

Critical considerations of Level 4 coach education in the UK:

A theoretical and empirical study

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of (MA by  
Research) at the University of Central Lancashire

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## **Abstract**

Within the last half a century the developments within the sporting landscape have been coupled with changes in the political sphere and - most recently - the successful bid to host the London 2012 Olympics Games. An incidental effect of such changes emphasised the fundamental role of coach education and development in the United Kingdom (UK) and stressed the need to up skill the coaching workforce. Accordingly, the primary aim in conducting this research was to investigate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current coach education system for elite coaches (Level 4); to establish what best facilitates coach learning.

In order to do so, I undertook a literature review to examine the applicability of Knowles (1970) andragogical principles and how - if at all - these principles could inform programme design and subsequent coach learning. The contributions of formal, informal and non-formal educative situations were considered alongside the currently prescribed approach - the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC). Moreover, I further considered the contributions of literature around social milieus; epistemology; contextualisation and professional thinking which provided further interesting contrasts with the current system and raised a number of questions with regards to how best effective learning environments for Level 4 coaches are created.

In order to offer an empirical comparison to the literature, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 18 Level 4 coaches, which were then thematically analysed using NVivo 10. The primary research method employed was deductive and inductive reasoning. Consideration of the results assessed to what extent the current educative provision for high level coaches met both the theoretically defined and client perceived needs.

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## Abbreviations

### List of Abbreviations

CDM	Coach Development Model
CoP's	Communities of Practice
HE	Higher Education
L4PGDiploma	Level 4 Post Graduate Diploma in Elite Coaching Practice
NGB	National Governing Bodies
scUK	Sports Coach UK
SSI	Sports Specific Interventions
UCLan	University of Central Lancashire
UKCC	United Kingdom Coaching Certificate
UKCF	United Kingdom Coaching Framework
UKCGE	United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 The socio-historic context for recent coaching education change and the role of sports coach UK

The increasing significance and profile of sport in the United Kingdom (UK) has been heavily tied to the socio-political climate. Historically, changes to UK sport policy and associated discourse increased initially as a result of National Lottery funding (1994); subsequently by the Conservative government (1995) and further by the New Labour government (1997) (Green, 2006). The most recent politically driven UK policy statement published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS): *Playing to win: a new era for sport* (2008) emphasised developing sports with assistance from the Youth Sports Trust, UK Sport and Sport England. The overarching aims of the revised policy was to;

“Engage a million more people in regular sports participation; produce a seamless ladder of talent development from schools to elite level with opportunities for more competition and more coaching at each level” (p.8).

In developing such a philosophy, it was acknowledged that in order to support and develop world class athletes; there needed to be a parallel system to further develop and professionalise the coaching workforce, e.g. “a legacy of world leading elite sport infrastructure including high quality coaching” (p. 4).

Perhaps consequently, but certainly serendipitously, in an attempt to provide high quality coaches; sports coach UK (scUK) - a UK registered charitable organisation were tasked with developing UK Coaching Excellence across the home countries Sports Councils. ScUK instigated a formal coach education framework entitled the United Kingdom Coaching Framework (UKCF). The UKCF was constructed around eight core principles, one of which included coach education and development. In this regard the UKCF’s principal aim was to support the endorsement and development of sport specific UK-based standardised coach education qualifications, which envisaged the UK coaching system to be world leading by 2016.

Building on their mission statement and *raison d’être* scUK have been instrumental in governing the UKCF which stressed the need for a “new system of long

term coach development underpinned by education, support and continued professional development opportunities” (National Coaching Foundation, 2008, p. 5). In fulfilling this philosophy, scUK were tasked to work alongside National Governing Bodies of sport (NGB’s) to develop sport-specific coach education provisions that are aligned with public policy; government initiatives and in keeping with existing education structures. From this foundation the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) - which is built upon a 3-7-11 year developmental structure - designed to develop coaches (National Coaching Foundation, 2008), was born.

This proposed UKCC qualification system, represented a progressive framework. UKCC Level 1 has been designed for coaches who assist in coaching sessions under supervision, i.e. a beginner. The UKCC Level 2 qualification equips coaches to plan for, deliver and review coaching sessions. UKCC Level 3 arms coaches with planning, delivery and evaluation skills, incorporating a periodised plan (Trimble, Buraimo, Godfrey, Grecic and Minten, 2010). Originally, scUK proposed a UKCC Level 4 and a UKCC Level 5 qualification. This high level structure was reviewed at the UK Coaching Summit in May 2007 (although significantly not through wider consultation or reference made to the evidence base), and it was agreed to combine the UKCC Level 4 and UKCC Level 5. This decision was reaffirmed through an independent report commissioned by scUK (Crisfield, 2007). In its current form, the focus of the UKCC Level 4 has been directing, managing, implementing and analysing long term specialised coaching programmes with a level of innovation and evidence based practice. At the time of writing, there were 28 sports endorsed to deliver Level 1, 29 Level 2 endorsed sports, 22 Level 3 sports and 11 Level 4 sports (“What is The UKCC?” n.d., para. 1).

## **1.2 The UKCC Level 4 Post Graduate Diploma in Elite Coaching Practice – The specific context for this thesis**

In principle the UKCF allowed NGB’s across the home countries, i.e. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to work collaboratively in developing coach education courses. In 2005, due to insufficient resources and the sustainability of high level coach education, five individual NGB’s, the England Rugby Football League, England Hockey, the English Table Tennis Association, Scottish Squash and England

Basketball joined forces to develop such a provision. These sports working collaboratively named themselves Pentagon Sports<sup>1</sup>. In 2009 the first 'elite' pathway came to fruition titled the UKCC Level 4 Post Graduate Diploma in Elite Coaching Practice (L4PGDiploma). As a planned and direct consequence the L4PGDiploma was an amalgamation of a postgraduate diploma validated by a higher education (HE) provider: the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the UKCC Level 4 award, which was awarded by Pentagon Sports and subject to endorsement and biennial verification by scUK.

The premise behind the development of the L4PGDiploma lent itself to the development of experienced coaches who had already undergone the UKCC Level 3 qualification (or alternatively/in parallel), for those coaches who had significant experience of coaching within their own sport. The number of years that constitute as significant varied across Pentagon Sports. In the design of L4PGDiploma, it was established that UCLan as the academic contributor would provide coaches with the theoretical background and the NGB's would then arrange sports specific interventions (SSI) i.e. workshops to aid contextualisation in relation to the application to practice.

The L4PGDiploma is comprised of two pathways, elite and talent development with slight variations on module title and contextualisation. The elite pathway, was aimed at coaches working in high performance environments and was delivered between 2009 and 2011. After this date, for sustainability purposes, Pentagon Sports agreed that an alternative pathway was to be developed and the talent pathway was born. The talent pathway has been delivered in subsequent years, with the option to revert back to the elite pathway should the need arise. The talent pathway targets coaches working in a multitude of talent development environments; schools, colleges, professional, amateur and community development clubs.

In its current form, delivery consists of four 20 credit modules which include; Coaching Practice, Coaching Analysis, Issues in Performer Development and Planning for Development, with one 40 credit module - Work Based Experiential Learning. The four 20 credit modules are delivered face-to-face at various locations over eight residential taught weekends. The Work Based Experiential Learning module on the

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<sup>1</sup> Squash left Pentagon Sport to pursue the development of a squash specific UKCC Level 4 award in 2011.

other hand, is delivered remotely, over the duration of the course making up the blended programme. For each module, there are two summative assessments in line with more traditional formal educational provisions; either an assignment, professional discussion, oral defence or presentation.

The weekend course structure is formalised to the extent that the coaches are expected to (where possible) attend the taught elements of the module and then conduct further reading/studying in their own time - not dissimilar to other more general HE courses. The taught residential weekends are filmed and uploaded online in case of non-attendant coaches. Weekend delivery focuses on the module outcomes and, experienced guest lecturers are invited to lecture on the programme. Additionally, the L4PGDiploma is a part-time course delivered over a two year period. Extensions and mitigating circumstances and/or suspensions are in line with HE regulations. In contrast to the formal modality of current UK based coach education, the L4PGDiploma is unique in the sense that - although it is bound by HE regulations and scUK competencies, in line with formal educative parameters - it also entails cross-sport collaboration, which is unconventional for UKCC qualifications.

Moreover, the L4PGDiploma employs a coach mentor to work with the coaches in their own environment. A minimum of two observation visits over the two year period are required and the coach mentor utilises the scUK Level 4 competency criteria (see Appendix 1) to assist in determining the coach's suitability for the UKCC Level 4 award. In doing so, the coach mentor also provides Pentagon Sports with recommendations ahead of the Level 4 assessment board. On successful completion of the course, the coaches are awarded a postgraduate diploma in line with HE guidelines. Under current regulations the coaches must obtain this diploma prior to consideration for the UKCC Level 4 award. This consideration process takes place at a separate assessment board, constituting of representation from the coaches' NGB; UCLan staff; the coach mentor - as well as an independent examiner.

Determination of awarding the UKCC Level 4 involves reviewing the coach's portfolio, which is compiled over a two year period and relates directly to the aforementioned Work Based Experiential Learning module. Moreover, written statements from each NGB, which are structured around the UKCC Level 4 12 competencies, are considered alongside the coach mentor's recommendation.

At the outset of the L4PGDiploma, coaches interested in the course applied directly to their NGB. The NGB forwarded successful applications to UCLan. In 2011, for sustainability purposes it was agreed between Pentagon Sports and UCLan to allow non-Pentagon Sport coaches to enrol onto the course and, as such, the L4PGDiploma has seen coaches from motorsport, archery and mountaineering. As these additional sports coaches opted to enrol on the course without the backing of their NGB's, these coaches were only able to undertake the postgraduate diploma and not the UKCC Level 4 award. In such cases, applications were sent directly to UCLan for enrolment. The details pertaining to achievement/attrition rates between 2009 until 2014, can be found in Table 1.1.

The recruitment, identification and selection process differs across Pentagon Sports. Hockey have a relatively robust process, for example they advertise, shortlist and interview coaches to determine their suitability. In addition to this, hockey have embedded the UKCC Level 4 award into their coach development pathway and therefore, to remain employed in particular roles, hockey coaches are required to hold a UKCC Level 4 award. Other NGB's are however, far more liberal in their recruitment strategies.

The Rugby Football League for example, advertise the course. Depending on the number of applicants, rugby league then hand-pick appropriate coaches for this level of study. There is therefore a clear disparity between Pentagon Sports with regards to recruitment of coaches onto the L4PGDiploma. Generally, Pentagon Sports recruit across three defined categories; having significant coaching experience (although the number of years differs according to individual NGB's); hold a UKCC Level 3 qualification (although this is not exclusively a requirement) and coach in an appropriate environment.

### **1.3 Potential problems with the award and the system: Clarifying terminology**

Defining Level 4 coach education/ Level 4 coaches and what this encompasses is, at best, problematic. The importance of definition is not purely a case of semantics but also relates to the selection/identification of coaches and the practical application

Table 1.1

## Coach Attrition rates between 2009-2014

	Enrolled		Completed		Withdrawn		Ongoing		Total Enrolled	% Completed	% Ongoing	% Withdrawn
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female				
Elite Pathway 2009-2011												
Hockey	4	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	5	60.00	0.00	40.00
Squash	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	33.33	0.00	66.67
Rugby League	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	100.00	0.00	0.00
Table Tennis	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	100.00	0.00	0.00
Basketball	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.00	0.00	100.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>72.22</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>27.78</i>
Elite Pathway 2010-2012												
Hockey	4	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	6	66.67	0.00	33.33
Squash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rugby League	9	0	5	0	3	0	1	0	9	55.56	11.11	33.33
Table Tennis	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	50.00	0.00	50.00
Basketball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>58.82</i>	<i>5.88</i>	<i>35.29</i>
Talent Pathway 2011-2013												
Hockey	5	3	4	3	1	0	0	0	8	87.50	0.00	12.50
Squash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rugby League	7	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	7	42.86	28.57	28.57
Table Tennis	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	100.00	0.00	0.00
Basketball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>72.22</i>	<i>11.11</i>	<i>16.67</i>

	Enrolled		Completed		Withdrawn		Ongoing		Total Enrolled	% Completed	% Ongoing	% Withdrawn
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female				
<b>Talent Pathway 2012-2014<sup>2</sup></b>												
Hockey	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.00	100.00	0.00
Rugby League	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.00	100.00	0.00
Table Tennis	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.00	100.00	0.00
Basketball	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.00	100.00	0.00
Motorsport	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.00	100.00	0.00
Mountaineering	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
<b>Talent Pathway 2013-2015<sup>3</sup></b>												
Hockey	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0.00	100.00	0.00
Rugby League	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0.00	60.00	40.00
Table Tennis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Basketball	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.00	100.00	0.00
Archery	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.00	100.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>86.67</i>	<i>13.33</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>41.86</b>	<b>39.53</b>	<b>18.60</b>

<sup>2</sup> Unable to provide completion statistics of coaches enrolled for the 2012 talent pathway as coaches are not scheduled to complete until Dec 2014

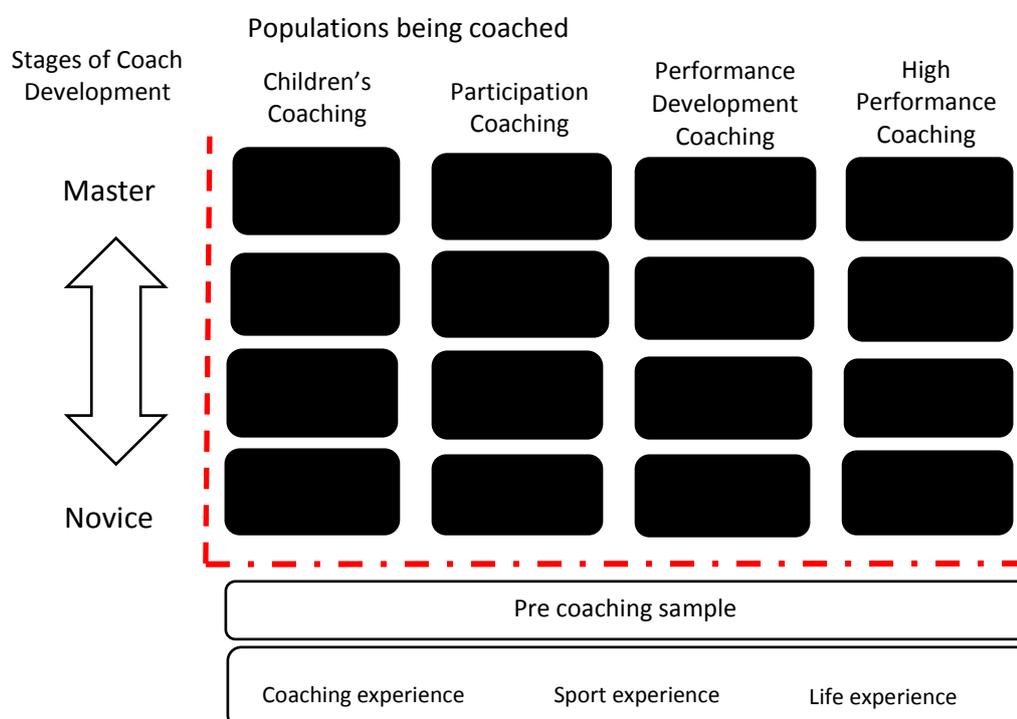
<sup>3</sup> Unable to provide completion statistics of coaches enrolled for the 2013 talent pathway as coaches are not scheduled to complete until Dec 2015

of such definitions, i.e. there should be a consensus on what a Level 4 coach looks like as Pentagon Sport (and numerous other NGB's, i.e. cricket, rugby union, rowing and equestrian) have been granted Awarding Body powers and qualify coaches at this level. In the creation of the UKCC as an endorsed progressive pathway, the Coach Development Model (CDM) (see Figure 1) offered NGB's guidance on a 4 x 4 structure to assist in the development of coach education provisions.

The CDM model is based upon the four populations of the player development model, the stages of coach development and various progression pathways, emphasising that a Level 4 coach is not necessarily required to work in a high performance environment and can, by inference, be a Level 4 coach in a multitude of developmental environments, i.e. children's coach (National Coaching Foundation, 2012).

Figure 1

scUK Coach Development Model



The definition of a Level 4 coach offered by Lyle (2010) in the UKCC Level 4 Guidance Document (published post Pentagon Sport programme validation) is,

“Level 4 sport coaches will be visionary, outstanding and knowledgeable decision makers. They will advance their own and others’ learning, and impact on sports performance. They will act in all aspects of their coaching practice, with professional standards of ethical behaviour. Sport coaching at this level is essentially cognitive, it involves a continuous process of decision making about when and how to intervene in order to maintain momentum and progression towards achievement of performance goals” (p. 14).

A more generic and global definition of a Level 4 coach provided by scUK is someone who,

“has the vision, values, skills and behaviours to effect change and develop, lead and evaluate cutting edge coaching programmes, or part of the programme, that results in a positive impact on the participants behaviour and performance” (Crisfield, 2007, p. 4).

Both definitions emphasised that a Level 4 coach must demonstrate both theoretically and behavioural competencies which in essence relate to decision making.

Surprisingly these definitions have therefore been compartmentalised into twelve workable competencies. It is these competencies that assist in the determination of a UKCC Level 4 award.

Moreover, the UKCC Level 4 competencies seem to be overly prescriptive and I would argue, have been used by Pentagon Sports as a tick box exercise. Additionally, although ‘research’ is stated as a core component in delivering an excellent coaching system (“The UK Coaching Framework”, n.d, para. 4), there does not appear to be any research supporting the competency framework. As such, the status of the structure *may* well be flawed, but is, at the very least, internally inconsistent with the very standards the UKCF system is meant to represent.

Notably the ‘validation’ or quality assurance of the coaches who enrol on the L4PGDiploma, and are then subsequently badged as UKCC Level 4 is also a matter of contention. ScUK endorsed the UKCC provision whereas the Level 4 is awarded by

Pentagon Sport; therefore it seems plausible that scUK either moderate the NGB's decision to award the UKCC Level 4. Although I do not suggest that this be done with individual sport coaches or NGB's, but more in terms of validating the current L4PGDiploma provision to ensure standardisation across the sports offering a Level 4 award. In either event, this does not appear to be happening.

In conjunction with the aforementioned definitional issues, research further suggests that there is a lack of clarity in defining an 'expert' coach. Nash, Martindale, Collins and Martindale (2012) examined published definitions of 'expert' coaches, and identified 27 interpretations across 50 research articles. In doing so, Nash et al., evidenced four distinct categories relating to the perceptions of an expert coach. These definitions included composites of coaching, i.e. coaching experience; development of participation/level of coaching; coaching qualification; selection by others (i.e. NGB's and peers) and the position held (i.e. Olympic coaches).

Interestingly, such categories seem to be in parallel with the Pentagon Sports recruitment and selection criteria, yet remain far removed from the criteria Nash et al., (2012) proposed. Therefore in acknowledging the disparity between the scUK definitions, along with the caveat of Pentagon Sports recruitment and selection strategies i.e. coaching experience, prior qualification attainment and coaching arena; for the purpose of this thesis a UKCC Level 4 coach is set by these limiting parameters.

A final definitional issue relates to the potential disjoint between coach education and coach learning. Throughout this thesis, discussion takes place around coach learning, along with the most effective ways to construct Level 4 coach education provisions. These terms have not been used as synonyms. Coach education refers specifically to the development of the L4PGDiploma which includes programme design, content, delivery methodology and structure. Coach learning, on the other hand, relates to the mechanics of demonstrable change to the coaches behaviour (Lyle, 2002). Accordingly, I maintained this distinction throughout the thesis.

#### **1.4 Thesis objective**

Against this theoretical and pragmatic backdrop, this research was conducted in two parts. The first block considered the pertinent literature in the field, together

with the implications for practice which accrue. In doing so, the extensive literature pertaining to formal, non-formal and informal environments were interpreted and by means of comparison, deliberation on other proposed learning theories - such as contextualisation and the role of the facilitator - were reviewed. Chapter 2 further considered whether the principles of the popular adult learning theory 'andragogy' applied to the coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma. This theory is further explored to assess whether it can offer further insight on how best to facilitate coach education to create optimum coach learning.

Chapter 3 provides empirical data as a point of comparison and contextualisation for the literature implications. The aim of this Chapter was to provide the coaches perspectives on the current L4PGDiploma. The focus of this Chapter was to establish the coaches' motivations for enrolling on the course, establishing how coaches feel they learn best, determining the coaches perceived highlights of the course, along with any suggested changes. In totality, this empirical study assessed to what extent the current method of delivery best meets the needs of Level 4 coaches as evaluated against the theoretical discourse. Accordingly, the aim of Chapter 4 was to assimilate the research and empirical evidence to provide concluding remarks on how best coach education courses can be designed to meet the needs of the coaches, thereby increasing 'client' satisfaction and overall impact for current and future coaches. Finally, I concluded with a summary of implications and recommendations; together with an exploration of areas for further investigation.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Coach Education and Development**

Since the inception of the UKCF in 2006, (National Coaching Foundation, 2008) and the promotion of coaching as part of the workforce agenda, along with the contentions on how best to educate the coaching workforce, I have raised a few questions for deliberation. Firstly, is this qualification structure the best way to educate coaches in the UK? Secondly, is there any empirical evidence to suggest that sports coaching has improved, or is improving, as a result of the UKCC? Finally, has the very existence of the UKCC assumed that coaches learn best through such formal qualifications?

Presumably, as so many sports are 'signed up' to and engaging in the UKCC, NGB's must be seeing a positive change in their coaching workforce? Or could it be that coaches are being qualified as a tick-box exercise; merely a numbers game in an attempt to increase participation and, ultimately, funding within a sport? Although the scope for these questions is extremely broad, (and clearly requiring a wider study than that which can be achieved within the confines of a Master's thesis), it does highlight the need for such a review to assess the impact and effectiveness of the L4PGDiploma. At the heart of the issue is the appropriateness, limitations and delimitations of formal, non-formal and informal educative situations, which I now consider.

There is a dearth of research exploring the impact of the UKCC at all levels. In parallel, and perhaps unsurprisingly, traditional formal methods of coach education have been cited as insufficient and inadequate (Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, and Rynne, 2009; Gilbert, Côté and Mallett, 2010). Remarkably, however, this 'academic' modality still appears to be the leading modus operandi for sports coaching in the UK. Gilbert & Trudel (1999) for example, researched the perceptions of an individual coach and the knowledge gained having attended a coach education programme. They found that "the course was not delivered as designed, no new knowledge was gained, and both the use and non-use of knowledge was evident in the field" (p. 248). Additionally, research conducted by Gilbert et al., (2010) found that "coaches at the highest level of competition spend the fewest mean annual hours in coach development" (p.11).

Such research not only brings into contention the value of formal coach education but subsequently questions what type of education coaches prefer, and how this can be best created to meet their needs. Confusingly however, although the literature queries the validity of the 'train and certify' approach (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012), it also suggests that coach education/training (although it is unclear at this stage to what extent) is indeed still essential in improving sports coaching (Cushion, Armour and Jones, 2003). Moreover, rather than assessing the educative models comparatively, e.g. which one works best (i.e. formal versus informal or non-formal), this thesis aims to establish the preferences of coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma to determine to what extent the current course design meets their needs.

## **2.1 What role can formal, non-formal and informal education play in developing coaches?**

In developing some recommendations for practice, Mallett et al., (2009) identifies three educative situations which, they feel, have an important role to play in facilitating effective coach education and subsequent coach learning. First and foremost is formal education. A rather pejorative and questionable definition is that formal education refers to "highly institutionalised, bureaucratic, curriculum-driven and formally recognised [courses] with grades, diplomas or certificates" (Merriam, 2007 cited in Mallett et al., 2009, p. 328). Such an approach (which largely reflects the taught elements of the L4PGDiploma) is generally criticised as being overly curriculum-driven whereby the content is either too basic (simple drills) or too abstract (as in scientific content) and not deemed to be relevant for use in practice (Abraham and Collins, 1998).

Currently, formal coach education in the UK provides a measure of quality assurance and standardisation across NGB's of sport which is undoubtedly a positive step in the professionalisation of sports coaching. To what extent this standardisation is a reality is uncertain. However, the current design of the L4PGDiploma is largely formalised, i.e. attendance at lecture's and summative assessments. What differs in comparison to a traditional formal educative provision is the deployment of a non-sport specific coach mentor.

By contrast, an equally questionable definition, is that of non-formal education, which refers to “organised education opportunities outside formal education settings, these offerings tend to be short term, voluntary and have few if any prerequisites” (Mallett et al., 2009, p. 328). Such educational settings include specific subgroups of coaches who have been invited to attend conferences, workshops and seminars. Interestingly, non-formal education situations, are said to be created to address the shortcomings and bridge the knowledge gap between the levels of formal educational opportunities (Cushion et al., 2003). This is certainly the case for the current L4PGDiploma as continuous professional development (CPD) is currently being developed to facilitate the transition from the UKCC Level 3 to UKCC Level 4. Notably, CPD does not necessarily fall within the parameters of non-formal education and can also include formal education.

Thus far, formal and informal situations both infer that there is a beginning and an end to learning, rather than viewing learning as a continuous, ongoing process (Cushion et al., 2003). Furthermore, and crucially against the adult learning parameters which will be discussed shortly, both formal and non-formal education infer that the facilitator is the person with the knowledge, implying a certain amount of transmittal learning. In this regard, the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE, 2002) states:

“Teaching has to become more a matter of guidance and mentoring than a didactic transfer process. It is, therefore, rather close in many respects to the relationship between supervisor and research student, than it is to that of lecturer and undergraduate student” (p. 29).

Taking this stance into consideration, informal education differs considerably to that of formal and non-formal, as it concerns education which takes place without dogmatic guidance from others. Informal education refers to learning taking place as an incidental by-product of some other activity (Mallett et al., 2009). Suggesting that learning does not necessarily always/best occur in the classroom but rather, can accrue through daily interactions and shared relationships, i.e. social learning. Despite the growing body of evidence that informal education situations are considered more valuable (Cushion et al., 2003; Culver & Trudel, 2006), they are by far the least utilised mechanism to stimulate coach development across the UKCF.

To further enhance this debate, I consider the popular adult learning theory andragogy, which emphasises five components as increasingly crucial in developing effective adult educational programmes. These components influence both programme design and the role the learner plays in facilitating their own learning.

## **2.2 Andragogy and the application to coach education and development**

Pedagogy is “a term derived from the Greek word ‘paid (meaning ‘child’) and agogy (meaning ‘leading’)...literally meaning the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, 1970, p. 40) where ‘teaching’ is the main focus. Andragogy however, is the “art and science of *helping* adults learn” (ibid, p. 37). Andragogy is based on the premise that adults are learning-centred and self-directed; crucially more so than children, and possess knowledge which has been gained through life/work experiences that are considered invaluable to the learning process. Knowles was one of the first scholars to identify the shortcomings of the traditional pedagogical approach and its application to adult learners. Pedagogy is based on a conception of the purpose of education—namely, the transmission of knowledge and skills— that adult learners seemed to sense this approach was insufficient. Accordingly, teachers of adults found them to be;

“resistant to the strategies that pedagogy prescribed, including fact-laden lectures, assigned readings, drills, quizzes, rote memorizing, and examinations. Adults appeared to want something more than this, and drop-out rates were high” (Knowles, 1970 cited in, Chan, 2000 p. 3).

In an attempt to rationalise and validate andragogy, Knowles (1970) went on to describe five measures for consideration relating to programme design and the role a learner plays in enriching the learning experience. The first is an adult’s self-concept: Once an individual defines themselves as an adult, their concept of self and their societal role they play will change. As an adult’s self-concept is revised, the individual will be more compelled to take responsibility, make decisions and, in general act autonomously. Adults are therefore thought to be more responsible for their goals and subsequent outcomes of their learning (Ross-Gordon, 2003).

The second presupposition is the importance of the learner’s experience. Unlike pedagogy, andragogy assumes that adults have (having lived longer) acquired a

greater volume of experiences (Knowles, 1970). This accumulation of experiences, if capitalised on in the classroom, or contextualised upon, can lead to deeper understanding of the content (McGrath, 2009). Furthermore, if a connection is made between sessional material and life experiences, there is an increased willingness to accept new ideas. This need to associate and contextualise information is certainly more of a challenge when working with adults, especially if they have not been challenged or asked to reflect in previous social milieus, as beliefs held for a longer period of time are harder to change. In this regard, Stoszkowski and Collins (2012), state that 'Cognitive Conservatism' outlines the reluctance of people to admit their mistakes and update their belief systems. Similar and limiting views may also accrue from the learner's perceptions of the nature of knowledge (expert versus self-established) and learning (learning facts rather than self-developing structures) (Collins, Abraham & Collins, 2012).

The third principle is orientation to learn, which refers to engagement in learning that is largely performance orientated or problem-centred. In this respect, an adult learner identifies and attempts to solve problems whilst making their own decisions and mistakes (which will facilitate their learning) more commonly referred to as experiential learning. Furthermore, in line with this principle, Knowles (1970) highlights the importance of the role of the facilitator. The decentralisation of the teacher is key, and supports the aforementioned UKCGE (2002) premise, as this moves away from the diction that the teacher is the holder of knowledge. To reiterate:

“the truly artistic teacher of adults perceives the locus of responsibility for learning to be the learner; he conscientiously suppresses his own compulsion to teach what he knows his students ought to learn in favour of helping his students learn for themselves what they want to learn” (p. 51).

Readiness to learn is the fourth premise of andragogy, which emphasises that adults need to be ready to learn and the absence of this has detrimental effects on the outcome. This also resonates with the literature around behaviour change conducted by Prochaska and DiClemte (1983). Their research states that individuals need to be well into the contemplation stage in order to initiate change and subsequently maintain new behaviour. A more recent extension of this model (Norcross, Krebs, & Prochaska, 2011) offers both more evidence and practical implications for the

operationalisation of these concepts in an educational/developmental environment. In short, coaches must ideally be well into this contemplation stage *before* they start the course of study.

The final area is motivation to learn. Adults usually enter into a learning situation *after* they have experienced a need. As their learning is usually problem-centred (orientation to learn); they will be motivated to solve problems which they have personally identified. Although some adults respond to external motivators such as job promotion, adult learners are more likely to be internally motivated: that is, they engage in learning to gain new knowledge and improve self-esteem. Adults therefore, need to be in a position where they are interested in the subject matter, have a desire to learn and understand the importance and value of learning (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Ross-Gordon, 2003; Werthner & Trudel, 2006; McGrath, 2009; Taylor & House, 2010).

### **2.3 Identified weaknesses and misapplication of the andragogy approach**

Although the andragogy philosophy has been instrumental in bringing adult learning to the fore; it is worth proposing a few questions for deliberation. Accordingly, the relevance of this philosophy to coaching and coaches is to determine whether these principles can be applied to coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma. In line with Knowles (1970) principles, the teacher/facilitator(s) should try to determine with the learner where the learning should commence. For example, where an adult is required to learn a new skill, they would most likely require more of a pedagogical approach.

This denotes a certain amount of individualisation in the delivery methods which is not seen in the current UKCC qualifications. For example, a Level 1 coaching course is delivered over approximately two days. All coaches present are taught in the same way and - on occasion - by different tutors over the two days. On the final day all coaches are assessed to determine whether the Level 1 criteria has been met. Arguably, NGB's would propose that this delivery method is largely as a result of the cost and time of delivering qualifications. However, if the evidence to date states that insufficient/ineffective coach education and subsequent coach learning takes place

using a 'one size fits all' model, it is suggested that an alternative approach considering individualisation of learning programmes is essential.

A further assumption made by Knowles (1970) is that adults are self-directed. Although this may be true to a certain extent, this assertion neglects the fact that some adults, to remain employed, are expected to invest in or top-up their education and training in their own time and at their own expense (Hake, 1999). It is worth reiterating at this stage that the hockey coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma are required to hold, or be working towards, a UKCC Level 4 award to remain employed (for particular roles). Anecdotally at least, this is certainly the case for some of the coaches on the L4PGDiploma. Subsequently, if adults are *expected* to attend training/education, one could argue that, as they have not chosen to be there, they will experience a lack of motivation which, according to Knowles, is central to the andragogical philosophy.

Furthermore, if a coach had freely enrolled onto a programme of study, the inference is that they are ready to question their ideas and beliefs, which Mezirow (1990) refers to as meaning perspectives and networks of argument. If however, they have been asked to attend by an employer, or hold a very authority-centred view of knowledge (cf. Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Collins et al., 2012), one could question whether or not they are really ready to critically question and be challenged by their peers.

A further limitation of Knowles' (1970) philosophy is that it fails to recognise the importance of possible social and psychological barriers which may make participation and motivation difficult. As all students in HE environments are eighteen-years and older, they are at the age to be considered 'adults'. For the purpose of this thesis however, the term 'adult learner' refers specifically to the coaches who have engaged on the L4PGDiploma. As Table 2.1, denotes the average age of a Level 4 coach is 42 years of age.

Table 2.1

Average age of Coaches enrolled on the L4PGDiploma between 2009-2014

	Pathway and year of study				
	Elite Pathway 2009-2011	Elite Pathway 2010-2012	Talent Pathway 2011-2013	Talent Pathway 2012-2014	Talent Pathway 2013-2015
Average age of coach	44.9	43.5	43.1	37.8	41

Unlike their younger counterparts, adult learners have a range of external commitments such as fulltime jobs and family commitments which can impact attendance and make engagement and motivation difficult to maintain. This is further exacerbated by holding competitions and training schedule's over weekends and thus clashing with the taught elements of the L4PGDiploma, as Table 2.2 indicates.

Table 2.2

Attendance rates of coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma between 2009-2014

%	Pathway and year of study				
	Elite Pathway 2009-2011	Elite Pathway 2010-2012	Talent Pathway 2011-2013	Talent Pathway 2012-2014	Talent Pathway 2013-2015
Average	67.90%	55%	65%	63%	TBC <sup>4</sup>
Median	62.50%	50%	62.50%	68.75%	TBC
Mode	62.50%	50%	62.50%	87.50%	TBC

Other possible barriers include the negative effects of previous educational experiences (McGivney, 2004); no experience of HE either because secondary education was unsuccessful and/or not enjoyable; a sustained break from HE and lack of guidance and support (Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999).

The importance of distinguishing between client groups is not solely to consider the barriers, but to also acknowledge the caveat of 'uncritical crediting' of adults. Although it is agreed that adult learners bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience, "there are experiences in adult education that are worthwhile and there are those that are not" (Quilty, 2003 cited in McGrath, 2009 p. 62). This certainly applies to coach education. This stance assumes that life *experiences* compensate for the lack of formal education (Groves, Bowd, & Smith, 2010), when surely what is *learned* is of more importance.

<sup>4</sup> Unable to provide statistics on attendance as student are due to complete in August 2015.

There is also the truism that, in any regard, individuals 'don't know what they don't know'. As such, at least *some* didactic instruction must *surely* be necessary, so that relevant experiences can be drawn out, contextualised and fully exploited within an established knowledge structure. Considering these factors it is argued that the older adult learner differs from younger adult learners and therefore, require their circumstances to be taken into consideration. Additionally, HE should be aware of these and consequentially, a better understanding of the types of educational programmes adults can commit to can be ascertained.

Overall, Knowles' (1970) assertions bring into question how, if at all, HE institutes can allow students to learn what they want. Although such a position supports the earlier research by Mallett et al., (2009) with regard to advocating informal education - even with attempts to be flexible - some framework or learning outcomes/objectives are usually outlined by HE and some educational didactic instructions seems plausible; contentions which both go against the andragogical principles. In summation although these five principles seem to be plausible, there is little empirical evidence to support this philosophy, due in part as least, to the lack of consensus on the definition of andragogy and what this terms embodies. However, at this stage I feel that Knowles (1970) principles are enriched through other theoretical dispositions, which I now consider.

## **2.4 How else can we create positive learning experiences for coaches?**

### **2.4.1 Epistemology and contextualisation**

A coach's epistemology is fundamental to how they approach learning and, more specifically, their willingness to participate in coach education. Epistemology refers to an individual's beliefs about knowledge and how this knowledge is constructed (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012). Epistemic beliefs are seen to be largely anti-intellectual and, if left unchallenged, are difficult to change (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012). Additionally, as adult learners tend to be more emotionally attached to their epistemic beliefs: "...if presented with information to challenge these beliefs, they are more likely to reject and attempt to explain away such new information" (Delahaye & Ehrich, 2008 p. 651).

Since it is acknowledged that adults are not empty vessels that need filling, the information offered to them requires presentation in a way to which they can relate, a

process referred to as contextualisation and supported by Knowles's (1970) experience of the learner principle. Contextualisation can ease the epistemological shift as evidenced by Entwistle and Peterson (2004) who assert that the way learning is approached affects the type of learning that takes place. In this regard, if new information is contextualised and the coaches can see the value of it, they are more likely to accept and further investigate rather than dismiss the new material.

In this regard, Entwistle and Peterson (2004) refer to deep, surface and strategic approaches to learning, emphasising the importance of seeking meaning when learning. The deep approach accentuates, "understanding ideas for yourself...relating ideas to previous knowledge and experience...looking for patterns and underlying principles, checking evidence, engaging with ideas and enjoying an intellectual challenge", i.e. contextualisation (p. 415). The surface approach refers to "reproducing content; treating the course as unrelated bits of knowledge; routinely memorising facts and carrying out procedures" (ibid).

The L4PGDiploma coaches have coached for a number of years and have extensive experience of working within a sporting environment. This previous knowledge, albeit taking into consideration the problems with long held epistemic beliefs and cognitive conservatism, is invaluable, especially if originally developed and subsequently exploited in the right ways. Thus, the challenge in changing a person's frame of reference (Mezirow, 1990) can clearly be made easier if the new information provided is connected to prior knowledge/life experience or contextualised as highlighted by Entwistle and Peterson (2004) and further emphasised by other scholars; (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Ross-Gordon, 2003; Cushion et al., 2003; Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Delahaye & Ehrich, 2008; McGrath, 2009; Chu & Tsai, 2009; Groves et al., 2010). Enhancing a coaches previous experience can therefore lead to enhanced learning, which I now consider further.

#### **2.4.2 Previous Experience in Sport**

Previous experience in sport is deemed to be of importance when exploring positive learning experiences for coaches (Mallett & Feltz 2000, Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Lemyre, Trudel, & Durrand-Bush, 2007; Mallett et al., 2009; Gilbert et al., 2010; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012). This differs from the stance that the *time spent* coaching allows a person to be considered the most knowledgeable. Rather, previous

experience allows coaches to gain sport specific knowledge and experience on how to interact with others who are more than likely to be involved in the sport and deemed influential/knowledgeable. This interaction with relevant others can be as a coach, athlete or another connection. Without it, however, 'development per hour' is considerably smaller. Interestingly, in research conducted by Gilbert et al., (2010)

"It appears that a minimum of several thousand hours of athletic participation, across several sports for an average of at least 13 years is a common characteristic of successful coaches. It also appears that coaches working at elite levels of competition (i.e. college) may specialise in fewer sports than coaches of recreation or development sports" (p. 11).

In short, it is not the 'time served' which is instrumental in implicit coach development and subsequently learning, but rather, the ways in which this experience is used through critical reflection (Schön, 1987); interaction (communities of practice) and evolution (Abraham & Collins, 2011). As such, coach education programmes should facilitate critical reflection and encourage evidence-based practice which I now consider.

### **2.4.3 Professional Thinking**

Schön's (1987) theory proposes that reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action evolves from experience. This critical reflection is an innate process, emulating from the competencies which an individual already possesses (Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998). Thus, critical reflection allows coaches to consider why they are doing what they are doing, which in turn encourages questioning of previous practice and avoiding insular mentalities (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Additionally, encouraging coaches to reflect on and establish a coaching philosophy can assist with how coaches make their decisions and allow them to underpin these decisions based on their individual philosophies. This also avoids reverting back to 'how things have always been done'. Promoting reflection and the development of a philosophy should therefore allow coaches to construct their own problems, question their existing practices and better meet the needs of their athletes (Nash, Sproule & Horton 2008), again supporting Knowles' (1970) orientation to learn principle.

Crucially, however, reflection is far more likely to generate change if it takes place against a clearly held and justified evidence base, to avoid reaffirming pre-existing beliefs and cognitive conservatism. Supporting this contention, Banningan and Moores (2009) propose a model of Professional Thinking, which integrates reflection and evidence based practice. The basic premise of this model involves critical analysis seeking, reviewing knowledge and sharing ideas against a clear evidence base (i.e. research), which can assist practitioners in developing a concrete framework which underpins their practice.

#### **2.4.4 Mentoring**

Mentoring is alluded to as having an increasingly important role to play in coach development (Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999; Cushion et al., 2003; Nash & Collins 2006; Cushion, 2006; Erickson et al., 2008; Mallett et al., 2009; Wilson, Bloom and Harvey, 2010; Gould, 2012). Mentoring is based on the premise of knowledgeable others providing guidance and support, while challenging taken for granted practices/thoughts and behaviours. This differs from reflection as it involves another person facilitating the reflective process and encouraging inquisitiveness.

Although a precise global definition of mentoring cannot be found, the fundamentals of mentoring have been well described by Jones, Harris and Miles (2009). These include building trust; providing feedback; ensuring challenges; goal setting and monitoring; supporting and formalising the process - although over formalising is not recommended (Jones et al., 2009). While this is not an exhaustive list, the general similarities allude to developing a relationship where the “mentor supports, counsels and guides the protégé within a chosen context” (Wilson et al., 2010) not dissimilar to the facilitation outlined by the UKCGE (2002) and Knowles (1970).

#### **2.4.5 Communities of Practice**

Interaction with other coaches is seen to have an increasingly important role when developing coaches (Hake, 1999; Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Nash & Collins, 2006; Cushion, 2006; Culver & Trudel, 2006; Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie, 2006; Lemyre et al., 2007; Parton & Bailey, 2008; Erickson et al., 2008; Mallett et al, 2009; Burton, Lloyd, & Griffiths, 2011; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012) and draws upon the fundamentals of informal educational opportunities, which largely

stem from social learning theory. It is acknowledged throughout the literature that there are countless benefits to sharing practice and social interaction. Wenger and Snyder (2000) coined the term Communities of Practice (CoP), which they identified as;

“groups of people informally bond together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise...inevitably they share experience and knowledge in a free-flowing, creative way that fosters new approaches to problems” (p. 139-140).

Wenger and Snyder (2000) distinguish between four ‘groups’ of interaction; CoP, formal work groups, project teams and informal networks. Each of the groups has a distinct purpose and are founded in different ways. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore the differences between these four groups, Wenger and Snyder (2000) do emphasize that there are essential components for a unified group to be called a CoP, which consist of three criteria.

The first is mutual engagement which emphasises that each member of the CoP must be actively involved (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Secondly, joint enterprise, which states that there is a “requirement that all members of the CoP must share a common goal” (Wenger, 1998 cited in Galipeau & Trudel, 2006, p. 83). Thirdly, there is a shared repertoire which refers to the importance of the community being able to communicate and understand each other using a common, technical (in parts) language (ibid). From such definitions, it is clear that CoP’s can apply to coaching, i.e. coaches sharing a common goal and having a shared repertoire. The contentions with CoP’s at the elite level is that on some accounts, sharing information is “considered cheating” (Culver & Trudel, 2006), and arguably in competitive sports the sharing of ideas is limited as Lemyre et al., (2007) explain.

“Interactions between rival coaches are of particular interest because coaches can learn a lot from their peers, but because of the inherent competitive aspect in sport, coaches are usually careful not to lose their edge by sharing too much knowledge” (p. 201).

Although social milieus are considered to be increasingly influential in line with the informal education situations discussed earlier, there is a need and requirement for facilitation and mediation of CoPs to ensure dogmatic beliefs are challenged

(Cassidy et al, 2006 p. 113). The final learning parameter for deliberation is the role observations can play in enriching coaches' learning experience.

#### **2.4.6 Observations**

Opportunities to observe other coaches are seen to be developmentally worthwhile (Lemyre et al., 2009),

“as coaches move to a competitive level, they tend to be more formal with rival coaches, meaning they exchange few words at the beginning or at the end of each game...to compensate for the absence of sharing knowledge with their rivals, some coaches observe them in an attempt to steal information” (p. 201).

Such observations may not, (but ideally should), allow the opportunity for discussion to aid the process of sharing practice and questioning a fellow coach's coaching practice. Research conducted by Erickson et al., (2008) investigated coaches' actual and preferred source of knowledge and found coaches deemed observing others to be important when learning. This was seen as key for those coaches who wanted to move up the ladder and out of the developmental arena. Notably, observations can be categorised as social learning and are therefore not entirely dissimilar to the previously discussed CoP and mentoring as all three stress the importance of creating informal educative parameters.

### **2.5 In summary – ‘Best’ ways to develop coaches’ education to facilitate learning**

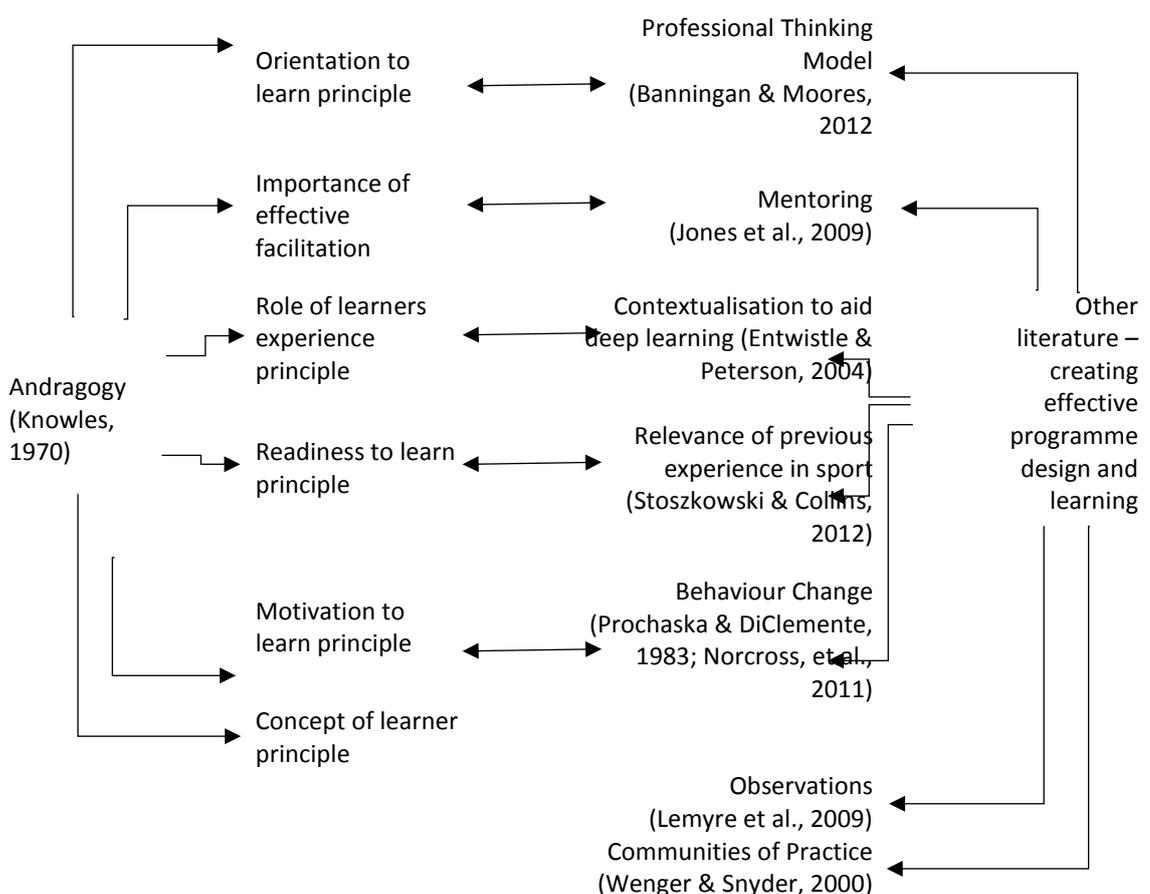
Assimilating the research highlights that constructing effective educational situations for L4PGDiploma coaches is a complex phenomenon. A plethora of features have been discussed which are suggested as important to enhance learning and subsequently inform effective programme design. What is paramount is that as facilitators of learning, in order to better our adult coaches and subsequent athletes, we do need to consider the best ways to do so. Having reviewed the literature, there is clear parity between Knowles (1970) andragogy principles and the ‘other’ literature in this domain when considering effective programme design for sports coaches (Figure 2).

The current research suggests that formal education is not redundant and can still play a significant role in creating and facilitating positive and appropriate adult learning experiences, i.e. through effective facilitation. Moreover, the additional features of establishing positive learning experiences are certainly not contemporary in thought, but the practical implementation of these suggestions, despite the overwhelming research, have largely been negated. Informal education situations, i.e. communities of practice, observations, mentoring, all suggest that these mechanisms can add value to coach education and subsequent learning.

In turn, I now review the empirical data, to assess how well if at all - the current L4PGDiploma meets the needs of the coaches against the theoretical parameters, with the overall aim of assessing what creates a positive learning experience for L4PGDiploma coaches.

Figure 2

Parallels between Knowles (1970) andragogy principles and the 'other' literature to facilitate effective programme design



Note: List of references is not exhaustive and for demonstration purposes

### **Chapter 3: Empirical Perspectives: What do Coaches say?**

Based on the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2, the objective of this Chapter was to consider the parity between the theoretical dispositions and the empirical picture obtained from a convenience sample of coaches. Accordingly, the empirical data were assessed to establish to what extent, if at all, the principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1970) applied to the coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma. Additionally, to determine whether the current modality of the L4PGDiploma was fit for purpose and to what extent, if at all, informal educative approaches were deemed to be effective. In doing so, to establish whether the coaches actively participated in such learning opportunities and how these social interactions, if considered appropriate and useful, were deemed as important or influential in supporting the coaches' learning needs.

If this proved to be so, could these environments be 'artificially' created as a result of the L4PGDiploma and thus, create a more 'informal' mode of study to support the existing formal structure? Finally, to establish to what extent there had been a perceived change to the coaches' coaching practice as a result of engagement on the L4PGDiploma and what they felt had been most beneficial for them during their studies. In totality, considering the experiences of coaches engaged in the L4PGDiploma and what they viewed as a positive HE coach education programme, I hoped to establish some clear guidelines to inform future practice.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

##### **3.1.1 Identification of approach and construction of the semi-structured interviews**

In designing the interviews, it was clear that there was a vast amount of literature exploring educative situations that are thought to enhance programme design and subsequent coach learning. Therefore, in determining the research methodology most suitable, a qualitative study, utilising inductive and deductive reasoning (Rhind & Jowett, 2010; Soiferman, 2010), was elected as it was felt that this approach had the potential to generate rich and detailed accounts of the coaches' experience through establishing their perspective against the theory. It was also considered that this methodology would be flexible enough to discuss areas which I

may not have considered. It is acknowledged that empirical studies often differentiate between inductive and deductive approaches. However, in order to test the theories presented in Chapter 2 and to allow a detailed account of the coaches' experiences it was felt that an amalgamation of these approaches would work best.

Semi-structured, in depth interviews were felt to be the most appropriate tool to elicit coaches' experiences and feelings (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In construction of the semi-structured interviews, introductory questions were included to assist in the building of rapport (Purdy, 2014) which was followed with a draft interview schedule. In designing the semi-structured interview schedule, the questions focused on the guiding principles of the theoretical discourse, mainly andragogy, i.e. 'to what extent are you self-motivated to study'.

Over a period of two weeks eight pilot interviews were conducted. The purpose behind the number of pilot studies was to develop my skills and techniques as an interviewer to enhance the trustworthiness of the interview process and subsequently data collection. On completion of each pilot interview, discussions took place with experienced interviewers who advised on how the interview could be improved. For example, member checking was introduced to check my understanding of what the coaches were saying. For example, to check my understanding and to enable accurate coding questions such as 'when you say X, what do you mean'; 'can I check, it sounds as though you are saying X'. Furthermore, having undergone a lengthy pilot process, it was then determined that in order to obtain a rich picture of the coaches' experiences, questions should enable coaches to speak freely and be less restricted. As such, the questions were refined, i.e. the aforementioned question was changed to, 'what were your motivations for enrolling on the L4PGDiploma'. Other changes having undertaken the pilot interviews included adding additional probes to facilitate an open discussion, changing the order of questions as well as introducing the aforementioned member checking. From this foundation, follow-up questions were included in the interview schedule as stimuli for extended discussion.

### **3.1.2 Participants**

Of the sixty seven participant coaches who had completed/were completing the programme, purposeful sampling was used to generate a representative cross

section of experience with the course. A total of 28 coaches expressed an interest to take part in the study. Of the 28 coaches that expressed an interest in part taking in the study, purposeful sampling was undertaken to ensure a representative cross sample of coaches across all Pentagon Sport, i.e. coaches from Rugby League, Hockey, Squash, Basketball and Table Tennis. Furthermore, in an attempt to enhance validity and reliability the data were triangulated, thus, I recruited nine participant coaches who had graduated, six who were halfway through and so a year into their part-time programme, and three participant coaches who had just started the programme (representing 25% of the whole) and attended only one residential weekend (half of a twenty credit module). Initially all coaches who had started, completed or currently engaged on the course were asked to participate in the study via email.

The study was conducted over a period of six weeks where face to face semi-structured interviews were arranged with the coaches at a convenient time and location. All interviews were recorded with permission from the coaches to allow me the opportunity to review the dialogue (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The participants were asked to answer all questions honestly, whilst assurances were provided on the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were also made aware that they could at any time withdraw from the study with no ramifications. Furthermore, the participants were advised that the research was being guided by theoretical predispositions along with obtaining a detailed account of their experiences (Munroe-Chandler, 2005).

Having worked personally with all the participant coaches, while this may have assisted in building rapport, this may have also hindered their ability to speak freely. As such, the participants were informed prior to the interviews that I would no longer be working with UCLan, to allow the facilitation of an honest discussion. The eight coaches who participated in the pilot interviews were excluded from the purposeful sampling.

The data presented are based on transcribed interview transcripts of the participant engaged in the study. The data included 13 male participant coaches (mean age = 43.8 years. SD = 8.3) and 5 female participant coaches (mean age = 45.1 years. SD = 11.1). All had extensive coaching experience (mean = 18 years. SD = 6.5). 15 participant coaches held a governing body specific UKCC Level 3 qualification, while

the remaining three participant coaches were permitted onto the course through their NGB's admission criteria and regarded as having a suitable level of coaching experience.

### **3.1.3 Procedure**

Coaches were initially emailed to request participation in the study (see Appendix 2). On expression of interest to take part in the study, a consent form (see Appendix 3) was forwarded and returned ahead of interview arrangements. Ethical approval for this research was granted by UCLan's Built Environment, Sports and Health (BUSH) ethics committee in line with UCLan's ethics procedure. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim and checked twice against the audio recording for accuracy.

### **3.1.4 Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using a qualitative methodology, employing both inductive and deductive reasoning. The face-to-face transcribed interviews were organised through coding the information into categories and themes (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). This method was deemed to be the most appropriate for this research as it would enable a comparison of the theoretical discourse and further to assist in the generation and identification of themes that I may not have considered. Thus, data were initially deductively coded and subsequently inductively coded using the analysis software NVivo 10.

The deductively coded data were based around the theoretical literature: motivations for engaging on the L4PGDiploma against the backdrop of andragogy; expectations of the L4PGDiploma and preferred approaches to learning against formal, informal and non-formal educative situations, which included CoP; mentoring and observations. The inductively coded themes emerged having asked about the highlights of the L4PGDiploma; suggested changes to the current provision and whether there have been any evidential changes to the coaches' coaching practice. In doing so, the data presented relates to the raw data themes. Summarised well by Krane, Andersen and Streaun (1997),

“Placing frequency count after a category of experiences is tantamount to say how important it is, thus value is derived by number. In many cases rare experiences are no less meaningful, useful or important than common ones” (p. 215).

In this regard the raw data themes discussed throughout this Chapter report the number of participant coaches, across Pentagon Sports that were able to relate to the theme and the importance attributed to the theme. For example, coaches were asked about their motivations for enrolling on the course, they were then asked to rank their responses in order of priority.

### **3.2 Deductive results and discussion**

For the purpose of discussion the deductive results are presented in the first instances, followed by the inductive results and discussion.

#### **3.2.1 Deductive analysis and discussion: Coaches’ motivation in line with Andragogy**

In line with Knowles (1970) principles discussed previously, there are five adult learning principles which were considered against the empirical evidence. The empirical data were initially deductively coded to evaluate to what extent these principles were prevalent to the L4PGDiploma coaches. In ascending order and across the whole participant group, as demonstrated in Table 3.1, the raw data themes coded under motivation for engagement were opportunities to work with other coaches and gain new knowledge (both at 9.13%); to obtain a postgraduate diploma and other pragmatic reasons (both at 8.71%); influenced by others (6.64%); affirmation of current knowledge/practice (5.81%) and finally to obtain a UKCC Level 4 award (4.98%).

Interestingly, in construction of the interviews, I did not identify that working with other coaches would be a motivational factor. In considering the empirical data however, the coaches felt this was a fundamental reason for engagement. A rugby league coach stated, “sharing and working with other coaches from other sports and the same sport”. Further reiterated by another rugby league coach, “I was probably more excited about the course...I probably see it as more beneficial to me to learn from other coaches”. A basketball coach added, “to be sat with peers of a similar

standard, a similar interest and a similar motivation, which I then hoped I would learn from”.

An additional reason for engagement on the L4PGDiploma deemed to be significant for the coaches was the opportunity to gain new knowledge - a rugby coach stated, “Yes, I wanted to do it, because I am a bit sad really, I quite like the idea of gaining new knowledge and that sort of stuff, so that was the big driver for wanting to do it”. A hockey coach added “gaining new knowledge, yes, and that new knowledge could inform me with the work I do now”. In supporting Knowles (1970) principles for motivation to learn, some of the coaches clearly demonstrated that they were motivated and the primary reason for this was to work with other coaches and gain new knowledge.

This motivation also seemed to be self-directed, as a basketball coach remarked,

“Because I want to be a better coach. I think that is my number one reasons and it’s the one thing that has driven me to do all my study...it’s all about me being a better coach”.

Such sentiments were echoed throughout the empirical results where the majority of coaches highlighted their reason for engagement as self-directed and as a desired to improve their coaching. Surprisingly however, some of the coaches’ motivation to learn was much more pragmatic than proposed by Knowles (1970), i.e. job progression. A table tennis coach for example stated,

“I had it in my mind that I didn’t have a degree on my CV and I wanted to gain more knowledge on coaching and this opportunity presented itself and seemed liked the right thing to do for my career”.

A rugby league coach asserted, “It was probably to get a qualification” while another rugby league coach provided an example of the perceived extrinsic benefits of completing the course,

Table 3.1

Deductive analysis of raw data themes across whole participant group: Reasons for enrolment on the L4PGDiploma

Reasons for enrolment on the L4PGDiploma	Alumni		Halfway		Started		Whole Participant Group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Motivation to Learn	65	26.97	46	19.09	17	7.05	128	53.11
Pragmatic reasons	11	4.56	8	3.32	2	0.83	21	8.71
Postgraduate diploma qualification	11	4.56	8	3.32	2	0.83	21	8.71
UKCC Level 4 award	5	2.07	4	1.66	3	1.24	12	4.98
Influenced by others	7	2.90	6	2.49	3	1.24	16	6.64
Gain new knowledge	12	4.98	8	3.32	2	0.83	22	9.13
Affirmation of current knowledge/practices	11	4.56	1	0.41	2	0.83	14	5.81
Work with other coaches	8	3.32	11	4.56	3	1.24	22	9.13
Readiness to Learn	13	5.39	8	3.32	2	0.83	23	9.54
Concept of Learner	10	4.15	2	0.83	0	0.00	12	4.98
Role of Learners Experience	43	17.84	16	6.64	6	2.49	65	26.97
Challenge frames of reference	14	5.81	12	4.98	5	2.07	31	12.86
Ability to contextualise	5	2.07	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	2.07
Applying theory to practice	19	7.88	4	1.66	1	0.41	24	9.96
Opportunity for critical thinking	5	2.07	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	2.07
Orientation to Learn	9	3.73	3	1.24	1	0.41	13	5.39
	140	58.09	75	31.12	26	10.79	241	100.00

“If I am being honest I probably thought in the back of my mind there would also be a more extrinsic benefit. I knew it was new, and I knew if I was successful in it that there would only be a small cohort of people who had completed the Level 4. I was also aware that because of the nature of what was involved, it wouldn’t be everyone’s cup of tea. If I was brutally honest I thought if that’s going to give me an advantage over people to be involved in programmes and coach in the environments I want to. That hasn’t happened; if I am being honest that was definitely a motivating factor for me”.

Some of the coaches stated that their motivation for engagement was influenced by a third party, either through the recommendation of coaches who had previously engaged on the course or by their NGB. A basketball coach highlighted, “the course came highly recommended [from a previous coach on the course]...it seemed like a natural progression for me, as I say I have my Level 3”. A hockey coach added, “I suppose the [NGB] were quite important as they recommend people to go forward for the Level 4, so it is quite important that you are recognised by them”.

A few coaches also stipulated that their motivation and reason for enrolling on the course was to reaffirm the knowledge they currently held and seek validation for the practices they were engaged in. A rugby league coach remarked, “I have always done stuff in my coaching career and well actually what I did back in 2000 about goal setting, well I wanted a paper that backs that up”. A hockey coach stated, “Planning and periodization, I wanted something to kind of dot some ‘I’s and cross some ‘T’s of the knowledge I already had”.

In considering Knowles (1970) second principle, there is a parallel between the motivation to learn and readiness to learn. Having previously reflected on the importance of readiness to learn (Chapter 2) when considering behaviour change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Norcross, et al., 2011), what the coaches also exhibited is that they had a goal and a clear rationale for continuing with their professional development - when they felt ready to do so (9.54%), further supporting Knowles andragogy philosophy. As one basketball coach explained,

“When I left school I went straight into work, I didn’t do education, it wasn’t for me. When I made a conscience decision to improve as a coach the first thing I did was return to university”.

In line with the theoretical discourse, this reiterates that learning can only take place when an individual is ready and motivated to do so (Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Bannigan & Moores, 2009; Taylor & House, 2010); a contention which the empirical data validates.

Knowles’s (1970) also accentuates that adults are more compelled to take responsibility for their learning and - as such - are self-directed which he refers to as the self-concept of the learner (4.98%). A hockey coach, for example declared;

“I think I wanted to do it, because I applied for two years and didn’t get on it before I got on it. So really, you could consider that they were a stumbling block and I understand that there were people ahead of me in the queue and I totally get that, but you know what I had in my mind that I was going to do it and generally once I decide I am going to do something, I do”.

A rugby coach explained, “if I look back to my philosophy it was about improving myself and once I start something I don’t like to give it up”. These example demonstrate the autonomy of the coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma and emphasised that the coaches felt responsible in initiating self-study and also investing in their self-development.

Knowles’s (1970) fourth principle stated the importance of adopting a problem-centred approach when working with adult learners: meeting their orientation to learn. As discussed in Chapter 2, this principle is further reiterated by Entwistle et al., (2004) who postulate the importance of providing information which can be contextualised to an adult’s wealth of experience to enhance deep learning, rather than employing a surface learning approach. This resonated amongst several coaches (5.39%) across the L4PGDiploma. For example a rugby coach highlighted,

“I don’t think there is loads of time where you get this is the answer, you get here’s some things to think about, here’s something you probably shouldn’t be

doing these are the reason why but you probably need to look yourself, so I think it has been about problem solving more than anything else”.

Furthermore, a rugby coach added “It was just problem solving.... some of it was, here is some information, so how does that fit with what you currently do, find out what somebody else does, so [the lead tutor] teased you to use it”.

A hockey coach added,

“If it starts with here is a great book, I am getting to the content page and drift off. It sounds pathetic, but I almost need a reason to learn, here is a hook, hang a bit on it and here is the rest and [the lead tutor] appears to work like this. I have gone away from [the L4PGDiploma] with some scribbled notes and without been told to, gone and investigated it and found 3 or 4 versions”.

Interestingly, and in line with the orientation to learn principles, Knowles (1970) stresses the fundamental role of the facilitator in adult learning environments which can be demonstrated from a basketball coach’s perspective,

“I am always saying how good [the tutor] is, he is one of the better lecturers of all of the others because he...knows us....knows the sport and knows the situation of each person and [has] the confidence around the content knowledge and just goes into an open discussion”.

What is more, several of the coaches mentioned the lead tutor’s ability to digress on the main topics in an effective way, depending on the needs of the coaches and the discussion taking place at the time, to further explore questions which had arisen as a result of the discussion. The benefits of which were demonstrated by a basketball coach.

“There has not been one time and this is something you can share with [the lead tutor and coach mentor]; they’ve never said no we need to move on, which has been fabulous. We overrun sometimes, we miss things out sometimes but again that is what your personal research for, they open a door, answer questions, have fabulous knowledge and they say here is a plate, there is some stuff on it, but there is only a plate”.

Both these statements demonstrate not only effective facilitation (over the taught residential modules) but also the decentralisation of the facilitator to empower the coaches to learn what they want, when they are ready to do so. This also moves away from the didactic transfer process of learning to guiding and supporting the coaches as stated in the aforementioned UKCGE (2002) statement and Knowles (1970) principle.

The final principles: role of the learners experience (26.97%) stresses the abundance of experience which adults bring with them to a learning environment, which if capitalised on through contextualisation leads to deeper learning. This principle is further reiterated by various scholars (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Ross-Gordon, 2003; Cushion et al., 2003; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Delahaye & Ehrich, 2008; McGrath, 2009; Chu & Tsai, 2009; Groves et al., 2010). In considering this stance, it was necessary to establish to what extent the coaches expected the information provided to be contextualised to their sport. The majority of coaches emphasised that they did not expect this. A rugby league coach stated,

“I think you do that yourself. So the lectures maybe give you a principle ...I always felt that it was for me then to apply to our context, not for them to make is specific to me”.

Furthermore, a hockey coach remarked,

“I didn’t expect them to be at all, I assumed that I would take the information that was given and I would do the contextualising. I mean as a coach your job is to improve athletes, so unless you can take the knowledge that you’ve got and use it then you’re pretty useless”.

Additionally, the majority of coaches expressed how the course had critically challenged them and the effect this had. A hockey coach for example stated,

“It made me question what I do more and highlights what I don’t do. The classic, you do a good session, the players are happy, the other coaches are happy you go home good job. Before the course that is what I was clearly doing. I never found myself in the middle asking what are you really achieving

here...You [thought that] was brilliant [but now it's] pretty crap because did I truly achieve”.

In line with the role of the learners experience Knowles (1970) highlighted the uniqueness of the adult learner which was evident throughout the interviews. Most of the coaches acknowledged the time commitments required along with the increased responsibility of working as a sports coach. For example, a recently graduated rugby league coach emphasised, “I couldn’t afford it at the time and also it was quite difficult logistically with everything else that was going on in my life at the time”. A basketball coach stated, “I think sometimes I struggle with time a little bit. Family members, colleague have made reference to the amount of stuff that I am doing, has it been too much?”

In providing overall consideration there are clear similarities between the motivational factors the coaches provided for enrolling on the L4PGDiploma across the graduate coaches, those halfway through and those who had recently commenced. Therefore, across the participant group the majority of coaches were engaged to initiate self-directed study, when they were ready to do so and – consequently - seemed to be self-motivated. This motivation to learn is, by and large, linked to other factors, such as working with other coaches and gaining new knowledge. The coaches’ motivation coupled with effective facilitation seemed to provide further support for Knowles (1970) principle but additionally for the ‘other’ literature on how best to create effective programme design discussed in Chapter 2. Surprisingly, the most significant factor for coaches’ engagement on the L4PGDiploma was to work with other coaches.

Despite the previously identified limitations of the andragogy principles (as stated in Chapter 2), these did not seem to be evident with the coaches interviewed. For example, the hockey coaches who are required to hold a UKCC Level 4 award, did not appear to express lesser motivations than coaches from the other Pentagon Sports. There were coaches who commented on time-pressures of having to attend the residential weekends but in the same breath expressed the usefulness of such attendance. In summary, although the data clearly demonstrated all five principles, they did not offer support for the limitations which I speculated as being associated with the principles themselves.

Having examined the tie in between the data and Knowles' (1970) principles, I now consider the parameters around what learning environments the coaches deem to be most suited to their needs. Again it is worth emphasising that the empirical evidence relates to the raw data theme.

### **3.2.2 Deductive analysis and discussion: Coaches' expectations of the L4PGDiploma**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the L4PGDiploma has been delivered in a largely formal fashion. Against this formal backdrop, a coach mentor is employed to offer support 'in situ', which 15.38% of the raw data themes relate to. In determining the nature of support required by the coaches, along with establishing the coaches' views of L4PGDiploma programme design, they were asked about their expectations of support from UCLan, which 20.88% of the coaches commented upon. The coaches were further asked about their expected support from their NGB (26.37%), see Table 3.2.

More holistically coaches' initial expectations of attending university can be demonstrated through the comments of a squash coach,

"...obviously going to university before, 6-7 years ago I sort of expected a little bit more of a lecture theatre type of scenario, you know tiered arc, sat in front of a lecturer for a couple of hours and sort of being lectured at and a lot more academic information, a lot more journals, a lot more sort of prescribed learning if you will. It has been quiet good and I am glad it wasn't like that but it has been a little bit more seminar based; that we're not on tiered seating, little things like that, you're in a classroom and not a lecture theatre, a lot more interaction, a lot more discussion".

Table 3.2

Deductive analysis of raw data themes across whole participant group: Expectations of the L4PGDiploma

Expectations of L4PGDiploma	Alumni		Halfway		Started		Whole Participant Group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Expectations of support from UCLan	0	0.00	17	18.68	2	2.20	19	20.88
Expectations of support from NGB	8	8.79	11	12.09	5	5.49	24	26.37
Expectation of mentoring	3	3.30	10	10.99	1	1.10	14	15.38
Other expectations	15	16.48	8	8.79	11	12.09	34	37.36
	26	28.57	46	50.55	19	20.88	91	100

A hockey coach added,

“I expected almost like a ‘chariots of fire’ type university with listed buildings courts and rooms covered in dust and libraries with books and little ladies. I would just be lectured at. I thought lectures would be people sitting there, no speaking and then tutorials and things like that but it couldn’t be further from the truth. The mismatch of my expectations and my understandings and how things are, couldn’t be more different. From the building we’re sitting in from the way that the course is delivered to the content”.

The latter two coaches highlighted that although they were attending lectures in a formal environment, there were clear differences between their initial expectations, (one coach had previously studied in HE where the other had not engaged in HE for over 30 years) and the actual L4PGDiploma environment. Both these coaches emphasised the discussion and interaction which takes place on the course. In doing so, they highlighted that this environment suited their needs to a greater extent than their expectations.

The L4PGDiploma coaches were then asked what their expectations were of UCLan and Pentagon Sport. With regards to expected support from UCLan, a basketball coach remarked, “obviously from an educational point of view, the tutorial, so the pastoral type support [and] subject support”. Further reiterated by a table tennis coach,

“I didn’t really have an expectation from UCLan apart from you know when it came to doing essays and things like that, assistance with that, where are we, what bits I’ve done well, what do I need to improve the next time”.

A hockey coach added,

“So it isn’t different to what I thought it would be. I don’t know if you’re going to ask this in a minute. The level of support, and I wouldn’t bulls\*\*\* and say this just for your study. Absolutely that has been beyond my expectations, when I ask for extensions, advice or anything nothing appears to be too much trouble”.

These statements represent the overall opinion whereby coaches predominantly seemed to be satisfied with the pastoral support offered by UCLan.

Contrastingly, however, the support expected and received from NGB differed across the coaches interviewed. A hockey coach for example stated,

“The Level 4 needs mentoring not just by UCLan, but I would suggest the [NGB] as well. [The NGB] could benefit from working with [the coach mentor] or seeing what we are actually up to, rather than reading a portfolio at the end”.

A table tennis coach added, “I actually thought that the NGB would give us more because of the sport specific interventions (SSI) side. I thought there would be more interaction with the national coaches”. A rugby league coach who had recently started the L4PGDiploma remarked,

“I wasn’t really expecting any really to be honest. There has been no indication that there would be any support, other than the offer of financial, in paying for accommodation. I suppose knowledge of the NGB at the minute, the amount of staff and how things have changed within the last few years, no I wasn’t expecting anything”.

Further echoed by a basketball coach,

“The NGB once asked if I was on with my portfolio but didn’t need to see any evidence of this and couldn’t offer me any feedback or anything like that. So as an example, if I do something at work, if I do a course then my programme manager will ask me what I am going to do in my assessment activity and if it could support the development of the programme area. So from a NGB point of view, perhaps they could be saying, I am not saying prescriptive, but maybe in a supportive/directive approach, have you thought about doing this, it might help the sport more, or it might help you more to get a job”.

The only exception to the coaches’ perceived lack of support from their NGB was from coaches who work with the Rugby Football League, who for a period of three years employed (although this is no longer the case) a member of staff, to work specifically with Level 3 and 4 coaches. This employment seemed to benefit the L4PGDiploma coaches who felt that they received ample guidance from this member of staff. The rugby league coaches who were engaged on the course with this additional support stated,

“He actually rang, called up quite a bit, say ‘how you getting on..’ and then sort of 2 or 3 weeks before the deadline he would get in touch again and say ‘oh how you getting on, do you need some assistance’?”

“There was the on-going support that he was usually there and [he] worked for the RFL and he was there...so that was quite good support there”.

“When [RFL staff member] was here, [he] was great because he had an academic background, if I am honest I never spoke to him about rugby because I had other people to speak to, [he] was always available to have a read of an assignment or give us some advice on how to do it and things like that”.

Unsurprisingly, since the inception of the L4PGDiploma there have been changes to the staffing structure within NGB's. For example, of the NGB representatives that assisted with the qualification development there are two original members of staff, one of whom attends the taught elements of the course irregularly. The remainder of the Pentagon Sports representatives have moved on to work for other NGB's. From the outset, NGB representation over the taught modules was considered beneficial to facilitate the arranging of SSI's, in order to assist with the application of the theory to practice. Very few SSI's have taken place. Further to an independent review of the L4PGDiploma, commissioned by scUK and conducted by Lyle (2012), it was agreed by Pentagon Sports that the SSIs were not financially viable, difficult to arrange and would therefore no longer be required. However it is clear from the coaches interviewed that they would find this useful, not just to aid contextualisation but to also provide support.

In line with coaches' expectations, they provided comments relating to their feelings prior to attending the course, 37.36% of the raw data themes related to this. A rugby league coach stated, “I was aware of the structure...but that was a question I had in my head, how well is this going to work if it is not sport specific”. A table tennis coach added, “I was a little bit concerned because it had been a while since I had been to university”. A hockey coach further stated, “it scared me to death, I have never been to university and I had no idea what it was going to be like”. Finally, a hockey coach added, “I had no idea what to expect, I got petrified. [The lead tutor] said here is a research paper, and I am thinking, what is a research paper”?

Moreover, several of the coaches interviewed expressed anxiety ahead of their mentoring sessions but also suggested that informal mentoring was an extremely positive feature of the L4PGDiploma. An example showcasing initial expectations of mentoring demonstrated by a basketball coach follows,

“I have been observed a number of times in a sports specific context and the focus is always about my level of sports knowledge, my level of understanding of the sports specific skills and whilst I enjoy that, I also wanted to have some coaching feedback, some coaching observations that measured my ability to coach”.

A table tennis coach perspective,

“...when I started working, the other coaches sort of watched to see what you were doing. As a whole observation isn't really done. You have a cultural of you've got a qualification, you went off and coached and that was it”.

In summarising, the coaches felt that the NGB's have not fulfilled their envisaged obligations to support them whilst engaged on the L4PGDiploma. I perceive this to be a missed opportunity as the NGB's could capitalise on the coaches' expertise and their specific areas of interest to enable further enquiry to benefit the sport as a whole.

The coaches stressed that they expected the course to be more 'formal' in design due to the fact that it is a HE provision. The expectations versus the support provided through the mentoring, also differs from the coaches' beliefs. Arguably, this is a result of the coaches' previous experiences of qualification design and mentoring. The mentoring component of programme design is further discussed as part of the inductively coded themes.

### **3.2.3 Deductive analysis and discussion: Formal, non-formal and informal educative situations**

In assessing the coaches preferred methods of learning, they were asked to describe their 'ideal' learning environment. Based on the raw data themes there was significant support for informal educative situations (90.72%), lesser support for formal situations (7.59%) and least support for non-formal situations (1.69%), see Table 3.3. Considering the deductive analysis in relation to these educative parameters, a few

coaches did feel the formal mode of study was most suited to their needs. For example a basketball coach stated,

“I quite enjoy the lecture type approach. I like to sit and listen to a very knowledgeable and experienced, I’m going to say academic, but that could be an academic or practitioner...I am not big fan of your workshops and activities”.

A rugby league coach added, “I am very content to just sit and listen, I am not keen on group work and tasks”.

Overall, however, there was little empirical support for formal education. This result was undoubtedly unforeseen as all of the coaches who have engaged in or completed the L4PGDiploma spoke extremely highly of the programme, the staff and the learning journey they had been engaged in as a result of the programme.

Moreover with regards to non-formal education, i.e. attending workshops and conferences there was, once again, very little empirical evidence (1.69%). Some coaches did actively engage in such situations. For example a hockey coach stated, “I was very proactive in attending courses that I could go to in terms of workshops”. Once again, however, this was very much a minority view.

In direct comparison, the situation that received a wealth of empirical support were informal educative environments. Establishing a community of practice (24.47%); working with others (14.35%) and working across sports (13.50%) seemed to be of most importance to coaches and littered across the raw data. A basketball coach highlighted,

“...this was an opportunity to do some networking with other coaches. I have done that with UKCC tutoring, where you do your tutoring and benchmarking with hockey, football and I really liked that, the idea of bouncing stuff off other coaches so not just basketball, hockey, table tennis whatever”.

Table 3.3

Deductive analysis of raw data themes across the whole participant group: Coaches preferred approaches to learning

Preferred Approach to Learning	Alumni		Halfway		Started		Whole Participant Group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Formal Situations	8	3.38	9	3.80	1	0.42	18	7.59
Lectures	3	1.27	2	0.84	0	0.00	5	2.11
Tutor facilitation	5	2.11	7	2.95	1	0.42	13	5.49
Non-formal Situations	3	1.27	1	0.42	0	0.00	4	1.69
CPD	1	0.42	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.42
Conferences	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Workshops	2	0.84	1	0.42	0	0.00	3	1.27
Informal Situations	105	44.30	78	32.91	32	13.50	215	90.72
Mentoring	6	2.53	7	2.95	2	0.84	15	6.33
Working with other coaches	17	7.17	15	6.33	2	0.84	34	14.35
Working across sports	17	7.17	10	4.22	5	2.11	32	13.50
CoP	30	12.66	18	7.59	10	4.22	58	24.47
Sharing experiences	6	2.53	7	2.95	2	0.84	15	6.33
Engaging in group work (on-course)	6	2.53	7	2.95	2	0.84	15	6.33
Opportunity to socialise	6	2.53	7	2.95	7	2.95	20	8.44
Opportunity to reflect	17	7.17	7	2.95	2	0.84	26	10.97
Total	116	48.95	88	37.13	33	13.92	237	100

Moreover, when asked follow up questions, i.e. 'to what extent, if at all, did you think learning from others would enhance your experience on the course' a hockey coach explained,

"I utterly believe that's the way you learn. Years ago I remember I was nearly appointed as [elite] coach. And at that point you think you're god there's no one higher than you in your country...so you are god no one questions you. [The NGB] said you[ve] got to go this coaches meeting and there were coaches from other sports and I thought bloody hell what an utter waste of the weekend. I went down so grudgingly and within the first break which was like an hour and a half in. I was on the phone...saying we have to send every coach to these".

A table tennis coach added, "I thought for me, it was the biggest part of it. From my actual experience on the course, when you talked about a topic during the day, having those conversations when everyone is a bit more relaxed was really good...I got a lot from that".

The emphasis of working with other coaches and working across sports reverberated across the majority of coaches on the L4PGDiploma. Some of the coaches mentioned that they felt coaching is largely an isolated activity and thus, sought this course as an opportunity to network with others coaches to improve their learning. A hockey coach for example stated,

"...you have to bear in mind ... you can be isolated at times, we feed off each other and we are very good at working with each other...There were people on the course who I respect and are working at the top levels of the game and I saw that as a big plus, not just trying pick up little tick bits off, but literally feeding off people's experiences and learning other peoples philosophies".

A table tennis coach added,

"I think for all of us, coaching is a lonely place. For a lot of 19 years I have been on my own a lot and it is very rare you get the opportunity to be in a room with likeminded people".

A hockey coach remarked,

“I think it is just talking to people with different experiences. I think it can get a little bit incestuous within your own sport and I found within [the sport] people assume an awful lot, ‘we all do it because we are immersed in it’, but if you speak to people outside the sport they don’t know. It was nice to come outside of that environment and talk to other people”.

This isolation experienced by coaches is not dissimilar to research conducted by Nash, Sproule, Hall and English (2012) albeit, their research focused on coaches outside the coach development system. It is however clear that, of the coaches interviewed, there is a definite preference to learn through working with likeminded others and across sports. Surprisingly, however, there did not seem to be many coaches who actively engaged in contacting other coaches to further develop this relationship and pursue ideas, outside the taught residential weekend.

Although this was not a formal requirement of the L4PGDiploma, it is encouraged. Interestingly, if the coaches have recognised and appreciated the benefits of both mentoring and working with other coaches, why have they then not actively undertaken in arranging such opportunities? Although, this did occur to a certain extent, some of the coaches explained the reasons they have been unable to engage in working with others outside the classroom environment. A rugby league coach stated, “life and being busy, there is a bit of that and a bit of chasing around on your day job ...there has been a little bit of practicality”. A squash coach added,

“People have come over and we’ve swapped ideas and it has been threatened every weekend. I’ll come over, you come over blah blah blah, I’ve definitely shared a few emails and a few text messages and chats with people and bumped into a few of the coaches here and there and discussed ideas. In terms of, you know I’m going to watch you and you’re going to watch me, which I think I should do, but when you come away from the weekends it never seems to happen, so no not really but I would like to”.

Further echoed by a rugby league coach,

“That is something I have missed out on definitely, that would be good. Again whether that could be sort of formalised into the programme...it probably is. If

you read the whole course thing it is probably in there. That is something maybe we could have, it would have been good to sort out when we were all attending the sessions and you know buddy people up and whatever”.

Although the geographical locations of the coaches were highlighted as an inhibitor, some of the coaches suggested that this should be a compulsory aspect of the L4PGDiploma. Whilst this networking did not happen as often as anticipated, or at least as desired, a handful of coaches did take the opportunity to do so, for example a rugby league coach stated,

“We went to Bisham Abbey ...to see the men’s hockey ...just to see how they set up their international programme and how they got access to their players, what sort of things they did on a typical training weekend and how they structured it”.

These coaches expressed the importance of sharing ideas and developing a community of practice. For example, a basketball coach who had not been involved in actively observing other coaches on the course stated,

“as long as there is absolute commonality then I think it can be good and that doesn’t mean that everyone has to come from the same sport or everybody has to come with the same agenda but there has to be, my experience of it is if you’re not careful or well-structured it becomes another opportunity to talk. Not being very good at networking and socialising I struggle with it. So if it well-structured then I think there is definitely purpose and benefit to it”.

This contention of appropriately managing CoP to challenge dogmatic beliefs is not dissimilar to establishing CoP’s as discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, Lemyre et al., (2007) emphasised the contentions around developing and promoting CoP’s as some coaches were reluctant to engage, to avoid ‘stealing of ideas’. This sentiment was also stated by a few of the coaches on the L4PGDiploma with regards to their sport specific environments. A rugby league coach for example asserted,

“...everybody seems open to share which is a massive opposite to how rugby league operates, people won’t tell anybody else what they do, which I find infuriating. They would share a bit with me because [I’m not] a threat so they

would talk to me a little bit, on the proviso, 'don't mention it to any other group', so don't speak to [a Super League club] about what you've seen. But a lot of it, you look at it and you think it is not even mind-blowing...so that has been good [about the L4PGDiploma] there has been a lot of sharing”.

In the current programme design the cross-pollination of sports differs from the UKCC Level 1-3 qualification, as these qualifications are sport specific. However, if coaches on the L4PGDiploma recognised the benefits of actively engaging in the sharing of information and ideas across sport, this is something that should be capitalised on to improve the coaching system more holistically.

In addition to the largely formal nature of the L4PGDiploma, UCLan also employs a coach mentor, who is tasked with mentoring the coaches and observing their coaching practice. This was designed to allow the coaches the opportunity to be guided by an experienced other and assist in the determination of the UKCC Level 4 award. Aside from the largely formal nature of the L4PGDiploma, the mentoring component was informal and a few of the coaches had a clear preference for this type of support (6.33%) which was further reiterated in the inductive analysis (Table 3.4, 12.70%).

A squash coach for example stated,

“I definitely didn't think it wouldn't have [had] as much impact as it had, I really didn't. But that is probably credit to how good a mentor [he] is. I thought initially coming into it, I didn't really think that there would be very much he would pick up on. Quite naïve or big headed of me, I thought [the coach mentor] might tweak this, tweak that but really there has been quite a lot of things and it has been great to link that into all the stuff [the lead tutor] has said, a double-whammy and punch, punch type of thing. Here's the academic stuff from the weekends and this is how we apply it”.

Further repeated by a hockey coach,

“I was amazed by [the coach mentor's] feedback because ... it wasn't the small technical it was the other stuff, how you interact, how you deliver. I was amazed by the feedback”.

Finally, a rugby league coach stated “he came along to my environment and he did watch me and then you know provided some meaningful feedback. I found that really useful”.

Several different views were articulated regarding the expectations and realities of mentoring. Some of the coaches not only expressed anxiety ahead of the mentoring session as explored in Chapter 3.2, but more fundamentally, that mentoring sessions were thought to be useful. Arguably, coaches’ expectations of mentoring are largely underpinned by their previous experience of mentoring within their sporting domain. As the aforementioned table tennis coach highlighted, there is a perception that once you have achieved a certain level of qualification the culture dictates that mentoring is no longer required, i.e. you are qualified, meet the competencies so should be able to coach. The basketball coach stated that the L4PGDiploma mentoring moves away from the ‘what to coach’ (which is inherent in the sport specific Level 1-2 qualification), to ‘how to coach’, so understanding how people learn, developing relationships and providing feedback.

As noted in Chapter 2, research conducted by Jones et al., (2009) and Wilson et al., (2010) emphasised the usefulness of mentoring but also stressed that ‘an outsider’ with the right skills can ‘artificially’ create tangible relationships with coaches to improve their coaching practice. This certainly seemed to be the case for the L4PGDiploma coaches and more fundamentally, this mentor does not have to be sport specific.

The final empirical element for discussion in this section relates to critical reflection, of which 10.97% of the coaches highlighted. Banningan and Moores (2009) model of Professional Thinking, accentuated the importance of reflection in improving practice and utilising research to underpin practices. Reflection was evident across the raw data themes and the coaches appeared to be actively engaging in such. Notably, not only to support the submission of the summative assessments, but also to improve their coaching practice. A table tennis coach for example stated,

“I’ll be honest, before I started the course I didn’t really self-reflect that much, if I had a bad session I’d look at it, why wasn’t that too good, the kids were tired, need to vary it, change it, but if I had a good session I wouldn’t reflect. I

would just think that was a good session. I would only reflect when things didn't go how I wanted them to go. Once I started doing the course I started seeing the value you can get from it".

A basketball coach emphasised,

"I think what I would call it, is reflect on my practice. If you'd asked that question I would say a lot. Constantly you know, how I do things, why I do them, to what extent do I do it correctly, to what extent could I do it differently, how do I work, how do I engage with others. So certainly from a reflective point of view colossal. I keep going back to this but in [sporting environment] we don't get challenged by the NGB, we don't get a chance, there is no forum".

Although having an underpinning evidence base was not a significant feature of the coaches' statements, there were some coaches whom demonstrated how reflection had enhanced their learning and coaching practice. For example a rugby league coach added,

"I was probably reflecting all the time [be]cause of the course...I actually reflect differently now...so before it was, I hope everyone has enjoyed that I hope everyone's has understood that. Now I am more like, did my players and staff need that session, it is going to make them a better player by doing it again. If it didn't work or it wasn't going to make them improve that is where my reading comes in".

In reviewing the empirical evidence of the three educative situations thus far, there was a wealth of support which was unequivocally linked to informal parameters as the way coaches preferred to learn. Despite the lack of empirical evidence for formal education when assessing the coaches' ideal learning environment, the coaches did regularly speak highly of the course and indicated that the course has been an extremely positive step in their development. In an attempt to rationalise the disparity between the positive statements relating to the L4PGDiploma and the lack of empirical evidence to support formal educative situations, this may have been as a result of the 'informal' set up of the programme, i.e. ensuring the opportunities to engage in

discussion, the opportunity to interact with other coaches and deployment of a coach mentor.

Interestingly, the L4PGDiploma coaches did highlight the need for the course to be more 'formal' in certain areas; again despite the limiting empirical evidence against their perceptions of ideal learning environments and the current programme. As such, due consideration is now given to the inductive analysis, which comprises of three key themes; the coaches' highlights of the L4PGDiploma; evidential changes to coaches' coaching practice and suggested changes to the current L4PGDiploma in order to improve the coaches' learning experience. Although the L4PGDiploma coaches suggested several highlights, the raw data themes that received considerable empirical support are discussed further.

### **3.3 Inductive results and discussion**

#### **3.3.1 Inductive analysis and discussion: Coaches highlights of the L4PGDiploma**

The coding of the inductive themes relating to the coaches suggested highlights are shown in Table 3.4. These themes included; guest lecturers (31.75%); the lead tutor and the mentor, i.e. course staff (28.57%); components of the module delivery (7.94%); assignments and attendance at the residential weekends (6.35%). The empirical evidence relating to the lead tutor and the mentor have been discussed at length as part of the deductive analysis. Therefore, the primary areas for discussion include the guest lecturers; module design; assignments and attendance at the residential weekends. Firstly, the coaches identified guest lecturers on the course as the primary highlight. A rugby league coach for example explained,

"Just the stuff that [the guest lecturer 2] was discussing about talent development, probably challenging the status quo, now I was aware of some of that information because I've read about it already but obviously [the guest lecturer] has gone a lot more into depth. So it's really interesting to listen to that and again gets you thinking differently and tunes you into different things to read".

Table 3.4

Inductive analysis of raw data themes across the whole participant group: Highlights of the L4PGDiploma

Highlights of the L4PGDiploma	Alumni Coaches		Coaches Halfway		Coaches Started		Whole group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Affirmation of knowledge	1	2.56	0	0.00	1	16.67	2	3.17
Assignments	5	12.82	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	7.94
Course Staff	10	25.64	6	33.33	2	33.33	18	28.57
Lead tutor	6	15.38	3	16.67	1	16.67	10	15.87
Coach mentor	4	10.26	3	16.67	1	16.67	8	12.70
Guest Lecturers	10	25.64	10	55.56	0	0.00	20	31.75
Guest lecturer 1 (Planning)	3	7.69	2	55.56	0	66.67	5	7.94
Guest lecturer 2 (Talent ID)	0	0.00	7	38.89	0	0.00	7	11.11
Guest lecturer 3 (Sport Specific)	1	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.59
Guest lecturer 4 (Performance Analysis)	1	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.59
Guest lecturer 5 (Talent ID)	5	12.82	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	7.94
Guest lecturer 6 (Movement Coordination)	0	0.00	1	5.56	0	0.00	1	1.59
Module Delivery	4	10.26	0	0.00	1	16.67	5	7.94
Philosophy	3	7.69	0	0.00	1	16.67	4	6.35
Planning and Periodisation	1	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.59
Other	9	23.08	2	11.11	2	33.33	13	20.63
New knowledge	1	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.59
Residential weekends	2	5.13	1	5.56	1	16.67	4	6.35
Self-reflection	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Sharing ideas with other coaches	2	5.13	1	5.56	1	16.67	4	6.35
Support from the RFL	3	7.69	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	4.76
Type of feedback	1	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.59

A hockey coach stated,

“I mean a highlight of bringing different people in all the time. I really liked the [guest lecturer 2] and understanding ...the sport psychology stuff has been great, that has been really beneficial”.

A rugby league coach remarked,

“[Guest lecturer 5] has a different style of lecturing to the other people. I think some of [the guest lecturers] blunt honesty about certain areas makes you go, fair point now I’m going to look at that”.

These statements emphasised that the coaches had not only begun to question their pre-existing beliefs but undertaken additional reading and research to explore areas of contention, prompted by facilitation by the guest lecturers. In the design of the L4PGDiploma, guest lecturers were employed within their area of specialism to attend and lecture on the taught modules. The guest lecturers deployed annually differed across participant groups. This change of personnel may explain the disparity between the coaches’ highlights. For example, guest lecturer 5 did not ‘lecture’ and had only been deployed between 2012-2014 and therefore had not met or taught the alumni coaches – it is not surprising therefore that the alumni coaches did not rank this guest lecturer as a highlight.

Secondly, the coaches identified aspects of module delivery, namely the coaching philosophy module as a highlight. A basketball coach stated,

“I think it’s enabled me to look at my coaching from a number of different perspectives, so firstly and actually and I don’t know whether it was by design or default, but looking at the philosophy first of all, so the why we are coaching I thought was quite interesting. I have never asked myself that question. I just continue do it. I continued to do as I have always been the sort of person that doesn’t quit something, and I want to get better so I am not going to quit. But actually to stop and think about why I am coaching was very interesting and really challenging for me”.

Thirdly, although some of the coaches suggested that the assignments were a highlight this was disputed by others. A rugby league coach stated, “I’d like to say, I’d not like to

do assignment, clearly I'd like to say that. I think you have to be assessed somehow I did enjoy the conversation one, I did think that was good".

A hockey coach who had recently started the course stated,

"the assignment looks quite interesting and it is something I am looking forward to doing to be honest. The challenge is having the time and I suppose starting earlier and getting that reading done".

A graduated rugby league coach added, "I enjoyed writing the assignment it made me better at what I do. I was prepared to make that commitments and I was quite lucky I have a supportive family".

Further highlights provided by a few coaches related to attending the taught components, i.e. the residential weekends. A hockey coach for example stated,

"I would get excited on the Monday until Friday when I was travelling. It didn't matter how much I had on, or how tired I was. I would also look forward to meeting everyone. I came away from each weekend with my head absolutely buzzing with ideas".

A rugby league coach added,

"The weekends I enjoyed best when we were all together and could talk about coaching and experiences that really challenged me. As soon as I went home on Sunday night I had to go on to the internet and look things up".

As discussed in Chapter 2, the importance of challenging pre-existing beliefs (Stoszowski & Collins, 2012) appropriately – through the process of contextualisation, can lead to enhanced learning, which certainly seems to be the case for the L4PGDiploma coaches. As a rugby league coach demonstrated earlier 'good point, now I am going to look at that'. Moreover, in delivering a residential weekend which was solely devoted to coaching philosophy also seemed to be beneficially. Again, supporting the aforementioned (Nash et al., 2008) research and Knowles's (1970) orientation to learn principle.

In summation, the coaches clearly demonstrated that there had been some clear highlights of the current L4PGDiploma. The positive aspects relate largely to programme

design and the effective facilitation by both the course staff and guest lecturers. The former is demonstrated through the module delivery and assignment submissions, i.e. consideration of the coaches' coaching philosophy, whereby the latter is exhibited through the wealth of empirical evidence of effective facilitation.

In considering the inductively coded themes further, coaches were asked what changes they would like to see to the current L4PGDiploma provision, which is now considered.

### **3.3.2 Inductive analysis and discussion: Coaches' suggested changes to the L4PGDiploma**

Unsurprisingly there were several suggested changes to the current provision and little consistency of the changes between the graduated coaches, those halfway through and those who had recently started the L4PGDiploma. There were however, some consistencies - in ascending order - the lack of feedback on assignments (21.43%); formalising the cross sport working relationship (8.93%); improved guest speaker facilitation (12.50%); better signposting to reading material; formalising buddying; creating online forums and additional support from England Hockey all received 5.36% as denoted in Table 3.5.

As a distance learning course, feedback on assignments are due up to twenty working days after submission, which is primarily but not exclusively submitted through an online submission website, Turn-it-in. The coaches who commented on the lack of feedback felt that the twenty day guideline was not met and stated the impact this had on their engagement and motivation.

A hockey coach stated,

“Not getting marks. Up until August I didn't know any of mine, I didn't have a clue where I was on the course in terms of the marks. Were you going to pass, distinction. If you'd asked me I wouldn't have had a clue, when you submit something and you don't get something back for two weeks, it goes to the back of the brain and after four you don't care because it doesn't mean anything to anybody”.

Table 3.5

Inductive analysis of raw data themes across whole participant group: Suggested changes to the L4PGDiploma

Suggested changes to the course	Alumni Coaches		Coaches Halfway		Coaches Started		Whole Participant Group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Improved guest lecturer facilitation	3	5.36	4	7.14	0	0.00	7	12.50
Conflict of holding course on weekends	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79	1	1.79
More critique from coach mentor	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79	1	1.79
Assignments delivered differently	2	3.57	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.57
Feedback on assignments	10	17.86	2	3.57	0	0.00	12	21.43
Formal buddying	3	5.36	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.36
Formal cross-sport working	1	1.79	4	7.14	0	0.00	5	8.93
More mandatory preparation ahead of residential delivery	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
More practical workshops	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
Signposting to core reading	3	5.36	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.36
More sports involved in the course	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
More technical support of practical coaching	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
More time to share ideas	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
More tutorial support	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
Online forum	3	5.36	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.36
Regional mentoring	0	0.00	2	3.57	0	0.00	2	3.57
Better signposting at the end of the course	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
Support from NGB EH	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
Support from NGB RFL	1	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.79
Support from NGB EB	0	0.00	3	5.36	0	0.00	3	5.36
Additional support away from residential weekends	0	0.00	2	3.57	0	0.00	2	3.57
Additional support from coach mentor	0	0.00	1	1.79	0	0.00	1	1.79
Lectures tied into UCLan's other courses	0	0.00	1	1.79	0	0.00	1	1.79
Provide PowerPoint slides before the weekend residential	0	0.00	1	1.79	0	0.00	1	1.79
Total	34	60.71	20	35.71	2	3.57	56	100.00

Furthermore, a hockey coach who had recently graduated explained that they were waiting for feedback on assignments submitted several months ago,

“I would like feedback more quickly. I obviously loved every minute of it and I totally get how busy everybody on the course is and they are busy because they are passionate, which is why they are so good for the course and I get that. But because I spent so long on every assignment I was really, really keen to get my feedback and know my mark because I am quiet driven by my marks so still awaiting for three pieces to come back to me now. I know which they are...I am genuinely interested in the feedback you know what I could have done better, what I did well and stuff like that”.

Another hockey coach explained the effect the lack of feedback had having not being involved in academia since 1990 states;

“I felt feedback should have been a lot quicker especially for the first one or two essays because you’ve never really knew where you were and for someone like me who was just didn’t think I was doing any good it would have been nice to know. I may have only been doing 48% when the pass was 40% but that would have made me feel fantastic early on...so that and just a little bit more help and understanding of the people on the course”.

Not only do these sentiments highlight the coaches need for feedback but they also draw on the uniqueness of the adult learner as proposed by Knowles (1970) and the potential negative effect of engaging in HE which does not support their needs (Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999). Additionally, the coaches emphasised the importance of receiving feedback in a timely fashion to support their academic progression and in turn their coaching practice.

Although guest lecturers were emphasised as a highlight previously, some of coaches felt that a few guest lecturers did not meet their overall expectations. A table tennis coach explained,

“[Guest lecturer 1] oh don’t get me wrong, I know he is knowledgeable and intelligent, but I don’t think it was a good use of my time because I don’t get the chance to be so detailed...so relevancy and value could be questioned”.

A rugby league coach added, "I lost the will to live part way through, I think there wasn't enough group work activity, so I got bored and I found some of the concepts quite difficult to think through and understand". Another rugby league coach stated,

"There was one delivery in particular which was like being back at school. Somebody asked something and [the guest lecturer] said 'you're talking and putting me off my delivery' and did it a few times...I thought well hang on, I am paying to be here... I asked about saliva sampling and he totally and utterly said it was a waste of time, it wasn't a level 4 discussion, it was, you got his opinion, as if you were paying for his advice in your environment, not can we have a discussion about that".

Interestingly, of the aforementioned remarks, two related to guest lecturers which were not mentioned by the coaches in the inductively coded highlights of the course.

The other inductively coded theme that received comment was formalised cross sport collaboration. Interestingly some of the coaches suggested formalising this aspect to make it a compulsory requirement of the L4PGDiploma. The coaches felt that this would improve the current programme design. A table tennis coach for example explained,

"I would have liked the opportunity to, as much as we tried to go across sport to see what other people were doing, maybe if that was a little bit more formalised and to do that I think that would have been good from my point of view".

This further supported the importance of cross-sport working, but also emphasised that more can be done to support the coaches whilst engaged on the L4PGDiploma. Some of the coaches felt that England Hockey could better support their needs. This may have been more prevalent as rugby league and hockey are the main contributors of the coaches engaged on the L4PGDiploma. In contrast, rugby league had previously employed a member of staff to support coaches.

In another regard, and emphasising a similar sentiment - some coaches highlighted the need for additional communication between coaches by the means of an online forum. A rugby coach for example stated,

"I am saying that in an ideal world...that there is an online forum that is, click in

and you can jump in. The one thing I am conscious of is people are all over the country, so you could have that, they could jump in, whether that was formalised support for an assignment or about a discussion. I would have liked to, in an ideal world face to face, [but] a forum would work, it would be really good to...have some reflection time and follow it up with a discussion”.

Another rugby league coach felt,

“Perhaps some online discussion forums, so we’ll all clock in at 7.00 p.m. or something and were going to chew the fat on X and it maybe stuff that fits around your assignment or it may be something completely different, and that would be really useful”.

Although there is a small amount of empirical support for online forums the need to further develop cross sport contact does appear to be a reoccurring theme across the data. Furthermore, the requirement of additional support appears to relate specifically to when coaches are operating in their own environments. In demonstrating the possible benefits of additional remote contact, some of the coaches stated that although they were motivated to attend the residential weekends, their motivation in between these weekends was difficult. If this is the case, there certainly appears to be room to improve the coaches’ learning experience by facilitating additional interaction with other coaches using internet based technology to enhance the cross-sport collaboration so much desired by coaches.

The other suggested change which received the same weight of empirical evidence was better sign posting of reading material. A hockey coach stated,

“It sounds very daft but arriving with having read, you know how you know you send out papers. I think we needed more of that. So the opportunity to arrive and question, rather than just listen”.

A table tennis coach added, “I know we got the module information packs and there were examples of books and journals to read but I think it may have been useful to be directed a bit more”. A basketball coach stated “When [guest speaker 2] delivered [they] sent out a lot of reading. When [guest speaker 1] delivered there was nothing, I think if that is their area of specialism this could have been done a bit more”.

As anticipated, the coaches mentioned a plethora of procedural changes to the current L4PGDiploma programme design. Across the raw data themes, the components which were deemed to be of most importance was the lack of feedback and improved guest facilitation. In this regard, it is no surprise that the coaches who had recently started the course did not refer to these changes as they are yet to submit an assignment and have not had the opportunity to engage with a guest lecturer.

Thus far, what appears to be reoccurring across the empirical data were the desire to work more closely with other coaches and across sports, which the coaches seemed to think can be artificially enhanced through formalising these aspects as mandatory components of the current course design.

This final inductive raw data themes relates to any perceived changes to the coaches' coaching practice which are now considered.

### **3.3.3 Inductive analysis and discussion: Coaches evidential changes to their coaching practice and 'other' non-specific themes**

As an overall measure to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the L4PGDiploma, coaches were asked to provide specific examples of 'before' and 'after' consequential changes to their coaching practice (57.14%), as denoted in Table 3.6. In doing so, the coaches also provided additional information regarding demotivation (8.33%) whilst engaged on the L4PGDiploma and their perceptions of the UKCF (17.59%). The coaches further commented on the amount of information provided during lectures (16.67%).

The coaches were able to articulate evidential changes to their coaching practice as a hockey coach stated,

“We did and the mind set this and talking about effort rather than ability. I have changed the way I set up and present my practices. I am not really looking for improved performance but improved learning. Also how to set up your stuff on how you create an optimum environment so I have done that with regards to block and random practice linking into the psychology. It is hard to say because I don't know what my sessions would look now if I hadn't been through the Level 4. But I feel that they are massively different from where they would be because I know and understand the theory behind everything”.

Table 3.6

Inductively analysis of raw data themes across whole participant group: Evidential changes to coaching practice and other emerging themes

<b>Evidential changes to coaching practice and other inductively coded themes</b>	Alumni Coaches		Coaches Halfway		Coaches Started		Whole Participant Group	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
Evidential changes to coaching practice	38	35.19	23	21.30	1	0.93	62	57.41
Amount of information during lectures	9	8.33	7	6.48	2	1.85	18	16.67
Demotivation	4	3.70	5	4.63	0	0.00	9	8.33
Perceptions of the UKCF	8	7.41	7	6.48	4	3.70	19	17.59

A rugby league coach remarked,

“I think it has guided me down a road...A real good example is everyone in the [sport] were raving about the Talent Code. Some clubs would have a group session and read it and say this is the way we are going forward. I read it, but it gave me more questions than answers: I am not too sure about that, I don't agree with that. Which has led me to read ... If I am brutally honest, I am not making this up, pre L4PGDiploma. I would have read this and agreed with all the other coaches. What I am probably trying to say is that I am not just comfortable to read things and I probably challenge my own learning now”.

A squash coach stated,

“That is a skill I have learned over the course, so with the players I would say ‘hold on a minute you said you were doing this but you did that’. Before my response would be very emotional, ‘you’ve let me down, what are you doing, I’m working harder than you’. Whereas now I say ‘your goal is this and your behaviour is this, why is that’ and it seems to have a lot more of a powerful punch on the players”.

A basketball coach remarked,

“Before the course I controlled the coaching environment and I controlled what I wanted my players to do. Now, there is a lot of empowerment and this sort of striving towards [creating] independent athletes”.

A rugby league coach highlighted,

“The biggest thing I have worked on in task orientation. So a very practical example of that is any scores the [players] get, whether it is in testing or whether it is game analysis, they only get their own and the group average”.

In questioning coaches on their change in behaviour, other non-specific themes emerged. The first for consideration was the coaches' perceptions of the UKCF. A hockey coach for example stated “I would say part of what was done at Level 4, should be done at Level 3. Some of what was done at Level 3, should be done at Level 4. I am forever filling holes in people's knowledge”. A basketball coach added,

“The current coaching structure for basketball is that you get your Level 3 and the Level 4 is given to you for your commitments and contributions to the sport. I am not going to do the sorts of things they do in order to achieve that”.

A rugby league coach stated,

“I was on the first Level 3, so very much a guinea pig. I didn’t really find a lot of new information...they were asking us to do stuff I already know...it was too heavier a slant towards strength and conditioning, I didn’t feel I gained a whole load of different knowledge”.

Another rugby league coach added, “I am not sure if there is a recognition in clubs in terms of qualifications...I found that I learnt a lot more from other coaches than I did from the actual course”. Although some coaches did praise their NGB’s coach development structure, the majority emphasised the shortfalls. These related to credibility, progressiveness and recognition by others in their sporting domain.

The other factor which received empirical support was the amount of information delivered during lectures. The majority of coaches who commented on this highlighted that although there was a lot of information, this formed a catalyst for their own research, for example, a squash coach stated,

“I mean some have been spot on. There have been a couple where it has been too much, it is never too little”. A table tennis coach added, “I think we do as much as we can with the time, we do get given a lot of information...there has been a lot of try this, try that and actually when I have tweaked it, it works”.

A basketball coach added, “for me it is just right, but functionally it is a lot for me to take in because I haven’t been in education for a while”.

Demotivation also factored with some of the coaches, but this was largely due to personal circumstances. A table tennis coach stated, “I think at the start I was definitely motivated...towards the end I just did what was necessary”. A squash coach added, “I am improving as a coach and I think there is a little bit of lack of motivation to sit down and write an essay, it’s like ‘oh \*\*\*\*tard’, because I already feel [the L4PGDiploma] has helped me”. Unsurprisingly, the coaches who had recently started the course were unable to articulate any evidential changes to their coaching practice.

In assimilating the coaches' views I now turn to the final Chapter to conclude.

#### **Chapter 4: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations for Further Study**

In summarising the empirical data, participants felt that the current L4PGDiploma provision could be improved upon. By and large the recommendations which received greatest empirical support related to minor modifications to the current programme design and additional support mechanisms for coaches, summarised as the following:

- Provide the L4PGDiploma coaches with feedback on assignments;
- Provide the L4PGDiploma coaches with further directed reading;
- Additional support in between the taught modules, through online technologies;
- Additional support from NGB's to aid contextualisation and identify areas to develop the coach.

In this regard, although the coaches suggested modifications were relatively minor, it is suggested that making these changes would improve coach satisfaction and more fundamentally, their learning experience. Moreover, in the pursuit of an excellent coaching system, coach developers state the need for coaches to continually review their practices. In this regard, it is recommended that coach developers (i.e. NGB, scUK) adopt a similar stance and continually review the best way to develop valuable educative provisions for adult coaches.

As an example, the empirical analysis emphasised that coaches felt a lack of support from their NGB (the rugby football league were an exception to this), through the duration of their studies. Yet through the consultation process these NGB's highlighted the need for a long-term coach development system which emphasised continuous support and development for the coaching workforce. If indeed the NGB's involved in Pentagon Sport are hoping to create such a system, then surely investing time into developing appropriate support provision for these coaches seems plausible. Notably, against the literature it is further proposed that the required additional support could be created through formal mentoring opportunities – which some coaches referred to as buddying/regional mentoring. Moreover, the aforementioned literature highlights the benefits of coach interaction and I therefore suggest that such interactions can be artificially created which in turn could enhance programme design and coach learning. Additionally, although the coaches were complimentary of the

support provided by the academic provider, UCLan, more can be done to enhance the coaches learning experience, for example, additional support in between the taught modules through online learning technologies.

In totality, however, and notably against the literature, the empirical evidence was supportive of the current L4PGDiploma which is largely formal in its programme design. The positive aspects of the course are summarised as the following:

- Opportunity to work with other coaches;
- Opportunity to work across sport;
- Module design and delivery;
- Course staff: lead tutor and coach mentor facilitation;
- Guest speaker facilitation.

As expected against the theoretical predispositions the educative situation which received the most empirical validation was informal education environments. Informal educative situations were discussed in Chapter 2 and considered to be increasingly useful to develop coaches and enhance coach learning. These informal parameters related to forming CoP, mentoring and observations. Interestingly, although the coaches stated that these were their preferred modality of study, there were some clear inconsistencies with their articulations as in the same breath they consistently emphasised the positive aspects of engagement in the L4PGDiploma – a largely formal course. This inconsistency, leads to a number of questions: Are the L4PGDiploma coaches confused about the parameters of formal education? Are the L4PGDiploma coaches grounding their definition of ‘formal’ education based on previous experiences, i.e. having attended a UKCC Level 3 qualification? Or are the L4PGDiploma coaches unable to recognise that the current provision is formal?

To further complicate these uncertainties, throughout the thesis, I have made reference to the L4PGDiploma as a formal programme. The determination of such has been based on the definition provided in Chapter 2 and compounded by the fact that the L4PGDiploma is underpinned by HE regulations - and scUK competencies. However, as the coaches had enjoyed and benefited from the L4PGDiploma, this inferred that the formal provision, it is not formal per se, i.e. through the deployment of a coach mentor. Although the current approach clearly meets the needs of the current client group, through formal coach education it could be argued that it does so

as the educative approach is integrated, i.e. by the deployment of a coach mentor. Overall however, what my research suggested is that the formal element of such educative provisions (i.e. module design and delivery) are clearly not redundant and can still play a significant role in developing high level coaches.

In adopting the stance that learning is essentially a social phenomenon, that learning takes place internally and cannot be imposed on adults, this is certainly supported in the current thesis. Notwithstanding the issues around epistemological beliefs, it appears that working with other coaches; working across sports; reflection and contextualised information in a formal setting can lead to coach initiated problem solving and consequently deeper learning. These components appeared to be evident within the current L4PGDiploma. Consequentially, the L4PGDiploma coaches articulated specific behavioural changes which occurred as a result of the course.

Moreover, formalising informal components could further benefit coach learning. In this regard coaches regularly highlighted the need to formalise and have further opportunities to engage with and work across sport and develop online communities of practice. What this research suggested is that these informal approaches can be artificially created to further enrich the coaches learning experience.

The thesis also offers some clear support for andragogy as an underpinning structure. In Chapter 2, I proposed that Knowles's (1970) principles of andragogy could be considered as a foundation to develop coach education for adult learners. Having reviewed this stance against the empirical data, it was also reaffirmed that the principles outlined by Knowles's were interlinked with the other literature on facilitating effective programme design and subsequent learning. In this regard, there was evidential support for each of Knowles (1970) five principles across the L4PGDiploma coaches. Unexpectedly, the primary motivation for coach engagement was to work with other coaches. This not only provided further support for the literature pertaining to informal education, but also to Knowles' philosophy. For example, Knowles (1970) emphasised the importance of appropriate facilitation to guide learning rather than a didactic transfer process, an approach which is further supported by Entwistle and Peterson (2004). This feature was unmistakable in the

data analysis as coaches frequently commented on the effective facilitations skills of the lead tutor, coach mentor and the guest lecturers.

In providing some global and strategic recommendations clarity on the roles and responsibilities of scUK and Pentagon Sports requires evaluation. I previously, presented some problems with the recruitment and selection criteria of Pentagon Sports. I further propose that it would be useful for NGB's to be provided with clear guidelines on what a Level 4 coach should look like, and that these principles should drive the essential support process from each sport to the University-based learning process. Although NGB's have been granted awarding powers, I argue that the coaches qualified thus far, have been primarily driven by the formal, university based element as they have demonstrated behavioural change (to obtain the UKCC Level 4 award) and knowledge (through the summative assessment) over the duration of the course. What is unclear and not within the confines of this thesis is what does coaching expertise look like?

Finally, the role of scUK as the external validators is also questionable. Although the endorsement of the UKCC Level 4 is subject to biennial verification, it is suggested that there is a lack of strategic guidance and, furthermore, an inherent problem with the UKCC Level 4 competencies being overly prescriptive. Moreover, in assessing qualification design more holistically, if the evidence to date suggested that learning is a social phenomenon, surely more effective learning provision could be developed which focus on informal parameters, where sports specificity is a lesser requirement? Additionally, throughout the empirical discussions, coaches highlighted contentions around the UKCF. Some alluded that having engaged in the sport specific UKCC Level 3 qualification, they felt the current coach education framework was not fit for purpose, i.e. being overly prescriptive and didactic in the teaching methods. Additionally, it is also felt that the UKCF should provide UK sports coaching with a development system that rewards coaches for the pursuit and demonstration of greater expertise, which the L4PGDiploma coaches felt was lacking.

In summation, if the UKCF is indeed a long term coach development framework, scUK and NGB's must take responsibility for ensuring such provisions are

fit for purpose. In doing so, to achieve a standardised accredited, quality assured provision it is suggested that scUK and NGB's regularly review such a provision against a clear evidence based to develop the coaching workforce.

More holistically and having conducted this theoretical and empirical study, it is clear that the current system and the factors driving coach education and development are multifaceted. In this regard, in order to fully understand the complete picture, further study should include exploring what coaching expertise looks like; how best educative provision can be created to meet the needs of expert coaches and ultimately I would suggest a review of the current UKCF – all of which should be conducted against a clear held and justified evidence base. In principle, the UKFC is plausible, i.e. having a master elite coach and a master children's coach. However, the current system has not created appropriate provisions to qualify a master children's coach.

More specifically, in suggesting areas for future research, it would be worthwhile in exploring Level 4 coach education programmes of other NGB's comparatively, to further ascertain how best to facilitate the education process to enable coach learning. Additionally, I also propose that, in order to truly ascertain whether the coaches whom have been qualified thus far, are indeed Level 4 worthy that further research takes shape in this area. Finally, to truly assess whether coach learning takes place through education on such courses, a comparative study considering coaches engaged and not engaged with formal education would be useful in assisting with future coach education initiatives.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: UKCC Level 4 Competencies

1. Reflect continuously on coaching practice and challenge personal assumptions and beliefs to improve future performance
2. Seek out, synthesise and apply relevant concepts, theories and principles
3. Make and critically reflect on decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
4. Recognise and resolve problematic and atypical coaching issues through the generation of innovative strategies and solutions
5. Build and maintain effective coach-athlete relationships
6. Design and implement an optimal learning environment to impact on athletes' performance needs
7. Adapt interpersonal, teaching and instructing behaviours to the needs of the athlete(s) and context
8. Develop athletes to be autonomous decision makers
9. Design, implement, monitor, evaluate and regulate advanced training and competition programmes
10. Design and implement a planned and strategic approach to performance improvement
11. Develop and manage an appropriate support structures to facilitate improved performance
12. Manage change in the context of the wider sporting, legal, political and socio-economic landscape

## Appendix 2: Information for the Participant Coach

Title of Study: Higher Educations Contributions to Coach Education: Exploring experiences of the UKCC level 4 coaches.

### **Why is this research being done?**

There is a lot of debate on what types of learning are the best ways to help adults learn. The literature largely agrees that social learning is the way forward, which goes against the current UKCC level 4 qualifications mode of delivery and it's formalness. This research is therefore to understand the experiences of coaches who have undertaken this qualification to assess whether the current method of delivery is best to meet the needs of coaches operating at this level. Researcher Arvinder Kaur is a university lecturer. This research is being undertaken as part of an MA in Research post graduate level study.

### **Why have I been asked to participant?**

You have been asked to participate as you have undertaken the UKCC Level 4 qualification along with your experience in the coaching arena. It is hoped that your participation will better inform what coaches' value most as learning experiences.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to attend an interview, lasting no longer than 60 minutes at a location of your choice at a mutual convenient date/time. The interviews will be recorded and then transcribed. You will be asked to respond to questions based on your personal experiences of the UKCC Level 4 qualification, reasons for engaging in the programme and what you think is the best way to facilitate your learning.

### **What will happen to the data?**

The data will be stored securely for a minimum of five years, after which it will be destroyed. The results of the project may be published or recorded in a thesis, peer review journal, journal paper, books or form part of a review report. Your anonymity will be preserved through the use of pseudonym; for example coach X (head coach, 5 years of experience)

### **Who has approved the study?**

Ethical approval for this research has been granted by UCLan's Built Environment, Sports and Health (BUSH) ethics committee.

### **Are there any risks to participant?**

The aim of the research is to discuss experiences of undertaking a coaching qualification, disclosing the information you feel comfortable doing so. We can therefore perceive no risks to your participation.

### **If I take part, can I change my mind?**

You do not have to take part in this study if you choose not to. If you do take part, you retain the right to refuse to answer any questions and you are free to leave the

interview and withdraw your consent to be involved in the research project. Please note that any data collected can only be withdrawn up until final analysis has taken place.

### **Where will my data be stored?**

Any data relating to this research project will be kept on an UCLan server and all files will be encrypted and password protected. Any hard copies of transcripts will be kept in a locked office in a locked filing cabinet. You may, if you choose to do so receive a copy of the findings once the research has taken place. You can also choose how best you would like to receive this information i.e. post or email.

### **Are there any benefits of taking part?**

There are no direct benefits to taking part in this study. There is very little research in the area assessing the experiences of coaches on high level qualification and by taking part; you will be contributing to the research in this domain.

Research

### **What happens next?**

If you are happy to be involved in the project, please can you contact the researcher on the contact details provided within two weeks to organise a mutually convenient time for the interview to take place.

### **Contacts?**

If you have any concerns or questions about the study, or if you would like further information please use the contacts as follows:

Arvinder Kaur

Email: [akaur@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:akaur@uclan.ac.uk)

Tel: 07758 513329

### **Who should I contact if I have any concerns or complaints?**

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research or anything else relating to the study please contact the research supervisor:

Dr John Minten / Email: [jhminten@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:jhminten@uclan.ac.uk) / Tel: 01772894901

Appendix 3: Written Consent Form

MA Research Project

Researcher: Arvinder Kaur

**Project Title - Exploring experiences of UKCC level 4 coaches**

I have been briefed concerning this project and understand my commitment and role in it. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage and can withdraw from the project at any time.

Please initial the boxes to indicate agreement with each statement:

	Initial
1. I confirm that I have both read and understood the participant information sheet dated _____ for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2. I understand that my participation in the above project is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving a reason and without any disadvantage	
3. I agree to the discussion being audio-recorded (as well as notes being taken during the discussion) and transcribed at a later date.	
4. I understand that anonymised quotes may be taken from the interview and used to illustrate general themes.	
5. The data [ <i>interview transcripts</i> ] will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.	
6. I understand that the results of the project may be published or recorded in thesis and journal papers but my anonymity will be preserved.	
7. I understand that I will be able to receive a copy of the study's conclusions when it is completed.	
8. I agree to take part in the above study.	
9. I would like to receive a copy of final paper when the study has concluded	Yes / No
10. I would like to receive a copy of the themes from this study	Yes / No
11. If you have answered yes to either question, please indicate how you would like to receive these documents and provide appropriate contact details:	Yes / No

**Contact details:**

**Name of participant (Print):**

**Signature of participant:**

**Date:**

**Name of Researcher (Print):**

**Signature of Researcher:**

**Date:**

Appendix 4: Coach Semi-structured Interview Questions

<b>Question 1:</b>		
Opening discussion		
How long have you been coaching		
What environment?		
What sport?		
Before starting this course, how often did you read about or 'study' to improve your coaching? Can you list up to three sources which you have used?"		
<b>Question 2:</b>		
Can you describe what your main reasons were for enrolling onto the course? Is there anything else? For example? Just wondering, is this a factor?		
PRAGMATIC REASONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
SELF-DIRECTEDNESS/MOTIVATION TO LEARN/ READINESS TO LEARN		
PATHWAY FOR DEVELOPMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
RECOMMENDATION FROM OTHERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent were the recommendations from other influential?
POST GRAD QUAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent was the Post Grad qualification influential in your decision to enrol onto the course? Why was this?
UKCC LEVEL 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent was the UKCC level 4 award influential in your decision to enrol onto the course?
ENGAGE WITH THEORY	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the fact that the course was more theoretical than practical influence your decision to enrol? Did it in any way deter you from applying? What were the main areas of learning you hoped to gain from the course?

NEW KNOWLEDGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	How about 'which topics/subjects were you most interested in engaging with in order to enhance your coaching?'
<p>What am I interested in? Establishing individual reasons for students engaging with the programme in line with Knowles readiness to learn/self directed concepts and motivation to learn.</p> <p>Which one was most important in influencing your decision to enrol onto the course? And then...and then?</p> <p>Can you rank the 3 most important to you?</p>		
<b>Question 3:</b>		
<p>Can you describe what your expectations were of the course in terms of the learning environment?</p> <p>How did you think it would work??</p> <p>What were your anticipated perceptions of academic learning – were you looking forward to course or apprehensive?</p>		
SOCIAL LEARNING	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent did you think learning from others may enhance you experience?
SUPPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>	What type of support were you expecting? eg were you expecting regular support from tutors and your NGB link.
FEEDBACK	<input type="checkbox"/>	How often were you expecting feedback? with regular feedback both before and after the completion of assignments or were you expecting to engage in self-directed study for much of the time.
OBSERVATIONS/MENTORING	<input type="checkbox"/>	What were your expectations of being observed? Was this a normal part of your coaching / Is this something unfamiliar to you? How did you expect observation/mentoring to influence your learning?
ACADEMIC/THEORY	<input type="checkbox"/>	How prepared were you for the academic study? i.e. had you got previous experience of academic study, and particularly academic writing, were you aware of the amount of reading required, the extent of the demands on your time etc
<p>What am I interested in? Establishing epistemic beliefs and how they feel they learn best against expectations/perceptions.</p>		

Question 4:		
What does your perfect learning experience look like? In terms of A) classroom environment		
CONTEXUALISATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent were you expecting the lectures/seminars to be contextualised to your sport? To what extent were you able to contextualise the content provided during the lectures to your own practice/environment?
FORMAL LEARNING/LECTURES		What does your perfect lecture (or seminar) look like?  In your opinion what were the highlights of the course? Is there a particular session that stands out to you over the course in terms of delivery?
TUTOR/FACILITATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	In terms of your perfect model, what would you expect from your tutor?  To what extent have the lecturers on the course been influential during your studies?
FEEDBACK	<input type="checkbox"/>	What type of feedback would you expect as part of your perfect model? To what extent was the feedback provided useful?
READING	<input type="checkbox"/>	What sort of reading would you like? How technical/academic or applied/anecdotal should it be?" To what extent has the recommended reading been useful? If so, why? To what extent were the set reading you were asked to do (handouts) relevant to the delivery? To what extent did your tutor make use of this reading during the delivery / were you asked to feedback on it?
ASSIGNMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent were you motivated to do the assignments?

Question 5:		
What does your perfect learning experience look like? In terms of Social Learning		
SMALL GROUP WORK	<input type="checkbox"/>	How have you found the interaction with other students on the course? To what extent have the cross-sport pollination of ideas been useful? Was there sufficient small-group work during the sessions, with the opportunity to share experiences with coaches from other sports, problem solve etc?
OTHER STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT/CONTRIBUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	What were you hoping to gain from engaging with other students from other sports? Did you have any concerns with engagement with other student? How valuable did you find the contributions of students from other sports in terms of furthering your own knowledge? Do you feel that all students engaged equally ?
FORMING COP'S	<input type="checkbox"/>	What do you understand by a 'community of practice'? To what extent, if at all, do you feel establishing communities of practice are useful? To what extent did you meet with other students on the course to discuss ideas on your own initiative?
OBSERVATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	How valuable have you found the observations of your coaching? Have they helped you to reflect on your coaching, offered new insights etc
MENTORING	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent have you engaged with any mentoring as a result of the contacts made on the course?
APPLICATION TO PRACTICE	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent have you been able to apply the course material/experiences on the course to your practice?
PROBLEM-SOLVING	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent did the course allow you the opportunity to problem solve? Why do you feel this is beneficial? Has there been sufficient opportunity on the course to engage in problem-solving or do you feel that for much of the time you have simply been given information? To what extent were you motivated to find things out over and above the course requirements?
SOCIALISATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent did the evening meals allowed you the opportunity to socialise with your peers? Did you find this useful? Why?
What am I interested in? Finding out what students consider to be of value in their learning – link to social learning and establishing epistemic beliefs.		

**Question 6**

Is there anything you would change about the course? If so, why and to what??

TUTOR/FACILITATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMOUNT OF INFORMATION PRESENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you feel that the amount of information you were given on the course was too much, about right, or too little?'
LECTURES	<input type="checkbox"/>	How did you find the format of the lectures in terms of engaging you as a learner? Was it too didactic or did you feel that there was adequate opportunity for questions and discussion?
OTHER STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT/CONTRIBUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has engagement with other students been a positive experience? Do you feel that you have learned from them as well as from coaches in your own sport?'
ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES/GAINING ONLINE ACCESS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent have you been able to access online material when you needed it?
FEEDBACK	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent are you happy with the amount of feedback that you received during the course, from tutors, the mentor and your NGB representative.
ACCESS TO TUTOR/STAFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you feel that you have been able to contact staff members when you needed to be able to do so? Do you feel that you have able to contact your NGB representative when you needed to?
APPLICATION TO PRACTICE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you feel that the time in between the residential weekends has allowed sufficient time to apply what you are learning?
What am I interested in? Finding out what students consider to be of value in their learning – link to social learning		

Question 7		
Can you give me an examples of how the course has, modified your coaching practice? (Before I used to, but now I...because)		
A) THROUGH THE RESIDENTIAL WEEKENDS AND b) THROUGH YOUR SELF DIRECTED LEARNING		
OTHER STUDENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent has engagement with other students affected your coaching practice?
SOCIALISATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PLAYERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent has the course affected the players you work with?
GUEST LECTURERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent has the lecturer influenced your coaching practice?
GROUP WORK	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extend did you find the group work over the weekends useful?
OBSERVATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent have you been able to view other students coaching session as a result of the course?
THEORY	<input type="checkbox"/>	How did you apply the theory to your coaching practice? How has the theory presented influenced your coaching practice?
ASSIGNMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent have the assignments influenced your coaching practice
READING	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent has the reading material on the course influenced your coaching practice?
MOTIVATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Were there any occasions on the course when your motivation dropped or you felt de-motivated? If so, what were these?
REFLECTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	To what extent did you reflect as a result of the course? Did your reflection affect your coaching practice?
What am I interested in? What influences adult learning most (Knowles) a) others, considering social aspect of learning and b) experiences adults value most. Has the course been beneficial to the student?		