# Re-Wiring Personal Epistemology;

# A Framework for Effective Mentoring

By

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**Abstract**

The aim of this thesis was to explore the contribution that mentoring can make to supporting grassroots coaches develop expertise through the current Football Association (hereafter the FA) Mentoring programme. Accordingly, Chapter 2 defines the concept of expertise and discusses the limitations of formal coach education programmes in developing expertise with specific reference to the goals, processes and epistemology of mentors and mentees. In summary, Chapter 2 then presents a conceptual framework by Entwistle and Peterson (2004) that can be utilized to support the development of a more sophisticated epistemology that underpins the development of an expert coach. In the first empirical chapter, Chapter 3 sought to evaluate a general view of the FA's Mentoring programme by mentors and mentees. The results indicated that mentors generally had a more sophisticated epistemology than mentees, although not as sophisticated as might be expected. Consequently, this difference led to what Light (2008) termed an epistemological gap which often resulted in a lack of coherence between mentors and mentees in what they believed the goals and processes of mentoring were. To build on the findings from Chapter 3 and provide greater clarity and an insight into the relationship between mentor pairs, Chapter 4 describes a multiple case study investigation that revealed that whilst mentors and mentees shared the goals of developing knowledge of tactics and techniques and some pedagogical practices (procedural knowledge) there was limited evidence that a wider declarative knowledge base was encouraged or indeed developed by mentors. Indeed, whilst there was evidence of an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees, mentors appeared to default to learn-drill-do philosophy of coach development. Chapter 5 then draws together the main conclusion by highlighting the implications of the research and considering a way forward to support the development of more expert coaches. In closing, Chapter 6 summarises the findings and

suggests a pragmatic way forward to support the development of more creative forward-

thinking coaches (Olsson, Cruickshank and Collins, 2017).

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Olsson, C., Cruickshank , A., & Collins, D. (2018). "Furiously agreeing" or "disagreeing furiously" Levels of coherence in attitude and behaviour across coach mentor and mentee pairs ( In review) . *Quest*.

Olsson, Cruickshank, & Collins,  FA Technical Report: Mentoring: A Route to Impact , (2018)

Olsson, C., Cruickshank, A., & Collins, D. (2018). Examining the impact of coach mentoring in football   In review). *Quest*.

Olsson, C., Cruickshank, A., & Collins, D. (2016). Making Mentoring Work: The Need for Re-Wiring Epistemology. *Quest*, 1-15.

## Presentation

Olsson, C. ( 2017) *Re-Wiring Epistemology* . Presentation at The FA Mentor Development Conference, St Georges Park. UK

Olsson, C. ( 2017). November 29) *FA Mentor Research Finding* Presentation to The FA Mentor Management Team. UCLan. UK

Olsson, C. (2018) *Mentoring: A Route To Impact.* Presentation to the FA Mentor Development Conference, St Georges Park. UK

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

**1.1.Current Coach Development Environment**

The continued use of sport in the last two decades as an important part of Government policy

(e.g., DCMS, 2008, 2014) has been reflected in the profile of coaching and the role of the

coach as a 'core area of activity' with a focus on 'high quality coaching' (Sport England,

2008). Consequently, the desire to raise vocational coaching standards and the demand for

'high quality of coaches' has led to increased attention on coach education as a key vehicle for

raising standards (Piggott, 2015). In response to these demands, coach education and national

governing bodies, have developed formal coach education programmes to help coaches prepare

for their role. Once qualified, these same organisations provide opportunities to progress to

higher levels of qualified status (e.g. level 2, 3 etc.) (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009).

These formal coach education courses are normally delivered in short blocks (Knowles,

Gilbourne, Borrie & Neville, 2001), are often decontextualized in nature (Cushion, Armour, &

Jones, 2003) and usually take a competency-based training approach to coach development,

(Collins, Burke, Martindale, & Cruickshank, 2015) this requiring coaches to demonstrate a

minimum level of technical, tactical and instructional skill in a prescribed manner

(Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). However, research suggests that such courses are not valued by

practitioners as they do not meet their needs and have been shown to make limited contribution

to the development of coaching expertise (Mallett, et al 2009, Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones,

2010, Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006). The decontextualized nature of formal coach

education programmes leaves coaches gravitating toward the observation of other coaches and

coaching experience as the primary sources of knowledge and coach develop. Hence, despite

being deemed as competent, it appears that many coaches are resistant to, or not influenced to

any large degree by, formal coach education and turn to other sources of knowledge and

guidance (Stoszkowski & Collins,

2014).  Consequently, there is growing acceptance that coach development often occurs outside of

formal coach education structures (Stoszkowski et al, 2014) through informal processes that are

often unmediated, and consequently lacking the quality assurance to ensure the development of

'high quality coaching' (Mallett, et al, 2009; Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2017).

To address the limitations of formal coach education, bridge the gap between mediated and

unmediated learning and make coach education relevant to practitioners, a number of governing

bodies have introduced a range of pedagogical approaches and theory based educational models

to help develop coaching expertise (Nelson ,Cushion, & Potrac , 2013).  For example, the use of

reflective practice (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), problem-based learning (Jones & Turner, 2006),

critical task-based approaches (Kirk, 2000), the establishment of communities of practice

(Culver & Trudel, 2008) and the development of mentoring schemes (McQuade, Davis, & Nash,

2015).  Whilst some, or all of these theoretically informed approaches may contribute to the

development of expert coaches, however, there remains a dearth of research to assess the impact

of such strategies upon coach education (Cassidy, Potrac, & McKenzie, 2006; Cushion &

Nelson, 2013).

### 1.1.1. Mentoring

Broadly defined, mentoring refers to the dynamic, reciprocal relationship between a more

experienced practitioner (i.e., the mentor) and a less experienced practitioner (i.e., the mentee).

Here, the experienced mentor provides knowledge and information to the less experienced mentee

in a one-dimensional relationship that presents mentoring as a simple uncomplicated process

(Sawiuk, Taylor, & Groom, 2016). Whilst it may be attractive to present mentoring in terms of

sharing or providing knowledge to a less experienced mentee, Parsloe and Wray (2000) conclude

that mentoring has an emphasis on supporting, guiding and facilitating. This focus on mentors

listening, questioning and enabling reflects the belief that real development in terms of

developing expertise cannot come from simply copying but rather, requires mentees to reflect

critically upon their practice (Jones, Harris, & Miles, 2009).  The most common mentoring

relationships have tended to operate in an ad hoc fashion and grow naturally, or what might be

referred to as 'informal mentoring (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 2006) Such informal mentor

relationships tend to evolve over time (3-6 years) on the basis of mutual respect and interpersonal

comfort with the mentor adapting to the needs of the individual. In contrast, formal mentor and

mentee relationships are normally assigned to each other and tend to last between 6 months and 1

year with the goals often specified at the start of the relationship. Mentors and mentees recognise

that the relationship will only be short term, which may restrict the development of trust and

undermine the impact of a mentor in a formal mentoring relationship (Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Moving beyond the distinction between formal and informal mentoring and accepting

Parsloe and Wray's (2000) assertion that there are nearly as many approaches to mentoring as there

are coaches and mentors, Nash and McQuade (2014) have recently described six different models

of mentoring in the context of coaching.  Specifically, these have been defined as: (i)

*apprenticeship*, where the mentor sets the standards that are to be copied; (ii) *competency*, where

specific skills and techniques are learned from the mentor; (iii) *reflective practitioner*, where the

mentee is encouraged to learn through critical self-reflection; (iv) *role model*, where the mentor

inspires the mentee as a consequence of their results and status; (v) *network*, where the mentor

introduces the mentee to other coaches; and finally (vi) *educator*, where the mentor listens and

creates appropriate opportunities for mentees to develop.  While Nash and McQuade (2014)

present each model as distinct, these authors also note that they are context dependent and may change at different stages of development. In short, *how* a mentor works needs to match *what* the mentee is trying to achieve at a given time.

### 1.1.2. Current FA Mentor Programme

In 2013 The FA introduced the FA Mentoring programme aimed at supporting grassroots Charter Standard football club coaches across England. Initially launched as a pilot with 60 part-time mentors, the programme has grown to include 290-part time mentors and eight full time regional mentor officers deployed across the country. Mentors are recruited on a regional basis by the FA through an open application process, with a pre-requisite of having secured a Level 2 FA coaching qualification. Once appointed, all new mentors attend a one-day regional training programme followed by completing the FA Adults' Mentoring qualification within 12 months of their appointment.

In terms of delivery, the FA allocates two grassroots football clubs to each mentor for one season. The criteria for identifying clubs who receive mentoring support is based upon the FA's Charter Standard Club System. More specifically, County FA Development Officers identify clubs who have the highest Charter Standard Award (i.e., a Community Charter Standard Club) and offer them the opportunity to receive support from an FA mentor. There are no restrictions on what level of coach can receive support, but it is expected that those who do will be a member of the FA's Licensed Club Association and, if they engage in the mentoring process, will consequently be allocated hours towards their Continuous Professional Development (Three hours per year). Overall, the FA expects each mentor to offer 50 hours of support per club over the season, equating to approximately five hours of support per month (which includes support during training sessions and/or match days). This support can be structured in various ways to

suit the needs of the club and their coaches (e.g., the mentor can provide five hours of support per month to individual mentees or / and deliver group workshops and support several coaches.

**1.2. My Background, Roles and Reflections on FA's the Mentoring Programme**

At a personal level, this research was motivated by my full-time role as a Senior Lecturer in Sports Coaching and Development at the University of Central Lancashire and a part time role as a FA Coach Educator and latterly as an FA Mentor. As an experienced tutor and educator, I had considered my role to transfer knowledge to candidates / students as directed by national governing body manuals and tutor education courses. However, since working in the higher education sector, my epistemological position had evolved to a relativist position where I recognised that I could generate my own knowledge by challenging and constructing new knowledge rather than simply replicating and reinforcing the status quo. This approach had been reflected in my teaching where I encourage learners to follow the same path as I, to generate their own understanding of the world around them through critical engagement (Freire 2000). As an FA tutor and mentor, I had encouraged learners to experiment, reflect and construct their own knowledge and reflect upon their own practice to come to their own conclusions. Although, I took a cognitive approach to learning which often came into conflict with the demands of delivering National Governing Body (hereafter NGB) awards, that were generally focused upon a behaviourist approach that presents a 'gold' standard of coaching that should be followed by developing coaches (Cushion, Armour & Jones,2003). Despite this contradiction, I was able to balance the competing philosophical demands of each approach to ensure that coaches had the opportunity to develop and secure qualifications that were often rooted in a competency-based model of accreditation. However, within a relatively short period of time of taking up a role as an FA mentor, I was becoming increasingly frustrated by mentees' thirst for simply wanting me

to demonstrate a range of drills and practices that could be replicated without due regard for the nuances of what, when, how and most importantly the why of coaching practice. There appeared to be a discrepancy between my understanding of coach development and effective coaching and mentees expectation of how they would be supported, in other words 'cognitive dissonance' (Griffiths and Armour, 2012) undermined the mentoring relationship. This discrepancy was brought into stark focus when working with one of the my very first mentees.

Initially having observed his coaching sessions with an under 10's football team and providing some feedback regarding changing his coaching focus to introduce more fun elements into his coaching, I offered to deliver a coaching session with his team and for the mentee to observe me. The following week I delivered the coaching session and the aim of my delivery was; having fun, empowering the players and to encourage the players to experiment and reflect upon their own development. Following the coaching session, the mentee and I discussed the practices, the approach I took and the benefits and limitations of different approaches. The mentee made it very clear that he did not consider my approach as making any type of contribution to the players' learning, although he did acknowledge that the players enjoyed the session. Fundamentally, however, he did not equate having fun, giving ownership, reflecting upon practice and experimenting with the concept of learning. Indeed, his view was that knowledge would be passed to him by the mentor and reproduced in a highly structured and prescribed manner to the players. It was at this point that I realised that, irrespective of my knowledge and wealth of experience in coaching football which I wanted to share, there was a philosophical discrepancy between my understanding of what constitutes effective learning and the mentees understanding of development and the construction of knowledge which was underpinned by each of our epistemological positions. In other words, an epistemological gap

existed between us, which irrespective of what knowledge I wanted to share and what drills, practices and skills he wanted to accrue, would undermine our relationship and only lead to frustration and disappointment on both sides of the mentoring relationship. The danger of course is that mentors may simply dismiss the mentees needs on the grounds that they are not capable of developing and the mentees may view the mentor as not having the required expertise or/and credibility to support their development. Therefore, to help the mentee develop, I would need to focus his attention on the characteristics of expertise and begin to prioritise developing his declarative knowledge above procedural knowledge. This would require the mentee to consider the 'why' and 'why not of coaching', by considering a range of contextual factors that would influence his coaching practice in complex environments. However, this journey toward expertise would require the mentee to move away from a naïve epistemology where he viewed coaching knowledge in terms of right and wrong to a more sophisticated epistemology where knowledge is tentative, and coaches must take a depends approach. In short, I needed to target his epistemology to help him develop expertise.

As a consequence of my mentoring experience, I wanted to explore if this experience was unique to me and was an issue due to my own relativist position or if other mentors through their own experiences of mentoring had considered this to be an issue. Consequently, it brought into sharp focus a number of key questions relating to the coherence across and between mentors of the goals and processes of mentoring and crucially the coherence between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals and process of mentoring through the lens of epistemology.

### 1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Thesis

In view of my role as an FA mentor, the growing use of mentoring to support the development of coaches and the mechanisms that underpin effective mentoring, the aim of this

thesis critically explores the goals, processes and the epistemological relationship of FA mentors and their mentees. Specifically, this aim was realised through the following objectives:

1. To critically consider relevant literature on the potential mechanism of effective mentoring,

2. To evaluate the FA Mentoring Programme in terms of goals, processes and epistemological relationships between mentors and mentees,

3. To identify and evaluate coherence and incoherence between mentors and mentees in terms of goals, processes and epistemology,

4. Consider and review the results of the study in terms of providing meaningful recommendations to support the development of an effective mentoring programme.

## 1.4. Methodological Considerations

In formulating a research strategy to address the objectives of this Professional Doctorate and support the wider aim of providing meaningful insight into the nature of mentoring as it relates to The Football Association's Mentoring Programme, a pragmatic research philosophy was employed. This is where the researcher is sensitive to the social, historical and political context of the inquiry and considers the moral and ethical issues that may emerge through the research process (Giacobbi Jr, Poczwardowski, & Hager, 2005). The aim of the research was not to find an absolute truth, but rather attempt to provide practical solutions to existing contemporary issues by building upon previous discourse and using more than one research method underpinned by an empirical approach, to illuminate the issues under investigation (Cresswell, Plano Clark, Gutman, & Hanson, 2003).

Using this approach, methodological decisions were based on their suitability to answer the research question and not a pre-defined epistemological view. More specifically, pragmatism

rejects the tenets of a pure positivism (i.e., the existence of one universal truth that can be objectively measured) and pure constructivism (i.e., that reality is entirely constructed by individuals and groups with no research findings being more "correct" than others: (Giacobbi, et al., 2005).  Instead, the pragmatic philosophy encourages researchers to assume an epistemological perspective that can provide tangible answers to their practically-meaningful research questions. By adopting a pragmatic research philosophy this research drew upon an empirical approach that reflected the aspiration to produce research that achieved its aims and impact upon practice (Verschueren 2012).

In making methodological decisions I was aware of the subjective nature of choosing and analysing the data. Therefore, as I was the main instrument of the research process I used a multi method approach to provide a more detailed and balanced analysis of the data. For example, Chapter 2 was a conceptual study that provided an opportunity for me to explore what expertise in sports coaching looks like and consider the processes to develop expertise in relation my role as a mentor. In light of my increasing awareness of a 'teaching and learning' discrepancy  between 'I' the mentor, and my mentees it was appropriate that I consider how mentors and mentees view the nature and acquisition of knowledge in relation to coach development, and how this impacts upon the mentoring relationships. This provided a focus for the study and a direction of travel for the research.

In order to explore general trends of the FA mentoring programme a survey was conducted to capture a large number of responses that could provide a general view of the mentoring process. This was then followed up with a qualitative multiple case study design that would provide deeper richer insights into mentor-mentee relationships as well as being able to analyse cross case comparisons (Yin, 2014).  More specific details on how a pragmatic philosophy

informed my approach in each of these studies is presented within the individual chapters that follow.

Drawing upon Bryant (2009), who stressed that the ultimate criteria of good pragmatic research is, 'that it makes a difference to practice and that such work should be tested through dialogue' so  every effort has also been made to share this work with relevant stakeholders. In this regard, the work has been disseminated and feedback sought through presentations at  two National FA Mentoring Conferences, 2 Regional Mentor Development Days and presentations with National and Regional FA Mentor officers. In addition, three peer reviewed papers (2 in review) and an article in the FA Coaching Journal, *Boot Room*, have provided opportunities to receive feedback. Currently, the research is informing the development of a Higher FA Mentoring Award that will be offered initially to existing FA Mentor workforce.

### 1.4. Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of 6 chapters that explores the role of the FA Mentoring programme in developing coaching expertise. Specifically, the thesis objectives are addressed in Chapter 2, 3,4, and 5 in a systemic fashion.

 To address the first thesis objective, Chapter 2 explores the basis of developing expertise by initially defining coaching expertise and highlighting the limitations of formal coach education in developing expertise. To move the discussion forward, Chapter 2 then considers the role of epistemology in developing more sophisticated coaches and presents an epistemological framework as a tool to help mentors understand the mentees journey toward a more sophisticated epistemology before finally suggesting what an epistemology focused mentoring would look like.

To address the thesis' second and third objectives, Chapter 3 describes a survey that collected data to explore general trends of mentor and mentee perceptions of what the markers of expertise were, how each group believed expertise is developed, the nature of the interaction and epistemological beliefs. Mean scores were calculated to provide typical mentor and mentee perceptions of each of the Markers and standard deviations were calculated to indicate the level of agreement within each group. In addition, to help illuminate levels of coherence between mentors and mentees, a *t* test was conducted to determine any statistical differences between the groups. Analysis of the data revealed that, whilst there was some evidence of some understanding and agreement regarding the markers of expertise, there appeared to be inconsistencies and confusion over others. Of significance, whilst Mentors epistemology was not as sophisticated as might be expected there appeared to be an, epistemological gap (Light, 2008) between mentors and mentees which may lead to what Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to as 'mentoring dissonance'.

To help clarify and illuminate some of the issues highlighted in Chapter Three, Chapter Four describes a multiple case study design based on semi-structured interviews of mentor and mentee pairs. By adopting this approach, I was able to explore in more detail within and across mentor pairs using a deductive content analysis. This employed QSR NVIVO 10 (qualitative software analysis programme) to probe some of the issues that emerged in the survey study described in Chapter 3. By using a digital software package it ensured all the data was securely stored and allowed efficiently and effective retrieval of the data for further analysis which reflected a pragmatic research approach. Using the headings 'GOALS, PROCESSES and EPISTEMOLOGY', I was able to identify, from the transcribed interviews, units of text that corresponded with the headings. This was then followed up with an inductive content analysis to identify text that could be labelled together as sub-themes that could be compared between

mentor and mentee pairs under the headings of Similar, Different or Unique.  Whilst the study

revealed that mentors and mentees shared similar goals, such as acquiring technical and tactical

knowledge of football and developing pedagogical skills, mentors articulated wider and

cognitively based goals such as problem solving and developing a coaching philosophy.

However, these goals did not appear to be shared with their mentees and, consequently, this

resulted in not only differences in goals but also differences in the process to develop expertise.

For example, whilst mentors recognised the importance of discussion and reflection upon practice,

mentees believed that the process of developing expertise is underpinned by observing and

replicating practice. As previously highlighted, this might be referred to as an epistemological gap.

However, there was little evidence that mentors either shared wider cognitively based goals with their

mentees or indeed employed discussion or reflective conversation with their mentees to develop

expertise.  There may be a number of reasons for this, such as mentors may be guarded against

sharing different goals as they want to be seen to be doing a good job and give mentees what they

want or alternatively,  mentors may not have the theoretical framework, skills or confidence to

develop a more sophisticated epistemology to move the mentee toward expertise, or simply, they

have not the time to engage in detailed conversation.

To address the final objective, Chapter Five draws together the main conclusions from the

research by highlighting the limitations of the current coach development processes and how

mentoring could be used to embrace informal learning contexts to develop expert coaches.

However, the research notes that the FA Mentoring Programme appears to be process driven with

an emphasis on developing procedural knowledge (i.e. what and how of coaching) with less

emphasis on developing coach's declarative knowledge (i.e. why and when of coaching).  Finally,

Chapter Six provides a brief summary of the results, conclusions and implications for the FA

mentoring programme.

## Chapter 2: Making Mentoring Work

## 2.1. Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, a number of governing bodies have established coach mentoring systems to help produce more expert coaches at both participation and performance levels. Although this approach is well-justified (Nash, 2003), the underpinning theory and mechanisms by which mentors can develop mentee expertise are poorly understood. Accordingly, as mentors will invariably possess a more complex view of knowledge, learning and practice than their mentees, mentoring is likely to be suboptimal at best – and doomed to fail at worst – unless critical consideration is given to the precise goal, nature, and process of this relationship. Consequently, this chapter critically discusses the role of the mentor in coach development, the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship, and, more specifically, how mentee expertise may best be developed.

To achieve this goal and provide a better understanding of this complex area (cf. Jones, Harris, & Miles, 2009), the chapter is structured in four main parts. Firstly, to frame the whole discussion, coaching expertise is defined, in short, the type of coach that mentors are being tasked to develop (or develop as far as possible). Secondly, building on this definition, consideration is given to the limits of many current coach education systems for developing expertise. Thirdly, the potential role of mentoring in addressing these issues and a framework – grounded in personal epistemology – that can conceptualize the development of expertise in mentee coaches. Finally, some consequent implications for the applied mentoring process underpinned by a focus on personal epistemology (cf. Giacobbi, et al.,2005).

## 2.2. Defining the Expert Coach

Responding to early definitions of expertise that revolved around coaching behaviours, Nash, Martindale, Collins, and Martindale (2012) recently proposed a set of cognitive-based criteria against which expertise can be more accurately classified. Essential components included: use of a large declarative knowledge base to solve problems and make decisions; use of perceptual skills, mental models, and routines; an ability to work independently and develop innovative solutions; use of effective reflection, experimentation, and lifelong learning; an awareness of personal strengths and limits; and management of complex planning processes. Noticeably, a track record of developing performers from one stage to another (e.g., development to world class level) was defined as a *possible* marker of coach expertise. Notably, the criteria proposed by Nash et al., (2012) define expertise across all coaching domains, covering the full participation-to-performance spectrum. Indeed, while there is much variation in how expertise is played out on a behavioural level (even within the same domain), its' cognitive underpinnings, by definition, are consistent (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Saury & Durand, 1998).

In sum, expert coaching involves much more than applying "solution X to problem Y", even if the solution has worked before. Instead, the expert coach is able to recognize the most relevant information in multi-faceted situations to help their athletes/teams to optimally develop or perform in their ever-evolving contexts (Nash et al., 2012). For example, a soccer coach who is just starting on their journey towards expertise may recognize that players are not passing effectively and then attempt to solve this with training practices that focus on passing technique. In contrast, a coach with established expertise might have recognized that this problem was symptomatic of poor conceptual understanding of support play and thus design sessions that foster development in this area in line with other "nested" development needs (cf. Abraham &

Collins, 2011). Some may argue that such insight is an art, rooted in a "natural flair" for coaching (or tacit knowledge of this art) that is acquired automatically through experience. In contrast, however, it is now well-established in the literature that coaching expertise can (and should) be intentionally developed (Collins, Burke, Martindale, & Cruickshank, 2015). Indeed, "coaching is not behaviour to be copied but a cognitive skill to be taught" (Abraham & Collins, 1998).

### 2.3. Developing the Expert Coach: Limitations of Training-Based Approaches

Considering how coaches accrue knowledge and develop expertise, Werthner and Trudel (2006) identified three avenues of learning: mediated learning, unmediated learning, and internal learning. Mediated learning is externally driven and includes activities such as formal education courses; unmediated learning relates to areas such as feedback from more experienced peers or mentors; and internal learning occurs when a coach critically reflects on their current practice (Wiman, Salmoni, & Hall, 2010). As the primary education vehicle in most sports systems, the focus here is on mediated learning and the limitations of formal coach education in developing and sustaining expert coaches (Mead, Campbell & Milan, 1999) (the reader should note that unmediated and internal learning is addressed in the following sections on mentoring).

Despite the cognitive basis of expertise, many coaching courses still reinforce images of coaches as behavioural technicians (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; McCullick, Belcher & Schempp, 2005). Indeed, the coaching process is often broken down into specific and isolated competencies that reflect "best practice" yet have little theoretical or empirical basis for developing higher level expertise (Cushion et al, 2003; Collins et al., 2015). In these systems, coaches are primarily *trained* on the acquisition and demonstration of certain behaviours and rigid decision-making processes; normally influenced by the system's desire for uniformity and

consistency in coaching standards. Although novice coaches may initially benefit from tight frameworks, the continuation of such approaches may simply encourage coaches to reproduce and replicate practice without due regard for context and limit higher levels of expertise. This unfortunately, reflects a process of indoctrination rather than education (Cushion et al, 2003).

Thus, against the expertise criteria listed earlier, the reality for many coaches is that formal coach education does not, therefore, adequately prepare them to manage the diverse range of environments, challenges, and pressures that they will face in practice (Cushion et al., 2003). With many programs still delivered in isolated and irrelevant contexts, including a focus on drills and behaviours rather than thinking structures and patterns, such "neat and tidy" courses are at odds with the complex and dynamic setting in which coaches are required to operate; in effect, there is an "epistemological mismatch".

### 2.4. Coach Mentoring: A Route for Impact?

Based perhaps on the accepted limits of "one-off" or isolated education courses (cf. Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013), as well as the recognized benefits of interacting with experienced practitioners (Cushion et al., 2003; Wiman, Salmani & Hall, 2010), a number of sports have introduced mentoring as a way to better develop creative, forward-thinking, and adaptable coaches; or, in other words, those which reflect the expertise criteria listed earlier in this thesis. While there is no single definition of mentoring (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009), emphasis is often placed on the provision of guidance and support (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Parsloe & Wray, 2000; Brockbank, 2006). More specifically, mentoring is often portrayed as a process of listening, questioning, and facilitating; as distinct from telling, restricting, and directing (Jones et al., 2009; Roberts, 2000). By its nature,

mentoring is therefore viewed against the responsibilities, challenges, and goals of each individual coach and something that is done *with* rather than *to* mentees (Jones et al., 2009).

Of course, the type of knowledge that is targeted for development and the steps taken to reach higher-level thinking are vital to the nature and extent of expertise that is ultimately developed. Certainly, while unfocused mentoring has the *potential* to develop expert coaches, failure to consider the theory and mechanisms of this process will likely amplify a *training* approach to coach development and exacerbate the problems of "copy and paste" coaching. For example, Cushion et al., (2003) has already criticized unstructured and uncritical approaches to mentoring for simply reinforcing the "learn-drill-do" orthodoxy and producing "souped up versions of the same" (p. 216). In short, if mentors view coaching knowledge as concrete, owned by higher authorities, and easily measured by simple and isolated competencies – as is often suggested by formal coach education – then there is a clear danger that mentoring simply reinforces what sports already have. In this way, past playing experience and/or a breadth of technical knowledge alone will not make an individual an expert (or perhaps even competent) mentor (Cushions, 2006). Rather, if the aim of mentoring is to develop expert coaches, then mentors need to possess a deep understanding of how mentees approach, acquire, develop, and use coaching knowledge. In short, cognitive excellence is impossible without excellent knowledge on how it is best acquired.

### 2.5. Personal Epistemology: A Foundation for Effective Mentoring

Given the importance of understanding "how knowledge works", it is crucial for mentors to therefore consider the role of personal epistemology for their practice. Epistemological beliefs relate to the nature and scope of knowledge, including how it can be acquired and what is and can be "known". These beliefs are fundamental to how individuals engage with learning and

teaching.  Treating personal epistemology as a multi-dimensional construct, Schommer-Aikins

and Easter (2009) argued that five beliefs underpin the acquisition, development, and use of

knowledge.  More specifically, these relate to the extent to which knowledge is viewed as (a)

simple and isolated facts or complex interwoven concepts, (b) stable and certain or tentative and

changing, (c) handed down by omniscient authorities or developed through personal reasoning

and evidence, (d) learned quickly/not at all or gradually/recursively, and (e) limited by the

learner's fixed capacity or subject to continuous development.  Importantly, Schommer-Aikins

and Easter (2009) argued that these beliefs are independent of each other and do not all have to

be at the same level.  For example, a person may believe that knowledge on a particular

issue/topic is structured in complex interrelationships (as per belief "a" above) yet, at the same

time, only source and use solutions provided by perceived authorities (as per belief "c" above)

(cf. Schommer-Aikins & Hutter (2002).

While it might be attractive to label learners along an epistemological continuum (i.e.,

coach X is naïve, coach Y sophisticated, and coach Z somewhere in the middle), Schommer-

Aikins and Hutter (2002) argued that one's epistemology is best characterized as a distribution.

In this way, a naïve individual may believe that 75% of knowledge is certain, 15% to be

discovered, and 10% evolving.  At the same time, they might also believe that 80% of learning

happens immediately with only 20% happening over a sustained period of time.  A more

sophisticated individual, on the other hand, may believe that 10% of knowledge is certain, 20%

is yet to be discovered, and 70% is evolving while also believing that 80% of learning occurs

gradually with only 20% done immediately.  In sum, the more that a coach believes that

knowledge is complex and tentative, derived from reason, constantly evolving and developed

over a long time, then the more likely they are to be critically reflective, adaptive, and creative in

their thinking (Schommer-Aikins & Hutter, 2002).  More sophisticated beliefs will also increase

the likelihood of individuals appropriately questioning and challenging knowledge that is held

and shared by others; a vital feature for avoiding the copy and paste coaching mentioned earlier,

especially when "expert opinion" is incessantly spewed out from television programs, radio

shows, websites, blogs, and Twitter feeds (Nussbaum & Bendixen, 2003; MacNamara & Collins,

2015)

Importantly, evaluation of the role of personal epistemology in coaching practice has

recently become a focus for researchers.  Grecic and Collins (2013) have argued that coaches

would have greater role clarity, functional understanding, and developmental potential if they

proactively and regularly engaged with their epistemology (i.e., their core beliefs on the origins,

constructions, and use of coaching knowledge).  As most cognition and behaviour is driven by, or

shaped through our core beliefs and values (Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2008), Grecic & Collins

noted that such understanding can help coaches to frame their decision making, overall practice,

and how they pursue, construct, and evaluate new learning experiences.  In other words, a

coach's epistemology can be used as a critical sieve to plan and evaluate all aspects of coaching

practice and development (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

Indeed, Grecic and Collins (2013) have demonstrated how a coach's epistemological

position is reflected in the environment that they create, methods used, behaviours employed,

relationships built, goals set and the decisions made with regards to performer development.  For

example, a more naïve coach will generally work in an autocratic fashion, foster obedient

performers who learn by following prescribed rules, and gauge success against simple results (e.g.,

win/loss record).  In this case, the performer will be highly dependent on the coach and develop

limited levels of adaptability, independence, and resilience (Webb, Collins & Cruickshank, 2016).

By contrast, a more sophisticated coach will generally empower their performers, encourage experimentation, set goals and evaluate progress collaboratively, and generate an environment where questioning and challenge, as underpinned by mutual respect and trust, is the norm. In this case, coaches therefore help to develop adaptive, independent, and resilient performers, which seems to be the main goal of most development systems (Webb et al 2016).

Significantly, coaches with more sophisticated epistemologies might not be the most effective for performer development in all situations. Certainly, there *may* be times where a more naïve coach is more suited to a specific role (e.g., to provide clear direction to performers who need a "do it like this" approach at a particular point of their development). However, if sports wish to develop adaptable, independent and resilient performers, who can meet the shifting demands of their sport, then a substantial body of sophisticated coaches who can support this goal is needed (Collins, Abraham, & Collins, 2012). In short, if sports want expert/sophisticated performers then mentors need to logically develop expert/sophisticated mentee coaches. Developing coaches who can recognise when they need to engage at a more critical level yet have the ability to operate in a more simplistic manner should be the aim of coach development.

### 2.6. Optimizing the Mentoring Process: A Guiding Framework

Taking mentee epistemology as a logical focus for developing sophisticated coaches, Entwistle and Peterson (2004) presented a framework on adult knowledge and learning within higher education that mentors might adopt (see Figure 1). Integrating the work of Perry (1970) and Schommer-Aikins and Hutter (2002), Entwistle and Peterson's framework outlines stages of progression along two continua; the individual's conceptions of knowledge (emanating from epistemology) and their conceptions of learning (emanating from constructivism and cognitive

psychology). As per the upper continuum in Figure 1, conceptions of knowledge are anchored

by a dualistic and factual (or "black and white") standpoint at one end to a relativistic and

reasoned (or "shades of grey") standpoint at the other. Resonating with Schommer-Aikins and

Easter's (2009) views on naïve epistemologies, those with a dualist conception of knowledge will

see coaching as based on clearly prescribed "facts" and heuristics with little need for (or

awareness of) interpretation and creativity. This is in stark contrast to the relativist coach (with a

sophisticated epistemology, Schommer-Aikins and Easter, (2009) who would see knowledge as

tentative, open to interpretation, and used to support creative and adaptive actions. Between

these anchors are individuals who initially see that there can be multiple and equally valuable

views on a topic and that knowledge is provisional rather that concrete (multiplism). This is then

followed by a pivotal advance (see dashed line in Figure 1) where relativism is acknowledged,

and individuals then begin to use evidence to debate the strengths and limitations of different

perspectives, culminating in the development of a personal and informed perspective.
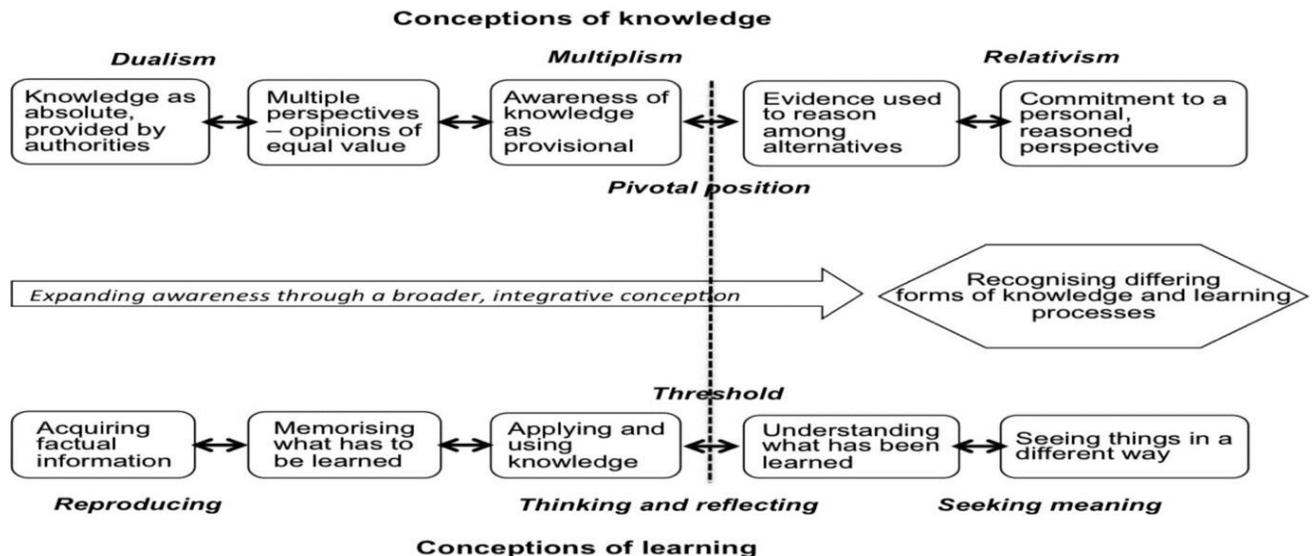


**Figure 1.** Progressions of knowledge use and conceptions of learning (adapted from Entwistle & Peterson, 2004). Taken from Collins et al. (2012).

In terms of an individual's conceptions of learning, Entwistle and Peterson's (2004) framework details that learners, or mentee coaches in our case, begin with rote learning and reproduction based on external sources that set the benchmark of "correctness" by providing the "right" answers.  Coach learning is therefore oriented towards listening to and following coach educators and more advanced/respected peers, as well as other influential sources such as television pundits and current and former performers; all of whom possess varying levels of actual expertise and target their messages for varying purposes and audiences.  From this starting point, coaches then move to apply what they have learned by consistently thinking and reflecting on their learning.  Similar to the conceptions of knowledge, once individuals start to develop a deep understanding of what they have learned a threshold is reached where emphasis then shifts from thinking and reflecting to searching for/establishing meaning and seeing things in ways that were previously inaccessible.

In pursuit of coaches who are committed to a personal, evidence-based, adaptive, and creative approach, Entwistle and Peterson's (2004) framework suggests that mentors should therefore help mentees to make a "step by step" progression – rather than an unrealistic and unachievable "leap" – toward relativism and sophistication.  In this manner, overlap is found with Vygotsky's (1980) *zone of proximal development* where learners are supported to move beyond what they are currently able to do through help from, or collaboration with a more capable other.  Of course, having to abandon long-held beliefs, assumptions, and "facts" will be a substantial, taxing, and uncomfortable journey for the mentee (and, perhaps, the mentor), including inevitable dips in confidence and, potentially, performance.  As a result, many will shy away from the apparently reduced clarity and "right or wrongs" of sophistication, remain reluctant to update their beliefs, ignore contrary evidence (especially when it challenges the

authority of influential figures), and stay within or return to the dualist comfort zone of definite facts (Schempp, McCullick & Mason, 2006).  Indeed, Perry (1970) stated that individuals can be at different positions for different amounts of time during their development, as well as halting or reversing their growth at any point; progress is neither uniform nor continuous.

Accordingly, the mentee's journey from a highly prescriptive approach where coaches are encouraged to follow formulaic practices to recognising the nuances of practice  where decisions are dependent upon context, requires significant care and treatment from their mentor, *together with* an acceptance, or even commitment from the mentee, to making the journey.

**2.7. Rewiring Coach Epistemologies: What We Might Expect To See In Effective Epistemology - Focused Mentoring**

Building on the presented messages so far, it is important to consider how epistemology focused mentoring may help mentee coaches develop a relativist view of knowledge and pursue meaning in their learning.  As key provisos, it is of value to clarify that a focus is on how mentors may best help their mentees work towards expertise by rewiring their epistemology; regardless of whether that mentee operates in a participation or performance role.  Second, mentors will of course need a thorough understanding of what expertise is (and is not) plus the theory of developing on an epistemological-level; something that appears to be major change in many sports' mentor selection policies.  Indeed, there would appear little hope for mentors (if *expertise* is desired) should their mentee subscribe to the competency-based, learn-drill-do orthodoxy mentioned earlier.  Finally, recognizing that not all mentees will, initially at least, have the skills, support, or desire to complete the journey to full sophistication/higher-level expertise.  These individuals can still, of course, be highly effective when a commitment to

"keeping it simple" is needed (Collins et al., 2012); provided that they, alongside sophisticated/expert coaches, appreciate their limits. However, as mentors are being asked to help develop more expert coaches, it is of value to consider various routes by which the rewiring process might operate. More specifically, 'how an epistemology focused one-on-one mentoring might work' and then develop these features to encourage mentees to engage with other coaches (i.e., social) to develop deeper declarative knowledge.

### 2.7.1. Epistemology Based Mentoring

Early definitions of expert coaching relied heavily upon recognising coaching behaviours that appeared to be common amongst what was expert coaches (Nash, et al., 2012). However more recently, this has led to a recognition that expert coaching is fundamentally a decision making process, making cognitive demands upon the coach. In other words, there should be more focus on the 'why and when' rather than the 'what and how' of coaching (Nash et al., 2012; Abraham et al.,2006).

As previously highlighted, Nash et al., (2012) suggested a set of cognitively based criteria that could be applied for identifying and operationalising expertise in coaching. Essential components included: utilizing a large declarative knowledge base to solve problems and make decisions; applying perceptual skills and mental models; demonstrating the ability to work independently and produce novel and innovative solutions; demonstrating effective reflection, experimentation and an attitude to lifelong learning; taking own strengths and limitation into account and being able to manage complex planning processes. Significantly, the criteria proposed by Nash et al., (2012) defined expertise across all coaching domains, covering the participation to performance spectrum (Olsson et al., 2016). Critically, experts make sound judgments and optimum decisions based on recognising the most relevant information in often complex coaching

contexts, regardless of the levels of the athlete being coached. Hence, knowledge alone is not sufficient but rather developing a base of declarative knowledge that underpins effective decision making should be a focus for developing expert coaches. Consequently, providing the opportunity to apply ones thinking to solve problems and create solution should take centre stage in the development process. It is within this context that expertise can be developed by offering scenario-based activities where coaches can form complete mental models and be encouraged to develop ideal structures of thinking rather than ideal solutions (Collins et al.,2015)

By learning through on-going interactions such as observing, listening, discussing and reflecting upon their own practice, coaches develop through contextualised experiences to find solutions to complex coaching problems (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009). This approach appears to be valued by coaches and research suggests that informal learning, when applied in the right way, can make a significant contribution to coach development (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012; Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). Notably, Mallet et al (2009) makes a distinction between unguided informal learning where what is learnt is often incidental and unplanned and is solely self-directed, in contrast with guided informal learning where learning takes place with someone other than the learner who deliberately facilitates learning in an informal way.

Mentors can therefore guide and facilitate 'solution-based thinking' as opposed to simply providing better drills and practices (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991; Collins et al., 2015). Initially, providing the mentee with an understanding of what the journey toward expertise might look like, mentors may initially support the mentees development of procedural knowledge (the what and how of coaching) but then begin to highlight the contextual factors that may impact upon their practice. Mentors would help the mentee recognise the complexity of coaching and consider a range of alternative strategies to solve problems and begin to develop their declarative

knowledge by drawing them away from simply copying drills and practices to consider their

contexts and 'other' solutions. Consequently, mentees begin to recognise that there may be more

than one solution and explore and consider a range of contextual factors that may impact upon

their coaching. Indeed, they may need to re-visit previously held beliefs and apply 'new'

approaches to established practices and develop innovative and creative solutions (Olsson et

al.,2016)

Integrating these two ideas with an increasing facilitation of coach development through

informal processes by social interactions and real-world experiences will produce coaches better

able to construct meaning and apply their knowledge and skills. Encouraging mentees to share

ideas and participate in discussion with their peers will ensure that they can construct new

knowledge through social interactions and negotiation (Gilbert & Trudel 2005). By generating

and developing knowledge in their own environment with their peers, knowledge is not imposed

(as in formal education) but rather, through an interactive process with other coaches.

To fully utilize and build on the concept of social learning in informal contexts, coaches

could be encouraged to come together and discuss coaching issues and share their knowledge.

However, the danger of relying on informal approaches to coach development is that without

appropriate guidance, support and critical appraisal may simply serve to reproduce and magnify

many of the issues that coach education should try and limit. Initially therefore, the role of the

mentor would be central to developing such learning relationships as some mentees may find

such social contexts threatening and undermining, whilst others would just experience them as an

echo chamber (Wohn & Bowe, 2016). However, by manipulating the social environment, the

mentor could guide and encourage critical questioning and reflective practice between group

members. As the group develop, the role of the mentor recedes and plays a more consultative

role. In order for such communities to benefit coaches, Stephenson & Jowett, (2009) suggest that coaches should have a clear understanding of what type of coach they want to become (i.e critical independent and creative coaches). This may be informed and led by the governing body and promoted through formal coach education and supported by appropriate media channels. By encouraging coaches to have an appreciation of their own epistemological beliefs and an ability to function relatively autonomously, coaches can therefore move toward the independent and creative coaches governing bodies claim to want to produce (Grecic & Collins, 2013; Olsson et al.,2016). Therefore, it is important that coaches are able to critique and follow through a rationale of reasoning to ensure that they do not fall back to simply agreeing with one another, creating a 'group consensus' potentially leading to a 'halo' led plagiarism (she/he is good so I should do that) that reinforces a cut and paste approach to coach development (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014) and could potentially lead to an elitist approach to coach development.

## 2.8. Conclusions and Next Steps

In light of the recent push on mentoring as a means to develop more creative, forward thinking, and adaptive coaches, as well as coach preferences for mentoring support (Cushion 2007), this chapter has attempted to identify important features, relevant theory, and potential mechanisms for the development of expert coaches (or at least coaches who are closer to this level). More specifically, this chapter has critically explored the role of mentoring in coach development, the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship, and, most importantly, how mentee expertise may effectively be developed through epistemology focused one-on-one mentoring and utilizing communities of practice to expand and develop declarative knowledge. In doing so, a focus on personal epistemology for mentors, mentees, and the wider sport system alike would underpin a more expertise focused approach to coach development. Indeed, as well as

examining the relevance and utility of the main suggestions on the theory and mechanisms of epistemological development,  additional benefits to come from work that explores areas including: the relationship being established between mentors and mentees; the extent to which mentors fully understand how expert coaching can be achieved; the expectations of mentees over what expert coaching is and how it can be reached; and the identification of sport-specific tactics and tools for use at each phase of epistemological development. To help illuminate how The FA's Mentoring Programme matches up against effective mentoring as discussed in this chapter and possible explanation for this through the lens of epistemology, Chapter Three describes a survey study that was completed by mentors and mentees that sought to compare general trends in the whole FA Mentor Programme.

**Chapter 3: What are the Goals and Processes of Mentoring?**

**An investigation of what mentors and mentees believed the markers of expertise were, how each group believed expertise is developed, the nature of the interactions and their epistemological beliefs**

### 3.1. Introduction

As previously outlined in Chapter 2, a number of governing bodies have established coach mentoring programmes to develop more expert coaches at both participation and performance levels of sport. However, there appears a lack of understanding of the precise goals and processes that underpin how mentors can develop mentee expertise. More specifically and what has been much less obvious in prior work is a consideration definition of 'expertise' and how it can be developed. As such, Chapter 2 drew on Nash et al, (2012) to clarify the essential criteria of expertise. These criteria were: (i) the use of perceptual skills, mental models, and routines; (ii) the use of a large base of declarative knowledge to solve problems and make decisions; (iii) the ability to work independently and develop innovative solutions; (iv) the use of critical reflection and experimentation in practice; (v) a commitment to lifelong learning; (vi) an awareness of one's strengths and limits; and (vii) management of complex planning processes. In this way, it can be argued that if sports want to develop creative, forward-thinking, and adaptable coaches, then mentoring should primarily target and extend the mentee's *declarative knowledge* and *cognitive skillset* over their *procedural knowledge* and *behavioural skillset* (albeit the latter abilities are still clearly important). Significantly, this message is consistent with a breadth of literature on coaching expertise and the mentoring process (Abraham & Collins, 2011; McQuade et al, 2015 Nash et al, 2012; Collins, et al, 2015; Partington & Cushion, 2013).

Regarding the process by which expertise might be developed, Chapter 2 stressed that mentors need to develop their mentee's epistemology; in other words, their beliefs on the nature, acquisition, evolution and scope of knowledge. More specifically, drawing upon prior work by Perry (1970) and Schommer-Aiken and Easter (2009), a coach needs to progress from a *naïve* towards a *sophisticated* epistemology to develop higher levels of expertise. To explain, a coach who holds a *naïve* epistemology believes that coaching knowledge is clear, simple, unchanging, handed down by authorities, and learned quickly or not at all. As such, they tend to coach in a fixed , replicated manner. In contrast, a coach with a *sophisticated* epistemology believes that coaching knowledge is complex, tentative, uncertain, self- constructed, and developed via reasoning over a sustained period. Accordingly, they tend to recognise the nuance of coaching practice and are able to "create and adapt" their coaching to respond to the needs of the participant.. Based upon these descriptions, mentors should target mentees' epistemology if they are to help them to optimally develop their declarative knowledge and cognitive skills that underpin expertise. In short, mentors need to encourage their mentees to *think* in an increasingly self-directed, explorative, critical, and adaptive fashion. Again, this message is consistent with a breadth of literature on coaching expertise and the mentoring process (Grecic & Collins, 2013; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014; Griffiths & Armour, 2012).

Based on the messages summarised thus far, and to build on an amalgamation of the mentoring literature, there are some clear implications for mentoring. More specifically, mentoring that effectively develops expertise in mentees will be characterized by the following three features: (i) a shared understanding across mentors and mentees on the markers of coaching expertise (i.e., what mentoring is trying to achieve); (ii) shared perceptions across mentors and mentees on the most important factors for developing expertise: and (iii)

interactions between mentors and mentees that prioritise the development of declarative knowledge and cognitive skills (over procedural knowledge and behavioural skills). However, the extent to which mentoring programs are currently reflecting these markers is relatively unknown. In addition, the extent to which epistemology might account for levels of coherence in the goals and process of mentoring is also unknown. As such, the purpose of this study was to: (a) explore the FA Mentoring Programme against the three markers of effectiveness previously outlined (i.e. (a) shared understanding of the markers of expertise, (b) shared understanding of the factors to develop expertise and (c) the interactions between mentors and mentees that prioritise the development of declarative knowledge and cognitive skills over procedural knowledge and behavioural skills) ; and (b) consider potential explanations and areas for enhancement through the lens of epistemology.

## 3.2. Methodology

### 3.2.1. Research Strategy and Design

Reflecting a focus and purpose, this research was undertaken through a pragmatic research philosophy; one which encourages an adoption of methods that could create practically useful knowledge (Giacobbi et al., 2005). In this respect, and to meet the purposes of this study, it was decided that a survey would provide an appropriate research strategy. More specifically, the aim was to explore general trends in a whole mentoring program rather than the features of specific mentor-mentee relationships, a survey provided an opportunity to collect responses from across the target population. Whilst recognising that a range of other social and demographic factors may influence mentor – mentee relationship which were outside the scope of this present study.

Accordingly, two surveys were designed using online software (Survey Monkey; Survey Monkey can be utilized to collate and analyse questionnaire responses and present the data in

appropriate graphical formats ): one to be completed by mentors and the other to be completed by mentee coaches. However, although two surveys were developed, both were focused on the same topics with the main difference relating to the wording of each question so that these were phrased appropriately for each group. In line with this, both surveys started with general questions relating to the mentors and mentees coaching qualifications, years of coaching experience, and length of time engaged in the FA's formal mentoring programme. In terms of the subsequent, specific topics addressed in the surveys, all questions were based upon the markers of expertise, how expertise can be best developed and mentor and mentee beliefs. More specifically, mentors and mentees were asked to provide responses on a Likert scale to statements on: (i) the markers of expertise; (ii) how expertise is developed; (iii) the nature of interactions with their mentor or mentee; and (iv) their epistemological beliefs. For example, participants were presented with statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they either disagreed or agreed with them, perceived them as important or not important, and experienced or did not experience them. To limit the interaction of demand characteristics (McCambridge, 2015), these statements were phrased in ways that were both consistent and inconsistent with literature on expertise and mentoring; thus, an effective mentoring program would be evidenced by participants scoring some statements high and other statements low (in terms of agreement, importance, or experience). For example, an effective program would be shown by participants rating the *ability to develop novel and innovative solutions* as essential and the *ability to reproduce the practices of expert coaches* as not important (Nash et al., 2012).

### 3.2.2. Procedure

Prior to sending the survey out to the targeted participants, seven mentors and six mentees were identified by the FA Regional Mentor Manager to pilot both versions of the survey

and provide feedback on their content, clarity and coherence.  Following this, some minor amendments were made to the wording of some questions and the answer options.  For example, to help clarify the markers of expertise 'using a large base of declarative knowledge to explain problems' was adapted to 'the ability to explain the reasoning behind coaching practices.  At this point, the FA were consulted for their views on the final versions of the surveys, from which no changes were requested.  From here, 302 mentors currently employed by the FA were contacted through an existing FA database and invited to complete the survey, with a link provided to the Survey Monkey website. The first page of the survey provided information on the purpose and nature of the study, assurances over confidentiality, and details on the withdrawal process. One week after the invitation was sent to the mentors, a further and separate email was sent to ask them to forward another Survey Monkey link to their mentees.  To ensure that all mentees undertook the survey of their own volition, the information page emphasised their freedom to choose to take part or not, the nature of their participation if they decided to take part, and assurances on confidentiality. For clarity, UCLan's institutional ethics committee approved all procedures and all participants denoted informed consent by completing the survey. To retain the integrity of the study, neither myself or any of my mentees did not complete the survey.

### 3.2.3. Participants

**3.2.3.1. Mentors.**  A total of 148 mentors participated in the study, representing 49% of all FA coach mentors at the time, with 132 of these completing all of the questions.  Of the mentors that responded to all questions, 54% were Level 3 / UEFA "B" qualified, 26% Level 2 / UEFA "C" qualified, and the remaining 20% were Level 4 / UEFA "A" qualified.  The majority of these mentors (76%) had worked on the FA's mentoring program for 2 years or less, with 2%

involved since its original deployment in 2013.  The number of mentees that mentors supported

ranged from 3 to 23 in a season with a mean of 5.

     **3.2.3.2. Mentees.**  A total of 201 mentees participated in this study with 162 completing all

questions.  Of those who responded to all questions, 68% were Level 1 coaches, 24% were

Level 2 / UEFA "C" qualified, 5% were UEFA "B" qualified or above with the remaining 3%

having no formal FA coaching qualification.  In total, 42% of the mentees had completed a

Module 1 FA Youth Coaching Award.  In terms of applied experience, the mentees had coached

for between 1 and 32 years with the majority having coached for 5 years or less (64%).  Of note,

the majority of mentees who responded were level 1 coaches which reflects the nature of

grassroots coaching where there is very little incentive to secure higher awards and the costs both

in terms of financial cost and time may be prohibitive to committing to courses.

     **3.2.4. Data Analysis**

     For the responses to each question, means and standard deviations were calculated based

on the data from participants who had completed the full survey (those who had not completed

the full survey were excluded from the entire analysis process).  The mean scores conveyed

typical mentors and mentees perception with regards to: (a) the markers of coaching expertise;

(b) how coaching expertise is developed; (c) the nature of their interactions with one another; and

(d) their personal epistemology (as per the study's purposes).  Standard deviations were

calculated to provide information on the spread of these perceptions.

     As a further marker on level of coherence between mentor and mentee groups, *t*-tests

were undertaken to determine whether any statistical differences were present across mentor and

mentee groups.  Whilst applying a parametric test to ordinal data may draw criticism it is of value

to point out that using parametric statistics are a more powerful and sensitive way to detect a

difference between groups, compared to using more commonly used non-parametric techniques.

Indeed, according to Norman (2010) 'this is perfectly appropriate without the 'fear of coming to

the wrong conclusion' (Pallant,2013).

### 3.3. Results

The goals of this study were to; (a) explore the FA Mentoring Program against three markers

of effectiveness outlined in Chapter 2; and (b) consider potential explanations and areas for

enhancement through the lens of epistemology.  For clarity, the messages in Chapter 2 were that

effective mentoring programs are characterized by: (i) a shared understanding across mentors and

mentees on the markers of coaching expertise (i.e., what mentoring is trying to achieve); (ii) a

shared understanding across mentors and mentees on how expertise is developed; and (iii)

interactions between mentors and mentees that prioritize progress in declarative knowledge and

cognitive skills (over progress in procedural knowledge and behavioural skills).  Finally, it is

important to acknowledge and address the large number of $t$-tests used in this preliminary

investigation; a process which will clearly have inflated the chance of a Type 1 Error across the

study.  I could of course have used a Bonferonni adjustment, dividing the desired error rate by the

number of comparisons (in this case .05/18) to yield a more conservative criterion value.

Importantly, however, this process has been criticised as being overly conservative, with new

methods suggested as offering an approach for retaining power whilst not rejecting interesting

effects.  Accordingly, I used the Sequentially Rejective Bonferonni (hereafter SRB) procedure

(Holland & Copenhaver, 1987), which yielded the unsurprisingly lower but still important number

of significant differences between mentors and mentees as shown in Table 1, 2,3 and 5.  Briefly,

this works by sequentially increasing the critical value of the $t$ score by adjusting the degrees of

freedom.  So, the most significant difference (largest $t$ score) is tested against the set alpha value (in

this case, .05). the next against .05/2, then .05/3 and so on until that particular score fails to reach

significance.  For clarity, I present both the p value obtained and the SRB result in subsequent

tables. What is now presented are the findings from the FA's mentoring program on these key areas,

followed by the findings on mentor and mentee epistemology.  All findings are presented via a

combination of tables and narrative that highlights the levels of significance for all the differences.

**Table 3.1**

**Perceived importance of different markers of coaching expertise**

| Marker | Mentor Mean (SD) | Mentee Mean (SD) | $t$. value | Bonferonni Adjustment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Playing and/or coaching experience at the highest level | 1.72 (0.84) | 1.94 (1.05) | 1.99 * | ns |
| The highest coaching qualifications | 2.28 (0.89) | 2.41 (0.96) | 1.22 ns | ns |
| The ability to reproduce the practice of other expert coaches | 2.07 (0.90) | 2.62 (0.83) | 5.58 *** | Sig. |
| The ability to apply principles from other disciplines | 2.92 (0.86) | 2.82 (0.79) | 1.06 ns | ns |
| The ability to adapt and make on the spot decision | 3.42 (0.66) | 3.22 (0.82) | 2.31 * | ns |
| The ability to explain the reasoning behind coaching practices and decision in detail  The ability to cover up shortcomings with presentational and interpersonal skills | 3.45 (0.67) 1.99 (0.90) | 3.28 (0.75) 1.97 (0.87) | 2.07 * 0.19 ns | ns ns |
| The ability to critically evaluate your own and others coaching | 3.53 (0.67) | 3.14 (0.88) | 4.28 *** | Sig. |
| A preference to engage in detailed up-front planning | 2.95 (0.83) | 2.93 (0.81) | 0.21 ns | ns |
| A lifelong learning attitude | 3.77 (0.47) | 3.26 (0.85) | 6.27 *** | Sig. |
| The confidence to overlook your own weaknesses / limitations | 2.52 (1.04) | 2.68 (1.02) | 0.11 ns | ns |
| An ability to develop novel and innovative solutions | 3.18 (0.66) | 2.94 (0.79) | 2.84 *** | Sig. |
| An extensive knowledge of techniques, tactics and practices | 2.99 (0.73) | 2.90 (0.85) | 0.98 ns | ns |
| Group leadership and management skills. | 3.26 (0.62) | 3.03 (0.84) | 2.67 ** | Sig. |
| Knowing what works and sticking to it carefully | 2.04 (0.86) | 2.38 (0.92) | 3.32 *** | Sig. |
| Track record of developing players who go onto to play at higher levels | 1.76 (0.77) | 1.99 (0.94) | 2.3 * | ns |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The ability to consider alternatives to the practices you put on | 3.17 (0.58) | 3.36 (0.62) | 2.70 * | Sig. |
| Developing rules that can be applied to different scenarios (eg. In situation x do y) | 2.65 (0.72) | 2.98 (0.79) | 3.73 *** | Sig. |

Notes. SD=Standard Deviation.
Scale:   1=Not important, 2=Fairly important, 3=very important, 4=Essential

Significance level:  ns = not significant

 *= p<.05
** = p<.01
*** = p<.001

### 3.3.1. Marker One: Shared Understanding of Coaching Expertise

Referring to Table 3.1, the study reports that mentors and mentees shared some beliefs that are consistent with the criteria of expertise (as per Nash et al., 2012).  For example, both groups considered the ability to critically evaluate your own and others' coaching, having a lifelong learning attitude and group leadership and management skills as very important to essential, however, statistical analysis highlighted a significant difference between mentors and mentees with regards to some of these markers.  More specifically, mentors were found to attach more importance to these markers than mentees (as indicated by the SRB adjustment). Of note, some essential criteria of expertise were not rated as essential by mentors and mentees. For example, mentors and mentees seemed to agree (as indicated by the p. value = not significant) that the ability to apply principles from other disciplines and a preference to engage in detailed up-front planning were only considered 'fairly to very important'. Unexpectedly, whilst both groups perceived it 'very important to essential' to consider alternatives to the practices you put on, statistical analysis indicated that mentees considered this to be more important than mentors. In line with the emphasis on procedural (rather than declarative) knowledge mentioned in the previous chapter, mentors and mentees agreed that having an extensive knowledge of techniques,

tactics and practices was 'fairly to very important'. At more direct odds with literature-based markers of expertise, both groups considered the ability to reproduce the practice of expert coaches, the ability to know what works and stick to it carefully and the ability to develop rules that could be applied in different scenarios as 'fairly to very important'. However, mentees attached greater importance to these markers than mentors (indicated by the SRB value). Of more concern, was that both mentor and mentee groups agreed (as indicated by not significant outcomes) that the ability to cover up shortcomings (such as technical coaching knowledge) with presentational and interpersonal skills and having the confidence to overlook your own weaknesses/ limitations as fairly to very important.

In summary, analysis of the results as presented in Table 3.1 suggests that, whilst mentors and mentees recognised some of the markers of expertise, the results indicate that there appears to be a lack of congruence between mentor and mentee groups with regards to the most important markers of expertise. Given the importance of such cognitive dissonance, this may well limit a shared understanding of the goals of mentoring which, in turn, may lead to coach development being disappointing and unfulfilling for both mentors and mentees.

**Table 3.2**

**Perceived importance o_f different_ processes for developing expertise**

| Markers | Mentor Mean (SD) | Mentee Mean (SD) | *t.* value | Bonferonni Adjustment | Mentor perception of mentee beliefs. Mean (SD) | *t.* value | Bonfronni Adjustment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal coach education (Level 1 – Level 5) | 3.06 (0.79) | 2.96 (0.80) | 1.08ns | ns | 2.76 (0.83) | 2.12* | ns |
| Watching practices from current top-level experts | 2.29 (0.85) | 2.51 (0.88) | 2.19* | ns | 2.48 (0.86) | 0.29ns | ns |
| Collecting a large base of practices | 2.44 (0.97) | 2.90 (0.75) | 4.65*** | Sig | 2.93 (0.79) | 0.33ns | ns |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Taking a trial and error approach/experimenting with different options | 3.30 (0.66) | 3.04 (0.80) | 3.03** | ns | 2.33 (0.84) | 7.5*** | Sig |
| Reflecting upon own practice | 3.79 (0.47) | 3.54 (0.66) | 6.37*** | Sig | 2.42 (0.90) | 12.48*** | Sig |
| Discussing and thinking through rationale of practice | 3.69 (0.52) | 3.47 (0.70) | 3.03** | ns | 2.46 (0.90) | 10.98*** | Sig |
| Finding and using resources from social media | 2.41 (0.92) | 2.45 (0.87) | 0.38ns | ns | 2.70 (0.80) | 2.58* | ns |
| Listening to respected pundits on TV and radio | 1.64 (0.80 | 1.65 (0.68) | 0.11ns | ns | 2.07 (0.90) | 4.62*** | Sig |
| Discussing coaching process with peers at the same level | 3.29 (0.73) | 3.24 (0.69) | 0.61ns | ns | 2.46 (0.78) | 9.22*** | Sig |
| Completing the required hours of licensed coach CPD hours | 3.15 (0.81) | 2.98 (0.80) | 1.82ns | ns | 2.32 (0.92) | 6.67*** | Sig |
| Joining the FA licensed Coaches Association | 3.01 (0.88) | 2.80 (0.88) | 2.06* | ns | 2.27 (0.97) | 4.97*** | Sig |
| Challenging existing coaching practice | 3.49 (0.58) | 3.23 (0.72) | 3.4*** | Sig | 2.29 (0.94) | 9.85*** | Sig |

Notes; SD= Standard Deviation
Scale; 1=Not important, 2=Fairly important, 3=very important, 4=Essential

Significance level:  ns = not significant

   *= p<.05
**   = p<.01
*** = p<.001

### 3.3.2. Marker Two: Shared Understanding of Developing Expertise

Moving on from the markers of expertise, Table 3.2 details the extent to which mentors and mentees agreed on how expertise is developed, as well as mentors' perceptions of what they thought that their mentees believed to be important to develop expertise.   Taking the views of each group first (i.e., the "mentor" and "mentee" columns in Table 3.2), there appears quite a mixed picture in terms of a shared understanding of perceived importance of the different processes for developing expertise.  For example, whilst both groups reported that challenging existing coaching practice and reflecting upon own practice as very important to essential, which

is consistent with the literature (Nash et al., 2012), statistical analysis (as indicated by the SRB adjustment in Table 3.2) showed that mentors attached more importance to these markers than mentees.  Interestingly, both groups agreed that discussing coaching processes with peers at the same level was 'very important to essential' process to develop expertise.

On the other side of these findings however, and highlighting a potential inconsistency, both groups also reported that watching practices from current top-level experts  and collecting a large base of practices were deemed 'fairly to very important'. However, of note, is that mentees attached significantly more importance to collecting a large base of practices than mentors (as indicated by the significance value in Table 3.2).  Indeed, while both factors scored lower than the more legitimate markers of expertise development listed in the prior paragraph (e.g., experimenting, exposing rationale), their ratings suggest that there may also be a preference in mentors and mentees to rely on the provision and copying of drills. This approach by replicating and reproducing practices from perceived experts may draw novice coaches toward ex-professional players, coaches and pundits without applying a critical approach that would encourage coaches to contextualise new knowledge

Notably, there was also some disparity between what mentors believed that their mentees thought important to develop expertise (i.e., "mentee" and "mentor perception of mentee beliefs" columns in Table 3.2).  For example, and consistent with literature on expertise, mentees considered reflecting upon practice, discussing and thinking through the rationale of practice, experimenting with options, and challenging existing coaching practice as "very important to essential"; however, mentors believed that their mentees only considered these processes to be

"fairly to very important". Other areas of disparity between mentor perception of mentee beliefs (as indicated SRB adjustment) that are notable are, listening to respected TV pundits, discussing the coaching process with peers, completing the required hours of CPD hours and joining the FA Coaches Association. As such, these differences suggest that the mentees may either: (a) be stronger in articulation than in actions (b) have been trying to provide the "right answers" to paint a positive picture of their own development (and perhaps their mentor's work with them); or (c) be inaccurately understood or portrayed by their mentors. Regardless of the reason, these differences do suggest that mentors and mentees are not as aligned as they could be; a point that will be addressed in the discussion.

**Table 3.3**

**Occurrence of different discussions between mentors and mentees**

| Markers | Mentors Mean (SD) | Mentees Mean value Adjustment (SD) | $t$. (SD) | Bonferroni |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The practices that are used to reach the mentees objectives | 3.65 (0.86) | 3.80 (0.88) | 0.15ns | ns |
| The reasoning behind using certain practices | 3.86 (0.70) | 3.97 (0.85) | 011ns | ns |
| The impact of contextual factors on the planned session | 3.42 (0.99) | 3.42 (1.07) | 0ns | ns |
| Potential scenarios that may come up during the session | 3.56 (0.88) | 3.72 (0.92) | 1.45ns | ns |
| Challenges that may be faced when delivering a session and what could have been done differently | 3.88 (065) | 4.13 (0.83) | 2.75** | Sig |
| Aspects of a practice you wish to develop | 3.80 (0.77) | 4.08 (0.85) | 2.83** | Sig |
| How the mentees coaching compares with experts | 1.76 (1.00) | 2.29 (1.19) | 3.95*** | Sig |
| The type of discussion that mentees could have with peer coaches | 2.58 (1.12) | 3.19 (1.09) | 4.53*** | Sig |
| Reviewing strengths and weaknesses | 3.56 (0.83) | 3.86 (1.01) | 2.66** | Sig |
| Management of the players and resources | 3.54 (0.86) | 3.68 (1.08) | 1.17ns | ns |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What went right and wrong | 2.89 (1.23) | 3.78 (1.15) | 6.14*** | Sig |
| How the session went against the planned goals | 3.68 (0.89) | 3.99 (0.99) | 2.74** | Sig |

Notes; SD = Standard Deviation
Scale; 1=Never, 2=Rarely,3=About half the time, 4=Often, 5=All the time

Significance level:  ns = not significant

 *= p<.05
**  = p<.01
*** = p<.001

### 3.3.3. Marker Three: Expertise-Supporting Interactions

Shifting from beliefs and perceptions to action, Table 3.3 presents data on the perceived

content of discussions between mentors and mentees.  Encouragingly, several responses were

again consistent with current literature on expertise.  For example, mentees reported that the

conversations they had most were on the challenges faced during a session and what could have

been done differently.  However, comparison of the mentees' coaching to expert coaches, was

never to rarely discussed according to mentees and rarely to about half the time as claimed by

mentors.

However, the findings in this area also suggest some discrepancies between the goal of

mentoring (as per the findings in Marker One) and the current process of mentoring used by

mentors.  Indeed, while both mentors and mentees stated that experimentation, reflection, focusing

on the rationale of practice, peer discussion, and challenging existing practice were all

'very important to essential' (see Table 3.2), Table 3.3 suggests that mentors don't appear to

harness expertise-supporting conversations as much as might be expected.  More specifically,

some topics that would seem essential for enhancing declarative understanding and cognitive

skill were discussed "about half of the time to often".  These included: the reasoning behind the

use of practices, the impact of contextual factors on sessions, and potential scenarios that might

come up during the session.  Interestingly, mentees also reported that "what went right and wrong" was discussed "around half of the time too often" (albeit mentors reported that this occurred rarely).   In addition, Table 3.3 suggests that mentors might be failing to fully harness the social side of learning, with advice given to mentees on the type of conversations they could have with their peers only "rarely to half of the time" (albeit mentees reported that this occurred more often).  Of note, statistical analysis indicates that generally, mentors and mentees highlight (or recall) different conversations (as indicated by the *Sig* results in Table 3.3) of being more or less significant than other conversations. This may again suggest a lack of congruence between mentors and mentees understanding of what type of conversations support the development of declarative knowledge.

**Table 3.4**

**Mentees' expectation of interactions with their mentors**

| Markers | Mentees | |
|---|---|---|
| | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| Provide you with practices that you could use to meet your session objectives | 3.25 | 0.91 |
| Provide coaching demonstrations | 3.30 | 0.87 |
| Help you to jointly deliver coaching sessions to your team. | 3.04 | 0.97 |
| Explain the reasoning behind using certain practices | 3.91 | 0.84 |
| Discuss and consider contextual factors in your planned session. (e.g. Weather, resources, facilities). | 3.27 | 1.08 |
| Discuss potential scenarios that may come up during the session. | 3.80 | 0.88 |
| Highlight and consider the challenges you may face when delivering sessions and what you could have done differently (i.e. practices not working). | 4.02 | 0.83 |
| Discuss aspects of your practice you wish to develop. | 4.04 | 0.83 |
| Review how your coaching compares with experts. | 2.67 | 1.23 |
| Outline the discussions you could have with peer coaches about coaching. | 3.28 | 1.04 |
| Review and consider your own strengths and weaknesses. | 3.98 | 0.91 |
| Discuss and review the management of the group/resources. | 3.65 | 1.01 |
| What you did right and wrong | 3.81 | 1.14 |
| How your session went against planned goals | 3.25 | 0.87 |

Notes; SD = Standard Deviation
Scale; 1=Never, 2=Rarely,3=About half the time, 4=Often, 5=All the time
Significance level:  ns = not significant
 *= p<.05
** = p<.01
*** = p<.001

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Supplementing the findings from Table 3.3 findings, Table 3.4 outlines what mentees expect from interactions with their mentors.  Of note, mentees only expect to discuss the impact of contextual factors and potential scenarios that might come up during a session "about half of the time to often" rather than "all of the time" (as might be expected, given that adaptability is a cornerstone of expertise) (Collins et al., 2015).  More significantly, and in line with some findings highlighted earlier, it also appeared that mentees expected their mentors to play a particularly directive role.  Namely, mentees felt that, for "about half of the time to often", they wanted their mentors to provide them with practices, provide coaching demonstrations, jointly deliver coaching sessions, and discuss what went right and wrong in a session.  It would suggest that this finding is somewhat at odds with the more positively coherent picture presented by other responses.

**Table 3.5**
**Comparing and contrasting mentors and mentees' epistemology.**

| Markers | Mentor Mean (SD) | Mentee Mean (SD) | *t.* value | Bonferonni Adjustment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coaching is fundamentally a simple process based on clear facts. | 2.96 (1.23) | 3.28 (1.22) | 2.27* | Sig |
| Expert coaches are made to a greater extent than born. | 3.76 (1.15) | 3.63 (1.17) | 0.97ns | NS |
| Expert coaching is learnt quickly or not at all. | 1.67 (0.84) | 1.82 (0.89) | 1.5ns | NS |
| The knowledge that underpins expert coaching is different from 20 years ago. | 3.71 (1.11) | 3.92 (1.08) | 1.67ns | NS |
| Expert coaching must be learnt by copying current experts. | 2.20 (1.00) | 2.51 (1.02) | 2.67** | Sig |

Notes; SD = Standard Deviation
Scale; 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=Somewhat agree, 5= Strongly agree
Significance level:  ns = not significant
 *= p<.05
** = p<.01
*** = p<.001

### 3.3.4. Mentors and Mentees' Epistemological Beliefs

Turning to the second purpose of the study, Table 3.5 details the mentor and mentee responses to statements on what knowledge is and how it is acquired. Consistent with what would be expected from less experienced coaches, mentees were uncertain if coaching was a simple process based on clear facts compared to mentors who 'somewhat disagreed' that coaching was a simple process (although notably only somewhat!). Of interest, the standard deviation would suggest that there was a notable level of variation within each mentor and mentee groups and statistical analysis (as indicated by the SRB adjustment) suggests a significant difference between mentors and mentees with regards to this belief. Based on the means and the statistical analysis, there appear to be modest levels of agreement between mentors and mentees with the statements that 'expert coaches are made to a greater extent than born', 'expert coaching is learnt quickly or not at all' and that 'coaching knowledge was different from 20 years ago'. Encouragingly, both groups also tended to agree (as indicated by the mean) that expert coaching was *not* achieved by copying current experts. However, of note, is that mentors only somewhat disagreed (rather than strongly disagreed, as would be expected) that 'expert coaching must be learned by copying current experts', in addition, statistical analysis (as indicated by SRB adjustment) indicated a significant difference between mentor and mentee groups with regards to this belief.

In summary, it seems that mentors, as a collective, do not have as sophisticated an epistemology as would be expected from those responsible for developing the epistemology of others. However, despite mentors not having as sophisticated epistemology as might be expected, the study does suggest an epistemological gap (Light, 2008) exists between mentors and mentees that has the potential to undermine the mentoring process which will now be discussed.

### 3.4. Discussion

The goals of this study were to: (a) evaluate one sport's mentoring program against the three markers of effective programs as outlined in Chapter 2 and (b) consider how the perceptions and actions of mentors and mentees on this program could be explained and enhanced through the lens of epistemology.  To reiterate, the three markers of effective mentoring programs, related to the existence of: (a) a shared understanding across mentors and mentees on the markers of coaching expertise (i.e., what mentoring is trying to achieve); (b) shared perceptions across mentors and mentees on the most important factors for developing expertise: and (c) interactions between mentors and mentees that prioritize gains in declarative knowledge and cognitive skills (over progress in procedural knowledge and behavioural skills).

In terms of the FA's mentoring program, the results highlight a largely shared view on what coaching expertise is, how it is developed, and how mentors and mentees currently interact. Positively, much of this was consistent with current literature on expertise (Nash et al., 2012) as well as the stated goals of the FA's program itself (The FA, 2016). In particular, it was clear that there was agreement that expertise involves a range of thinking and decision-making skills (e.g. adapting practices), as well as a broad base of declarative knowledge (as per the findings on Marker One).  It was also clear that mentors and mentees agreed that developing these skills required processes (as per the findings on Marker Two) and interactions (as per the findings on Marker Three) that chiefly exposed and explored the mentee's thinking and decision-making (e.g., focusing on practice rationale, taking an experimental approach, use of reflection, peer discussion, and challenging existing practice).  Whilst there may have been general agreement between mentors and mentees with regards to what coaching expertise is and how it is developed, statistical analysis of the data suggests that mentors attached greater significance to

many of the key markers of expertise and the processes to develop expertise which may lead to a lack of congruence between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals and processes of mentoring.

However, beyond this alignment with current literature on expertise, the findings also pointed to a number of features that might be limiting the delivery and impact of the FA's current program. Regarding Marker One, a number of essential markers of expertise (Nash et al., 2012) were not rated as such by either mentors or mentees. It was notable that several markers such as the ability to reproduce the practice of expert coaches, the ability to know what works and sticking to it carefully, the ability to develop rules that could be applied in different scenarios are inconsistent with current literature on expertise were rated as 'fairly to very important' by both mentors and mentees. As such, it would seem that there may either be confusion within the FA's mentors on the type of coach they should be developing, or insufficient recognition of essential elements in the targeted make-up. Of note, statistical analysis of the data suggests that mentees attached greater importance to these markers than mentors suggesting a lack of alignment with regards to the goal of mentoring. Similarly, the findings on Table 3.2 suggest that there might be an inappropriate emphasis on processes that encourage a "drills-focused", "copy and paste" approach, (inappropriate in the sense that this approach is inconsistent with the need to prioritise development on a declarative level, including the mentee's ability to plan, act, and reflect independently). This approach by mentors and mentees is reflected in the response that considered it fairly to very important to collect a large base of practices as a means to develop expertise. However, of note, mentees attached greater importance to collecting a large base of practices to develop expertise than mentors (shown by the significance value in Table 3.2), again this suggests a lack of congruence between mentors

and mentees which, Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to as mentoring dissonance between

mentor and mentee pairs. In addition, the findings from Table 3.2 indicates that there were

significant differences between mentors perception of what mentees beliefs were and what their

actual beliefs were. Indeed, the findings on Marker Three further suggested that mentors and

mentees are either not engaging in a level or nature of interactions that can optimise the

development of expertise, or that they lack sufficient understanding on how the *process* of

mentoring might best work.

As an explanation for the apparent issues on what expertise is, plus the processes and

interactions required for its' development, the findings point to the role of epistemology and, in

particular, mentors' epistemologies as crucial considerations.  More specifically, as has already

been pointed out, mentors considered the 'ability to reproduce the practice of other expert

coaches', 'develop rules that can be applied to different scenarios' and 'know what works and

sticking to it' as fairly to very important. This result suggest that mentor epistemology are not as

sophisticated as would be expected from this group (although more sophisticated than mentees)

which could result in mentors reinforcing a naïve or black and white approach to coaching; or at

least limit the potential for mentees to learn to see the grey of coaching practice and develop a

more critical approach (cf. Grecic & Collins, 2013).  For example, and although causation can

clearly not be inferred, it is clear that a "drills-focused", "copy and paste" focus  was apparent in

the participants' accounts *alongside* a group of mentors who: (a) did not disagree that coaching

was a simple process; (b) weren't particularly sure if expert coaches are made more than born;

(c) weren't particularly sure that coaching knowledge is different from 20 years ago; and (d) only

somewhat disagreed that expert coaching must be learned by copying current experts.  As Grecic

and Collins (2013) argue, a coach's epistemology will reflect the environment that they create

and the coaching they deliver, so if mentors promote a cut and paste approach there is every likelihood that mentee coaches will go on to reflect this in their own coaching.

It is important to stress that these differences appear to be a program-level issue rather than an entirely individual one as the study has focused on the average response. Accordingly, it would seem that a number of mentors match up well in terms of the epistemology (plus understanding and action) required to optimally develop their mentees (i.e., those who provided responses that were consistent with literature and the FA's goals). However, given the programlevel focus in this study, it does appear that mentors as a whole require (even) further development if the FA are to limit the extent to which mentors work from more naïve and varied epistemological positions. A factor which potentially leads to mentors giving different messages to their mentees and supporting incoherent outcomes across the programme. In other words, an epistemological gap between the stated aims of the mentoring programme and the actions and knowledge of developing expert coaches exists (Light 2008; Partington & Cushion, 2013). Indeed, if the aim of the mentoring programme is to develop more creative independent coaches, it will require coaches to develop a more sophisticated epistemology in order to draw upon previous experience and be able to understand the *why* of practice (Light, 2008; Collins et al., 2012). Such coaches will be able to apply their more sophisticated epistemology as a critical sieve that can be used to evaluate all aspects of coaching practice (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

However, to produce such coaches, mentors need to develop a more sophisticated and coherent epistemology with skills and knowledge to apply a range of strategies to support the development of their mentees.

While epistemology may play a part in explaining some of the apparent shortcomings in the FA's mentoring program, it is of course important to recognize other possible factors. For

example, while mentors might be over-emphasising drills, procedural knowledge, and an understanding of "the way" to coach because they believe that this is how mentees learn, it is also possible that they do so because of social factors (e.g., to foster positive impressions by

"giving the mentee what they want"). Of course, the provision of drills and a "do it like this" style of mentoring might be appropriate for some mentees early in the process. However, as the questions focused on what mentors generally believed or perceived, it would seem this approach points to issues in mentors' epistemology, knowledge, and skills rather than any temporary or initial strategy. As another possible reason for the shortcomings found in the studied program, practicalities might be limiting the work of mentors and mentees. For example, most interactions between mentor and mentee seemed to be those that could take place *after* a coaching session rather than *before* a coaching session. As such, it may be the case that some factors were rated less important for developing expertise than others because of situational factors (e.g., mentees don't have the time to commit to conversations with their mentors before as well as after coaching sessions).

Although there seems to be a logical match between the shortcomings of the studied mentoring program (as per Markers One, Two, and Three) and mentor-mentee epistemology, it is also important to recognise the limitations of this research and factors which may have shaped the findings. For example, whilst conclusions have been drawn from the respondents who took part in the study, there is recognition that this does not reflect all mentors and mentees engaged in the programme. In addition, both mentors and mentees who took part may have tried to provide the "right" answers or paint a positive picture that may have differed from reality. As described in the Methodology section, steps were taken to limit the interaction of demand

characteristics (i.e., by presenting statements that were consistent and inconsistent with literature on expertise and effective mentoring).

In another limitation, mentees were recruited to complete the survey by their mentors and, as such, it is possible that those who did not "fit" with the expectations of the program or who may have provided "wrong" answers may not have been given the opportunity to complete the survey.  In this respect, however, it is worth noting the number of participant responses that are either inconsistent or not entirely consistent with literature on expertise and, significantly, what the FA have publicly targeted (The FA,2016).

### 3.5. Concluding Comments

Whilst there was general agreement between and amongst mentors and mentees with regards to some of the markers of expertise, there appeared to be some inconsistencies and / or confusion of other markers of expertise, such as 'being able to reproduce the practice of expert coaches' or 'the confidence to overlook weaknesses / limitations'. Potentially this results in a lack of clarity to what constitutes expertise which may lead to inconsistent messages and outcomes of the FA mentoring programme. In addition, the study reported that whilst mentor epistemology was not as sophisticated as might be expected there was evidence that it was more sophisticated (not surprisingly) than mentees and consequently a lack of congruence between mentors and mentees exists that may undermine the process of effective mentoring. Even where there was general agreement between the two groups evidence of an epistemological gap was reflected in the statistical analysis (significance value) which often suggested a lack of coherence between mentors and mentees with regard to the value of some markers of expertise and the processes to develop expertise (Light, 2008).  Finally, mentors did not appear to utilize a range of mentor - mentee interactions that can optimise the development of expertise which may limit

the mentees opportunity to develop a more sophisticated epistemology which can be argued underpins the development of more expert coaches.

Whilst this study has highlighted several possible inconsistencies and a lack of coherence between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals, processes and epistemology of mentoring, the nature of this survey study could only provide a general mentor and mentee views of the mentoring process. To provide a more insightful exploration of the issues highlighted in this study, Chapter 4 now describes a more detailed study that sought to investigate how specific mentor pairs perceived a) goals and processes of mentoring and b) the epistemological basis of their actions and perceptions. By interviewing existing mentor-mentee pairs it was expected that a more detailed understanding of the how mentors and mentees pairs either shared or differed in their view of the goals and processes of mentoring and the epistemological basis of their action and perceptions would be revealed.

## Chapter 4: The Mentoring Relationship:

## An Investigation of the Goals

## and Process of Mentoring as Perceived by Mentor pairs through an Epistemological Lens

### 4.1. Introduction

During the previous chapter a number of general insights of mentoring were explored from mentor and mentee perceptions using an on-line survey. More specifically, the previous study highlighted some of the general inconsistencies between mentors and mentees across goals, processes and epistemology that may be limiting the impact of mentoring programmes. Indeed, research by Griffiths and Armour (2012) has previously questioned the impact of such formal mentoring programmes by highlighting the tendency for an incoherent relationship that can leave both mentors and mentees unsure of what was expected of them.

Whilst the previous study reported many relatively well-agreed and expertise-consistent perceptions within and across mentor and mentee groups, several ssues required a more in-depth examination. Specifically, such issues borne from the findings were that:

- some essential markers of expertise were not fully acknowledged by mentors and mentees;

- mentors and mentees reported the value of covering up one's shortcomings as an important process;

- mentors and mentees appeared to have different views of what was most important for developing expertise;

- many mentors did not have as sophisticated an epistemology as one might expect, and;

- mentors did not appear to utilize the power of expertise-supporting conversations as a strategy to develop a mentee's epistemology.

In short, these factors were concerning in that they all seemed to limit a mentee's ability to develop a more sophisticated epistemology, therefore undermining their journey toward expertise and the desired impact of the FA's mentoring programme. In such circumstances, mentoring is likely to be suboptimal at best or fail at worst. Whilst this may point to a programme level issue as the previous study focused on the average responses across each group, the statistical analysis suggested significant differences between mentors and mentees that required further investigation at an individual level. Although the survey was supported by access to a large number of mentors and mentees, there were a number of limitations in this approach. Firstly, multiple-choice design of this on-line survey did not capture much information on the meaning or rationale behind participant responses, therefore, the findings may be open to interpretation. Indeed, the responses from the survey only allowed for a surface-level, general analysis and so this work was limited in its ability to provide a detailed description of some of the emerging issues and themes.

Therefore, to illicit a more thorough understanding of the issues highlighted in the previous study, the aim of this study was to take a more detailed look at the goals, processes, and epistemology of specific mentor-mentee pairs in the FA's coach mentoring programme. More specifically, the purposes of this study were to: a) explore the goals and processes of mentoring as perceived by mentor and mentee pairs; and b) to explore the epistemological basis of these actions and perceptions. In doing so, I hoped that this study would offer a more informed review of the current FA mentoring programme and assist in the research, design, and structure of future mentoring schemes in football and other sports.

## 4.2. Methodology

### 4.2.1. Research Philosophy, Strategy, and Design

Reflecting the aim to generate practically meaningful knowledge, this investigation was also driven by a pragmatic research philosophy. In the case of this study, it was decided to adopt a more constructivist position given the aim to explore the beliefs, perceptions, and actions of mentors and mentees; including the extent to which they were coherent across both groups (Voelker, Reel & Greenleaf 2015). By adopting a constructionist approach, a more discursive interview was applied using probes and prompts and asking more open-ended question to expose existing and emerging themes during the interviews. In addition, the opportunity to construct reality by drawing upon my experience as a coach educator and existing mentor would provide a unique insight (Giacobbi et al., 2005).

From this perspective, it was also decided to use a qualitative design. More specifically, a multiple case study strategy (Yin, 2014) based on semi-structured interviews with pairs of mentors and mentees. Using a multiple case study approach provided an opportunity to gather rich descriptions of particular mentor and mentee pairs (i.e., one "case") that could be compared across other cases (Yin, 2014; Stake, 2006). Indeed, this design enabled the use of *within-case* analysis to focus on the specifics of individual cases (i.e., one mentor-mentee pair), as well as *cross-case* comparisons to identify aspects of coherence and incoherence across and between mentor and mentee pairs (Swann, Keegan, Crust, & Piggott, 2016). As such, the rationale for taking this approach was that it could provide a stronger basis (than a single case study) to identify practical implications for the studied mentoring program, as per a pragmatic philosophy.

### 4.2.1. Participants

In consultation with a FA Regional Mentor Officer, eight mentors (six male and two female) currently employed by the FA's mentoring programme were approached to participate in the study, with six agreeing to take part (five males and one female) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The selection criteria for the mentors was that each had been employed in the mentoring programme for at least three months and were supporting at least 2 mentees once a week. Subsequently, each of the six mentors then invited one of their mentees to take part in the study. The rationale for this approach was that I did not have direct email access to any mentees. After declaring their shared interest to participate, each of the six mentor and mentee pairs were emailed separately to provide an information sheet outlining the purpose and process of the study. Given the purposes of this study and the approach to recruiting mentees, the information sheet clearly outlined the nature of participation in line with UCLan's institutional ethics committee (e.g., covering voluntary involvement, confidentiality, and an explanation that either the mentor or mentee could withdraw at any point without the need to provide any reason).

In terms of the characteristics of this final group of participants, each mentor had worked in a formal part-time mentoring capacity for the FA for between 1 and 3 years ($M = 2.33$) and as a coach themselves for between 10 and 30 years ($M = 19.66$). Two of the six mentors held a FA Level 4 Coaching Award (UEFA A License) with the remaining holding a FA Level 3 coaching award (UEFA B License). Finally, two mentors held the FA Adult Mentoring qualification. Of the six mentees, two held an FA Level 2 coaching qualification with the remaining four holding a Level 1 qualification. The mentees had been coaching between 1 and 5 years ($M = 3.33$) and at the time of study had been receiving mentoring support for between 5 and 7 months ($M = 6.16$).

### 4.2.2. Data Collection

Prior to the research being conducted, ethical approval was granted by UCLan's institutional ethics committee and informed consent secured from each participant. From this point, data collection was based upon semi-structured interviews with each of the six mentor and mentee pairs, with follow-up prompts and probes used to explore a number of themes related to the aims of the study. More specifically, the main questions in this interview broadly focused upon three areas: (i) what do mentors and mentees hope to achieve through the mentoring relationship (i.e., the goals); (ii) what type of activities generally take place and what activities do mentees and mentors believe will help develop expertise moving forward (i.e., the process); and (iii) how do mentors and mentees believe that coaching knowledge is accrued and expertise developed (i.e., their epistemology).

All the interviews with the mentors and mentees were conducted separately *and after* each pair had been observed and video recorded during a mentored coaching session (i.e., a coaching session delivered by the mentee where their mentor was in attendance). The reason for the observation and recording of the mentoring event was firstly to enhance levels of familiarity and rapport between myself (Researcher) and the participants. Secondly it would help both mentors and mentees recollect and refer to specific events during the mentoring event with prompts and probes during the interviews that would enhance the ecological validity of the questioning (Sparkes & Smith, 2009).

Mentees were interviewed first so that mentors could not inform mentees of the specific interview content in advance (an order which was felt to be more beneficial than the reverse in terms of managing a potential imbalance of power between mentor and mentee). In terms of the interviews with mentors, one mentor was interviewed immediately following the observed mentor

support session (and after their mentee had been interviewed) with the remaining five mentors interviewed a few days later (ranging from four to eight days) at a mutually convenient location. All interviews were digitally recorded face to face and lasted between 25 and 35 minutes ($M =$ 30.46).

### 4.2.3. Data Analysis

As described above, the multiple case study approach supported a within and cross case analysis to identify aspects of coherence and incoherence between and amongst mentors and mentees (cf. Swann, Keegan, Crust, & Piggott, 2016). To support this process, all 12 interviews (six mentor and six mentee) were transcribed and read through to increase familiarity and understanding of the information obtained. Subsequently, a deductive content analysis was undertaken to analyse the data using a qualitative software analysis package (QSR NVIVO 10). More specifically, and reflecting the purposes of this study, three main nodes were used to categorize units of text for each mentor and mentee pair; these nodes were labelled *goals*, *processes* and *epistemology*, then deductively placed the units of text from all of the transcribed interviews into the relevant node for each mentor and mentee (i.e. *mentor goal*, *process*, or *epistemology*; *mentee goal*, *process* or *epistemology*) (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001). Once units of text were attributed to each mentor and mentee pair under these nodes, an entirely separate inductive content analysis was undertaken to identify units of text that could be bound together as sub-themes for each individual mentor and mentee, subsequently labelled using short phrases that captured the interview content (Davies, Collins, & Cruickshank, 2017).   Finally, the sub-themes were compared from each mentor and mentee pair and considered if they were *similar*, *different* or *unique* to each other and grouped them together accordingly for presentation purposes (see Tables 1-3).

### 4.2.4. Quality and Trustworthiness

According to Sparkes and Smith (2009), the outcomes of interview-based studies are shaped by the levels of trust and rapport that are developed with participants.  In the present study, and beyond assurances of confidentiality, this was enhanced by the following features: (a) all of the mentors were briefed by the Regional Mentor Officer and informed that the research was supported by the FA; (b) I was an existing mentor with the FA's programme and so was able to empathise with their approaches and experiences of mentoring; (c) all of the mentors who took part in the study I had met in a professional capacity on previous occasions; and (d) the observation of a mentored coaching session before the participants were interviewed (as described in the Data Collection section).  As evidence of the rapport established, all of the mentors and some of the mentees expressed their interest in the research following their interview to discuss aspects of coaching practice.  Additionally, all participants requested feedback once the research had been completed and indicated that they would be happy to engage in further research in the future.

As well as efforts to gain trust and rapport, a number of other steps were taken to ensure the quality of the work.  Firstly, to decrease the chances that the participants would try and provide what they perceived to be the "right" answers, I strived to remain neutral, both verbally and non-verbally, as to whether the answers were positive or negative (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). To further enhance the quality of the data analysis, I also took several of steps to manage my role in the research process.  For example, to aid transparency and consistency in the analysis, I recorded conceptual memos (digitally recorded observations with annotated notes to aid analysis) to log the rationale behind their coding, interpretations, and provide a stimulus for discussion with the research team (Davis & Meyer, 2009). Following this initial process and in

line with pragmatism that priorities practical – level truths (i.e, those which are functional for the level for the context in which study was engaged (Giacobbi et al,.2005) I sought feedback and interactions through dialogue from those with topic relevant experience and expertise. Accordingly, the analysis was shared with National and Regional FA Mentor Managers and Regional Support Mentors before being presented at the FA National Development Conference which added another layer of reflection and discussion to the initial interpretations (Giacobbi,et al., 2005). To support a recursive process, regular comparisons were employed to evaluate and modify the findings and to support this process, two critical friends were used to challenge and encourage reflexivity in relation to the data analysis and subsequent write-up (Faulkner & Sparkes, 1999). Finally, member reflections were undertaken to explore the participants' perceived balance and fairness of the quotes used in this article; from which no changes were requested by any of the participants (Smith & McGannon,2018).

## 4.3. Results

The aims of this study were to: a) explore the goals and processes of mentoring as perceived by mentor and mentee pairs; and b) to explore the epistemological basis of these actions and perception. To illustrate the findings, three tables were constructed that present the analysed data in relation to each mentor and mentee's epistemology, as well as their views on the perceived goals and processes of mentoring (see Tables 4.1- 4.3). Within each of these tables, the sub-themes developed through the inductive content analysis are grouped in terms of whether they were similar, different or unique across the mentor and mentee pair. To help illuminate the messages from these results, a commentary is provided around each of the tables, supported by participant quotes. By presenting the results on mentors' and mentees' epistemology first, we aim to provide a context for the reader to better interpret the findings relating to the goals and

processes of mentoring (i.e., the findings on epistemology provide an important lens by which to consider those on the perceived goals and processes).

**Table 4.1**.

**Similar, differences and unique epistemologies of mentor-mentee pairs**

| Pair | Similar | Differences | Unique |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | Learning through reflection and experience [Mentor] **Versus** Observing and replicating practices from those of higher status [Mentee] | Knowledge viewed as stable and certain. [Mentee] |
| 2 | | Skills learnt through reasoning and practice. [Mentor] **Versus** Natural ability to coach. [Mentee] | |
| 3 | Learning from experience | Develop knowledge through discussion. [Mentor.] **Versus** Observing and replicating practice from those of higher status [Mentee] | Natural ability to coach. [Mentee] |
| 4 | Continuous development over a period of time. | | |
| 5 | Work through problems gradually | Learning from experience. [Mentor] **Versus** Natural ability. [Mentee] | Lots of knowledge is required. [Mentor] Limited by their (Mentee) playing ability. [Mentor] Observing more experienced coaches. [Mentee] |
| 6 | Working through problems gradually | Develop through reflection. [Mentor] **Versus** Doing it right or wrong. [Mentee] Developing skills through practice and experience. [Mentor] **Versus** Development limited by personality. [Mentee] | Open minded. [Mentor] Motivated to learn. [Mentor] Learn from a broad range of challenges [Mentor] Learning from formal courses. [Mentor] Coaching is a relatively simple process. [Mentee] |

### 4.3.1. The Personal Epistemology of Mentors and Mentees

Referring to Table 4.1, the results revealed that four of the six mentor-mentee pairs shared some aspects of a more sophisticated epistemology (i.e., pairs 3, 4, 5, and 6). Specifically, these four pairs seemed to recognise that the development of expertise in coaching requires continuous work over a period of time, can be learned from experience (rather than simply handed down from authorities), and is characterised by working through problems gradually. However, the data also revealed some inconsistencies with regards to epistemological views (as per the *differences* column in Table 4.1). For example, the mentor in Pair Three shared a similar belief with their mentee that learning from experience is important for developing expertise. However, they also differed in their beliefs on the types of learning that needs to be engaged with. More specifically, mentor 3 considered that knowledge is "developed through discussion" gradually and recursively, which contrasted with mentee 3's belief that knowledge was primarily acquired by "observing and replicating practice" from someone of a higher status (i.e. their mentor):

> I will see the mentor doing it so I am observing it and then obviously I will
> pick it up . . . . You pick so much up from people in really good positions. I will go
> and observe the coach and I will see the mannerisms, see what they are doing,
> where they stand, the actual terminology and obviously the drills they do.

Indeed, while the data suggests that mentor and mentee pairs shared a number of similar beliefs, the results generally indicated that mentees held a more naïve epistemology compared to their mentors. For example, and alluding to a fixed capacity to learn, Mentee Two stated: "I think you have got to have some natural ability, I suppose you could learn but you have to have it in

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you". This contrasted notably with their mentor (mentor 2), who reported: "my view is that the best development is by making mistakes and understanding the reason why things might not work" (i.e., that expertise is driven by continuous development). An epistemological difference was also reflected in other mentor pairs. For example, mentee 1 stated that: "[my mentor] would show [a practice] to the whole group and then I would go away and do the same" (i.e., conveying a belief that knowledge is handed down by someone of a higher status). Again, this contrasted with their mentor (mentor 1), who stated that "a massive part [of learning] is from experience [and] being in uncomfortable situations" (i.e., situations that requires the mentee to think and develop rationale for their actions).

However, and notably, not all of the mentors in the study conveyed as sophisticated an epistemology as might have been expected. For example, mentor 5 acknowledged that expertise is developed via problem solving skills, stating that: "[my mentee and I] have talked about things that are important to them and then I have given them different problems to solve [around these areas]". As suggested, this mentor recognised that the progression of expertise requires the development of declarative knowledge through discussion and problem solving. However, it was apparent that this mentor considered that coaching expertise was also underpinned by a large base of procedural knowledge which is developed in relation to a coach's playing ability: "[my mentee] has not played the game [to a high level] so he will not have the same knowledge as someone who has". In summary, the analyses suggested that, mentors generally had a more sophisticated epistemology than their mentees (albeit that this wasn't wholly sophisticated). Additionally, the mentees' epistemologies tended to be more varied than the mentors (with notably greater sophistication in some beliefs but not others).

**Table 4.2.**

**Similar, differences and unique goals of mentor-mentee pairs**

| Pair | Similar | Differences | Unique |
|------|---------|-------------|--------|
| 1 | Mentor to provide technical and tactical knowledge. | | Address the needs of players. [Mentor] <br> To take meaning from observation [Mentor] <br><br> Align with mentee goals [Mentor] |
| 2 | To develop confidence. To develop a range coaching competencies <br><br><br><br><br> To adapt coaching session. [Mentor] | Develop problem solving skills .[Mentor] <br> **Versus** <br> Accrue drills and practices by replicating those of a higher status. [Mentee] <br><br> Develop innovative & creative solutions [Mentor] <br><br> **Versus** <br> Follow stable and certain coaching principles. [Mentee] | Develop a coaching philosophy [Mentor] Develop the ability to differentiate practices to support player development [Mentor] Understanding the principles of learning [Mentor] <br> Retaining the mentee as a coach. [Mentor] <br> Align with mentee goals. [Mentor] <br> Develop the mentees inter-personal skills [Mentor] |
| 3 | Mentor to provide technical and tactical knowledge. | | Being able to adapt. [Mentor] |
| 4 | Mentor to provide technical and tactical knowledge. | | Addressing mentees needs. [Mentor] <br> Develop critical reflective skills. [Mentor] |
| 5 | Mentor to provide technical and tactical knowledge. | | Create positive learning environments. [Mentor] <br> Develop problem solving skills. [Mentor] <br> Develop confidence through support. [Mentee] <br> Aligning with mentee philosophy and needs [Mentor] <br> Adaptable and flexible skills. [Mentor] <br> Developing the skills to cope. [Mentee] |
| 6 | To develop a range coaching competencies <br> Adapting and developing solutions. | Develop a broader understanding of social and psychological aspects of coaching. [Mentor] <br> **Versus** <br> Mentor to provide technical and tactical knowledge. [Mentee] | Aligning with mentee philosophy. [Mentor] <br> Develop a holistic coach [Mentor] |

## 4.3.2. Mentoring Goals for and of the Mentee

With reference to Table 4.2 addressing the goals of mentoring, as perceived by mentor

and mentee pairs, mentor-mentee pairs were generally in agreement that a primary goal of

mentoring was to provide or receive technical and tactical knowledge of football and to develop the skills and competencies to deliver practices. For example, mentor 1 reported that a goal was "to give technical and tactical details [to my mentee]"; a goal that aligned to the mentee 1's goal for the mentoring process: "for me, [the main goal] would be the technical and tactical knowledge, as well as knowing how to deal with players". Although mentor and mentee goals were generally aligned (as shown by the *similarities* column in Table 4.2), it was notable that all of the mentors in the study reported that the goals of mentoring were broader than simply providing practices and drills to be replicated by their mentee. For example, this difference was reflected in the views of mentor 2, who stated that mentoring was about "influencing their [mentee's] coaching philosophy". This contrasted with their mentee (mentee 2), who considered that a goal of mentoring was "to see [my mentor] coach and whether [the players] take to it [mentor coaching]". This mismatch in goals between mentors and mentees was also highlighted in the *unique* column in Table 4.2, where mentors expressed wider goals beyond simply technical and tactical knowledge. For example, mentor 5 considered developing adaptable and flexible skills as an important goal of mentoring: "[one of the goals for my mentee is them] being able to adapt himself without having to go to a text book or ring me".

To summarise, there appeared be broad agreement between mentors and mentees that the goal of mentoring should be to develop procedural knowledge (based on technical, tactical, and pedagogical skills); in other words, the "what to do" and "how to do it" of coaching. In addition, mentors generally recognised that developing declarative knowledge and a philosophy of practice should also be goals of the mentoring process; in other words, the "why" of coaching. Notably however, there did not appear to be any evidence that developing these wider goals were shared with their mentee.

**Table 4.3.**

**Similar, different and unique processes to achieve mentor-mentee goals.**

| Pair | Similar | Differences | Unique |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mentor directing session design<br>Mentee to observe and replicate mentor practices<br>Mentor led discussion | | |
| 2 | Mentor provides knowledge Reflecting upon experience. [Mentor] **Versus** coaching performance Reproducing practices from | Mentor to provide specific feedback on<br>observation [Mentee]<br><br>Developing knowledge through discussion. [Mentor]<br>**Versus**<br>Being given knowledge by someone of a higher status. [Mentee] | |
| 3 | Mentor to observe and provide feedback on practice.<br>Reproduce coaching behaviours from more experienced coaches.<br>Mentor to provide a model of coaching practice.<br>Mentor to lead and direct coaching activities. | Skills learnt through reasoning and practice. [Mentor]<br>**Versus**<br>Natural ability to coach. [Mentee]<br><br>Develop knowledge through discussion. [Mentor.]<br>**Versus**<br>Observing and replicating practice [Mentee] | Provide varied challenges [Mentor.]<br><br>Knowledge accrued gradually. [Mentor] |
| 4 | Develop knowledge through discussion.<br>Mentor provides advice and support.<br>Mentor provides demonstration | | Using a range of sources [Mentee] |
| 5 | Mentor to observe and provide feedback on practice.<br>Mentor to provide demonstrations<br>Mentor to review coaching plans and practices and feedback. | Learning from experience. [Mentor]<br>**Versus**<br>Natural ability. [Mentee] | |
| 6 | Mentor to demonstrate a range of practices.<br>Discussion pre & post practice session.<br><br>Mentor to observe and provide feedback.<br>Learning from observation of more experienced coaches. | | Provide session plans. [Mentor] |

### 4.3.3. The Process of Mentoring

Finally, Table 4.3 addresses the process of mentoring as perceived by mentors and mentees. In terms of convergence, the study found that mentors and mentees shared a key similar belief with regards to the process of mentoring and one that seemed to contradict the more sophisticated epistemology reported by mentees earlier; that is, both groups suggested that mentors acted as a resource via which mentees could directly accrue coaching knowledge. Specifically, both mentors and mentees considered the opportunity to observe and replicate practice as an important process for developing coaching expertise. For example, Mentee Three described their work with their mentee: "I will see the mentor doing it so I'm just observing it and then, obviously, I will pick it up". Indeed, this approach was often encouraged by mentors, who would provide opportunities for mentees to observe and replicate practice as a legitimate process to develop their mentee's coaching skills: "I did a parallel practice that day, so I led it but [Mentee Three] kind of looked after a pitch and shadowed me" (Mentor Three). Tellingly, this process was much valued by Mentee Three, who considered this as the most effective ways to develop their coaching skills:

> Working with coaches who have got the experience [is a key part of the development process]. Going down observing it, I have done that for all my Continuous Professional Development (Hereafter CPD). I did lots and lots of observing because you pick up so much from people in good positions.

In contrast, and notably, a number of mentors did report the value of other, more expertise-consistent activities, such as reflecting upon practice and engaging in discussion with their mentee to help them develop a deeper understanding of coaching practice:

Those conversations have been along the lines of: how did you feel that went? Did the players have lots of touches on the ball? Do you feel they are participating? Was there progress from a technical practice to make it a little harder? (Mentor Six)

However, while the mentors generally appeared to recognise the value of such conversations for developing expertise, it contrasted with their mentees who did not appear to value such conversations and appeared to default to a cut and paste approach to development. Indeed, the results suggested that mentors did tend to have a more sophisticated understanding of the process to develop expertise, as highlighted by the *differences* and *unique* columns in Table 4.3. However, while this might have been the case, there appeared to be little evidence that mentors engaged in such activities given that no mentees reported these features in the own perceptions on the process of mentoring. Or, if these activities were taking place, they didn't come to the mentees' minds as important during their interviews.

In summary, mentors generally appeared to recognise a wide range of strategies that could be employed to develop their mentees coaching expertise. However, the findings also suggested that the common "go to process" was to provide the "right" knowledge and, at times, direct the mentees' coaching sessions; thus, encouraging a cut and paste approach. This appeared to satisfy both mentors and mentees as there appeared to be very little appetite, particularly by mentees, to engage in more expertise-consistent processes, such as discussions on the context and decision making of practice, or reflecting upon experience. Significantly, these findings are therefore inconsistent with the more sophisticated epistemologies that were conveyed by the mentors during their interviews, as well as their perceptions on the goals of the mentoring process. Overall, therefore, the processes adopted by mentors don't seem to match

their mentoring beliefs or goals particularly well; however, these processes do seem to match the beliefs and goals of their more naïve mentees.

## 4.4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the goals and processes of mentoring as perceived by mentor-mentee pairs in an established mentoring program and to establish the epistemological basis of any similarities and differences between and amongst these dyads. By exploring how mentor-mentee pairs perceived mentoring, the study aimed to further understand the mechanisms by which mentors support the development of their mentees and consider any limitations and opportunities to further develop mentoring as a justifiable and sustainable process to enable coaching expertise.

On an epistemological level, the primary finding in this study was that, generally speaking, mentors had a more sophisticated view on what coaching knowledge is and how it can be learned. More specifically, mentors generally recognised that coach development requires mentees to gradually work towards seeing more of the nuances in their coaching, draw conclusions and make adaptations after exploring a range of alternative options, and reflect critically upon their practice within a social context. This contrasted with their mentees' more naive beliefs on coaching knowledge, which typically reflected the idea that this knowledge was simple and stable, handed down by those of higher status (in this case the mentor), with their acquisition of this knowledge limited by their own fixed abilities. In this sense, the findings demonstrated the existence of an "epistemological gap" between mentors and mentees; in other words, mentors and mentees operated against significantly different belief systems (Light, 2008; Partington & Cushion, 2013). Of course, however, this finding was expected given mentors' greater levels of experience (and therefore chance to develop on an epistemological level) plus, presumably, their selection as mentors by the FA (who are trying to develop more reflective,

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creative, forward-thinking mentees via the support of already reflective, creative forward

thinking mentors (The FA, 2016).

Significantly, these findings on mentor and mentee epistemology appeared to align with

those on the perceived goals of mentoring. More specifically, and reflecting their more

sophisticated epistemology, mentors reported that they pursued goals that revolved around the

"why" of coaching, such as the development of declarative knowledge, decision making skills,

and coaching philosophy. However, these goals were not reported by their mentees. Indeed, the

results suggested that mentor and mentee goals were at times not only different but, on occasion,

diametrically opposed (e.g. Develop problem solving skills v Accrue drills and practices by

replicating those of higher status). Clearly this contradiction in goals could lead to what

Griffiths and Armour (2012) have referred to as "mentoring dissonance", where learning

interactions are unfulfilling and unsustainable for both parties. Consequently, such a relationship

between mentors and mentees can result in incompatible expectations, tension, and

disappointment that undermines the impact of mentoring upon the development of expertise.

However, and significantly, there seemed to be no evidence in the data that mentors established

their goals on declarative knowledge, decision making skills, and coaching philosophy with their

mentees. Instead, the shared goals of mentors and mentees revolved around the development of

procedural knowledge and pedagogical skills; in short, a set of drills, practices, and procedures

that reflected the "what" and "how" (rather than the "why") of coaching practice. Indeed, while

mentors reported a more sophisticated epistemology and claimed to use a range of strategies to

develop their mentees declarative knowledge (e.g., through reflection and discussion), the results

suggested that the mentoring process seemed to be largely based upon the "what" and "how". In

this respect, there was a consensus amongst mentees that the role of a mentor was to act as a

resource that handed over knowledge on techniques, tactics, and organization of coaching

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sessions.  By employing observation and replication as the primary method for mentee development, mentors thus seemed to be giving mentees what they *wanted* but not, seemingly, what the mentor believed that they *needed* (Bullough, Young, Hall, & Draper, 2008)

Of course, observing and replicating a mentor or more experienced coaches can be useful for developing some coaching knowledge and skills in mentees.  Indeed, this approach has been described in prior work as a form of apprenticeship that allows neophyte coaches to familiarise themselves with the coaching process; and one which coaches often view as the primary means of gathering knowledge (Cushion et al., 2003).  It is also consistent with other research on mentoring specifically, which has described how many aspiring coaches initially seek to acquire valuable information, learn their roles and responsibilities, and progress their coaching styles and behaviours through this relationship (Fairhurst, Bloom, & Harvey, 2017).  Importantly, working in this way can also help the mentor to gain the initial buy-in from the mentee; a factor that can then help the mentor to consequently push the mentee beyond their comfort zone and current belief system with the confidence that their mentor is on their side and there to help them (Olsson et al., 2016).  However, as detailed in Chapter 2, the development of more reflective, creative, and forward-thinking coaches relies on advancing a mentee's epistemology and declarative knowledge; neither of which are appropriately catered for by a continuously structured and prescriptive "I show/say, you do" process.  Indeed, this copy and paste method fails to provide opportunities to develop the critical thinking and reflection skills that Nash et al. (2014) have highlighted as essential for mentees to consider their coaching in a wider context.

In terms of explaining these findings, and as suggested above, mentee preference for observation and replication is understandable given their more naïve epistemological beliefs.  In short, the desire for a copy and paste approach to learning reflects the view that coaching knowledge is factual, simple and stable, and handed down by those who have it.  In a wider

sense, this belief system also doesn't seem to be particularly challenged by aspiring coaches'

early exposure to football coaching knowledge.

For example, initial coaching qualifications still typically take a "train and certify" approach,

often presenting coaching skills in isolated competencies and accrediting coaches based on their

ability to reproduce practices shown to them by coaches of a higher status (Cushion et al.,

2003;).  In this manner, many aspects of formal education focus on procedural knowledge,

usually related to technique, tactics and pedagogy, and assumes that such knowledge can be

transferred by coaches to their own environments (Cushion et al.,2003).  Moreover, the social

milieu of football will also logically play a role in mentee epistemology, such as the plethora of

fixed opinions shared by widely-viewed or read media pundits (Olsson et al., 2016).

In terms of explaining the limited connections between the mentors' epistemologies and

goals with their processes, a number or mix of reasons are plausible.  More specifically, it could

be that: (a) mentors may not have as sophisticated an epistemology as they described (i.e., one

which exists as a more superficial belief system, potentially to manage impressions, serve the

institutional agendas of the FA, or ensure their own continued status within the mentoring

programme (Sawiuk, Taylor, & Groom, 2016); (b) mentors may have been guarded against

sharing "different" goals from their mentees given the potential for this to undermine the

relationship (as mentors may have wanted to be "seen as doing a good job" and keeping the

"customer" or their manager satisfied); (c) mentors may not feel they have the theoretical

framework, skills or confidence to develop deeper declarative knowledge and epistemology in

the mentee (e.g., through a lack of training on these processes); or (d) mentors may lack the time

to engage in sufficiently detailed conversations with their mentees that would allow for greater

exploration of the coaching process.  Another possibility, of course, is that the interviewed

mentors *do* use more expertise-consistent processes with their mentees but these processes didn't

come to the mentees' minds during interview (although this may suggest that these processes aren't considered relevant or significant). Additionally, and reflecting an earlier point, it is also possible that all mentors felt that they were still in the early phases of building rapport and trust with their mentee; thus, justifying the dominance of the observation and replication-based methods at the time of their interviews. However, in this regard it is noted that mentoring had been taking place for at least five months and that no mentee reported an awareness that different (more expertise-consistent) goals and methods would be introduced in the future.

### 4.5. Conclusions

This study sought to compare and contrast the goals and processes of mentoring as perceived by mentor and mentee pairs and to consider the epistemological basis of such perceptions. By exploring how mentor and mentee pairs perceived mentoring, and to further understand the mechanism by which mentors attempted to support the development of their mentees and consider any limitations and opportunities to develop mentoring as a justifiable and sustainable process to develop coaching expertise.

The findings suggest that mentors and mentees shared the goal of acquiring knowledge related to technical, tactical and pedagogical skills of coaching football. In addition, mentors identified wider and more sophisticated goals of mentoring such as developing coaching philosophy and problem-solving skills. However, mentors did not appear to share these wider mentoring goals with their mentees which may have implications for the process of mentoring.

Turning to the process of mentoring, although mentors and mentees shared some beliefs regarding the process to develop expertise, there appears to be a mis-match in many important areas. Generally, mentors reported that the process to develop expertise was facilitated by engaging in discussion, reflection and considering alternatives. This contrasted with the general view of mentees who believed the process of developing expertise to be underpinned by

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demonstration, observation and replicating practice, in other words there appeared to be an epistemology gap (Light, 2008). This difference between mentor pairs could lead to tension and disappointment, or what Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to as mentoring dissonance, leading to mentoring working sub-optimally at best or failing completely.

However, whilst the results indicate a difference in goals and processes between mentors and mentees that has its roots in epistemology there appeared little evidence that mentors fully utilized reflective discussion with their mentees to develop declarative knowledge but relied heavily upon providing what mentees expected, (i.e demonstrations, session plans etc.). Whilst there may be a number of reasons why mentors do not fully utilize the range of strategies to develop their mentees such as prioritising institutional agendas or having limited amount of time to develop more sophisticated coaches, it is more likely that mentors do not have the theoretical framework, skills and confidence to help guide their mentees toward a more sophisticated epistemology. This will have implications for mentor training and development in terms of recognising what expert coaching looks like and the strategies that can be employed to develop mentee coaches epistemology in order to build and develop the cognitive skills that underpins the journey toward expertise.

Of course, the study was not without limitations which are recognised. For example, mentors that were initially approached to take part in the study were all identified by the Regional Mentor Officer and in turn the mentors who agreed to take part were then free to approach and choose one of their mentees to take part in the study. Clearly this may lead to a level of self- preservation bias by identifying participants that will reflect well on the programme and give the 'right answers' (Giacobbi et al.,2005). In addition, I was known to all the mentors as a colleague which may have influenced their responses. In this respect however, I would ask the reader to consider the lack of congruence that was evident between mentor and mentee pairs.

In addition, there was limited evidence emerging from the study, to suggest that mentors applied appropriate strategies to develop mentees declarative knowledge. More positively, I would encourage the reader to recognise the strengths of the study. Specifically, I had access to a national formal mentoring programme that is relatively young in its development and I had unique insight into the programme.

The pragmatic study attempted to address applied challenges of the programme and was supported by the governing body. Considering the findings from the Survey Study as discussed in Chapter Three and the conclusions drawn from the study in this chapter that highlighted a mismatch between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals and process of mentoring that that reflect the key messages that were discussed in Chapter Two with regards to the criteria of effective mentoring. Chapter Five now draws together the key findings to present an overview of the current location of the FA Mentoring programme and possible implications to develop expert coaches.

## Chapter 5: Meeting the Growing Need for Mentoring Coach Development –

## 5.1. Introduction

Recognising the benefits of interacting with other more experienced practitioners and accepting that coach learning, and development can be enhanced outside of formal coach education by utilizing informal contexts, mentoring has come into common use within sports coaching (Jones, et al.,2009). To illuminate this area of study, this research has explored the current Football Association's (The FA) mentoring programme that was established in 2013 to support the development of 'better coaches'. By comparing the goals, processes, rationale and the epistemological basis of mentor mentee relationships, the research presented in Chapters Two, Three and Four considered a several factors that underpinned the mentoring process in terms of developing coaching expertise. Therefore, against the backdrop of these findings, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the current focus of the FA Mentoring Programme, to highlight issues that undermine the effectiveness of the current programme and finally, to present a coherent framework that attempts to address these issues and so improve the effectiveness of mentoring in relation to developing more expert football coaches.

## 5.2. The Story So Far

Recognising the limitations of training-based programmes to develop expert coaches, a several governing bodies have established mentoring programmes in order to utilize the perceived benefits of non-formal and informal approaches to coach development. However, whilst this approach may have been welcomed by many coaches, the results from this study indicates that there was a mixed picture with regards to what the perceived goals of mentoring were and the processes to develop better coaches. As outlined in Chapter Two I argued that the journey toward coaching expertise is underpinned by the development of a large base of declarative knowledge (the why and why not of coaching) that require coaches to make decisions

that are often dependent on a range of contextual factors. Consequently, coaches are required to take a nuanced approach to their coaching practice which does not necessarily provide the neat and tidy solutions to complex problems that coaches often seek. For many coaches, particularly novice coaches, embracing the complexities of coaching and accepting there may not be simple straight forward answers may indeed be a challenge that falls outside of their comfort zone and consequently may be drawn toward sources that present easy, quick straight forward solutions (YouTube, TV Pundits etc.). Based on the evidence from this study, mentees often considered the role of the mentor as the 'Go To' source to solve their coaching challenges. This is hardly surprising as mentors will invariably possess a more sophisticated understanding of the coaching process, and therefore mentees expectations will be that the role of the mentor is to supply them with the answers to complex coaching problem they encounter in their practice (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Wright & Smith, 2000).

However, acknowledging that mentors have a larger base of declarative knowledge of the coaching process than mentees, which is underpinned generally by a more sophisticated epistemology, evidence from this study indicates that this led to a mis-match in the goals and processes of mentoring which may have led to tension and disappointment between mentor pairs. For example, whilst generally mentors recognised that the goal of mentoring was to develop expertise, underpinned by a more cognitive approach (in line with Nash et al., 2012) through a process of analysing, considering alternatives and reflecting upon practice, mentees goals tended to focus upon acquisition of practices and drills (procedural knowledge) through a process of observing demonstrations and/or being provided with drills and practices. This approach I would suggest has been as a consequence of formal coach education systems that value a behaviourist approach to coach development (Cushion et al, 2003)

As discussed earlier, I would argue that a discrepancy in the goals and processes of mentoring has its underpinnings rooted in a difference in personal epistemology. Accordingly, Chapter Two presented a framework that could be applied to target the mentees epistemology to make the journey toward expertise more realistic and encourage mentees to engage in more critical conversation to support the development of declarative knowledge that underpins expertise. To utilize a such a framework, Chapter 2 outlined how such an epistemology focused mentoring programme may work. Clearly, if such a strategy were to be followed it would be vital that mentors recognise how knowledge is constructed (i.e. epistemology), what the goals of mentoring are (i.e. developing expertise) and the processes to support the development of expertise. Accordingly, Chapter Three and Four investigated the current mentoring relationship in terms of the shared understanding of the markers of expertise, the shared perceptions of the processes to develop expertise and the interactions between mentors and mentees through the lens of epistemology. However, as reported in Chapter Three and Four, the results indicated that whilst there were some areas of agreement between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals and processes of mentoring, there was evidence that there was a mis-match or what Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to as mentoring dissonance between mentors and mentees with regards to the goals and processes of mentoring.

However, of note, and in my view to mitigate any tension between mentors and mentees, there was evidence that mentors adopted a cut and paste approach in their mentoring to satisfy the needs and expectations of mentees, in other words, mentors provided demonstrations of drills and practices that mentees often craved for. This approach may have been justified early in the mentoring relationship, however all the mentor pairs interviewed for this study had been engaged in the mentoring process for at least three months. However, the problem with this approach is that it will limit the opportunities for mentee coaches to consider the 'why and why not' of

practice and therefore undermine the expansion of declarative knowledge that underpins the development of expertise. The following section will now consider some of the possible reasons why issues uncovered in this research might occur.

### 5.2.1. Why might these issues occur? Epistemological processes and issues

The issues highlighted above are, perhaps, unsurprising as formal coach education is all too often focused on the procedural (what and how) of coaching rather than the declarative knowledge (why and when) of coaching. Consequently, formal coach education has tended to focus upon providing knowledge and developing isolated competencies that reflect best practice (Collins et al., 2015; Cushion, et al, 2003).  Despite an increasing focus by governing bodies to develop more informed coaches, coach educators continue to rely upon what Bruner (1999) refers to as 'folk pedagogies' (i.e. strong implicit beliefs or theories) which are often derived from personal experience but lack the rigorous evidence-based frameworks that underpin the development of expertise.  (Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, & Groom, 2014). Unfortunately, this approach has reduced some coaches to behavioural technicians, trained to deliver effective coaching session that 'fit' a prescribed model of coaching. According to Cushion et al., (2003), this reflects a process of indoctrination rather than education. Consequently, coaching courses are constructed along rationalistic lines and present what is seen as a model of 'best practice' where coaches are encouraged to replicate and reproduce behaviours and methods which are often de-contextualised.  Inevitability, these courses cannot adequately prepare coaches to manage the diverse range of environments they will face in practice (Olsson et al.,2016). Promoting a 'best practice' model of coaching would only fit if coaching was stable and in a consistent environment; however, the reality of coaching is a complex, dynamic process, presenting varied problems that require flexible and adaptable coaches (Cushion, 2011).

The increased significance and investment in coach education to elevate coaching standards and promote coaching as a 'profession' has led to a focus on programmes that are often built around a set of prescribed competencies (Collins et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2013). Whilst the acquisition of specific knowledge regarding the technique and tactics of a sport may serve as a building block, particularly for novice coaches, such approaches may limit the development of more 'expert' coaches (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006). Indeed, it has been acknowledged that a cut and paste approach to coach education, encouraging coaches to see practices and drills as recipes that can be applied without consideration of context, only goes to reinforce coaches as behavioural technicians that can deliver the 'what' but not the 'why' of coaching practice (Collins et al, 2015; Cushion, 2011).

Coaches are often faced with a range of issues that very rarely have single correct solutions but require them to cope in dynamic contexts that are often complex in nature. It necessitates taking decisions that can often only be a 'best fit solution'. As suggested by Collins et al., (2015) and Martindale and Collins (2007), competency-based courses cannot adequately prepare practitioners for the diverse range of challenges they may face. In addition, if the aspiration is to elevate coaching to a profession on par with teaching, a competency approach will not serve the needs of developing coaches and potentially could limit their development as the focus will be accruing procedural knowledge (what and how of coaching) rather than developing their declarative knowledge (why of coaching) (Collins et al., 2015).

### 5.1.2. The Influence of Social Learning

Accepting that coaches are social beings and operate in a social environment where knowledge is mediated and socially constituted, coaches' behaviours are linked to their own histories and crucially how they learnt (Cushion et al., 2003; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). Therefore, mentees personal coaching journeys will have been influenced and shaped by their

experiences and exposure to; access to other coaches, their own playing histories, media influences (e.g. football pundits) and multiple stakeholders , such as parents, administrators and formal coach training, all of which may be working to different agendas. In such contexts, learning, particularly for novice coaches, is influenced by the social milieu that may encourage coaches reproduce and conform to existing cultures and practices (Cushion et al., 2003). This may lead to coaches reproducing what is presented to them from those that are perceived of a higher status, reinforcing a naïve epistemology and consequently the expectation may be that a mentor's role would be to provide the right answers by presenting appropriate drills and practices that will solve complex coaching problems.

Clearly, mentee coaches therefore approach the mentoring relationship from their habitus that guides their view of learning which, based on the findings from this study, tend to be from a naïve epistemological position which results in an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees which may lead to a discrepancy in the goals and processes to develop expertise. Based on this study and other studies (Griffiths & Armour, 2012), it appears that there is a consensus amongst mentees that mentors should act as a resource that could provide the technical and tactical knowledge and the organisational skills to make them more efficient and effective coaches. Consequently, a mis-match in goals and processes may result in the mentoring relationship being incoherent, with the interactions being unsatisfying and unsustainable with mentors and mentees being unsure of what was expected of them. Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to this mis-match in their study by highlighting the 'tension and disappointment' between mentors and mentees resulting from 'incompatible expectation' of the mentoring process. Of concern however, is that some mentors may not have as sophisticated epistemology as might be expected and therefore may default to providing the drills and practices that mentees thirst for, reinforcing a 'cut and paste' approach to coaching and limiting the development of mentees

declarative knowledge. Alternatively, some mentors may indeed recognise the mis-match, however in order to keep the mentee (customer) satisfied, the mentor may succumb to the social pressures and expectations and provide what is expected by the mentee (i.e. drills and practices), or indeed mentors may not have the skills, knowledge and strategies to develop the mentees epistemology to support their journey toward expertise.

Whilst acknowledging the positive impact of mentoring, there are several of issues that, at best may undermine the mentoring process and at worst may result in mentoring programmes failing to achieve their aims. To address these issues, the following section will present a framework to develop the process of mentoring and its implementation.

### 5.2. Going Forwards: Next Steps for Mentoring and Coach Education

Whilst it may be argued that informal coach development can play a significant role in the development of expertise, and is highly valued by coaches as an authentic source of knowledge and understanding, there are still unanswered questions regarding what is learnt and how. So, whilst acknowledging that mentoring may provide a bridge between formal coach education and informal coach development, there is a danger that mentoring, either formal or informal, may simply serve to reproduce existing practice and not develop the creative, problem solving coaches governing bodies often claim to require (Cushion et al., 2003).

To take mentoring forward by examining the evidence from this research, I suggest two issues that primarily undermine the impact of the current FA Mentoring Programme. Firstly, at an individual level, between and within the mentor-mentee pairs, there are inconsistencies in the aims of mentoring and an apparent mis-match in the process of support the development of expertise, which I would suggest has its roots in an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees (Olsson et al.,2016).  Secondly, to address the wider issues in the mentoring programme that undermine a coherent approach to coach development, I would like to suggest number

strategic decisions that would be required to enhance the impact of mentoring. To address these challenges, the following sections provide a number of strategies that should be utilized to support both of these challenges.

### 5.2.1. Epistemology Focused Mentoring

As a logical first step, it is clearly important that mentors and their mentees define and map out the long-term objectives of their working relationship. Through this, the mentor will sensibly identify the mentee's ultimate aims (e.g., to develop into a forward-thinking, creative lead coach) and preferences on the nature of their relationship (cf. Martindale & Collins, 2005). As part of this groundwork, it would also seem sensible for the mentor to provide a general overview of what eventual expertise would look like (i.e., having the ability to work independently and innovatively with complex challenges), what the journey is likely to involve (i.e., an increasing awareness and consideration of multiple ways to solve coaching challenges), and what the journey is also likely to feel like (i.e., consistently working outside of one's comfort zone mixed with blocks of consolidation). Of course, the language used at this stage will be vital; detailed enough to set expectations but appropriate enough so that mentees are not immediately intimidated or disillusioned. Accordingly, "epistemology" might not be mentioned in most first meetings! Notwithstanding this point, however, it will still be crucial for a mentor to quickly gain an understanding of the mentee's current epistemological distribution. Part of a broader "getting to know each other" block, where trust and rapport are also targeted, this epistemological evaluation will sensibly involve the triangulation of data from sources such as informal discussions, observations of practice, and perceptions of peers/seniors. Using Schommer-Aikins and Easter's (2009) five epistemological beliefs as a guide, mentors will need to consider this data with respect to the mentee's views on the origins, stability, certainty, organization, acquisition, and learnability of knowledge. Once again, it will be important to

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explain to the mentee *why* these types of conversations and observations are taking place, but not necessarily in overt "epistemological terms". Indeed, the extent to which technical language is used and progressed will of course depend upon individual needs (as such, there are no prescribed or concrete guidelines on when and how "personal epistemology" should be directly referred to).

From here, early mentoring with naïve mentees will then focus on developing a broad base of declarative knowledge, focused on the techniques and tactics of their sport (including the provision of drills that *can* be simply copied at this stage – although increasingly with alternatives included), pedagogical principles, basic tenets of major support disciplines (e.g., skill development; sport psychology), and the social and political features of their work (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006). Given the mentee's likely preference to acquire, memorize, and reproduce fact-based information at this stage, this knowledge will be chiefly "taught" by the mentor and a range of other sources (e.g., ratified books). The development of the mentee's declarative pool will then help them to become increasingly aware of different options for their coaching practice and, in conjunction, increase sensitivity to the "whys" and "why nots" of what they do. It is perhaps at this point that mentors may then deliver review blocks that highlight or reinforce the mentee's evolving beliefs on the origins, construction, and use of coaching knowledge. More specifically, such reviews could open the mentee's eyes to the point that they are now (hopefully) aware of lots more factors in the coaching process than when they started. Moreover, this awareness can then be paired with education on what the next steps towards expertise will involve (e.g., moving beyond an awareness of these multiple factors to deciding when they're relevant in specific situations).

Indeed, to make the next step to multiplism, mentors may then sensibly facilitate discussion and debate where the provisional and recursive nature of coaching knowledge is

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emphasized (i.e., it will apply in some cases but not all and needs continual updating). For instance, a mentor may set up conversations on why a practice or session that had worked well for the mentee a few months earlier was now no longer delivering the same impact; as such, drawing attention away from the content and procedures of practice (e.g., were the drills set up "correctly" or not?) toward contextual factors (e.g., what progress had performers made in the intervening period? Were some performers finding the content too easy? What stage of the season was it? How much of the prior success was due to block practice? Was the assistant coach sending mixed signals?). Here, mentee learning should centre on thinking and reflecting, including how they then use this 'considered' provisional knowledge in their practice. Indeed, encouraging explicit thinking allows a "cognitive apprenticeship" to be served and mental models to be developed and/or refined (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991; Monaghan & Lunt, 1992).

As mentees start to appreciate that coaching is an inherently complex and contingent process, mentors may start to include regular epistemology-oriented reviews that help mentees to reflect on their previously held beliefs on where coaching knowledge comes from, how it can change, and how it can be used. Similarly, conversations might also be held on the next step toward expertise; specifically, the ability to make appropriately balanced and evidence-based judgments. To achieve this, mentors may start to incorporate more scenario-based work. For example, discussion on multifaceted coaching challenges, which increase gradually in complexity, can be presented and options examined to identify "best fit" solutions (cf. Collins et al., 2015). Initially this will probably require the mentor to use significant probing to tease out the different options and the merits of each from the mentee. However, as the mentee's declarative understanding and professional judgment and decision-making skill grows (Abraham & Collins, 2011), and through a gradual promotion of mentee ownership, this support can then

recede with the mentee responsible for conducting evidence-based, "pros and cons" trade-offs.

It is at this point where Entwistle and Peterson's (2004) pivotal position would be crossed, after

which meaning is sought from learning and relativism starts to become more established.  In line

with the expertise criteria outlined earlier, mentors would therefore expect to see mentees display

greater independence, use their knowledge to experiment with and then develop novel solutions,

manage more complex planning processes, and couch all of the above against their perceived

strengths and limits.  Mentees will also be more likely to critically assess their role in the wider

system of which they are part, become more aware of the social pressures acting on them, and

engage critically with peers and seniors (as opposed to routinely accepting their views).  From

here, the final mentoring phase will see the mentee view learning episodes in multiple ways and

committing to a personal and reasoned perspective on what knowledge is, how it can be

developed, constructed, and shared, and how it can be used to inform practice.  This will

inevitably align with other elements of the mentee's coaching philosophy, including the purpose

of their coaching for both themselves and those they work with.

As implied in the preceding suggestions, developing sophisticated coaches therefore

requires much more than just reflective practice; a pertinent point considering the prescribed

dominance of this skill in academic and applied spheres (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010).  Of course,

reflective practice will still play a significant role; but as part of a holistic, systematic, and

conceptually framed process.  More specifically, the framework of Entwistle and Peterson

(2004) and Schommer-Aikins and Easter's (2009) work on personal epistemology can be used to

set what reflection is chiefly done *against;* in short, without such criteria against which to

evaluate, reflective practice may only be elaborate navel gazing.  Indeed, by encouraging

mentees to deconstruct their practice against their current epistemology and, more importantly,

the next stage of progression (or their zone of proximal development), they then have the chance

to develop on a deeply personal *and expertise-enabling* level rather than reflecting at random or for the sake of reflecting alone (Grecic & Collins, 2013; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

Whilst this Chapter has outlined what we might expect to see in epistemology focused mentoring, it is also important to stress that the features described above have implications for the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship. Given the challenging path ahead, including anticipated dips in confidence and performance, mutual trust will be pivotal (Bloom et al., 1998). As such, while partnerships will usually be set up through formal system requirements (i.e., as part of coach education programs), mentors clearly need to possess the interpersonal skills that can foster immediate (and enduring) rapport and respect. Indeed, first impressions may make or break (or at least significantly delay or impinge on) the mentor-mentee relationship, particularly with naïve mentees and those fearful of being exposed or undermined. As part of this process, and as touched upon earlier, mentors would do well to set clear expectations over each partner's role and the program of support. Indeed, it might often be the case that mentees, through socialization and experience of drill-focused qualifications, may expect the mentor to simply provide the answers to their coaching needs. As also mentioned earlier, mentors may sensibly fulfil this role through the provision of coaching drills and "do it like this" guidance at the *beginning* of the relationship. After this initial period, however, mentors will need to progressively weaken dependence and increase mentee ownership; as such, moving from instructor to educator to collaborator to consultant to one of several sounding boards (cf. Raelin, 2007; Grecic & Collins, 2013). Importantly, this process will also depend upon the appropriate deployment of skills such as: the ability to directly and indirectly challenge mentees on why they are doing what they are doing, this will require mentors developing sophisticated interpersonal skills and building a level of trust that empowers the mentee to embrace constructive criticism (cf. Nash, 2003). Finally, for mentees struggling to manage the complex links between theory,

critical thinking, and practice, mentors would also seem well advised to have skills that help

individuals cope with uncertainty.  Specifically, mentors should help mentees to challenge the

assumptions behind their struggle, seek further information to make more informed decisions,

debate between options rather than falling back on biases and heuristics, and identify future

contingencies (Kahneman & Klein, 2009) so that complexity is adapted to and not absorbed

(Theodoris & Bennison, 2009).

### 5.2.2. Communities of Practice

Building on the features of one-on-one mentoring, encouraging mentees to participate in

targeted communities of practice (Hereafter CoPs) may also work to systematically expose these

coaches to different views and then onto critical and evidence-based discussion of these views.

Indeed, the chance to engage with larger pools of knowledge, share ideas, and probe the rationale

behind these ideas can enable the mentee to extend their declarative knowledge base as well as

what they can do with this knowledge, who with, when, where, how, and why (Culver & Trudel,

2008).  By strategically selecting the CoP based on the aims and current epistemological

positions of its members, such groups can also serve a social support purpose as mentees start to

question their practice and face the unnerving world of Multiplism and Relativism.  Indeed,

many will feel uneasy with opening up on why they do what they do (or not being able to

explain why they do what they do); particularly those who (a) are focused on rapid upward

mobility (via impression management), (b) fear being exposed in front of their peers or role

models, (c) are particularly staunch dualists, (d) are easily impressionable (i.e., "if X says so then

it must be true!"), or (e) some combination of all four.  In this way, mentors will have to play a

critical role in CoPs to ensure a shared purpose, a critical but non-judgmental culture, and

benefit for all members.  Again, the mentor will likely assume a neutral position; not that of an

assessor but, returning to Vygotsky, a "more capable other" who can appropriately manipulate social environments (Potrac & Cassidy, 2006).

Early on, it would seem sensible that the mentor leads the agenda for the more formal aspects of interaction, such as group meetings, before gradually progressing toward the more consultant-type role noted previously.  Guidance on how mentees engage with more informal features, such as social media, blogs, and other online resources would also seem wise in an opinion-dense world (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014); in effect, shaping the lens by which mentees collect, interpret, and reflect on (apparently) relevant information.  Finally, another useful approach might see mentors operate "buddy systems" whereby a mentee is paired with a more capable peer; or, more specifically, a coach who is one step closer to relativism than themselves.  In this way, the thinking and behaviour desired of the mentee can be modelled by this individual, who can also provide a vital source of confidence during what may be uncertain times (i.e., "if they can do it then so can I"; Bandura & Walters 1977).

### 5.2.3. Epistemology Focused Sport Education

Following the points made in the introduction, formal coach education has traditionally adopted a procedural (i.e., technique/drill-oriented) approach to the development of coaches rather than encouraging an appropriate expansion of declarative knowledge (i.e., the "whys, why nots, and what would have to be different").  As such, sport education systems have often, whether knowingly or unknowingly, worked to a dualist and reductionist model; as driven by the desire to identify clear competencies on which effective coaching can be assessed and reproduced (particularly at the novice end of the coaching spectrum).  It is not until coaches reach the higher levels of education that they are then normally expected to develop and demonstrate the core problem solving and decision-making skills that more closely characterize

expertise (albeit still with a technical/drill orientation). This overall approach is conveyed in Figure Two. However, as the development of expertise and a relativist epistemology is a protracted and demanding process, only those who have been highly self-driven in their acquisition of knowledge, critical reflection, and learning/debating with more capable others will tend to go on to deliver expert practice (as defined in this paper) once the top award has been achieved.

So how can sports address the contradiction of pushing for more creative, forward thinking, and adaptable coaches – as supported by mentoring programs – yet achieve this with dualist/competency-oriented courses? Although this is clearly a major and multifaceted challenge, a model of formal education that more closely reflects that shown in Figure Three which would seem to offer a better fit than the often drill/technique-dominated courses currently delivered by many sports. Importantly, such an approach would clearly define expertise from the off, then set the tone for development by encouraging coaches to continuously engage with and build their declarative understanding as they progress through every level. In this manner, formal courses could then align with the rewiring activities of mentors (and vice-versa) and help coaches to: (a) increasingly deepen their understanding of what expertise is and what it's not; and (b) build their own bespoke, contextualized, and "declarative-rich" knowledge (i.e., knowledge that allows them to take resources and apply them in a way that delivers peak impact in *their* environment for *their* purposes). Moreover, by awarding qualifications to those displaying suitable *epistemological* development (i.e., transitioning from a "prescribed coaching model to recognising a nuanced approach to coaching) social expectations can then also be shaped to promote the need for an extensive declarative knowledge. Indeed, this strategy would send a strong message, especially when reinforced by coach mentors, that understanding the

"whys" and "why nots" of coaching, is both an *essential* and *normal* feature of becoming a better coach.

**Level of Qualification** (vertical axis)

Declarative Knowledge

Procedural Knowledge

**Knowledge / Assessment Focus**
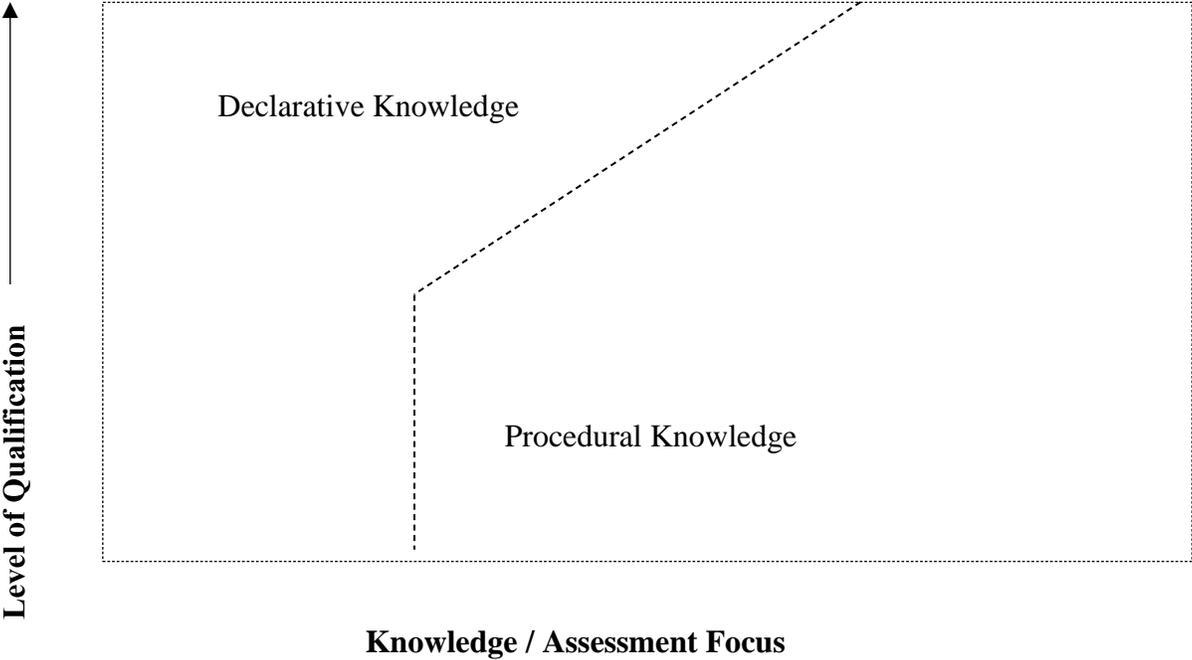
**Figure 2.** Knowledge and assessment orientation of typical current. Formal coach education programs

**Level of Qualification** (vertical axis)

Declarative Knowledge

Procedural Knowledge

**Knowledge / Assessment Focus**
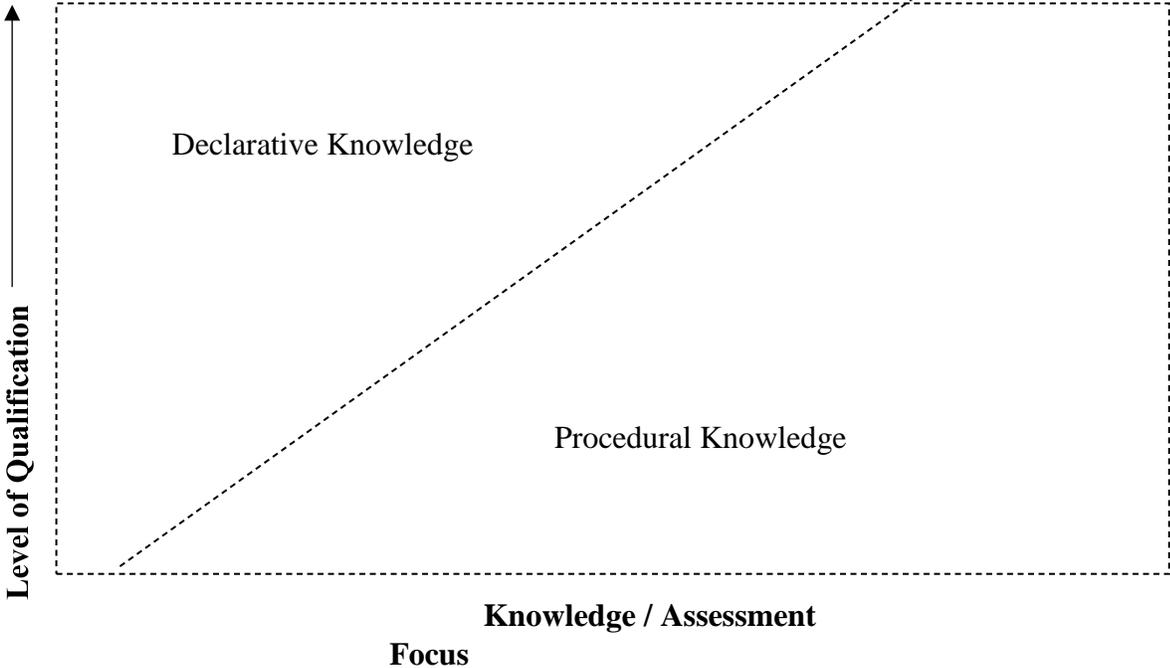
**Figure 3.** Knowledge and assessment orientation that reflects more expertise-based coach education

## 5.3. Driving Change at Mentor-Mentee Level

To fully exploit the role of the mentor to support the aim of developing of more expert, declarative knowledge rich coaches, and to build on the key messages from this research I would suggest a number of key strategies. Firstly, going forward there needs to be an agreed and clear emphasis on determining shared outcomes of what expertise in coaching 'looks like' in practice. This approach includes promoting and developing appropriate training and development programmes for FA Mentors, Coach Education Tutors and the wider development community that will include County Football Associations. In addition, by utilising appropriate media and social platforms to create social milieu that values the development of declarative knowledge and promotes a more 'it depends' approach to coaching practice, other key stakeholders such as grassroots coaches, parents and participants can be influenced to move beyond a cut and paste approach to player and coach development. Such an approach needs to be facilitated by central advertising campaigns; in short, exploiting the social dynamic of coach development (cf.

Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

Secondly, to support the development of declarative knowledge, there will be a need for mentors to understand the role of personal epistemology on the acquisition and construction of knowledge and understand their role in supporting mentees acquire and develop new knowledge. Clearly, recruiting mentors that have a sophisticated epistemology would and should be a prerequisite of developing more expertise within a volunteer coach workforce. Recognising their own (mentor) personal epistemology and being able to identify the personal epistemology of their mentees, mentors can anticipate potential areas of dissonance that may undermine the mentoring relationship. Through utilizing Entwistle and Peterson (2004) framework (Fig 1),

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mentors may initially need to target mentees personal epistemology and encourage mentees to consider a range of alternatives by recognising the context and taking a more 'it depends' approach. By drawing the mentee toward a more sophisticated epistemology there is less likelihood of lack of coherence in the goals and process of mentoring which has the potential to undermine the mentoring relationship. Finally, encouraging mentees to see the nuances of coaching and engage in a process of critical thinking they move to a more sophisticated, expertise level of coaching where the mentor and peer coaches become co-constructors of knowledge that is tentative and contextualised.

Thirdly, to make this change sustainable and the 'norm' of coach development, I would suggest that all strands of coach education and development need to recognise the underpinning characteristics of expertise and the role of personal epistemology in the acquisition and construction of knowledge. Encouraging formal coach education and mentoring programmes to move away from presenting knowledge in terms of 'solutions' and support coaches build large base of declarative knowledge through discussion, reflective practice recognising the grey of coaching. By targeting mentees epistemology coach education tutors and mentors can help coaches draw upon their experiences to create, develop and adapt knowledge that is context specific.

Finally, to support such a strategy as outlined above, it would of value to develop and pilot a higher order mentoring course that would be required training for all FA mentors. In addition, joint mentor and coach education tutor training events and conferences to support and sustain the development of mentors and tutors.

To summarise the above discussion the following points, provide a framework that can be used to drive, monitor, justify and adapt the implementation of a national mentoring programme:

i) Promote a shared understanding of 'expertise' across all coach education and coach development domains, ii) Present a coherent approach to coach development across all coach education and development domains with greater emphasis upon the development of declarative knowledge and cognitive skills (it depends / decision making) as opposed to an overemphasis on procedural knowledge and behavioural skills (a recipe / reproduction), iii)

To support this process, a common and consistent approach to coach development should be agreed based on current evidence, utilizing all appropriate marketing and public relations channels, iv) Integrated Mentor and Tutor Coach Education events and conferences,

v) Develop a higher order 'Mentoring in Practice' course,

vi) Regular and continues professional development events to support mentors and coach educators,

vii) Encourage coaches and mentors at all levels to form and engage with coaching communities of practice to share and challenge existing practice. This may include the use of a range of digital social media platforms.

## 5.4. Monitoring, Evaluating and Adapting

To ensure the implementation of a more expertise focused development of coaches that is focused on cognitive rather than a behaviourist approach to coach development, a strategic approach will be required that encompasses many different of aspects football and coach development. Accordingly, one useful direction will be to increasingly test the impact of coach education initiatives against pre-set goals on outcome and processes, rather than using the existing approach of soliciting feedback from attendees. My point here, without wishing to be overly critical, is that many trainee coaches may not yet recognise what they need. Indeed, if the work of Entwistle (2004) cited in Chapter 2 is accurate, some may even never get there! Such an

approach needs to be well structured, and the ideas well marketed and accepted, if the course philosophy and content are to gain real traction.

This modification in goals and design must also be matched by placing the new approach against a revised set of government agency and NGB objectives. Whilst there has a been a growth in the number of formal mentoring schemes set up, including the FA Mentor Programme, such programmes are often tied to the longer-term strategic objectives of the organisation which in turn are linked to funding (Sawiuk, Taylor, & Groom, 2016; Roberts, 2000). As a result, mentoring programmes may simply become extensions of formal policies which are assessed through the collection of 'political agenda metrics' (e.g. number of males, females, ethnicity etc.). Consequently, there is a danger that formal mentoring programmes become highly structured, regulated and reflective of a generic, one-size fits all approach to coach development. Such approaches, whilst attractive to national governing bodies of sport as they serve the institution agendas, could indeed undermine the very reason why such programmes have been introduced, (i.e. to develop better coaches) and may restrict the opportunity to develop bespoke coach development programmes that address the needs of individual coaches (Chesterfield , Potrac , & Jones, 2010; Nelson , Cushion, & Potrac, 2013).

A third agenda relates to the use of mentoring as a tool for change rather than a superficially attractive political initiative. Whilst the introduction of a mentoring programme appears to have been welcomed by coaches as a support mechanism, national governing bodies of sport will need to consider the role of mentoring in relation to wider coach education and development programmes rather than as an isolated 'bolt on' programme that sit outside of the broader coach development landscape. If mentoring programmes are not fully integrated into the wider coach education structures, there is a danger that mixed messages will undermine the development of more 'expert' coaches. This, in turn, may result in tension between the two

strands of coach development (i.e. mentoring and formal coach education) leaving coaches confused and lacking in a clear understanding what coaching expertise looks like and their journey toward expertise.

## 5.4. Summary

Several governing bodies of sport are establishing mentoring programmes as a mechanism to support the development of more expertise focused coaches. Accordingly, this chapter has attempted to draw together several strands from the research and current literature. Turning to a specific football focus, it appears that currently, the FA Mentoring programme is heavily process driven with an emphasis on 'what and how to coach'.

Consequently, mentors spend time providing technical and tactical knowledge and focusing their attention on developing mentees' coaching competencies, such as their ability to communicate. This approach reinforces mentees' understanding of what good coaching is (i.e knowledge of drills and practices that are delivered competently), but this can limit the development of their declarative knowledge (why and why not) which often results in mentee coaches taking a cut and paste approach to their own development. However, there was evidence that mentors often had a more sophisticated understanding of what expertise was and the processes required to achieve expertise; a situation which, at times, resulted in a discrepancy or an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees expectations of what the process is. This incongruence between mentors and mentees potentially could lead to frustration on both sides and undermine any formal mentoring programme. However, concerningly there was evidence in this study that mentors often defaulted to a 'cut and paste' approach to support their mentees which potentially could undermine the development of declarative knowledge and limit the mentees journey toward expertise. However, to have the desired impact, there needs to be a recognition of the complex nature of coaching and resist the temptation to present coach practice and development in neat and tidy packages that can be

reproduced in an un-problematic manner. Developing coaches need to be encouraged to leave the

safe ground of dualistic certainty and move toward relativism which may lead initially to a degree

of defensiveness and resentment. However, only by embracing a 'it depends' approach can coaches

begin to see the nuances of coaching and begin to construct meaning to an inherently complex

process (De Martin- Silva, Fonseca, Jones, Morgan, & Mesquita, 2015).

Finally, to move coach mentoring forward there will be a need to locate and integrate

mentoring as part of the wider coach education and development landscape in order to ensure a

coherent approach to the development of coaches.

# Chapter 6: Conclusions and Future Research

## 6.1. Introduction

To help produce expert coaches at both participation and performance levels, a number of governing bodies have established coach mentoring systems. Considering the limited literature on coach mentoring, as well as the risks of superficial treatment by coach education systems, this thesis has explored the role and impact of mentoring upon the development of more expert coaches through an investigation of the Football Association's Mentoring programme that was launched in 2013. More specifically, the aims of this thesis were to address and inform current mentoring practice as it relates to the FA's National Mentoring programme by addressing the following objectives:

1.  To critically consider relevant literature on the mechanism of effective mentoring,

2.  To evaluate the FA Mentoring Programme in terms of goals, processes and epistemological relationships between mentors and mentees,

3.  To identify and evaluate coherence and incoherence between mentors and mentees in terms of goals, processes and epistemology,

4.  Consider and review the results of the study in terms of providing meaningful recommendations to support the development of an effective mentoring programme.

## 6.2. Summary of Results and Implications

As outlined in Chapter One there has been an increasing focus and attention paid to the development of high-quality coaches and more specifically the training and support for coaches, many of which operate as volunteers across a range of contexts. In response, National Governing Bodies have developed a range of formal coach education programmes to help

coaches accrue the knowledge and skills to function at participation and performance levels of sport (Piggott, 2015). To ensure a level of consistency and transparency, formal coach education courses have tended to focus on procedural knowledge where knowledge is presented in neat and tidy packages that are tightly controlled by coach educators and student coaches are presented with a gold standard of coaching (Cushion et al., 2003). However, research suggests that such formal coach education courses are often decontextualized in nature and do not adequately prepare the coach for the dynamic coaching contexts that often reduce coaches to technicians who transmit knowledge without the ability to adapt and apply knowledge at the right time for the right reason (Nash et al.,2012). Consequently, evidence suggests that practitioners have turned to informal sources of knowledge to aid their development, such as listening to TV pundits, or searching the internet for practices, which can lead to a serendipitous journey, which lacks the quality assurance required to develop high quality coaches (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2012; Wright, Trudel , & Culver , 2007). Therefore, to bridge to gap between formal and informal coach development, several overning bodies have turned to mentoring as a legitimate tool to develop coaching expertise (Olsson et al., 2016).

Summarising the results from this research, which specifically explored the impact of the FA Mentoring Programme, mentoring may be well justified and have the potential to support coach development, however, the results do suggest a lack of clarity with regards to what the goals of mentoring are (i.e. developing expertise) and the processes to develop expertise. Whilst not surprisingly, mentors had a more sophisticated appreciation of the goals and the processes to develop expertise (e.g. developing innovative and creative solution and reflecting upon practice) when contrasted with mentees goals (e.g. collecting drills and practices and replicating the practices of experts), resulted in a lack of coherence that had the potential to undermine the mentoring relationship, leaving mentors and mentees unfulfilled and dissatisfied. Consequently,

mentor and mentees may be unsure of what is expected of them and what they are trying to achieve (Griffiths & Armour, 2012). Whilst clearly a lack of coherence, or as Griffiths and Armour (2012) refer to as 'mentoring dissonance' may exist and might not be uncommon, evidence suggests that the root cause of this mis-match was an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees (Light, 2008). For example, mentors recognised that expertise can be developed through reflection and discussion, however mentees appeared to consider that expertise is developed by copying those of a higher status and limited by natural ability. Hence, I would argue that mentors need to target mentees' epistemology to develop the innovative, creative and decision-making coaches that governing bodies strive to develop. However, of note, whilst there appeared to be an epistemological gap between mentors and mentees, which at times was recognised by mentors, there was little evidence that mentors made any attempt to address this gap by, engaging in reflective type conversations to develop deeper levels of declarative knowledge which is consistent with developing expertise. Indeed, whilst mentors may have claimed to have a more sophisticated epistemology than their mentees, mentors appeared to default to a learn-drill-do or a military approach of coach development which may have been welcomed by their mentees, but unfortunately, may simply lead to replicating practice and reinforce a naïve epistemology (Grecic & Collins, 2013). There may be a number of different reasons for this, such as mentors may not have as sophisticated epistemology as they claim, or mentors may want to be seen to be doing a job by 'keeping the customer satisfied' and providing what mentees want, rather than what they need. However it is more likely that mentors do not have the theoretical framework and skills to guide their mentees toward a more sophisticated epistemology.

## 6.3. Summarising Issues, Implementation and Future Research

### 6.3.1. Summarising Issues

To build on this thesis which has provided an insight into the mechanism that underpin the mentoring process, Chapter Five presented a route map to support the development of an effective mentoring programme.  Consequently, and in line with the initial motivation for the completion of this Professional Doctorate, this research has made some in-roads in informing and extending the impact of a current formal mentoring programme in which will now be discussed in relation to the impact of mentoring generally.

Whilst acknowledging that mentoring may be well received and has the potential to develop better coaches, without an evidence-based framework, there is a danger that mentors may default to presenting a 'Gold Standard' of coaching where coaches are encouraged to reproduce and replicate existing coaching practice and cultures that are often uncritical in style (Cushion et al., 2003). In such a relationship, the role of the mentor is reduced to providing and presenting knowledge in step by step tasks that are repeated and rewarded until certain coaching behaviours are demonstrated (Brockbank & Magill, 2007).  Therefore, mentors will focus upon developing procedural knowledge (what and how) limiting the opportunity for mentees to build a base of declarative knowledge (the why) of coaching.  The danger of course, is that coaches will take a 'recipe' approach to their own development (i.e. learn-drill-do) and this will be legitimised by mentors who will provide the recipes and coaching behaviours that are copied without due regard for the context, reinforcing a behavioural rather than a cognitive approach to coach development (Grecic & Collins, 2013).

Based on current literature and evidence from this thesis it appears that the FA Mentoring Programme is process driven, focusing upon developing procedural knowledge by observing and reproducing practices. However, by encouraging the mentee (and their stakeholders) to see the

complexities of coaching by considering their context and develop their problem-solving skills, mentees will develop their declarative knowledge and encourage critical thinking skills. Therefore, the role of the mentor moves away from initially providing procedural knowledge (drills and practices) to that of a 'critical friend' who guides and challenges practice through discussion, therefore building the mentees declarative knowledge (Brookes and Sikes, 1997). To make this process sustainable and visible, the mentor may encourage mentees to share ideas and challenges with peers to construct new knowledge through social interactions. The role of the mentor is therefore to guide and stimulate critical reflective practice amongst a group of coaches and when appropriate the mentor is 'iconoclastic' in nature, encouraging mentees to question and challenge their existing practice forcing a re-examination of often deeply held beliefs (Yamamoto, 1988).

To make such practice sustainable, mentors may encourage the formation of Communities of Practice that provide opportunities to discuss and challenge practice in a supportive environment with the goal of developing independent critical thinkers who have the confidence and skills to analyse and make effective decisions in complex environments. The corollary of this approach is that mentees' epistemology moves to a more sophisticated position and will lead to more creative and innovative coaches who may indeed empower their participants to become the creative independent performers that the Football Association strive to produce (Grecic & Collins, 2013).

The latter stages of Chapter 5 offered an action plan for moving this area forwards. To ensure the successful implementation of such the action plan, further research will be needed to specifically design, evaluate then refine and drive, this change process.

### 6.3.2. Implementation

To address the issues highlighted in Chapter 5 and support the implementation and development of a coherent mentoring approach that builds on the strengths of the current mentoring programme I would suggest the following strategy:

Firstly, promote a shared (and agreed) understanding across all coaching and development domains with regards what expertise in coaching is, and looks like in operation. This will require a focus on declarative knowledge over procedural knowledge, which will be particularly important for mentors and coach education tutors to ensure a coherent approach to coach development. In addition, it will require 'buy in' across relevant stakeholders, such as County FA's, grassroots clubs and the wider Football Community. This may require a top down marketing strategy, that utilizes all appropriate internal and external communication channels to create social milieu that drives a consensus, initially inside the FA and then across all relevant stakeholders, promoting a 'depends- decision making model of coaching.

Secondly, to ensure a coherent approach to all coach education, training and development domains, an investment in tutor and mentor education programmes that promotes a cognitive basis of expertise will be required. This will be supported by relevant education and training programmes to support mentors and coach education tutors to develop the knowledge and skills to support coaches understand and develop the cognitive basis of expertise. A focus on personal epistemology will underpin such a development, utilizing Entwistle and Peterson's (2004) model to frame a coach's progression from dualist to relativist thinking. Moving forward, the recruitment of, and subsequent retention of tutors and mentors may require the development of a recruitment process that can identify mentors and tutors who have the appropriate sophisticated epistemology to fully integrate their approach to the needs to developing coaches.

Finally, to ensure a mentoring programme remains fit for purpose and sustainable, a continuous review, justify and adjust approach will be required to monitor and evaluate the impact of the mentor programme supported by regular and on-going professional development education to develop existing and new mentors employed by mentor programme. This may in addition be supplemented, by the development of a higher level Mentoring Qualification that is based on the key messages detailed in this thesis.

### 6.3.3 The Impact to Date

The initial motivation for this thesis was to critically review the role of mentoring in relation to my own practice and to support the development of the FA Mentoring Programme. To date, over 35,000 coaches have received support by the scheme since its launch in 2013 and is recognised as the largest formal mentoring programme for coaches in the UK. As previously stated, the research presented in this thesis has been disseminated through presenting at two National FA Mentoring Conferences held at the FA National Football Centre at St Georges Park, Burton-On-Trent and contributed to three regional and national mentor training events. The finding from the research have also been used to produce a technical report (see Appendix. C1) that was submitted to The FA followed by a presentation outlining the implications and suggested future direction of the FA Mentoring Programme. More recently, I have been invited to discuss the construction and production of a new higher-level mentor training course to be rolled out by September 2019.

### 6.3.4. Future Research

Mentoring in sports coaching has often been regarded as unproblematic and been incorporated into formal coach education programmes despite a paucity of research to support the claims of accredited coach education bodies of its value. To illuminate this contemporary area of coach development, this thesis has provided an initial exploration of the impact of

mentoring and presented a framework to guide the mentoring process. However, recognising the limitation of this relatively small-scale research, it is important to note that the findings have generated more questions than answers. This therefore provides an opportunity to build upon this research and support the aims of mentoring programmes.

Firstly, recognising the role of the mentor in supporting the development of a mentee epistemology. Further research exploring the construction of mentor epistemology in relation to their learning disposition (e.g. values, interests and attitudes) would add another layer of understanding to how mentors approach their role. For example, how do wider contextual factors such as their own educational experiences, or their own sporting histories, influence their approach to mentoring (Griffiths and Armour, 2013). Such a study would a provide a platform to help develop appropriate mentor education and training programmes to ensure mentors are supported in their role.

Secondly, according to Brockbank and McGill (2007), personal reflection is a key to successful mentoring as it promotes learning through dialogue. As such, this should form part of any mentor training and development programme.  However, what is unclear is what mentors and mentees consider to be personal reflection and its' role in developing coaching expertise. As has been illustrated by this thesis, mentees' thirst to be provided with practices and drills by mentors appears to be a common expectation. As such, there was evidence that mentors provided what mentees 'wanted' despite recognising the limitations of such an approach. Therefore, a study focusing upon mentors' conceptualization of 'reflective practice' and how they believe they currently employ reflective practice (if at all) to support coaches may further illuminate the role of the mentor in developing mentee coach's declarative knowledge.

Thirdly, although outside of the parameters  of this study, it is recognised that issues related to  gender, race and faith may indeed influence the impact and  role of mentoring in

developing a broader range of coachers and mentors to that can support football development Consequently,  further research is required to inform policy and practice to ensure opportunities and pathways exist for under-represented groups to access football coaching.

Finally, responding to Cushion et al.'s (2010) call for greater longitudinal research into coach development and the acceptance of relativity in the field of sports coaching, a further study tracking mentee coaches' epistemology whilst engaged in a formal mentoring programme would be of value (De Martin- Silva, Fonseca, Jones, Morgan, & Mesquita, 2015).  Such a study would provide an insight into the impact of a mentoring in terms of moving coaches toward a more relativistic position underpinning a declarative rich understanding of the coaching process and encouraging the development of expertise.

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**Approval Form**



3rd December 2015

Clifford Olsson
School of Sport and Wellbeing
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Clifford,

Re: BAHSS Ethics Committee Application Unique Reference Number: BAHSS 313

The BAHSS ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'The contribution and impact of mentoring upon the development of coaching expertise'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer.   It is your responsibility to ensure that:
the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved,    by Committee
you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee  a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report.  If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).
Yours sincerely,

Peter Herissone-kelly
Chair
BAHSS Ethics Committee
* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

## A2. Introductory Letter; Mentor



Dear Mentor,

I email to ask about your interest in taking part in research being carried out by myself, Cliff Olsson, Senior Lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire.

I would be delighted if you would be willing to donate approximately 10-15 minutes of your time to complete an online questionnaire. This questionnaire will relate to your views on coaching and the role of being a mentor which we hope will make a contribution to developing the programme.

I would appreciate if you could complete the survey by the 7$^{th}$ March 2016.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or choose not to answer any question. There are no foreseeable risks associated with taking part. All responses which you provide will be entirely anonymous and sent over a secure, encrypted connection. The research team's access to the survey results on Survey Monkey © is also passwordprotected.

If you have any questions before deciding to participate then please do not hesitate to contact me at colsson@uclan.ac.uk

By clicking the "next" button, you indicate that you grant consent to have your responses included in this research.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Please follow this link to complete the survey:

[LINK TO BE INSERTED HERE]

Cliff Olsson
Senior Lecturer

University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE

Email: colsson@uclan.ac.uk

## A3. Introductory Letter; Mentee



Dear Mentee,

I email to ask about your interest in taking part in research being carried out by myself, Cliff Olsson, Senior Lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire.

I would be delighted if you would be willing to donate approximately 10 minutes of your time to complete an online questionnaire. This questionnaire will relate to your views on coaching and the support and experience of being mentored which we hope will make a contribution to developing the programme.

I would appreciate if you could complete the survey by the 7th March 2016.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time or choose not to answer any question. There are no foreseeable risks associated with taking part. All responses which you provide will be entirely anonymous and sent over a secure, encrypted connection. Access to the survey results on Survey Monkey © is also password-protected.
If you have any questions before deciding to participate then please do not hesitate to contact me at colsson@uclan.ac.uk
By clicking the "next" button, you indicate that you grant consent to have your responses included in this research.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Please follow this link to complete the survey:

[LINK TO BE INSERTED HERE]

Cliff Olsson

Senior Lecturer

University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE

Email: colsson@uclan.ac.

## A4 Mentee Survey

**Welcome to My Survey**

FA Mentoring Programme: Survey Information

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before deciding you need to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve.

What is the purpose of the research?
To explore perceptions on coach mentoring from the perspective of FA coach mentors and mentees

What will you be asked to do?
Complete the survey which should take approximately 10 minutes. The focus of these questions will be on your role as a mentee coach.Please take your time in considering each question and be as honest as you can with your responses. The findings of this study rely on the accuracy of your views.

What are the anticipated benefits of participating in the research?
Other than stimulating reflection of your experience as a mentee coach, the main benefits will be your contribution to our understanding of the coach mentoring process ( we aim to publish our findings in academic journals and coaching magazines). The results wil be used to form the basis of an academic paper that will potentially inform the FA coach mentoring programme moving forward.

Are there any risks associated with participating in the research?
Your only task is to complete the questionnaire. There are no associated risks.

Do you have to take part?
No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during the survey without giving a reason. Incomplete surveys will not be included for data analysis.

What happens if you change your mind and want to withdraw?
If at any time you change your mind and wish to withdraw, then you may do so immediately by closing the survey on the screen or simply leaving it incomplete. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.

What will happen to the information collected as part of the study?
Data will be anonymous and stored for 5 years on a password protected computer accessible only to the researchers. It is our intention that data collected will be written for journal publication, conference presentations and may be used in text books or related magazines.

Who has reviewed the study?
The project has been approved by the University of Central Lancashire Ethics Committee.

Will I be contacted to take part in any future research?

Possibly. We are interested in conducting follow up individual interviews to obtain more detailed responses. Once again your participation in any follow-up interview will be completely your decision

**Who can you contact if you have a complaint about the project?**
If you have any complaints about the study you may contact the University Officer for Ethics (OfficerforEthics@uclan.ac.uk).

**Who can you contact if you have any questions about the project.**
Please contact the lead researcher: Cliff Olsson (colsson@uclan.ac.uk)

Consent

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information detailed above. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I accept that data I submit will be used as part of the results of this research study and may be included for publication purposes.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

4. I understand that my responses in this survey will be anonymous

5. I agree to take part in the study.

1. I understand and consent to all the above points

◯ Yes

◯ No

2. In years, how long have you coached for?

3. What is your highest Coaching Qualification?

○ Level 1

○ Level 2

○ UEFA "B"

○ UEFA "A"

○ UEFA "A" Pro License

4. Using the scale provided, how important is it to have the following to be classed an EXPERT coach?

| | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Playing and/or coaching experience at the elite level | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The highest coaching qualifications | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to reproduce the practices of other expert coaches/ coach educators | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The abilty to apply principles from other disciplines (eg Psychology Physiology etc.) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to adapt and make effective on the spot decisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to explain the reasoning behind coaching practices and decisions in detail | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to mask shortcomings with people and presentational skills. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to critically evaluate their own and others' coaching | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A preference to engage with detailed up-front planning. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A lifelong learning attitude | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The confidence to overlook your own weaknesses/limitations | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An ability to develop novel and innovative solutions | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| An extensive knowledge of techniques,tactics and drills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Group leadership and management skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A preference to stick with what has worked before. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Track record of developing players who go onto to play at higher levels | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

5. Using the scale provided, please respond to all of the following statements.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither disagree or agree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coaching is fundamentally a simple process based on clear facts | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaches are made to a greater extent than born. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaching is learnt quickly or not at all. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The knowledge that underpins expert coaching is different from 20 years ago | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaching must be learned by copying current experts. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

6. Using the scale provided, to what extent are the following important for developing an expert coach?

| | Not at all important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal coach education (Level 1 to Level 5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Watching practices from current top-level experts (eg. Current premiership coaches) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Collecting a large base of drills and practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Taking a trial and error approach/experimenting with different options | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reflective practice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing and thinking through rationale of practice (ie why I'm doing what I'm doing) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finding and using resources from social media ( eg. Twitter , Websites) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Listening to respected pundits on TV/Radio | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing coaching process with peers at the same level | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Completing the required hours of Licensed Coach CPD hours | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Joining Licensed Coaches Association | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Challenging existing coaching practice ( self and others) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

7. Using the scale provided, how often do you discuss with your mentor the following factors?

| | Never | Rarely | About half the time | Often | All the time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The drills that you could use to meet your session objectives | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The reasoning behind your chosen drills and practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The impact of contextual factors in your planned session. ( eg.Weather, resources , facilities) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Potential scenarios that may come up during the session | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Challenges you may have faced delivering the session and what you could have done differently( ie drill not working) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Aspects of your practice you wish to develop | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| How your coaching compares with experts | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The type of discussions you could have with peer coaches about coaching | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reviewing your own strengths and weaknesses | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Management of the group/resources | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| What you did right and wrong | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| How your session went against planned goals | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

8. To what extent do you think the following are important for demonstrating that you are becoming more expert?

| | Not at all important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wider knowledge on techniques, tactics and drills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to consider alternatives to the drills and practices you put on. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to explain what you are doing | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Communication and delivery skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Wider knowledge on the social and political pressures of coaching ( eg .parental pressures) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Organisational and commuication skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Developing rules that can be applied to different scenarios (eg in situation x do y) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Wider knowledge of the principles from other disciplines ( eg physiology, psychology) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use a range of interventions to solve coaching problems | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Create novel and innovative solutions to coaching problems. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Achieve higher coaching qualifications | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to adapt and make on the spot decisions | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to critically evaluate your own and others coaching | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to reproduce the practices of expert coaches/coach educators more accurately | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Not at all important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The ability to mask shortcomings with people and presentational skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Working out drills that work and don't work | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Doing more up-front planning | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Greater confidence in overlooking your weaknesses /limitations | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Having more players from your team moving up to higher levels | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## A5 Mentor Survey

FA Mentoring Programme: Survey Information

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before deciding you need to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve.

What is the purpose of the research?
To explore perceptions on coach mentoring from the perspective of FA coach mentors and

What will you be asked to do?
Complete the survey which should take approximately 10 minutes. The focus of these ques will be on your role as a mentor.Please take your time in considering each question and be honest as you can with your responses. The findings of this study rely on the accruacy of views.

What are the anticipated benefits of participating in the research?
Other than stimulating reflection on your work as a mentor, the main benefits will be your contribution to our understanding of the coach mentoring process ( we aim to publish our f in academic journals and coaching magazines). The results will be used to form the basis o academic paper that will potentially inform the FA coach mentoring programme.

Are there any risks associated with participating in the research?
Your only task is to complete a questionnaire. There are no associated risks.

Do you have to take part?
No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during the surve without giving a reason. Incomplete surveys will not be included for data analysis.

What happens if you change your mind and want to withdraw?
If at any time you change your mind and wish to withdraw, then you may do so immediately closing the survey on the screen or simply leaving it incomplete. You do not have to give a for withdrawing.

What will happen to the information collected as part of the study?
Data will be anonymous and stored for 5 years on a password protected computer accessib to the researchers. It is our intention that data collected will be written for journal publicatic conference presentations and may be used in text books or related magazines.

Who has reviewed the study?
The project has been approved by the University of Central Lancashire Ethics Committee.

Will I be contacted to take part in any future research?
Possibly. We are interested in conducting follow up individual interviews to obtain more de

responses. Once again your participation in any follow up interview will be completely your decision.

**Who can you contact if you have a complaint about the project?**
If you have any complaints about the study you may contact the University Officer for Ethics (OfficerforEthics@uclan.ac.uk).

**Who can you contact if you have any questions about the project?**
Please contact the lead researcher: Cliff Olsson (colsson@uclan.ac.uk)

Consent

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information detailed above. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I accept that data I submit will be used as part of the results of this research study and may be included for publication purposes.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

4. I understand that my responses in this survey will be anonymous.

5. I agree to take part in the study

* 1. I understand and consent to all of the above points

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. In years, how long have you coached for?

[                          ]

3. What is your highest Coaching Qualification?

○ Level 1

○ Level 2

○ UEFA "B"

○ UEFA "A"

○ UEFA "A" Pro License

4. In years, how long long have you been an FA mentor for?

[                          ]

5. How many coaches do you currently mentor as part of the FA mentoring programme.

[                          ]

6. If known, how many coaches at each level do you currently mentor?

| Level 1 | [                          ] |
| Level 2 | [                          ] |
| UEFA "B" | [                          ] |
| UEFA "A" | [                          ] |
| UEFA "A" Pro License | [                          ] |

7. Using the scale provided, how important is it to have the following to be classed an EXPERT coach?

| | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Playing and/or coaching experience at the elite level | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The highest coaching qualifications | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to reproduce the practices of other expert coaches/coach educators | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to apply principles from other relevant disciplines. (eg Psychology Physiology etc.) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to adapt and make effective on the spot decisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to explain the reasoning behind coaching practices and decisions in detail | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The abilty to cover shortcomings with people and presentation skills. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to critically evaluate their own and others' coaching | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A preference to engage with detailed up-front planning | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A lifelong learning attitude | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The confidence to overlook one's weaknesses/ limitations | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to develop novel and innovative solutions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| An extensive knowledge of techniques, tactics and drills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Group leadership and management skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A preference to stick with what has worked before. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A track record of developing players who go on to play at higher levels | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

8. Using the scale provided, please respond to all of the following statements.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither disagree or agree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coaching is fundementally a simple process based on clear facts | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaches are made to a greater extent than born. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaching is learnt quickly or not at all. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The knowledge that underpins expert coaching is different from 20 years ago. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Expert coaching must be learned by copying current experts. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

9. Using the scale provided, to what extent do YOU think the following important for developing an expert coach?

|  | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal coach education (eg Level 1 etc.) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Watching practices of current top-level experts ( eg current premiership coaches) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Collecting a large base of drills and practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Taking a trial and error approach/experimenting with different options | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reflective practice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing and thinking through rationale of practice (ie. why I'm doing what I'm doing) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finding and using ideas/resources from social media (eg. Twitter, Websites) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Listening to respected pundits on TV/Radio | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing the coaching process with peers at the same level | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Completing the required hours of Licensed Coach CPD | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Joining Licensed Coaches Association | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Challenging existing coaching practice ( self and others) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

10. Using the scale provided, to what extent do you think that YOUR MENTEES find the following important for developing an expert coach?

| | Not important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal coach education (eg Level 1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Watching practices of current top-level experts ( eg current premiership coaches) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Collecting a large base of drills and practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Taking a trial and error approach/experimenting with different options | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reflective practice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing and thinking through rationale of practice (ie. why I'm doing what I'm doing) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finding and using ideas/resources from social media (eg. Twitter, Websites) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Listening to respected pundits on TV/Radio | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Discussing the coaching process with peers at the same level | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Completing the required hours of Licensed Coach CPD | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Joining Licensed Coaches Association | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Challenging existing coaching practice ( self and others) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

11. Using the scale provided, how often do you discuss with your mentees the following factors?

| | Never | Rarely | About half the time | Often | All the time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The drills that the mentee should be using to meet their session objectives. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The reasoning behind their chosen drills and practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The impact of contextual factors on their planned sessions ( e.g. weather, resources, facilities) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Potential scenarios that may come up during the session | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Challenges they have faced delivering the coaching sessions and what they could have done differently(e.g. drill not working) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Aspects of their practice they wish to develop | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| How their coaching compares to experts | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The type of conversations that they should have with peers. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reviewing their strengths and weaknesses | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Management of the group/resources | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| What they are doing right and wrong | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| How the observed session went against planned goals | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

12. To what extent do you think the following are important for demonstrating that mentees are becoming expert?

| | Not at all important | Fairly important | Very important | Essential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wider knowledge on techniques, tactics and drills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to consider alternatives to the drills and practices they put on | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to explain what they are doing | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Communication and delivery skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Experimenting with different options | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Wider knowledge on the social and political pressures of coaching ( eg. parental pressures) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Developing rules that can be applied to different scenarios (eg in situation X do Y ) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Wider knowledge on principles from other disciplines ( eg physiology, psychology) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Organisation and communication skills | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Use a range of interventions to solve coaching problems | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Create novel and innovative solutions to coaching problems | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Achieving higher coaching qualifications. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to adapt and make on the spot decisions | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to critically evaluate their own and others coaching | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The ability to reproduce the practices of expert coaches/coach educators more accurately | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Appendix B**
**B1. Ethics Approval Form; Phase 2**
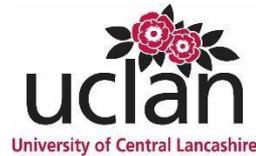


12 April 2017

Cliff Olsson

School of Sport and Wellbeing University of Central Lancashire

Dear Cliff

**Re: BAHSS Ethics Committee Application Unique Reference Number: BAHSS 313 (2nd Phase)**

The BAHSS ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'The contribution and impact of mentoring upon the development of coaching expertise'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

• the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted • you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data • any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee • you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start • serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee • a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report.  If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).  Yours sincerely



Nick Palfreyman Deputy Vice-Chair BAHSS Ethics Committee
NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed,  and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

**B2. Information Sheet for Mentors and Mentees**



**University of Central Lancashire**

Project: The contribution and impact of mentoring upon the development of coaching

expertise

Participant Information Sheet

Please read the information below thoroughly before deciding whether or not to

participate in this study.

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a study being conducted as part of a Professional

Doctorate in Elite Performance research programme at the University of Central

Lancashire. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research

is being done and what it will involve. If there are aspects of the research that you are

not clear about or if you would like more information – our contact details are at the

end. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this information sheet, which you should keep if you decide to

take part in the study.

Purpose of this Study

The FA mentoring programme was launched in 2013 to support grassroots volunteers

coaches. The investigation aims to explore the impact and effectiveness of the

programme in developing and supporting coaches.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because you are currently engaged

in the mentoring programme as either a mentor or mentee.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you

will be given this information sheet to keep and also be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving

a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The study will consist of the researcher observing the mentor and mentee during a

coaching session. The session will be video and voice recorded. This will be followed

separate interviews with both the mentor and mentee and a time and location of your

choice. The basis of the observation and interview will be to better understand the

approaches taken by mentors and the associated perceptions of the mentees during

this process. . The Interview should last no longer than 60 minutes and you will have

an opportunity to review the interview transcript for your approval should you wish to

do so, prior to its use in the research.

Confidentiality

Please rest assured that all information gathered in this study will remain anonymous

and strictly confidential. Interviews will be assigned an anonymous code number.

When we write the final report and any other academic or professional publications,

we will not use your name or any other information which could make you publicly

identifiable.  However, since the report will discuss issues arising in the coaching

sessions that we observe, you should bear in mind that it might be possible for you

and your mentor/mentee to identify each other from what is written. All collected

data will be held on a password protected computer and in a secure locked cupboard.

Data relevant to the outputs that arise from this study will be stored for five years

from the end of the project and then destroyed.

Withdrawing from the study
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any

question, you can stop answering a question at any point, and you have the right to

fully withdraw from the study independently without penalty which will not affect the

interview with your mentor/mentee.  If you withdraw from the study before your data

has been analysed and aggregated with that from the other participants, your recorded

interviews will be deleted and all information about your involvement will be

discarded. Please note that if your data from the interview have already been included

in academic or professional publications arising from this study, it will not be

possible to rectify this. However please be assured that none of your responses will be

explicitly linked to you in any of these outputs.

Risks and Benefits

Your participation and the information you provide will help us understand more

about the impact of the FA mentoring programme upon the development of

grassroots coaches and help inform and develop mentoring practice

Research Ethics

The University of Central Lancashire's research ethics committee has reviewed and

approved this study. If you have any complaints or issues about the study please

contact Adrian Ibbetson, Acting Head of School, Sport, Tourism, and the Outdoors,

UClan.

If you would like to take part in this study or if you require further information please

contact:

Cliff Olsson (Lead Researcher) colsson@uclan.ac.uk  07913935532

# B3. Interview Matrix – Mentors and Mentees

| | Purpose<br>*What do you want to know or find out?* | Question<br>*What 'open' question do you need to ask to achieve this purpose?* | Probe<br>*What 'open' question can I ask to get info on the things I want to know if they don't seem to understand the main question? Or if they don't provide enough detail in their answer?* | Prompts<br>*If they still don't give me the information that I'm most interested in then what can I ask them to directly comment on?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MENTOR QUESTIONS** | What mentor wants to achieve with mentee | What are your trying to achieve with your mentee? | Tell me what your aim is with your mentee? | What exactly are you trying to do with your mentee? |
| | What mentor thinks that their mentee want to achieve | What do you believe your mentees wants to achieve? | What do you think your mentees expect to achieve with your support? | If you asked your mentees what they wanted from this what do you think they might say? |
| | What mentor says that they do to achieve their goals | How do you support your mentee | What do you do to help your mentees? | Can you tell me specifically what you do to help your mentee become better? |
| **MENTEE QUESTIONS** | What mentee wants to achieve from mentoring | What do you hope to achieve with support from your mentor? | What aspects of your coaching do you expect to improve and develop as a result of being mentored? | What aspects of coaching would you expect to be better at as a result of being mentored? E.g. knowledge of tactics & etc? |
| | What mentee think that their mentor is trying to achieve | What do you believe your mentor is trying to achieve by supporting you? | What do you think your mentee is trying to do in supporting you? | What specifically do you think your mentor is trying to do to help you become a better coach? |
| | What mentee says they do with mentors to achieve goals | How does your mentor help you become a better coach? | Tell me about the activities that you do with your mentor that helps you become a better coach? | Tell me about the things your mentor does to help you become a better coach? |

| Original Transcripts:<br><br>**Mentor 1** | **Exploratory Comments**<br><br>• **Descriptive Comments:  Bold Text: (Face Value meaning)**<br>• **Linguistic Comments: Normal Italic (Emphasis and metaphors/meanings from the audio transcript)**<br>• **Conceptual Comments: Underlined normal text (Interpretation at a Conceptual level of the transcription)** |
|---|---|
| **Goals**<br><br>*I was trying to do with Jack was to get in to a little bit more detail because obviously we are working with centre of excellence kids* | **Enhance technical and tactical knowledge**<br>*There was emphasise within interview was that the mentee was working with high performance players therefore the depth of knowledge of detail was very important.' Working at centre of excellence level'*<br><br>The mentor was conscious that it was important the mentees had the detail of knowledge to support the development of the players otherwise there may be an issue of credibility both for the mentor and mentees; There may also have been a credibility issue in terms of demonstrating to the mentee the range of depth of knowledge that the mentor. |
| *you may find that you're just talking rather than actually observing them and picking up what you need* | **Develop ability to take meaning from observation** |
| *try understand individual players rather than actually coach as a collective* | **Tailor coaching to individuals**<br>The mentor appeared to indicate that ensuring that the coach could understand individual people and address their needs was an important coaching skills. This reflected broader inter-personal  skills beyond the knpwledge  and detail of the game |
| *he needs to put himself in those situations more and more* | **Develop adaptability**<br>*the mentee needs to put himself in unfamiliar situations in order to develop the adaptive skills to work effectively as a coach*<br><br>This suggests that the mentor understand and appreciates that to develop the mentee needs to have experiences that will test and challenge their ability to adapt to the context they are coaching in.  It was not clear if this had formed part of wider discussion with the mentee and of indeed the mentor recognized how to support the mentee through such a process |
| | **Alignment with mentee goals**<br>*The mentor made it clear he was very much focused on working out why the mentee had engaged in the mentoring process, what were the mentees motivations and drivers.* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *it was about trying to understand where they are coming from so why are they involved in it, what do they want to get from it?* | This in part could be a reflection of the mentor building rapport and evaluating the longer term value of supporting the mentee. The session that the mentee supported was actually led by the mentor with the mentee acting as an asst coach. This relationship was therefore based on the mentee following clear and direct instructions given by the mentor as it was his team and his responsisbilty. There did appear however to be room for discussion and review both live and through social |

| | |
|---|---|
| | platform ( Hive) but this review was focused upon the coaching of the team and players rather than specuially about the mentees development. |

## Processes:

*So I think that is what he has been trying to work on while he develops his knowledge of the game at the same time so it is very much what are you seeing, rather than actually what are you verbally telling people because actually you may find that you're just talking rather than actually observing them and picking up what you need*

**develops his knowledge of the game;** Again the focus appears to be on broader social/ observational skills that need to be developed in the mentee, but very little acknowledgement of how to support this development. The discussion tried to move away from a technical focus to recognising that the mentee needs to develop broader inter-personal skills. The use of the 'picking up' suggested that mentee need to see beyond the surface and analyse more conceptual details that may impact upon performance

The mentor appeared to recognise that in order to develop excellent coaching skills the mentee needed to develop their ability to take into account a number of factors within the context of coaching, which included aspects of personality. The term 'picking up' suggested the ability to recognise more subtle cues that often novice coaches miss was an aspect that the mentee needed to develop. However it was not clear if the mentor know exactly how to support this development.

*to go in and drip feed in small doses so he wants to feel more comfortable about doing that, he just feels as he coaches, he wants to be in it all of the time.*

**to go in and drip feed** *Using the term 'drip feed' suggests that ensuring the mentee has the knowledge to feel confident and comfortable appeared to be a focus for the mentor.*

Ensuring the mentee is given lots of knowledge appears to be a focus, this may be as a consequence of expectation from the mentee and / or a demonstration of the wealth of knowledge from the mentor.

*I probably think at times I think at times I have probably overloaded him. probably given him **too much information** maybe not given him the opportunity,*

*not given him the opportunity to ingest what he has got to then implement it, because I think it is maybe it is coming at him quite a lot, so again it is maybe understanding how much is he taking in to how much he actually wants?*

**Emphasis on technical and tactical information**
*Recognition by the mentor during the course of the interview that he appeared to come to a conclusion that there was too much information without engaging in a deeper discussion. There was a pause throughout this section as the mentor contemplates the issues that he has identified. Using the term 'ingest' suggested no real opportunity to consider and review new knowledge and allowing time or discussion with he mentee.*

There appears to be a heavy focus upon providing lots of knowledge to the mentee and that was the responsibility of the mentor. Maybe it was seen as fast tracking the mentee toward expertise rather than allowing and supporting the mentee develop expert skills egg. decision making.

**Meeting.** *The mentor used the term 'hone' in on individual to accentuate a point regarding focusing on specific needs of players, trying to draw the mentee attention to specific subtleties of coaching. In other words the details of the coaching session.*

*we have our little prep **meetings**, before any of the session so again what we have started doing is talking about specific individuals so again use trying to get them to start to hone in on individual needs*

It appeared clear that the mentor who was lead coach, focused heavily on ensuring that the asst coaches / Mentees focus of attention was on individual players to help them recognise individual needs and details that may get lost in general overview of the coaching session and may not be seen by an inexperienced coach.

*unless you put yourself in an **uncomfortable
environment** because I think once you start doing that, you
start working out your own coping mechanisms or your own
strategies to addressing that*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Yes 100% so every week try and get here at least half an hour before the kids turn up, me Steve and Sam will have a **discussion** right we're working on the specific topic for the day* | **Uncomfortable environment.** *The mentor appeared to suggest that in order to develop expertise the mentee needed to be put in situation where they could adapt and make decisions.*<br><br>The mentor recognised the value of developing higher order skills such as perceptual cognitive skills, mental models and creative thinking in order to develop an effective coach.<br><br>**Discussion**<br><br>This discussion focused upon the development of the players, ensuring that the coaches were aware of the practices and the reasons behind the practices that were to be delivered. |
| Rationale:<br>*I always believe even in the job that I do and you can read books, you can read… go on the internet you can research but I think a massive part of it comes from experience so experience of actually being in situations, being in uncomfortable situations.*<br><br>*you can plan the nicest session but I always think it is about what challenges you, what makes you feel a little bit uncomfortable.*<br><br>*Yes I honestly think if you're open minded to learning from experiences and being in experiences why couldn't you?*<br><br>*,* | **Experience in uncomfortable situations:**<br>The mentor reinforces a point made earlier by suggesting that developing adaptable and decision making skills can only be achieved by the mentee being exposed to environments where they have to make decision based on their interpretation of what they see.<br><br>**Challenges.** *The mentor appears to suggest that coaching is complex and very rarely straight forward by using the terms 'plan the  nicest session'*<br><br>The mentor clearly appreciates that expert coaching is underpinned by be the ability to observe and make decision in complex situations.<br><br>**Learning from experience.** '*Open minded' suggested a more sophisticated epistemology would aid the development of expertise.*<br><br>The mentor indicated that expert coaching can be developed through experience and commitment . In other words coaching expertise can be learnt. |

| Epistemology: | |
|---|---|
| *anybody can print off a session plan, anybody can read up on how to set out the prefect grid with the perfect numbers and stuff and I think you have got to be in a scenario where you don't know how people are going to react,* | **Perfect sessions**<br>Reinforcing earlier points regarding developing mentees ability to re-act and make decisions based on a range of information requires a sophisticated epistemology |
| *I think there is a time and a place to copy and I think there is a time and a place erm to replicate* | **Time and place to Copy:** *This suggested that the mentor was aware that simply copying practice from more experienced practitioners has its limitations*<br>Did not articulate where and when its appropriate to copy |

| | |
|---|---|
| Observations:<br><br>Clear direction given, specific knowledge by the coach/mentor<br>Briefing given by the lead mentor coach.<br><br>The mentor is the lead coach and delivers the session as the lead coach expecting all other coaches, including the mentees to act sub-ordinates.<br><br>Some observation and support given by the mentor, however the mentor was using the time to provide feedback to the players on a 121 basis whilst the mentee carried and delivered the coaching session.<br><br>There was some discussion toward the end of the session regarding how it went, but this was more to do with the players performance rather than the mentee performance. | The lead coach who was also the mentor took the role of a lead coach set the objectives of the session and the type of practices and drills that were to be delivered. The mentee followed clear instructions whilst the lead coach would observe and support.<br><br>At times there appeared to be a conflict of interest in the terms the focus of the mentors attention was ensuring that the players were supported in their development and the mentees development was as a consequence of supporting the players. |

| Original Transcripts:<br><br>**Mentee 1** | **Exploratory Comments**<br>•    **Descriptive Comments:  Bold Text: (Face Value meaning)**<br>•    **Linguistic Comments: Normal Italic (Emphasis and metaphors/meanings from the audio transcript)**<br>•    **Conceptual Comments: Underlined normal text (Interpretation at a Conceptual level of the transcription)** |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| **Goals** | **basic knowledge** |
| *I had a basic knowledge when I first started because I had only done my level one and I knew how to set up you know certain warm up passing drills, things like that but knowledge improved like tactical wise, technical wise, the movement, the rotations, of the players, just picking little things up* | The mentees focus was very much on the amount of knowledge/ information that he felt that he could consume that would underpin his development as a coach. As long as he felt he was receiving this information from the mentor he would be progressing as a coach. |
| *For me it would be technical, knowledge as well as knowing how to deal with players* | Being able  to observe the mentor and learn from the mentor ability to deal with situations and players appeared to underpin his development. |
| *Yes oh yes it would be definitely so set plays for example on how the team would set up on a set play, erm where they should be positioned, whether that be an attacking set piece or a kick in or defending a set play that would be 100% something we should know or I should know* | |
| *the formations we play so whether it be a box are we going to do a high press, are we going to sit off like today for example doing scenarios we're two nil up, we have got 3 minutes to play are we going to sit off let them come on to us?* | |
| **Processes:** | **technical plan:** |
| *we always get weekly emails of what we're focusing on so we have like a **technical plan*** | Clearly there was strong guidance/direction of what the lead coach was going to deliver in that weeks coaching session |
| *I have got a technical plan throughout the whole season so we know what we were looking at and delivering on each session and we have got the **full block of session plans** there as well.* | **Full block of session plans:** *A programme of coaching that had been written by the mentor for the mentees to follow.* |
| *I **pick up** learning from visually so what I have learnt a lot is what Steve has shown me.* | Clear direction by the lead coach/Mentor to following  a curriculum that was set out in advance by the lead coach/ mentor. There appeared to be very little in-put from the mentees although there was discussion with regards to how to deliver the session. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Picking up;** *within the context of the sentence the mentee appeared to indicate the opportunity to observe the mentor coach would help him learn* |
| | Being able to observe a session being delivered by the mentor appeared to be a vital component in the mentees understanding of their development as a coach. The mentee drew upon the concept of visual learning as a justification to use observation as a key component of their development |
| | **Observe demonstration and practice**<br>It as not clear if there was an opportunity to discuss and consider the different aspects of the practice with the mentee |
| *Steve would **demonstrate** it with the group and Steve would give me a chance to go and work away with another set of players on it.* | **Replicate**<br>The mentee appeared to appreciate the opportunity to observe and replicate the practice that the lead coach / mentor had demonstrated to the group. This was then reproduced by the mentee with their own group. |
| *Int: So would that be Steve showing the players to do that and then you **replicate** that?* | |
| *RES:Yes **replicate** it so we would have like maybe two white boards on the go so he could show it on one to the whole group, and then I would go away and do the same.* | |
| *INT: And how do you get better?* | |
| *RES: Yes I think for me it is repetition, repetition.* | |
| | **Information overload:** *The mentor appeared to provide lots of technical information that the mentee indicated was overwhelming* |
| *I have got like a notepad so when we've been coaching Steve has been giving me these points erm it is like information overload sometimes so you can't always remember it.* | The mentors and mentees pre-occupation with information appears to have undermined the mentees development. The measure of the mentees development appears to be focused upon the amount of knowledge they have. The mentee suggests that relatively little information comes from the courses he has attended. This may indicate that the measure of the quality of the course may be measured in terms of knowledge rather than the development of cognitive skills. |
| *I would say very small amount actually comes from your courses.* | **Sinks in - Soaking in;** *The process of understanding the knowledge and information and the ability to apply it.* |
| *I am thinking all of this information overload but then when you take it away and come back in a few weeks' time it sinks in I think. If you take some key points from a session, just focus on them and then try not to soak it in all at* | The mentee described the process of chunking information into bite sized parts in order to help him understand and apply the knowledge in the their coaching context. |

*once because obviously you don't want to overload on information really.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rationale:** | |
| *a bit like **learning** to drive, like your driving lessons they teach you the fundamentals of the coaching but then when you actually go back and coaching with the players, that is when you get better.* | **Learning;** *the mentee appeared to indicate the value of learning some principles that were the foundation of learning to coach and once they were mastered you had the platform to develop further more sophisticated skills.*<br><br>This may suggest that the mentee viewed his development along a continuum that was underpinned by 'need to know knowledge and behaviours' that needed to be learnt and replicated before moving to a more sophisticated place of coaching. |
| *Yes I think for me it is repetition, repetition.* | **Replicate and Repeat** |
| *Yes 100%, it is like a trial and error* | **Different experience** |
| *putting yourself out there and grasping opportunities as a coach and not just going along at that same level all the time, I think learning different experiences, working with different levels of players is a massive one*<br>Your learning and development is unpinned by that experience and having a go at? | |
| **Epistemology:** | |
| **Observation:** | |

| Mentors | Mentees |
|---|---|
| | |

| Mentor/Mentee Pairs | Goals | Processes | Rationale | Epistemology | Goals | Processes | Rationale | Epistemology | Differences between mentor and mentee |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Enhance technical and tactical knowledge** *I was trying to do with Jack was to get in to a little bit more [technical and tactical] detail because obviously we are working with centre of excellence kids* <br><br> **Develop ability to take meaning from observation** *you may find that you're just talking rather than actually observing them and picking up what you need* <br><br> **Tailor coaching to individuals** | **Emphasis on technical and tactical information** *I probably think at times I have probably overloaded him. probably given him too much* <br><br> **Directing session design and content** *we have our little prep meetings, before any of the session so again what we have started doing is talking about specific individuals so again use trying to get them to start to hone in on individual needs* | **Provide varied and challenging experiences** *I always believe even in the job that I do and you can read books, you can read… go on the internet you can research but I think a massive part of it comes from experience so experience of actually being in situations, being uncomfortable situations.* <br><br> **Knowledge accrued gradually through experience** *Yes I honestly think if you're open minded to learning from experiences and being in experiences why couldn't you?* | **Replicating at appropriate times** *I think there is a time and a place to copy and I think there is a time and a place to replicate* <br><br> Observation <br><br> The mentor set up the practices and the mentee delivered the practices to | **Enhance technical knowledge** *For me it would be [technical and tactical], knowledge as well as knowing how to deal with players.* <br><br> **Enhance detailed technical and tactical knowledge** *it would be definitely be set plays for example, on how the team would set up on a set play, where they should be positioned, whether that be an attacking set piece or a kick in or defending a set play that would be 100%* <br><br> **Observe and replicate practice** *so what I have learnt is what the mentor has shown me.* <br><br> *The mentor would demonstrate it with* | **Provided with technical plans** *we always get weekly emails of what we're focusing on so we have a technical plan* <br><br> *I have got a technical plan throughout the whole season so we know what we're looking at and delivering each session and we have got the full block of session plans there as well.* | **Repeating practices** *Yes I think for me it is repetition, repetition.* <br><br> **Stable and certain principles** *a bit like learning to drive, like your driving lessons they teach you the fundamentals of coaching but then when you actually go back and coach with the players, that is when you get better.* <br><br> **Too much content** *I am thinking all of this information overload but then when you take it away and come back in a few weeks' time it sinks in.* | **Observe and replicate practice** *Yes I replicate it so we would have like maybe two white boards on the go so he could show it on one to the whole group, and then I would go away and do the same.* <br><br> *The mentor would demonstrate it with the group and would give me a chance to go and work away with another set of players on it.* <br><br> **Observation** *The mentee looked to the mentor to take a lead* | **Goals** Mentor focus was providing detailed knowledge in addition to wider developmental skills such as being able to observe and make decision about what was required to support the players <br> Mentee focus was on accruing knowledge. There appeared very little focus upon skills beyond having knowledge of technical and tactical aspects of the game <br> **Processes** Mentor recognized the value of the mentee learning from |

| | | | their own subgroups | | something we should know or I should know. | the group and would give me a chance to go and work with another set of players on it. | it is like information overload sometimes so you can't always remember it. | throughout the session. | uncomfortable situations. |
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*try understand individual players rather than actually coach as a collective*

**Develop adaptability** *he needs to put himself in those situations more and more.*

**Alignment with mentee goals** *it was about trying to understand where they are coming from so why are they involved in it, what do they want to get from it?*

**Observation**

Clear instructions supported by a session plan which was delivered and

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**Observation**

The mentor provided a great deal of technical knowledge and content which included the coaching plan. The mentor would set the coaching session as the head coach and the mentee would act as an asst coach. *information*

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*the formations we play, are we going to do a high press, are we going to sit off like today for example or doing scenarios, we're two nil up, we have got 3 minutes to play are we going to sit off let them come on to us?*

**Observation**

The mentee checked with the lead coach/mentor at regular intervals that the objectives of the session was being followed.

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*Yes replicate it, so we would have two white boards on the go so he could show it on one to the whole group, and then I would go away and do the same.*

**Mentor led discussion prioritizing goals of the coaching session** *every week we'd try and get here at least half an hour before the kids turn up, we would have a discussion 'he (the mentor) would say 'right we're working on the specific topic for the day'*

**Observation**

The mentee looked to the mentor/ lead coach to provide clear direction

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**Having different experience**

*I think learning different experiences, working with different levels of players is a massive one*

**Observation**

The mentee followed clear practice instruction given be the lead coach/ mentor. There appeared limited discussion between mentor and mentee concerning the coaching process

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However much of the support from the mentor was focused upon providing detailed technical information

The mentee was very much focused on observing and replication knowledge and information. However there was some recognition that having different experiences can contribute to the overall development as a coach and adapting the skills and knowledge that he may have witnessed during the coaching session.

**Rationale**

The mentee valued accruing knowledge to help their own development. However in contrast, the mentor who valued the opportunity to present challenging situations would be of most value

| | led by the lead coach who was also the mentor. | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | to developing the mentee. **<u>Epistemology</u>** The mentors' epistemology appeared to points toward a more sophisticated approach to the development of expertise compared to the mentees. This suggested that the mentees view of his own development was firmly rooted in being able to copy and replicate a practice that had been given to him by the mentor. The mentor in effect acted as the lead coach and the mentee as an asst coach, supporting the coaching event. This approach appeared to reinforce a naïve epistemological positon where the mentee was increasingly dependent upon the role of the mentor/ lead coach. |
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**B7. Mentor Mentee Event; Video Example:**

https://youtu.be/8oGe-ChnsMA

# FA National Mentor Programme

# Technical Report

# Mentoring, A Route to Impact

# February 2018

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**C2 Mentor Conference Presentation**