going on with her, so I think I’ve sort of, like I say, I wasn’t forced into doing it but I almost had to find justification for doing it and yes, I had to reflect on that, because I was like, how can I justify giving this athlete, you know, ten one-to-one sessions which, you know, is, that pretty much works out the equivalent of, well, let me see, kind of put it into context for you, five days of my year and golf are only assigned something like 11 days a year, so half of the time that golf were getting from me was going on one athlete, you know, so I was having to find a way to justify it and it was definitely through sitting down and thinking of it from these different perspectives, through, you know, reflecting on it, that helped me come to that conclusion I think.

M So really you had to start dealing with those off the course issues that were clearly going to be an influence of her performance on the course?

Yeah, because, you know, as we all know, you know, it’s not just what goes on, you know, on the course, it’s very hard to leave all these things and like simple little things like, you know, she couldn’t, she would always wear a cap, you know, to play golf and it wouldn’t stay on her head now because she was losing her hair and then she didn’t want people looking, you know, because of golf as well, it’s very about what, you know, it’s quite an image-conscious sport and they will always be looking at what you are wearing and stuff and she felt like, you know, self-conscious in those areas so if she wasn’t better able to deal with those sorts of issues in day-to-day life then there was no way she was going to be able to go out and perform, you know, anywhere near her best on the golf course.

M So what sort of, did you have any supervision over this period that sort of enabled you to make that sort of decision to change or did you run it by anybody or…?

Probably should have but I didn’t. And I think, I don’t really know if I’ve got a reason or an answer for that, I kind of knew that it was the right thing to do but I also had to work within my sort of boundaries and the confidence, and I knew that there would come a time when I wouldn’t be able to provide the emotional support that she needed, so that’s when I looked into how to make like a referral and I looked into other sort of options through the hospital, like a counselling service, there’s no counselling service offered through the hospital, at all, to do with this issue. But subsequently we found, like, other support groups and other people of a similar age who have gone through the same sort of thing, so I made it clear from probably, not like straight after the first sort of session, but after maybe the second or third session, once she kind of was able to detach some of the emotions from things, you know, that I wasn’t the best-placed person to be able to deal with this issue completely and that I had a number of alternatives available that when she felt ready, you know, to explore those, because the talk of a support group and all this was just like a, ‘No, no, no,’ there was still denial that she was suffering from alopecia, it was just, you know, it was just, ‘No I’m fine, I’m fine, there’s nothing wrong.’ So, until she was ready to accept it really I couldn’t do anything but. So I would say that I didn’t really have any, you know, additional support. I did speak to like the, my, like the manager that would manage all of those athletes as a whole and explained that, the same sort of thing, that I wasn’t the best-placed person to deal with this myself, and that, you know, would she support the decision for me to make a referral if and when it was needed, and she, you know, agreed to that but she’s not of, you know, any sort of psychology background or training or anything like that, purely a management sort of thing, but I think that probably reassured me that at least I would have, you know, the backing of someone to go through that process if I needed to. But I think in the early stages as well it was just her having someone to talk to, you know, about it, because, you know, parents were asking her every day, ‘How are you?’ because it doesn’t affect you physically it’s just a, you know, apart from losing your hair you don’t feel any different and they were making her think that she, you know, ‘Are you feeling okay, are you feeling ill?’ And she was like getting enraged by all these things, so it was, you know, I realised that it wasn’t something that needed immediate referral, you know, she wasn’t at any sort of risk, there was no sort of risk to her health or anything, she was signed by the hospital to get, you know, the appropriate treatment as well, so all of that was going on, you know, out, with our, you know, kind of conversations.
Right, okay, fair enough. So you sort of, you mentioned that you sort of knew that, you knew instinctively that it was the right thing to do in terms of the way in which you work with her, how did you sort of base that, what did you base that judgement on?

The very fact that she was so open with it all so quickly. I’d had some encounters with athletes probably in about a month prior to when we started, you know, working, just observation like in training and stuff like that, so I’d built up a very small amount to report but enough that I knew that if she was comfortable enough she would come and talk, so I knew it was by that, I mean that I knew it was the right thing to do, to listen, but I’m, you know, on reflection, you know, listening I probably still in the early days tried to problem-solve rather than listen. But again, you know, that’s the benefit of reflective practices, you can look back on that and think, right, you know, how would I approach that differently and I think it gave me the scope to do a little bit more listening, you know, as the time progressed working with this.

Fantastic, so considering that service then, and the use of reflection enabled you to make that informed decision about how you change maybe working with her, how successful do you think that the service that you provided was?

I would say I was, I think it was definitely effective and I would say more so, you know, in the later stages than sort of the, you know, post-intervention, getting more guidance, getting a bit more structure and detail. Now, looking back, if faced with a similar situation I think I could sort of justify and rationalise doing what I’m doing better given the reflective skills. I’d say I was still very much in the CBT frame of mind, you know, still trying to prove myself too much, looking for answers, when maybe she felt that she just needs someone to listen to. But then, you know, that was sort of the basis with probably one or two consultations and then, you know, the consultations started to take a shift towards, you know, different things, and other things became a priority, so…

How do you think your client would answer that question?

Erm… I would say she probably found it helpful that I made the shift back towards the performance enhancement stuff for her.

Right, okay, why do you think that?

Because I think everything, almost like an injured athlete, everything became too overly focussed on the, you know, the alopecia and the problem, and I think it was probably the right thing to do, the whole offloading, venting, listening, having someone to listen to and stuff in the early stages but because there are no real solutions there’s no way, you have to cope with it, you have to deal with it, you can, you know, the treatment doesn’t change that you can’t say, there’s no way to measure if you’re getting better from it or not, so with no sort of, kind of, with no measurables like we couldn’t, it’s not like, you know, something like you could do a blood test and say, like, you’re getting better, of if you do more of this then that will help or if you take this medication you’ll notice x, y and z improvement, there’s no way of doing that, so it was, I think, she would say I helped her cope and listened, but then made the shift back towards what my job, I would say, is labelled to be, which is back towards performance.

Right, okay, so were you able to, you mentioned that the client would probably think that it was effective when you shifted back to the performance and you thought it was effective more so in the later stages, did you gain any sort of evidence that’s led you to this belief?

I think the only evidence that I can really go on is I would just, dependency on me, I would say the athlete was making a lot of use of me in the early stages, like, this athlete is probably the athlete that I’ve seen the most out of all the athletes, you know, that I’ve worked with, which also then became a bit of a worry, you know, for me, because if it was more social support and counselling and the risk of dependency then I was getting myself into something that was showing that I wasn’t being as effective as what I could be. So that’s why I think I needed to make that shift back towards focusing on performance, when, obviously, the athlete was ready and I think when we eventually did she was. But that’s the only sort of measurable thing
that I can tell apart from, you know, what she said in terms of it being helpful for her and her being, you know, grateful of having that person to speak to. Apart from that I wouldn’t have.

M So just to clarify, so the dependency sort of started off quite high but obviously she became a little bit more independent then as the service went on?

Yeah, I would say probably the first couple of months, you know, from, would have been mid- to end October, middle of October probably when I started getting through to probably not long after the Christmas, it was quite a heavy going stage, and then probably as she started to cope better with it and be able to rationalise what had happened, and had gone through probably the most treatment that she would have had to go through, then she was ready to accept that right, okay, we can’t do anything else about this, but we still need to do some work on the golf. So the shift came, so her dependency shifted from needing me in terms of social support to needing me to help her with her golf again, which she didn’t feel, well I perceive that she didn’t feel, you know, as much of a need to see me quite as regularly then.

M Oh right, I see, fair enough. That’s good. So are there any particular aspects of your service or your personal behaviour as sports psychologist that you would potentially change to improve the level of success that you have with the client?

I would definitely have listened more. Like I say, I think I tried too much to just, you know, to talk, to offer solutions rather than gaining like all of the information all the time. And that’s something that I don’t do, it wasn’t just, you know, with this athlete, I think that’s across the board that I think that’s sort of indicative of the level of experience as well and, you know, exposure to a range of athletes. So I think it did make me realise and I think you’ve referred to it, you know, on a couple of occasions, more reflection, to not have an answer’s not a bad thing.

M Right yeah, okay. So how do you think that would have improved your service?

How would that have improved my service? I don’t, erm, I think it just would have, I don’t really know. I just think it would have probably shifted me away more from the whole like cognitive behavioural approach if I felt that I had listened or I should listen more to someone, which would have just been more beneficial I think in terms of me knowing and understanding the bigger picture.

M Yeah, yeah, fair enough. Is there anything else, any other behaviours or anything you would have changed or…?

What were the other things?

M Is that the main thing that...

I think probably, I think I maybe would have looked, no, actually, there wasn’t really, else I would have… no, I don’t think there is anything else I would have done any differently. I didn’t think that, I always wonder, should I have explained to her that I wasn’t the best-placed person to do it, earlier, rather than sort of two or three sessions in. But I didn’t think it was appropriate at that given time, so I think that’s something you almost just need to make a judgement call with each athlete, because if they’ve suddenly opened up to you and then you turn round and say, ‘I’m not the best person for this,’ like straight away, that could have equally have had a, you know, more sort of devastating effect on them. So, I don’t really know if that answers your question or not.

M Right, okay, that’s alright, I mean, on a more positive note then, what aspects of your practice do you believe were particular strengths of yours during that consultancy period?

Across like the whole time?

M Yeah, the time that you’ve been working with your client.
I think the main thing sort of, kind of, things that are good is, it’s helped me not, you know, jump in too quickly, it’s helped me realise to gain a bigger picture and to take more time to find either other solutions or other options, probably increased my sort of effective questioning skills a little bit better. You know, I think before I didn’t like to probe athletes on the whole as much as what I probably would now.

M What about those characteristics and particular strengths during the period of support that allowed you to be quite effective?

Although I said I didn’t listen as much as I want to, obviously the listening skills were good because the athlete wouldn’t have kept coming back to offload so there was obviously a degree of sort of, you know, a sympathetic ear as well, non-judgemental, quite objective to the situation with having that, you know, a rapport with an athlete but obviously the distance as well of not being, you know, a family member or whatever. Just in terms of helping with, you know, information gathering as well, being able to go and find out information for that athlete that would potentially help. I think my availability as well I think probably helped and again that was much higher, my availability was more available in the early stages of the whole period than I was towards the end, and I think that could have had a sort of correlation, you know, a correlational effect with the dependency because she maybe couldn’t see me, you know, before she used to be able to say, ‘Can I come and see you tomorrow?’ And I would be, like, ‘yes.’ Whereas as my availability shifted it became a case of, ‘No, I can’t see you tomorrow, it will have to be…’ you know, so that could have actually helped with the dependency issue.

M So she needed to develop those independent personality characteristics?

Yeah, but it had to be done, you know, I would still probably, thinking about it, prioritise her as well, because as much as I didn’t go, or as much as I said, like, ‘You can’t come in tomorrow, but you could come in on, you know, say Monday,’ then I was never leaving her too long either, and I had to explain that situation to her which I think, given that whole, I think there was a log of trust there and that would be a quality because, you know, she was trusting me with the information and then sort of my manager was trusting my judgement that it was still appropriate to be working with this athlete. So I would say that was probably, for this one particular athlete, that was a quality that probably helped the whole situation as it was.

M It felt good, it sounds good. Is there anything else you wanted to add on that, I mean, we’ve gone over quite a bit of information as like a bit of an introduction to the service that you’ve provided, but is there anything else you wanted to add in terms of what you did with the client, or are you happy to move on?

No, well, I think because obviously there’s like, you know, the alopecia stuff at the start and then like the family issues at the end, so it almost went like, you know, counselling, performance enhancement and then back to counselling, then went back to performance enhancement. So I think that had the initial counselling and social support services not been helpful, that athlete wouldn’t have come to me again.

M Right, okay yeah, so that’s a good indicator of the success of...

Yeah, that could be a measurable because we can measure I suppose the, like, performance enhancement stuff by saying, you know, is there an increase in her ability to visualise? Yeah, great, okay, we can measure that to a certain degree. But in terms of more of the social aspects, the good aspects of it, to go from the initial alopecia to then going through a tough time at home to thinking, like, things between mum and dad weren’t great, you know, on the grand scheme of things it was, you know, just, it was important to her as a, what, 15, 16 year old athlete, but again that could be quite a good measurable indication of how effective it was to the, because if she hadn’t have felt that the support in the first instance helped she wouldn’t have brought that sort of thing to my attention, because that’s something I would never have known, you know, I would never have, it’s nothing that she would have ever had to come and talk to me about given it’s not directly related to her performance.

M That’s quite interesting. I think that brings us to a point where we can sort of move on now and talk more specifically about your reflective practices and how they may have influenced your effectiveness.
I would firstly like us to talk about your reflective practices prior to the training and support that you received during the period of the study, and in particular I’d like to talk about the methods, your reflective focus, how you find the process and the impact that you feel it may or may not have had on your practice. So I’m talking about the initial sort of proforma that you use, those sort of reflections, the first five or six that you did for me.

Firstly, okay, erm…

M So basically, how did you use reflective practice during this period of consultancy, and what I mean by that is, what sort of things did you focus on, what did you use reflective practice for?

I think definitely in those initial, early stages, it was, I was too descriptive, you know, in what I was reflecting on. It wasn’t, I wasn’t best-placed to pick out, like, a critical incident, it was like the whole sort of consultation, and it was very, like, more descriptive and not sort of digging deep, it was just like, but it still served a good purpose because it gave you a chance to, you know, step back a little bit from the consultation and think about it again which is sort of one thing more than what I would have probably done in the past. But it was still quite, you know, just descriptive and what I did and didn’t really look any deeper than that to be honest.

M So how do you think that it might have affected your practice by using that in that particular way?

I think it was still beneficial because it almost, in a way, forced you to re-think about what had happened, and it forced you to think, you know, did I pick up on that right, does anything else need clarification on, what are my actions almost from this. So it was helpful.

M In those descriptions, did you tend to focus on the sorts of things that happened, so in the situation, the environmental aspects or…

Yeah.

M Did you focus also on your own behaviours and that type of focus?

I think it was probably more situational than environmental, especially in the earlier stages. I don’t think I was digging, you know, sort of deep enough to think about what could my reaction to that as suggested or implied, I don’t think I was kind of at that, you know, sort of level of questioning myself and my reflections yet, so I would say it was probably more, yeah, what was happening and what was being said.

M Rather than whether to make certain decision?

Yeah, which I think, you know, which developed then over the course of actually going through the reflective process.

M Right, okay. So what sort of problems did you have with using the particular method that you were given at the start? I thought it was sort of, the four sections, just like identification, description, significance, and I think implications, you know, it was just, it was structured which was good, because it was obviously better to have some sort of structured outline about what you should potentially be reflecting on, but I just don’t think it was… the problem I had was that, you know, I didn’t have enough guidance about it, what I should be including in each of those, like, not that I didn’t have enough guidance, I didn’t have enough knowledge, you know, about what I should be including in each of those four sub-sections really, if you like. I kind of found it hard sometimes to separate the first two, you know, in particular, like, the identification and description, it was like, well, in the main I was initially just thinking, ‘Well that’s just what happened.’ So I think I found it quite hard just to know what exactly to focus in on.

M Right, okay, and do you think that that sort of hindered your reflections?
I’d say it hindered them a little bit because it required probably more thought than I wanted to have to put into it, initially. But it was still of more benefit than not reflecting at all, because it was giving me, you know, I used this word ‘forced’ and I don’t mean in a negative way, I mean, you know, it was encouraging me, that’s a better word, to re-think about what, you know, what had happened, even if it just was from a what happened point of view, you know, which, you know if I’m being honest, wasn’t something that I was doing as often as what I would be doing now.

M Did you have any particular problems with, like, recalling the incident once you came to sit down and reflect based on the proforma that you were using?

I don’t think it was based on the proforma because I tried to do them within sort of a day or two, but I, like, I think if I’d left it any longer I probably would have found it hard to recall the information but I don’t think that was as a result of the, like the structure that we were being asked to use, I think it was more my lack of short term memory, or long term memory.

M But in this instance that didn’t sort of play a role?

No I don’t think so.

M Okay, fair enough. So in terms of the sort of, well, in spite of those problems that you had, you’ve spoken about some of the good, some of the positive factors of just being asked to just reflect in a little bit more of a structured manner, you say that the actual structured process led you to think about things even if it was just from a descriptive point of view...

Yes.

M And it was just that the fact that you are now, it encourage you to engage in a process of reflection.

Yes.

M Were there any other benefits that you can think of?

I think, you know, you can sometimes get sort of caught of in sort of the moment, in the emotional, you know, the one-to-one consultation and that can obviously impact on what your kind of recommendations and suggestions are, you know, at that moment in time, and I think with coming from the, initially coming from a problem-solving sort of approach, you know, I could have been making suggestions that had I, you know, reflected on it, then I could have made a, you know, better suggestion and I think that’s what really helped me in terms of the reflecting, in terms of having a positive impact. You know, I’d go away and think was that maybe the best thing to recommend or was that a kind of the heat of the moment, knee-jerk, I should offer some advice here? You know, and, you know, if I did feel that it was the right thing then I would have, you know, just reinforce that. If I didn’t then, you know, I don’t think there was any time that I thought a suggestion wasn’t right, but I think I just maybe came at it from a different angle the next time. The next time we met I would say, you know, ‘Last time I said…’ you know, oh well there’s lots of support groups available for something or counselling or whatever, you know, I hope that didn’t sound like I was pushing you into doing it, but I just wanted you to know that those options are, you know, available, so I think the reflective process helped me, helped reassure that I had given the right sort of suggestions, but it gave me time to think about could I put that across in a better way.

M Oh right, okay, and to clarify that was during that first initial period when you were starting to take part in the study?

I’d say yeah, I probably didn’t do it as much as, you know, in the later part of the study. I would say that was probably an influence, sorry, I shouldn’t have jumped away there, but that was more of an influence in the later part of the study, but just by even doing it, it did make me think, was that the right sort of recommendation? Even if it was just at a very simple level like that.
M So really from the start you were able to think about some of the positive aspects as well then rather than just maybe reflecting on some of the negative aspects of sessions?

Yeah, definitely, and I think that helped reassure yourself, you know, because a lot of like the early social support stuff, like, for me the performance enhancement stuff was easier to reflect on because it’s a bit more matter of fact, you know, and there’s probably more answers, like I know how I am supposed to deal with those things better. So I think having to reflect on these other aspects reassures you that maybe, you know, what you were saying was okay at the time.

M Right, okay, fair enough. During that initial stage then, how do you think that, or do you think that your behaviours as a Sports Psychologist were affected in any way by reflecting on your practice?

I think it had nothing but a positive impact. You know, I don’t think people can say that there is a downside to reflecting, you know, the only thing is the fact that it’s time consuming, but it’s as time consuming as you make it, you know, and not to jump ahead, but one of the things that did sort of reduce as I went through the process and the later stages was it didn’t take me as long, you know, to reflect.

M So initially, do you think the time that you had to commit to reflecting influenced the quality of your reflections?

I would say yeah.

M In what way?

In that because I had to take more time over them, initially I think I probably begrudged doing it, does that make sense? Because you think, oh, this takes such a long time. But once you’ve actually gone through it and you sort of get that, it’s almost like that step back approach, and you can, you actually get, you know, although it takes you a little bit longer to do it, you are gaining so much more information which in the long run’s going to make the whole consultancy approach just more, you know, smoother, because you’ve taken more time to think about what you’re going to do and how you’re going to approach it, rather than just switching from, you know, one consultation to the next without having any reflections.

M Okay, fair enough, so let’s just re-cap on a couple of issues if I can, just to make sure I’m clear on what, the sort of experiences that you had. In terms of your reflective practice during the initial part of the study, before you received any sort of training, the sort of problems that you had were that you wasn’t too sure on how to complete the proforma, you say that you didn’t have enough knowledge maybe or understanding to start off with of how to complete it, and that led to you struggling to focus on different factors that may have been important during the sessions, and you also found it quite time consuming in terms of the problems that you may have had with the reflective process, is that right?

Yes, that’s right.

M And then in terms of the benefits you said that just be engaging in a more structured process and being encouraged to reflect on your practice you were able to consider the benefits of certain decision-making processes which allowed you to reassure yourself that the sort of practice that you were going through and the service that you were providing was sort of right, really.

Yeah, I think, it kind of links back to something you said earlier about, you know, did you have anyone to run these ideas past in the first place, and I think because I didn’t, using, you know, the reflection, even in these early stages, was almost serving as that reassurance tool. If that helps.

M So if I was to ask why you think the reflective process enabled those developments to happen, you think that it’s just that reassurance and reinforcement, so it’s almost like you’re checking-in with yourself?

Yes, definitely.
Okay, excellent. So during that initial stage, did you actually speak to anyone regarding the content or the structure or the quality of your reflections?

I don’t think you did!

I don’t think we did, no.

No.

I didn’t know whether there was a supervisor or a colleague that you just wanted to run a few things by or anything like that, just to sort of check your experience of using reflection at that particular point?

No, rightly or wrongly, no, you know, I didn’t. I think, again rightly or wrongly I think reflection’s become quite, they are quite a personal thing aren’t they in a way, you know, and you almost, I don’t know if it’s just me, but you know I kind of wanted, it was useful for a personal purpose but it wasn’t really something that I felt the need to share with anyone else. I did talk about the issues, you know, some of the, more the alopecia and then the, later, the family issues with a few close people, you know, close to me professionally.

Right, was that decision to go and speak to those people based on maybe reflecting on your experiences or is that something that you would just do naturally anyway?

No, I don’t. I wouldn’t have done it naturally. I think through reflecting it helped me realise that maybe I should be checking in with a few things, just, you know, obviously working within your levels of competency, by reflecting it was making me think, you know, why am I struggling to maybe find answers for this when there are other people that could be best placed to do it, but are working in the same environment.

Right okay.

When I was sort of saying, right, what are the options, what sort of things should I be looking to do to help this athlete then that kind of helped me come to the decision to run some of the ideas passed someone, it was through reflecting that it made me think to do that.

Did anything else happen during that initial stage before you received the training that may have influenced the way in which you reflected on your practice?

I think again within the job that I’m in, we have to keep what we refer to as like a project document on every consultation that we have, so we’ve got two probes, we’ve got like the A document which is just an overview and then the B document which is like your own like little diary of what happens. So I think that maybe some of my problems with not being able to kind of get enough detail in my reflection was because I was quite, I was used to doing these project documents which are quite descriptive.

Okay, fair enough, yea.

So maybe that…

There might have been some cross-over?

There might have been a bit of a cross over in terms of that, you know, in the initial stages, before I received, you know, more guidance and everything on how to reflect more effectively.

So can you just outline then how that may have influenced your reflective practice a little bit more specifically?
Yeah, I think, we have to outline what the objective of the session is, what we are aiming to achieve, how we are going to go about this and then whether or not that’s been achieved, so in a way that’s like a form of reflection but like I said, that’s very performance-outcome based. So my project documents to do with this athlete, to do with the social issues, the social support issues, would have been very just descriptive about what happened, so probably having done one of those would have just led me to almost regurgitate in a way the same sort of information in the initial stages, you know, kind of. But with, you know, the reflections, sort of doing for the study, doing probably more in depth, so by doing it more in depth that was giving me more than what I would have been getting from the project documents alone. So it was having an additional effect, albeit, you know, maybe, albeit not as effective as following the training.

M Oh okay, fair enough. Just finish on that, this section particularly, is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience of reflective practice during this time period prior to receiving any formal training or guidance?

It felt more of a, I’m going to use this word a little bit, it felt more of a chore in the early stages because of the lack of, and maybe that’s, you know, reflective of my maybe personality and the way I work, like, I like the structure and the outline that, you know, following the train, following the intervention, I prefer that method so I think it was more difficult just for me to do it in the earlier stages when I had less knowledge.

M And that influenced your experience of reflection how?

Just made it probably, it just made it less effective, you know, I wasn’t getting as much from the reflection from the early stages as what I’ve got from it now following the input, you know, from the intervention.

M Right okay, and based on that comparison then, how did that influence the effectiveness of your practice?

Definitely more positively in the later stages.

M Well, let’s move on to specifically consider the impact of the formal training and support you were provided with and then we can talk a little bit more about reflective practices post that period. So I want to examine now how you found the training that you were provided with, and we’ll talk about each of the different sort of aspects specifically in a second, but with specific emphasis on the education and support you received, how do you think your reflections changed as a consequence of that training?

I just think the fact that each of the sub-sections were broken down even further, and gave me more clarity and guidance about what I should be including. So initially I was able to give more relevant detail I think to, you know, in the initial writing of my reflections.

M What do you mean by relevant detail?

Like, where before I would have been thinking, is this what I should be reflecting on? Given the information, you know, I was able to say, right, have I included like what the essential factors were, the contributing to the experiences, like why am I reflecting on this? It has given me more questions to ask myself in order to help with my reflections.

M Right, okay, fair enough. So can you just sort of outline whether there were any specific changes to your knowledge in the way in which you reflect, or changes to your understanding of the reflective process as a consequence of the training you received?

I think… can you ask that question again?

M Just, because you’ve spoken so far about the changes that occurred as a result of the training in that it increased your clarity and guidance, you were able to increase relevant detail that you were including in, so rather than focussing on what you should be reflecting on, you were able to focus on those specific factors that may influence the quality of the session, yeah?
Yeah.

**M** So just wondering whether there were any specific changes to your knowledge or understanding of the reflective process as a result of that support and training that you received?

I think most of it was coming from, like, you know, doing the reflection and our conversations as well, so having, so doing the reflection and then actually receiving some feedback on that reflection helped me, you know, one, like, if I use this word, ‘reassurance,’ you know, it reassured you that you’re on the right lines but it also encouraged me to dig that little bit deeper, to provide, you know, ask further questions about certain areas and I think someone like yourself or someone that’s got more knowledge and experience of the reflective process is good to act as that sort of mentor because they’ve got that sort of knowledge to be able to push you to think further and to think deeper, so I definitely think the knowledge changed as a result of, a, more detail, clarity, etc, with even just the layout of the forms, but also having that contact with you helped to increase the quality of my reflections.

**M** Fantastic, so if you take that support into account and then obviously the tutorials that we went through where we spoke about the sorts of questions you could be asking yourself so that we were able then to develop the proformas, how did that influence your perceptions of reflective practice?

It made me realise how often we only get to, you know, the information that’s sort of, only get the information similar to what was provided in the early stages, and I think that’s the bit that puts people off reflection. I think when given that additional knowledge and guidance and the more structure that, you know, changed my perception of it, made me find it easier to do, it was quicker to do and like I said, it was more relevant and more helpful for my actual practice.

**M** Alright, okay, that’s quite interesting. So do you think that those changes occurred just as a result of your increasing your knowledge and also, as you said, like the mentoring that you’re provided with, or was that a natural occurrence of just changing the structure of the proforma?

No I think that, probably a combination of both, but more influenced by the amount of knowledge that I felt that I was getting, you know, from you, from the feedback, but also just in terms of the, like the proforma itself, the change in that, and I know maybe some people wouldn’t respond as well to such a structure but I think it really helps when you’re learning about reflection to have more of a structured approach to help guide your reflection.

**M** So if you just think about, I asked you a little while ago what you sort of focused on in terms of the way in which you use your reflections, and you said you focus a little bit more on the environmental aspects and the structure of the, the structural aspects of the sessions, did that focus of reflection change once you’d received the support?

Yeah, I think I was less looking at the, you know, what happened and the situation, and more looking at sort of more of the internal things that kind of influence, you know, why I did it and why I suggested what I did, so there was a definite shift. I was still, I would probably say I was still sort of 60, 70% on, you know, situation or an environmental issues, on exactly what’s happening, but I was then starting to consider why I was maybe reacting the way that I did, or, you know, what did I feel, why did I feel that I intervened as I did, or what could the potential outcome of what I’ve done, you know, how could that impact on, how did that impact, you know, on the session or on a future session, so it did get me thinking more about my actions and my recommendations and internal factors and not just situational and environmental factors.

**M** Fantastic. So could you just clarify why you think that change occurred?

Just an increase in awareness.

**M** Of?
Through this whole kind of increasing knowledge about reflection, you know, the very fact that you were saying, like, well, what sort of internal things have influenced you, why did you think you did that, what could you have done differently, you know, how did you feel about it when it was happening, and sort of what other choices could you have pursued and things, it just made me think more about that really.

M So how would you say that the depth of your reflections then changed from the period before you received the training to the period afterwards?

Definitely in more depth. I would say, you know, probably less descriptive but more substance to it, does that make sense? A bit more…

M Is there any chance of providing a couple of examples, can you think of any off-hand or…?

Trying to think. Sort of like, like when we were talking about like when the athlete, going back to a second sort of person issue, to do with her family and, you know, she knows that I will be talking to you about this so it’s not a problem, but just issues between her mum and dad, potentially, you know, going through a divorce. I think, you know, I was starting to think, why am I agreeing, you know, to talk to the athlete about this and it was probably based on sort of more internal, my internal sort of previous experiences with that athlete, knowing that it was a trust thing, knowing that’s helpful, a duty almost to support that athlete, but knowing there that I had to make it known that that really was something that I couldn’t, you know, help her with, so learning from the previous experience of maybe, you know, trying to be too supportive about something that wasn’t a performance-related issue, I really don’t think that’s probably the best example.

M If you’re able to unpick that, it starts to, it sounds like you started to consider more of your decision making and the reasons behind why you did certain things and the effect that that had on your practice.

Sort of the effect of agreeing to do it. Like, I knew there was the dependency issue of seeing the early stages so it was making me think, yeah, I guess I was using the section to go, well, I’ve been in a similar situation, how can I avoid that, you know, becoming the case again, and sort of allowing the athlete to say what she needs to say, but then instead of leaving it two or three sessions to explain that I’m not the best-placed person, you know, to offer that information more upfront. But I don't think I could have done that had I not had that kind of rapport and reflective skills, you know, because I probably would have just said, ‘Yeah, you can come and talk to me about it,’ if it was, you know, another athlete. I mean without the development in reflective skills I wouldn’t be able to sort of consistently reflect at the depth I achieved, in the, you know, later on because I became far more questioning and open-minded to learning about what I was doing.

M So what sort of influence do you think that change in focus, you know, the increase in the depth of your reflections, the change in the content of your reflections, what influence do you think that had on the outcomes that you gained from reflective practice?

I think I felt more, like, more satisfied you know, with the, with doing the reflections, I felt I got more out of it.

M In terms of what?

Just in terms of helping me put into perspective how the consultation went, you know, what I was choosing to do, how I was choosing to react, how I could maybe get that across in a better way if I was faced with it again, how, you know, was I really hearing what the athlete was saying, or was I not taking the time to listen to the details or ask more effective questions. Just, almost acted as a check-in with yourself too, and it’s helped me now because this athlete actually has subsequently come to me and asked for, like, you know, just like being 16, you know, advice about boyfriends and, you know, I’m now better placed to say, ‘That’s not something that you should really be talking to me about, I know I’ve helped you in the past about some personal issues but they are different to this sort of thing,’ you know, and I think it’s just helped me to make sure that I know the reasons why I’m helping, you know, the athletes and why I act as I do and sort of the
consequences of my actions, whether they are appropriate or not, and I don't think I probably would have
thought that much about things had I not gone through this whole process.

M That’s good. The last couple of questions I want to ask you in this section are going to focus
specifically on your reflective practices now as a result of the formal training that you received. I want you
to try and comment a little bit on the different aspects of the training and support you received, so I’m going
to ask you, how beneficial did you find the tutorials for example?

I thought any additional support was beneficial, it just gave, like I say, it added clarity, it provided an
opportunity for asking questions, offered a chance for reassurance about being on the right lines with things,
but also gave me an opportunity to get, you know, more information from you. So, and I think it was also
probably tailored to my level of knowledge as well, you know, not having an awful lot of reflective practice
experience before. I don’t think you were, you know, there might have been other people taking part in the
study where you were able, you know, to give them slightly different levels of information, but I think what
you provided for me was definitely beneficial.

M Okay, so can you give any specific examples of how it was sort of beneficial, if we specifically
focus on those tutorials, the two personal tutorials we had?

Just the type, like, the way you were asking me, the tendency to home in on one sort of critical incident, and
the kind of, understand, ask myself the question why am I reflecting on this, has there been a change or a
shift or is there an overriding sort of influencing factor that’s causing me to want to reflect on this rather
than just reflecting on everything? I think that helped me because, you know, it’s good to still reflect on
every session I think, but it’s about picking out those critical incidences and I think with, through those
tutorials you were able to say well there’s this, you know, everything’s worth reflecting on, but can you start
to now prioritise the main things that you are going, the main things that you want to reflect on, and what,
you know, what are the priority things that you need to be thinking about rather than just, you know,
thinking about everything.

M Okay, that’s good. You’ve spoken about the feedback that you received on your reflections and the
sort of mentoring service before, but if we can just sort of readdress those, how beneficial did you find that
feedback and the mentoring service you were provided with, I mean, what influence did they have on your
practices?

I thought it was good, like, when you worked on one of my reflections, you know, you just asked more
questions and looked at, I think someone else, like a fresh pair of eye reading someone else’s reflection,
you’re going to look at it, you know, as an outsider and from another point of view, and that’s something
that I might, you know, wouldn’t have been able to see or maybe might not have been able to come up with
those questions, you know, at that stage myself. So just getting those additional little questions, you know,
why do you think that happened, could it have been due to something else, what are the overriding factors,
you know, those sort of extra questions from a slightly different perspective was good because again you
can get caught up in just what you sort of perceive the situation to be and what you perceive the problem to
be but you can’t always see the bigger picture, so I think the extra feedback from you helped me kind of get
that bigger picture.

M Were you able to carry that on into future reflections as well?

I think yeah, I think I was, and I think probably even more so now, still making use of the reflective process,
having gone through this, you know, gone through the study and received the extra knowledge and
information from yourself, it’s making me probably not as, you know, I’m going to use a work like tunnel
about it all, you know, I’ll go into a consultation and I’ll think, when I reflect, helping me sort of open that
up a bit and not have tunnel vision about what the situation is and that’s through the sorts of the effective
questioning and the types of questions that you would put to me through the format of the proforma that
helped me kind of do that.
Okay, that’s excellent. We also spoke about the use of a diary during the sort of tutorials to help you in a number of different ways, what sort of benefit did that have on your reflective practices?

I, if I’m being honest, I didn’t really use the diary because I tried to reflect within sort of 24 hours to 48 hours of the actual event, so, and also because I’m probably in this type, in the consultancy environment all the time, it wasn’t the case of having to remember where I was and who I was with and at what time and things like that, and I thought the diary serves more of a factual purpose. And I think, I don’t know why I didn’t feel the need to use it, and probably on reflection now it would have been good to scribble probably some initial notes and ideas.

If we sort of take that, if you can reflect on that now, do you think that, do you think that it would have benefited your reflective practice in any way or do you think that, you know, you got what you needed to get out of the training without using the diary?

I think again anything extra, you know, is a bonus. I think the use of the diary could have helped a little bit more, but, you know, I think that, you know, the training, the feedback, the tutorials, the amended proforma, were definitely of most benefit. The diary would have been a little extra, probably for initial thoughts, feelings etc, but as I said, I tried to reflect pretty quickly after the event. Maybe if I was choosing, maybe, you know, in the future if I was choosing to leave and reflect a little bit later on things given, maybe it’s a particularly difficult situation or quite heavy in terms of it’s emotional or whatever, then the diary could come in handy then, if you do need time longer to reflect. So yeah, I could see that it would have had probably a little extra benefit.

Fair enough, fair enough. Finally then, the proforma, so obviously we went through some of the reflective type of questions that you could ask yourself and therefore structure the proforma a little differently during the tutorials, I just wondered how beneficial you found that questioning technique and the more structured proforma then?

It definitely made it a lot easier for me to fill it in. And, you know…

Why would you say that?

Just the structure for me was good, it, you know, it wasn’t just, you know, description and what’s the significance of this, it was breaking it down further, it was asking like what was the client thinking about this, what were you thinking about this, you know, what actually happened, what were the influences, it just encouraged you to dig deeper in the first place, which when prompted to do that I think I almost continued to do that myself.

Right, fair enough.

Whereas when you, if someone’s, it acted as an effective questioning tool, it was almost like it was saying to you, like, well, think a little bit more about this rather than just describing what happened. So yeah, that was definitely of most benefit for me in terms of helping me reflect better the structure and the guidance to, and the amount of detail, it wasn’t too long either, and you could sort of imagine, you could in the future then sort of remember, you almost can cut down the description part of it, and I found that sort of happened, it wasn’t as big in terms of the description and stuff like that. Can you bear with me 2 seconds?

Yeah, yeah, alright.

Sorry about that.

That’s alright, no worries. So the questions themselves then, do you think that they help you to focus differently, your reflections on things a little differently?

Yes, a lot more deeply, just a new, it almost helped me in the consultations as well, because it was, because I knew that I was going to be reflecting on, you know, what, how is the client thinking, like the athlete
thinking and feeling about this, and how did I know that, and, you know, what am I trying to achieve out of this session, it was helping me to reflect on the previous, you know, experience, but also influence the future consultation.

M  So would you say you became a little bit more reflective in action then as a result of that?

Definitely. Because I knew I would be reflecting on, like, what are the, what are the external things that are influencing me here, you know, what sort of knowledge did I have from the last consultation I had, what have I done as a result of that, am I going to be able to give more to this consultation than the last one? So, you know, and how am I implementing, you know, what I’ve learned from the last consultation with this athlete to the next. So yeah, I guess you got a reflection-on action there as well.

M  Superb. Did you experience any problems post the sort of training and support that you received while you were completing your reflections? You spoke previously about, like, the time that you had, the lack of clarity and understanding, were there any problems that you sort of faced afterwards, using reflective practice?

Not in terms of being able to reflect just, I think, like and external influence was mainly the availability of then the athlete, you know, I wanted to do things with her but it then became, we got into competition season.

M  But in terms of your reflective practices?

No, I don’t, no I think… although my availability to athletes has decreased, my time, if this makes sense, to do the things like reflections hasn’t suffered, there’s just more structured processes being put in place about how an athlete goes about having, you know, a consultation with me, and whether they are a priority, whether the coach is involved, so it slowed that sort of process down, but it almost means that each consultation is even more important because of their availability so in terms of problems with reflection, the only sort of thing that was sort of contributing, you know, to the whole thing, the slowdown of the process, were nothing to do with my reflections, and knowledge now. Sorry, that was totally waffle there.

M  It’s alright, it’s good, there’s some interesting things coming out, it’s interesting for me to hear about your experience in that. Just to recap then, how do you think things changed as a direct result of the training and support you received, with specific reference to your reflective practices? So do you think you became a more able reflector?

Definitely, yeah.

M  The question is why?

Why? Just literally understanding the whole reflective process better. Knowing what I should be reflecting on, when I needed to reflect on it, like I knew that I had to reflect pretty quickly after an event, you know, and that might change given whatever the event is, etc, but it helped me understand that that’s what I need to do to gain more information and to increase my knowledge about the situation, so definitely helped. Trying to think why. Just, it’s easy, rightly or wrongly for me, it’s easy to come out of a consultation and not think about it again. If it’s just a run of the mill performance enhancement strategy, because, you know, I’m probably in the unique position where I see…

M  You’re doing it all the time I suppose?

Yeah, I’m doing it day in, day out. I’ll probably not see athletes every single day, and I do spend, you know, there is a lot of paperwork and stuff that goes with it, but I’ll probably see on average, like I’ve got probably 12 athletes that I’m currently working with, so I’ll probably see about five athletes a week, five or six athletes a week. So for some of those it is just visualisation, right, here’s what you can do, here’s how we can work on it, you know, so it’s easy just to come out and not think about it, but now having the knowledge of how to actually reflect, it’s helping me go, are there other ways I can do this, how do I want to
improve it, what other angles could I come at, you know, this run of the mill visualisation training, you know. Is this working for the athlete, how can I tell, am I measuring that?

M So those things can cross over then from one athlete to another?

Yeah, so it has had an impact in terms of it encourages me, going through the whole process has encouraged me to want to reflect in the first place, as I said I used to walk out and forget about it, but now, having gone through and seen the benefits, it’s made me even want to reflect, even if it’s on a slightly smaller level for those sorts of issues, I’m still thinking a little bit more and reflecting a bit more on my practice as well as, you know, I’m not just saying what did I do and why?

M That’s interesting, I mean, do you think that you’ve been able then to develop a better understanding of how to improve your practice by implementing what you learned from reflections, you spoke about you want an increase and you’re wanting to reflect them now?

Yeah, it just made me think, you know, because there’s such a gap between, you know, theory and practice, that there’s only so many times you can do the same thing, you know, with an athlete, you know, if they are looking for, just to keep it consistent, you know, visualisation, there’s only so many times that you can go through the same thing so it’s made me want to get how I can improve my practice, how can I mix that up a bit, how can I provide something different to my athletes, and if I wasn’t reflecting on that I would never make those changes, so…

M So basically, just to make sure that I’ve got the information right, I just want to reflect what we’ve been talking about for the last ten minutes or so in terms of the benefit of the training and support that you received. You said as a result of the training and support you’ve increased, there’s been an increase in clarity and guidance based on the way in which you perform your reflections, you’ve been able to increase the relevant detail that you include in that, and your perceptions of sort of reflective practice have changed from a real top-heavy approach where it’s been quite descriptive to increase the sort of depth and critical nature of your reflections. You also mentioned that you’ve become more satisfied with the process and you’re getting more out of it in terms of your change in perspective and you’re starting to understand the sort of decision making and the influence of those decisions within practice. Then we talked about a range of the different training and support that you receive, and you’ve basically said that you’ve increased, you know, wanting to reflect, there’s been an increase in your wanting to reflect on your practices due to the benefits that you’ve actually received.

Definitely.

M Okay, that’s great, so what do you think, if you can sum it up, what’s been the biggest influence on the way in which your reflective skills have developed over the period of this study?

The combination of the type of proforma that we used, and the feedback that we had from like you in terms of the tutorials.

M What do you mean by the type of proforma, can you just explain why that’s been an influence on your…?

Just because of the level of, you know, the detail that it asks and requires of you. But it was, also it was like I mentioned before, it was like an effective questioning little tool of its own, you know, I thought it was relevant, it was asking the right sort of questions that you would want to think about and reflect on. I thought you weren’t confined though, because of, you know, this sounds a bit silly but, you know, you weren’t told that you had to write so much about everything, it was like totally open to how much you wanted to include, so there was a bit of kind of, you know, an individual kind of take on it as well. But then getting the feedback from you and the reassurance about whether it was right or wrong or needed more detail, not right or wrong but, you know, whether it was on the right lines or needed to sweep through, needed, you know, could be probed further, I think that really helped.
M Yeah, a lot of the important thing for me that, one, obviously was that you were taking part in this study so you wanted to get something out of it, but two, that, there’s no right or wrong way to reflect but you need to be working towards those reflective learning outcomes and implementing that into practice and hopefully that’s what the feedback did.

Yeah, definitely, and I think, like when you’ve got more knowledge about reflection and you actually can see the benefits of it yourself in terms of it’s getting you to think more critically and to look at other options and the, you know, sort of question what you are doing a little bit more and not just, you know, going through the process of a consultation and not reflecting on it, you know, it makes it a more satisfying process over all.

M Good, is there anything else that you’d like to add then about your experience of reflective practice after receiving the formal training and guidance on its use?

I was trying to think of something funny to say there but I can’t! So I’ll just say no.

M That’s not like you!

I know.

M Okay, so we’ve talked in some depth about your reflective practices, the training you received and the impact that this had on the way that you were able to reflect, and now I’d like us to focus a little bit more specifically on the way in which the development of your reflective skills may have impacted your effectiveness as a consultant. Okay, so can you just outline whether your practice has changed in any particular way over the period of this study?

There has been a shift. I think just not always listening to the athlete and hearing what it is, you know, I’m hearing what they are saying now but now, through going through the reflective practice I’m starting to say, you know, are there other things that could be influencing this? You know, I don’t make it, I’m sort of stopping myself a little bit and saying, I don’t need to jump in here with whatever the solution is. It’s okay to say, you know, can I get back to you on that? So if anything I would say it’s helped, I’d almost say it’s slowed down what I’m doing, like I’m not rushed through consultations as much just asking question after question, you know, I’ll take more time even within a consultation now to reflect on what’s been said, in order to try and help myself come up with more effective questions within the consultation so I’m actually coming away with more information than I probably would have before I went through the whole reflection training.

M Right, okay, so what you’re saying is, that those sort of changes occurred where you sort of slowed things down, you’ve not rushed through the questions, that you sort of prepared and you were able to sort of reflect, impact this, to develop more effective questions in order to meet the aims or to provide an effective service as a result of the training that occurred after that, is that what you said?

Yeah, definitely.

M Okay, fantastic.

I think reflection encourages you to stop, slow down, and look at it again, or to look at it from another angle, and I think from going through this I started to do that a little bit, like you say, in practice as well, which I wouldn’t have been able to do that before.

M So you don’t think these changes would have occurred naturally then?

I think maybe with experience they would have, but I don’t think they would have occurred as quickly as what they have, without the reflection training, no, I think it’s definitely helped influence my whole consultancy approach and effectiveness, you know, a great deal.
Okay, fair enough, so if we focus a little bit more on the actual benefits then, what sort of benefits do you perceive you received from adopting a more stringent, structured reflective process following the training that you were provided with? What sorts of things have you learnt through reflective practice for example following the training?

Just thinking a bit more about what, why am I reacting the way I am, what are the external and internal influences that are having an additional impact, what are the alternative options or suggestions that I could make. It just has helped me broaden I think my whole perspective on, you know, gaining information and reflecting on information, if that makes sense.

Yeah, can you just sort of like clarify that a little bit for the less intelligent listeners, me?

I don’t know if I can! I can’t even remember what I was saying now! No, it’s just, what has it actually done to help me?

You said things like, um, you said something like it’s helped me to understand the way that I am actually practicing, the decisions that I am making, it’s allowed me to identify certain alternatives that could have happened, it’s allowed me to become more aware of the internal and external influences, those sort of things.

Just to help me like with other athletes, for instance where there is a manager involved, and they’re demanding to know certain things about the athletes, it helped me to be able to not just, you know, give in and give them that information, obviously within confidentiality bounds, but it’s helped me learn how to ask more effective questions and why is that the case, and, you know, are there compromises that we can make and ways to get around it rather than rushing in and doing it and thinking about it, almost reflecting at the time.

That’s fine, so like in terms of, you’ve mentioned this a couple of times, you’ve said it’s helped you to, sorry, developing your skills in reflection has allowed you to develop the skill of asking more effective questions, how do you think reflection has enabled you to do that?

The reflective process and training we went through, a lot of it was getting us to ask ourselves more effective questions about what we were doing, sort of like, why do you think that might be, what are the other influences, what are the consequences, how do you know that’s the case, you know, so we were constantly asking ourselves questions to help prompt our reflections, and in doing that it’s made me think more about the questions I ask to the client which has helped me to improve the way I try and implement a humanistic approach to my consultancy.

Okay, because really what I’m doing now is I’m asking you to reflect on the last, year, I think it’s been, hasn’t it, that you started to take part in the study, and it’s quite interesting that you’re talking about some of those sorts of things, that are probably a little less obvious than maybe some benefits that other people may have had, sort of like, oh yes, allow me to understand how to communicate or develop a rapport better with my athlete, it sort of demonstrates the depth of reflection that you’ve actually been able to achieve.

It’s funny, it’s like it’s just like my preparation, like I spend a lot of time preparing for it, the first sort of initial meeting with an athlete, whereas I will go into that with basic sort of background information and then gain that, and I think that is through more effective questioning and just being more comfortable at knowing that I’m asking the right sort of things, and knowing that when I go back and reflect on that, I’ll still be able to unpick more information, so I almost think, you know, it doesn’t matter if I don’t get everything that first time, because once I reflect I’ll see where the gaps are, and I can go back and do that as well. so it does help, you know, in, even in simple terms, in helping me just be I think more effective in the first place, at information gathering as well.

I mean, I don’t want to put words in your mouth now, but from what you’re saying it sounds like you’ve become a little bit more confident in your own practice by implementing that humanistic approach almost?
No, definitely, no, you know, definitely, I would agree.

M  Again, like, it sounds like you’ve started to develop this awareness of yourself and of your practice and how they best complement that?

Definitely. That wouldn't have come unless I’d done, you know, gone through this process with yourself and gone through the reflective training, so it has definitely been worthwhile.

M  So based on that in terms of the training and that, do you think that that helped you to understand how better to implement the learning that you get from your reflections?

Yes, without a doubt, without a doubt. Just being able to, like I keep saying, take that step back and look at it again, and then implement learning, you know, sort of say like with this information now and looking at some of the various different angles rather than just the one that I think it might be coming from, you know, how am I now going to use this information to influence the next session, or, you know, the intervention that I’m going to use, or to get more information, so it has become more, I would say it’s become more cyclical in nature that before I would have just reflected and that would have been the end of it, whereas now it’s reflecting and saying, right, how can this now help with the next consultation, and the next one.

M  That’s interesting. Now we’ve spoken about the benefits and the way in which by developing your reflective skills you’ve been able to change your practice, if you think about that in terms of now to what extent has developing your reflectance skills influenced the effectiveness of your practice, so you’ve spoken about like it’s enabled you to gain certain benefits and implement certain learning into practice, how do you think that influences the effectiveness of the service that you’ve provided to your client?

Well it could have had an impact because of information, xxx’s just come into the office and is laughing that I’m still on the phone.

M  Are you okay to carry on?

Yes, certainly.

M  You don’t need to take a break or anything?

No, no, I’m fine.

M  Okay, cool.

No, I think, because I’m gaining and although I’m probably asking better questions in the first place I’m gaining more information as a result of the reflective training, it means I’m getting more from the athlete in order to give, you know, probably more rounded solutions or options or basis on which to, you know, to achieve the goal of improving their performance.

M  So would you say then, if we take it from another angle, have you noticed a link between the improvements in your reflective skills based on the training and support that you received and a greater focus on the effectiveness of your practice?

Yes, definitely.

M  And why do you think this will occur?

I think it’s just like a higher level of thinking when it comes to reflection, you can’t, you know, you can’t just do the what happens, the descriptive, it forces you to think or encourages you to think that little bit more about it, and through doing that it’s almost like you’re able to observe more information or gather more information which just seems to make the whole process, the whole consultancy process, more effective.
M  Okay, and that is as a result of the training?

Yeah.

M  And are there any, I mean, are there any sort of examples you can provide that you could sort of support that link between the training and the development, is there anything that particularly stands out in your mind?

I just think, like, what I’ve started to do is a more structured needs analysis proforma that I use with my athletes now, and I think that’s probably reflective of the, you know, the reflection proforma that we use, you know, it’s given me a structure with, you know, covering your basics but also with some sort of effective questions on there that I can ask them and constant sort of wee reminders of what else could be having an influence, just that, and I’ve only started doing that as a result of going through the training, whereas before, you know, I’d just go into the needs analysis and almost, not wing it, but you know just go with what feels right depending on the athlete and how much they are willing to talk, rather than following more the structure. So I think the structured reflection’s helped me just structure other areas of my, you know, approach more.

M  That’s good, that’s good. For the next question I just want to focus on some of the characteristics that have been associated with effectiveness in the literature, so I’m just going to ask, what influences the development of your reflective skills based on the training and support you received had on a number of characteristics, okay?

Okay.

M  So what sort of influence has that development in your reflective skills had on your personable skills, so your ability to develop a working alliance and gain trust and that with your client?

I think because it’s encouraged me to be more open in my questioning, it will probably be more helpful for gaining information and kind of develop that rapport, as I say.

M  So how has that development in your reflective skills led to the development in that characteristic?

How has that development in my reflective skills… I think I’m just constantly asking myself why, how, more.

M  So would you say you focus on that specifically as something that happened as a natural consequence of developing those skills?

Well I think that’s come through the reflective training, a wee bit probably naturally, but I would say when you know you’re going back and you almost have a set sort of set of things that you want to be able to reflect on and you want to be able to get those answers to be able to reflect on them, and other, and any others over and above that, you know, a bonus, and I suppose that shows how you can develop reflection even further.

M  Okay, so how does developing those personal skills influence your effectiveness with that client in that situation?

Just I think it gives, helps me tease more information out of the client in the first place which gives me a better understanding of the situation or the issue, which then in effect means that I can provide a better service because I’m in a better placed position to give a better judged intervention. Does that make sense?

M  Okay, yeah, let’s move on to your sort of communication skills, the way in which you are able to sort of communicate with the athlete, maybe through the different forms of communication, orally or through paper sort of tasks, that sort of stuff. So how has the development in your reflective skills influenced those communication skills?
Most of my stuff is just all face-to-face or telephone. So…

M  *Has it had a particular influence or...?*

Apart from just helping me as I keep sort of saying to you, sort of digging deeper and asking more questions, it’s probably helped me look at it from the two angles, like why is this athlete thinking and feeling this, and why am I, you know, reacting in this way. I don’t really know, actually, how it’s affected my communication skills. It’s probably just made me, I would say, more clear and structured in what information I want to get from them.

M  *That’s fine, I’m not, I’m just picking these skills out, they may not have had a direct influence, they may not be things that you’ve particularly focused on because you haven’t had to.*

I think it’s more helped with my own, like almost, you know, interpersonal communication skills, like being able to organise the questions and thoughts in my mind a bit better.

M  *So what about your knowledge and understanding of sport and Sport Psychology as such?*

How has the reflective process helped?

M  *Yeah, so has developing your reflective skills led to a development in your knowledge and understanding of Sport Psychology?*

I would say it’s more influenced and developed my knowledge in terms of consultancy skills.

M  *Right, okay.*

Rather than Sports Psychology as a whole.

M  *Right, okay, that’s fair enough because obviously that’s the nature of the beast that you’re working with in that sort of sense.*

Yes.

M  *So how has it sort of developed those counselling skills?*

Just again through being able to probably reflect better now in action as well, it’s helped me by being able to reflect on the practice, you know, after an event, and then using then to then also influence the next consultation, it’s just helped me probably link consultations better.

M  *Okay, and that relates back to the sort of questions and the listening and taking time out sort of thing and, in order to reflect in action?*

Yes, that’s come through the reflective training.

M  *Alright, what about the way in which the development in your reflective skills has influenced sort of professional skills such as your ability to make decisions in preparation for consultations or during consultations, has that had an influence?*

Yeah, like, the one that sticks out in my mind, the question like, from the reflective proformas, you know, what are the consequences of my actions or, you know, recommendations, and I think I ask myself that a lot more now that what I would have, and that’s also given me the knowledge and the kind of confidence to buy myself time, to say, I’m not in a position to do, you know, comment on that like now, because what are the consequences of me saying A versus B.

M  *So how do you think that’s influenced your effectiveness as a consultant, making that...*
Probably helped me not jump in so quickly with my initial, even if my initial suggestion is what I end up going with, I would probably think a wee bit more about it than... you know, and that was always one of my problems with trying to find a solution quickly.

M Right, so you are able to make a more informed decision now, basically?

I would say so, yes.

M Fantastic. And then the last couple are your practical skills, so how has your development in your reflective skills influenced your ability to apply theory in practice?

Well obviously, given mine is so, you know, practically oriented, there has been, there has got to have been a direct link there. Just, like I said, going through the kind of questions, how can I do this differently, it’s made me want to change some of my approaches, you know, some of the basic mental skills, approaches, don’t just do, you know, the theory is saying this, but how else can we do that to make it more relevant for the athlete. And it just gets you thinking a bit broader I think, and a bit more outside the box.

M So you’ve been able to be, it’s helped you to become a little bit more innovative?

Yeah.

M And that’s obviously influenced your effectiveness how?

Because it’s more interesting to the athletes, it’s different, it’s not, you know, because a lot of them it’s not the same thing they’ve had before, so that makes them more interested in my way of doing things, which is obviously what they are perceiving to be helpful, you know, they see me is probably then is more effective because I’m not just regurgitating what they expect me to say, and the same old examples, so it probably made me think a wee bit more about how I can do it differently and what would make this better or more interesting or more relevant.

M Alright, fantastic, finally in this part, what about your philosophy in terms of understanding and implementing that, I mean, we spoke about it before in terms of accounts and approach, the humanistic approach, but do you think that’s made you more effective by being able to develop an understanding of...

Yes, definitely, I think, I’m definitely, like, combination of the more cognitive behavioural approach versus the humanistic. I think the humanistic approach, and that little portion of me, helps me be more effective in terms of, like, helping the athletes be more empowered about their decisions and how to come up with some solutions themselves, and that’s been helped through an increase of being able to ask more effective questions and listen better and not jump in with the solution too soon.

M Okay, so has developing your reflective skills enabled you to provide a service that achieved or worked towards achieving the goals of the practice?

Yeah, I think so. Just...

M How has that sort of happened?

It’s just made me I think a more effective practitioner, because I’m thinking more about what I’m doing, you know, reflecting on it instead of just leaving it at that, you know, I think it just means I’m thinking more in depth about what I’m doing, I’m not just sticking to the norm, you know, going back, how else can I get more information, have I really tapped into that enough, not, because before it has probably been a bit like, oh, I can’t go back and ask those sort of questions again, but now I’m like, well, I can, but just come at them from a different angle. So I think it has had, you know, an impact on my, you know, effectiveness mostly as, you know, as a consultant.
Fantastic, fantastic. Great, you’ve been speaking for quite a while now, I appreciate that, are you okay just to, there’s a couple of questions left, is that alright?

Yeah, that’s fine, can I just grab a glass of water?

Yeah, no worries, yeah.

I’ll just be right back.

No worries.

Okay, what time is it anyway?

It’s a quarter to five now.

Oh okay, oh my god!

Yeah, I know, it won’t take long to finish now.

That’s alright.

So basically you’ve been able to gain a more in depth understanding of the way in which the training of your reflective skills is linked with improvement in the effectiveness of your practice, particularly when considering some of the characteristics associated with effective consultants. Is there anything else you wanted to add to that in terms of the way in which formal training and reflective practice influence the effectiveness of your practice before we moved on?

No, I think we’ve covered pretty much everything really.

Okay, just to finish then, there’s a couple of more general questions regarding reflective practice and the effectiveness of Applied Sports Psychology that I want to talk about before we finish with the concluding section. My first question is, what has been the biggest influencing factor on the way in which your effectiveness has developed over the period of this study?

What has been the biggest influence? Having the time to step back and look at it. So the very fact that rightly or wrongly I had to reflect during the this time, I’ve always been encouraged to reflect, just even being presented with the opportunity to try it was the single biggest influence, being able to actually, I don’t know how to describe it. Like, just the very fact that I had to do it showed how much benefit it could be.

So the biggest influence on your effectiveness was being able to engage in reflective practice?

Yes, I think.

Right, okay, and just to recap some of the reasons why that might have been, based on what you’ve said before, it’s because you’ve been able to better understand the sorts of questions that you should be asking, develop your listening skills, etc, etc, all the benefits we’ve talked about?

Yes, and use it to implement, you know, learning and influence, you know, subsequent consultations, it’s just the very fact that I stepped back and did it and had the structure and the feedback in the first place.

And that enabled you to alter your practice or maintain your practice or...?

Alter it for the better. Definitely for the better.

So has receiving the formal training and support in reflective practice allowed you to address areas of your practice that require improvement, as you’ve just mentioned?
Yeah, I think, yeah, it’s just helped almost, it’s been quite a holistic sort of help, you know, it’s just, it’s helped with so many of the things that we’ve, you know, that we've already talked about, it’s just I haven’t gone and done anything, you know, taken any extra training or anything like that in terms of effective questioning or anything like that, but it just has made me naturally think more about that really, in depth.

M Right, so the same question then, I said it’s helped you to maintain your practice maintain, and you said it’s more it’s helped you to change your practice for the better, has receiving the formal training allowed you to make sense of and build on your strengths as a consultant?

Yeah, strengths and weaknesses.

M So how has it helped you to build on your strengths?

Strengths in terms of I think it’s a, I’ve used the word reassurance quite a lot that what you’re doing is right and it’s helpful, reassurance that, you know, I know I ask a lot of questions but maybe asking more effective questions, listening more, rather than just listening but hearing what’s being said, so stopping myself from jumping in and trying to offer solutions rather than just listening, so, yeah, it’s just had so many benefits really.

M Okay, good.

It’s hard to put them all into this. It has not helped my communication skills on the telephone with you!

M No, no, it’s fair enough, you have been talking for an hour and 50 minutes so, er, I appreciate that, you know, like I’m asking similar sort of questions about a year’s worth, I suppose, so... So in terms of that, basically just to recap, you’ve been able to build on your strengths as a consultant and obviously improve some of the weaker areas?

Yeah.

M How will your reflective practices change now as a direct result of participating in the study?

I will definitely engage in reflection on a more regular basis.

M Why is that?

Just because I can see the benefits of it. I’ve got, like, I like the structure that you provided for us. I know that there’s someone still there in, you know, in the form of yourself, that if I needed extra guidance on it, you know, that support could still be there. And I just think I can see how it’s helped me almost to put into perspective each consultation and helped sort of almost rationalise certain things, or look at things from different angles, so it anything, you know, it’s beneficial. So I’ll continue to do it, and I’ll probably use it more on any sort of bigger issues, because I feel like I’m now able to pick out more critical incidences. But I’ll probably use it more on a slightly, you know, smaller level still, so the day-to-day stuff as well, just to help me remain kind of self-aware.

M Fantastic, so basically that wraps up the main part of the interview, I just wondered if there was anything else you wanted to add on your experience of the use of reflective practice, the training that you’ve received or how that’s influenced your effectiveness?

No, I think it was a really well put together process, so thank you.

M Oh, that’s alright, no, thank you. I mean, I’ve just got a few final questions to ask you just to conclude. How satisfied were you with the intervention and the support you received during the study?
Yeah, like, I thought that made the difference to be honest with you, you know, in terms of changing my perceptions of reflections in terms of me actually getting benefits from it. You know, had there not been an intervention I wouldn't have got the same gain, so yeah, very satisfied. On a scale of 1-10, 10.

M  Oh, fantastic, there you go, can't get better than that.

Very good.

M  Would you regard the changes to your reflective practice and professional practice as significant as a result of your participation?

Yes, definitely.

M  What...?

Just like I said, just an overall increasing self-awareness, like, the ability to reflect in action as well as like on practice. It’s just, yeah, it’s just been helpful, significantly.

M  During the study itself were you coerced at any times in terms of your practice and behaviours beyond the scope of the study?

I don’t know what that means!

M  Did I sort of lead you in any particular way?

No, no.

M  I was trying to sound intelligent by using bigger words, you know.

Coerce, no, not at all, not in any way shape or form.

M  So how would you rate your experience as a participant in the study?

Well, just being able to gain that information was, you know, obviously of benefit to my reflective and professional practice, but the benefits were two-fold, you know, being able to take part and gain that knowledge was great, but also the whole experience itself was beautiful, it was well put together, well structured, and yeah, a good experience all in all.

M  Fantastic, so would you say it was fair or was it biased in any particular way?

No, it was totally fair, there was nothing leading, nothing biased, you know, any sort of questions to help me be more effective, you know, in reflection were totally, totally fair.

M  How do you think the interview went, apart from being extremely long?

Apart from me blabbing?

M  It’s good stuff.

I’m probably saying some stuff that you’ll listen back to and go, ‘What is she talking about?’ No, I thought it was great, I thought you didn’t lead in any way, I thought your questions were beautiful, you clarified as well, which helped me, it sort of, you know, remember and sort of summarise what was being said, and I thought your interview skills were excellent.

M  Thank you, did you feel like you could tell your storied fully?
Yeah, definitely. There was always plenty of opportunity to add anything that I might have forgotten, so I think it went through very fully.

M  *Do you think we failed to discuss any important factors then?*

No, I think we've covered everything.

M  *Yeah, okay, cool. Any other comments or suggestions about the interview itself?*

I hope you're wearing your thong.

M  *It's on and polished.*

No, I thought it was excellent, no, good job, brilliant.

M  *Thanks ever so much for taking time to participate in the study and the interview itself.*

No worries.

**End of Interview**
# APPENDIX 17

Example analysis of participant’s levels of reflection Study 3

## Participant: B

**Date of Reflection:** 19.11.2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Reflection</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Researcher</strong> 2b</td>
<td>Reflection was shallow but participant clearly aware of his own feelings. Focus on one issue and some evidence of over-concern about the implication of this for the participant leading to little thought about the client. Some understanding of ways to alter the session but no evidence of level 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Assessor 1</strong> 2-4</td>
<td>Reflection was superficial (perhaps because it was quite limited). There was a focus on one issue and some evidence of over-concern about the implication of this for the SP (limited consideration of the athlete). There was some reflection on what the SP would need to do differently – which is why I’ve considered level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Assessor 2</strong> 2a/2b but a touch of 4!</td>
<td>Definitely aware of his own feelings in that he says he felt out of his depth and a little aware of clients feelings in that he comments on what he felt she wanted from him. No 3 but clear suggestion of a future need for action hence 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Agreed Level of Reflection = 2b**

## Participant: A

**Date of Reflection:** 04.03.2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Reflection</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Researcher</strong> 1, 2a, 2b, 3, 4 (some 5)</td>
<td>Clear description of the session and its aims. Interesting consideration of the influence of internal factors as well as the thoughts and behaviour of the client allowing a range of influencing factors to be accounted for in the reflection. Evidence of learning and understanding how this might influence future practice conceptually and theoretically. Also demonstration of knowledge as to how this learning could be implemented, although somewhat brief and somewhat diminutive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Assessor 1</strong> Up to 4 some 5</td>
<td>A detailed and insightful reflection. The SP has clearly thought about this experience and reflected on her own and the client’s thoughts and feelings during the consultation. Also consideration of what the SP could have done differently and what learning is needed. Some awareness that the SPs current approach could be modified/ adapted. I had a sense that the client was still quite ‘distant’ in the reflection with more focus on the SP and what she got from the session rather than the athlete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Assessor 2</strong> 1, 2a, 2b, 3 and 4</td>
<td>Reflection is well structured and presented and offers good evidence of being aware of their own and the client’s feelings. Level 3 is evident as there is evidence of being aware if the implications and consequences of the actions. I think there is some Level 4 reflection as there is some suggestion that the consultant is aware of what else needs to be done in order to use the reflections carefully.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Agreed Level of Reflection = 4**
Reflective Practice Pro-Forma

NAME: B

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Weekly Meeting

DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION: 12/11/07 - NIAC

CLIENT SPORT: Rugby

DATE OF REFLECTION: 19/11/07

REFLECTION NUMBER: 1

1. **Identification**
I’ve found this (reflection) more difficult to work through this week as I normally conduct an immediate reflection and then re-reflect a week later. However, due to a lazy spell I did not conduct an immediate reflection. What I do recall is that the client is struggling with his physical fitness due to a new fitness regime being implemented by his coach, and I felt a little bit out of my depth within this discussion.

2. **Description**
What the client identified was that the coach had implemented a much tougher fitness regime, which has affected his ability to train on subsequent days. I did engage in a discussion about fitness, but the client seemed interested in any input I had or whether I felt that he was doing the right thing. I stated that any such comment would be superficial as it is outside of my area and I am not totally familiar with the prerequisites required in his sport.

3. **Significance**
Immediately I felt out of my depth as it brought home to me that I do not have sufficient knowledge of rugby and the technical and physical attributes required. I did mention that because the client hadn’t worked physically in this manner before that it would get easier the more he did train, ‘similar to when you drive a car’ is the way I put it. Nevertheless, this did emphasize that I need to do more homework with regards to this sport and that I must keep my distance in relation to work that I am not involved in (i.e., coaches instructions etc.).

4. **Implications**
I felt the session did go really well, however I hope that I did not in anyway jeopardise the professional respect I may have had from the performer due to my lack of knowledge on the physical demands of the sport. This has made me ‘go back to the books’ so to speak to become even more familiar with what the performers require.
Reflective Practice Pro-Forma

NAME: C
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Visualisation session
DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION: 12.02.08 TFIS
CLIENT SPORT: Golf
DATE OF REFLECTION: 13.02.08
REFLECTION NUMBER: 6

1. **Identification**
   Update on how visualisation is improving / developing.

2. **Description**
   Athlete highlighted that she couldn’t see the ball in flight and needed this to help her decide which shots to play on the course (Nov). Since then the athlete was given the tools to develop imagery scripts in an educational workshop on 11.12.07 at St Andrew’s as delivered by myself and was able to transfer this information from driving to seeing shots on the course.

3. **Significance**
   Athlete felt that the information provided in the workshop helped and she was better able at present to visualise shots (although a lot more practice was needed). We discussed how to make the scripts specific to seeing the ball in flight and also the “roll” of the ball on landing.

4. **Implications**
   Good that athlete able to come back to performance related issues as she was still a little unsure the last time I wrote a reflection as to whether she was ready to address golf related details again or not. Visualisation improving but some video footage may assist with this. Will have to wait until after her training trip to Spain in March to do any filming. The video footage could help her see the shot more clearly to enhance her visualisation. Athlete to action when she returns. Feel like I am getting more performance orientated outcomes from the athlete at present. This is directly linked to the fact that the athlete is more comfortable with her alopecia and is more open to talking about it in front of other golfers etc.
Reflection-on-Practice

NAME: B
NATURE OF INCIDENT: 
DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION: 12th May
CLIENT SPORT: Rugby
DATE OF REFLECTION: 18th May
REFLECTION NUMBER: 7

1. DESCRIPTION – What happened? Contributing Factors?
In Works office (with door open), during the afternoon of Monday the 12th of May. Client was discussing progress on pre-performance routines prior to implementing a cognitive restructuring strategy.

The main factor that contributed to this experience was my own ability to listen to the athlete before intervening and expressing my opinion and directing future actions. I’m reflecting on this because a lot of this work is voluntary at present and interfering with my full-time work, and I’m conscious that I don’t want to be impatient or force the session to end quickly.

2. FEELINGS – Client’s and own thoughts and feelings
I’m aware from previous experience that I may try to get to the solution/outcome to quickly during these ‘voluntary’ sessions, and from my observations an athlete may tend to feel that I do not have much time for them. I therefore don’t want to put the athlete through that.

I felt that this went a lot better but I’m finding it difficult to ‘switch off’ from other work when the meeting with the client is within the timescale of this full time work. Specifically, I’m sitting back, keeping eye contact, but I know I’m missing some of the information due to being unable to switch off.

I don’t think the athlete noticed my attention span waned on times. Specifically, the athlete continued to talk and, on prompts where I switched back on, the athlete expanded and seemed to feel comfortable to discuss the experiences. Indeed, the amount of information and dialogue exchanged emphasised this.

3. EVALUATION – Goals? What was good and bad about the situation?
The session goal was to ensure that the performer was adhering to structured routines, while ensuring that the performer demonstrated an understanding of the importance of these routines for now and future psychological skill development.

My personal goal was to facilitate the above and to allow the client to talk about the experiences and adherence to routines.

I structured the session as it was because it is to a structure that we are working through. The next progression if you like. Decisions were based on my previous knowledge of the client, what we were doing and how the client responded to different things with regards to work. My intervention was also based on theoretical based knowledge and understanding of the applied process.

Consequently, the client was able to talk through the experiences and discuss the routines that were put in place. As a consequence, we can now progress to the next stage. I was glad that this occurred because I just wasn’t there in the session 100% I kept thinking about other things and should have been focusing more on what the client was saying. Fortunately, the client was quite chatty so I think I was able to get away with it and the client ended up having a good experience.
4. ANALYSIS – What sense can you make of the experience? External influences?
The ‘open door’ was an issue to consider… whenever meeting anybody (including students) in my office, I always try to remember to keep the door open for ethical reasons, although sometimes this can cause disruption, during this session it was fine. Another issue was that self enforced time restraints were in place, but I worked hard to bend them a touch and let the athlete speak comfortably. I think that by doing this is was able to overcome this constraint and achieve the aims of the session by drawing on my previous experience with performers, the knowledge gained through experience implementing techniques, and knowledge gained through reading etc.

Consequently, the session progressed as it did because I was conscious to allow the athlete more time to talk and provide a non-aggressive posture that would not give off the signal that I wanted the athlete out as soon as possible.

5. CONCLUSION – What else could you have done? Making sense of the experience
Other choices would be to conduct this practice out of work time and in a less private environment. Unfortunately, due to the amount of workload I have on, I can’t afford to make too much time for the volunteer clients I work with. I could have also got the client to feedback progress on pre-performance routines via email in order to help me get to grips with the client’s experience and help me to focus more specifically on them. This would have also reduced the amount of time needed to meet and could have helped me to prepare more stringently.

I haven’t provided this type of support before and realise that I may have taken too much on. This is something that I need to think about when planning time and committing to clients.

6. ACTION PLAN – If it arose again what would you do? Is learning required?
I will continue with forcing a more polite, relaxed, and enabling body language that sends the right signals to the client. I think I will also get the client to feedback either through email or through a pro-forma so that I can reduce the amount of actual contact time and get information ahead of any meetings in order to plan more specifically for that client.

In this instance, I need more reflection on my interaction with clients, even those who pay. Specifically, to see if workloads do affect my behaviour with clients across the board and how this influences the quality of the support I provide. I intend to reflect on upcoming sessions to try and make sense of this. It would also help to talk to my supervisor who could offer advice on how to organise things more efficiently with my clients.

If I’m able to do these things I will be able to see if my actions get a good response from the client through sharing information and seeming enthusiastic, which should improve the rapport we have and the quality of the support.
Reflection-on-Practice

NAME: A
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Consultancy
DATE / LOCATION OF SESSION: 30th April 2008
CLIENT SPORT: Rugby
DATE OF REFLECTION: 4th May 2008
REFLECTION NUMBER: 7

1. DESCRIPTION – What happened? Contributing factors?
Description:
1. Consultancy in UWIC office – 1 hour
2. Discussed behaviours over past four weeks and recapped on the last session
3. Discussed coping strategies to be employed over the summer and sport goals for next season that may influence eating behaviours
Contributing factors:
1. The client requested the session indicating that they would be extremely receptive and conscientious when it came to discussing the important issues. This clearly had an influence on the way in which I could consult and behave.
2. The aim to monitor the athlete's progress with her intervention strategies during a particularly stressful period contributed as this influenced the structure and content of the session.
3. It is important to consider how I can improve my use of the spider diagram technique with athletes with clinical issues and identify ways I could integrate it into my work with athletes presenting non-clinical issues. As this is a clinical issue the in which I interacted and consulted with the client was a major contributing factor, the success of which needs to be considered.

2. FEELINGS – Client’s and own thoughts and feelings
I was pretty relaxed and confident about the session as the client had requested the meeting so I knew that she had some issues she wanted to address with me. Whenever this has happened in the past the sessions have been much more client driven and seemed to be more effective for the client. So I was aware that we could get some important work done and ensure that the client went away happy that we had addressed in detail the issues that they brought to the session. However, I was conscious of the levels of stress in my client over the past few weeks and felt a little anxious about how she was coping with her eating disorder, as stressful situations in the past had caused her to lapse back into her disordered eating behaviours.

I did feel anxious at the start of the session as I wanted her to have used her interventions during the stressful period, as soon as she said she had maintained 100% control over her eating disorder I felt far more relaxed and positive. This change in feelings indicates to me that if the client is coping successfully due to interventions we had established together, then I feel a sense of satisfaction and success. I suppose the issue that this leads to is that if the client is not successful, then I continue feeling anxious and this may have an influence over my ability to consult effectively. I need to work on ways to be aware of this during sessions and develop strategies to cope with it so I ensure it does not negatively influence my work. This change in confidence lead me to re-do her spider diagram, which I had not planned to do prior to the session, but I felt it would be a good strategy to show the client how far she had come and to enable us to set goals for next season while still considering her battle with her eating disorder.
The athlete was clearly feeling proud of herself because she could not wait to tell me of her success over the past month and how she was feeling much more in control of her eating and was not obsessing about it. She brought up a situation in which a comment was made in training about bulimia, and normally this would have resulted in some really negative emotions (i.e., paranoid, anxious), but instead the client was able to see it for what it was, a joke that was not directed at her, and laugh with the rest of the team. She did think about it after, but more of a reflection about how she reacted so calmly. The athlete’s positivity carried on through the session as she was really open, engaged in the spider diagram really well and set some pretty challenging goals which she spoke openly about with regards to her eating and how this might influence her ability to achieve her goals.

3. EVALUATION – Goals, What was good and bad about the situation?
My personal/session goals prior to the session was to help the athlete identify stressful situations in the future that may influence her eating and to set performance goals but pay particular attention to the role of food and eating in achieving these goals. Once the session started I went back to the spider diagram concept and got the client to re-do her diagram so we could compare the 2 diagrams so identify differences and similarities, explore reasons why and future actions. The reason why I did this was because I felt the client was on such a high because of her success I wanted to capture that enthusiasm through the diagram as another avenue to reaffirm how well the client was doing, but really ID the reasons for that success so they could be repeated. I felt using the diagram achieved these goals better than simply discussing it.

In addition to the information given above, I intervened as I did because I felt confident due to the client’s success, this gave me confidence to go back to the diagram format, which initially I had difficulty with, but I knew from my training and preparation for the session that this is an effective technique given the situation and therefore I wasn’t afraid to go back to it in this session. For me the consequences were hugely positive. I felt more comfortable using the spider diagram in my consultancy with the client, but also would feel happy using it with clients presenting non-clinical situations as I have learnt that it gives you the opportunity to explore an issue in real depth and the opportunity to reflect in quite a formal way with a client to highlight progress, changes and developments over time. It was also really useful to have the diagram there when working on goal setting for the short-term future, as I was able to explore how different issues might influence goal achievement. The only aspect I was disappointed with on reflection was not discussing failure to achieve goals and having a recovery strategy, but time limits prevented this from happening.

4. ANALYSIS – What sense can you make of the experience? External influences?
Time had a negative influence as I was not able to discuss failure to achieve goals. This is something that I need to think about in future in terms of either arranging a longer session, or explaining to the client that these need to be considered and arranging an extra session to accommodate this. I think that this is an extremely important consideration and will help to complete the picture for the client and help them to develop strategies for prevention rather than having to deal with and cure issues in future.

My organisation had a positive influence as I had the old diagram and felt confident to produce a new diagram and compare as I had spent time prior to the session looking at her old diagram and familiarising myself with it. This preparation is clearly something to consider as by being thorough I made myself more confident, which definitely improved the quality and flow of the session. Indeed, the fact that I used the diagram spontaneously during the session indicates how my confidence has grown from the first time I used this technique to
now, and this is mainly due to the time I spent reflecting after my first session, using it again and growing in confidence. I also think I was able to use the technique because it was appropriate, not just because I wanted to use it, which had a positive influence on its effectiveness with this client at this time. This made the session focused and specific rather than feeling around in the dark for something that may work I knew from previous experience and my training that this was the right approach.

After the initial part of the session, the client could sense my confidence and satisfaction that she was doing well, so I guess we feed off each other and this resulted in a really positive and energetic session which achieved the majority of its goals.

5. CONCLUSION – What else could you have done? Making sense of the experience
Other choices I had:
1. I could have just talked through her progress instead of using the diagram, but I don’t think that this would have had the same effect. The client reacted so well to this session so I don’t think just talking through her progress would have engaged her as much. If I didn’t have the old diagram with me I could then I would have to be prepared to engage the client in conversation.
2. I could have covered less goals and discussed goal failure and recovery strategies for the goals as I was working through them. However, due to the time available I wouldn’t have got through everything with the quality that we did. So I know that I need to arrange another session to address these issues.
3. I could have focused again on her relationships with others and how these influence her eating, but these relationship issues came up as we were talking about her progress.

My past negative experience of using the spider diagram has not influenced my confidence in using it, but the biggest factor is to use it when and where it is appropriate to help the client achieve their goals. If you use it when it was inappropriate, then the client will be confused and may not engage, which will be a negative experience for both you and the client.

6. ACTION PLAN – If it arose again what would you do? Is learning required?
In order to put into action what I’ve learnt from this experience I need to make sure that I listen to the client, if they are having trouble identifying and reflecting on the issues that are influencing them, then the spider diagram would be appropriate and I would now feel confident using it, and understand how the technique can be used effectively.

I think a chat with my mentor would be beneficial just to help me consider the way in which this technique could be used with performance issues so that I can integrate the technique into my wider practice. This will help me to consider the value this could have in a variety of areas of consultancy work. I happy that I know how to use and implement it but it is always good to get another view point and some input about this because I think this can be a valuable technique for myself and other psychologists working on similar issues. It’s always good to review these things as I don’t spend too much time working from a clinical perspective.

It may also be beneficial if I use the spider diagram technique with myself to help me reflect on my coaching, this might give me more experience to use it in non-clinical situations and help me to iron out any issues on its implementation. This will simply give me another way to interact with clients that may suit some individuals or situations and add to my ‘armoury’ of consultancy techniques.