'[Riding] by the seat of our [Lycra]':

Understanding British Cycling's Coach Education Pathway

By

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List of Abbreviations

BC: British Cycling

BIS: British Ice Skating

CEM: Coach Education Manager

CEO: Coach Education Officer

CoP: Community of Practice

CTFR: Coaching Task Force Report

DCMS: Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DoC: Director of Coaching

EMHD: Ecological Model of Human Development

LJMU   Liverpool John Moores University

MKO: More knowledgeable Other

NCC: National Cycling Centre

NCF: National Coaching Foundation

NGB: National Governing Body

NOS: National Occupational Standards

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

PCK: Pedagogic Content Knowledge

RDM: Regional Development Manager

scUK: Sports Coach UK

SDL: Self-Directed Learning

SDO: Sport Development Officer

SE: Sport England

TA: Thematic Analysis

TNA: Thematic Narrative Analysis

UCI: Union Cycliste Internationale

UKCC: United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

VRM: Visual Research Methods

WSP: Whole Sport Plan

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

Abstract

The introduction of the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) in 2004 treated professionalisation of sport coaching as a linear process. This neglected the social, messy reality of the coaching process and overlooked the subtle cultural differences between sports. Consequently, the UKCC was not as effective as first hoped and has now become more of a reference point than active policy. It has been criticised for deskilling coaches through indoctrination, for being decontextualised from the complex nature of coaching, and for covering irrelevant topics. The result is a dominant narrative that claims formal coach education is under-resourced, lacks leadership, direction and quality assurance. This leaves coaches perceiving their formal educational experiences as less helpful in practice, compared to less structured learning opportunities.

This research applied Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development as a theoretical framework to sport coaching for the first time. Embedded in the interpretivist paradigm, this research employed Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism as a methodological framework. The result was an exploration of the learning ecologies of sport coaches, from the macro to the micro. This piece of work studied the political, socio-, economic-, cultural and historical backdrop (the macrosystem) to the development, implementation and delivery of British Cycling's formal coach education provision (the exosystem). This research gave the National Governing Body a platform to tell the untold story of developing formal coach education programmes. This highlighted how the controls were not in place to support, or ensure, the standardisation that UKCC promised. In this way, British Cycling were powerless to the implemented national policy, powerless to a national drive to improve elite sport at an international level and sold a dream.

Transitioning away from UKCC-endorsed programmes is seen as a backward step as there is currently no suitable framework to replace the UKCC. Formal education is important to professionalising the coaching workforce as it controls the dissemination of knowledge and establishes entry routes to the coaching role through the delivery and regulation of formal qualifications. This regulates the recruitment of coaches and standardises the delivery and expectations of practitioners. This presents National Governing Bodies with a dilemma. Many researchers have made idealistic prescriptions for coaching, but there is a need to develop pertinent frameworks that can improve learning and practice within different populations and maintain trainees' motivations and engagement with their formal education experiences. Although formal coach education has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, there is a dearth of studies that have attempted to directly investigate, or evaluate, a coach education programme. Research investigating coach learning is yet to provide specific, structured, evidence-based suggestions that coaches can use to enhance their learning and effectiveness.

It appears that the relative success of coach education starts with the individual's past experiences and networks of existing knowledge, beliefs and values. Crucially, this means that the same coach education opportunity has a different impact on different individuals, depending on each individual's unique starting point. As such, finding ways to deliver formal education in ways that more effectively takes into account trainees' biographies might increase the effectiveness of formal education and trainees' engagement with these programmes. This research identified three 'types' of coaches attending British Cycling's formal education – three narratives: performance, discovery and relational. Employing a micro-ethnography methodology over fifteen months, this work gained a deeper understanding of eight individuals' insight and

experiences of attending British Cycling's formal education (the mesosystem). Then, by capturing participants' experiences of coaching as they entered their coaching contexts following their formal education (their microsystem), this PhD explored how effectively British Cycling's formal education prepared participants for their role as qualified coaches. In addition, this data captured coaches learning within their everyday context.

These findings, for the first time, align trainee coaches to different narrative types. Each narrative experienced formal coach education differently, each valuing different mechanisms and outcomes. Further, each narrative type constructed different learning ecologies distinct to their narrative. It is proposed that these findings offer a 'soft start' to informing British Cycling's delivery of their formal education as they move towards more holistic, personalised models of formal sport coach education. Of course, it is likely that more narratives are identifiable and that coaches can transition from one narrative type to another during the course of their coaching career. Therefore, it is recommended that future research applies Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development to different sports, across more diverse sample sizes.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is an original report of my research, has been written by me and has not been submitted for any previous degree. The experimental work is almost entirely my own work; the collaborative contributions have been indicated clearly and acknowledged. Due references have been provided on all supporting literatures and resources.

Acknowledgements

This PhD was only possible because of a number of people who I could never repay. Some got me to the start line. Some guided me through the process in practical and encouraging ways. Some simply kept me going in their own special way. Thank you to each and every one of you.

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To my Grandparents, thank you for your continued support, love and care. I cannot wait for my graduation photo to be up on your wall!

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engaging in interviews. I thank you for your warm welcomes into your clubs – your hospitality, and your openness, regardless of how vulnerable you might have felt. You made the research process a pleasure to be a part of and I wish you the best of luck for your future coaching.

Thank you to British Cycling for collaborating on this project. Thank you to the education team – Vinny, Adrian, Chris, Adam, Trish, Helen, Marshall – for your help recruiting participants and your guidance on understanding the cycling world.

Also, a special mention needs to go to Arvinder Kaur, who started this research and was sadly unable to realise her ambitions. This thesis is for both of us. Thank you to her family for sharing her data, and for trusting me to share her work with the world. Arvinder, I hope this work makes your family proud and keeps your memory alive. Thank you for your contribution, I hope I did your work justice.

Lastly, I have to acknowledge how lucky I feel. I feel lucky to have been assigned my Director of Studies and for being a student at LJMU – thank you for your support to facilitate my growth and development as a researcher and an academic. However, two other instances stand out. Firstly, research with people can be fragile, and I feel very fortunate to have completed this project without experiencing issues of drop-out. Secondly, towards the end of the PhD, COVID-19 meant the UK was on Lockdown with no coaching activities happening at all, anywhere. I feel lucky that my data collection had concluded and I sympathise with all the coaches the Lockdown has affected and, of course, my fellow PhD students whose research has been impacted by these unfortunate events.

Prologue

When I (Sam) initially saw the advert for a PhD studentship, I was unbelievably excited at the potential opportunity to undertake research in coach learning. I had become so frustrated – despondent even – with the coach education offered by the National Governing Body (NGB) of 'my sport' and I was energised by the prospect of reviewing, and potentially improving the quality of education experiences within a coaching environment.

The interview for the PhD studentship was conducted at the British Cycling (BC) Head Offices at the National Cycling Centre in Manchester. Walking through the doors, I still remember that feeling; a real sense that special things happen inside this building on a daily basis. I recall in my interview talking about that feeling, and stating that I hoped that, no matter how many times I walked through those doors, I would never lose that feeling. I vividly remember Vinny (Head of British Cycling Coach Education) smiling after that comment. Later in the discussion, he came back to my point, reassuring me that I would never lose that feeling.

Later that day, on my drive home, I had parked at a service station for coffee, hoping to catch my thoughts and process the interview which had been re-playing in my head since I left the BC offices. Before I left my car, I received a phone call confirming I had been awarded the position. I could not believe it and I still remember that feeling of elation. I often stop at the same services and relive that moment. I had always wanted to study a PhD. My parents did not attend University, and the only person in my life growing up who had a PhD was an uncle on my mum's side. His three children attended University to PhD level, and growing up, I was inspired and intrigued about studying for a PhD. There were many times throughout my education where I did not feel that PhD study would be a reality. It was a huge deal when I received that phone call, followed by an official email.

I was going to become a Dr and change the world in the process!

I offer this prologue for context. See, I was inspired, enthused, motivated and excited that I had been given this amazing opportunity. These feelings were intense. I felt so positive. Ready. This was my chance. But my first day offered a crushing blow by some tragic news. This project had already been started by another student – Arvinder Kaur, or Arvy as her friends called her – who was now deceased.

I sat in my Director of Studies' office when he delivered the news. I felt numb with shock. I felt embarrassed that I had just talked, at length, and on reflection, so recklessly, about producing a PhD thesis that had impact and created change, more than a thesis that simply gathered dust on a shelf. Hearing Arvinder's tragic story floored me.

I was confused. All I understood was that the project had already been set out. The advert stated this project was in collaboration with BC, and as such, I expected the project outline to have already been decided. Yet I was taking on someone else's work? I then remembered that during my interview Professor Morley (Project

Coordinator) asked me about taking ownership of academic work. The question confused me at the time, but suddenly it made sense. This project had Arvy's stamp on it. My challenge was to make this project, this PhD – this contribution to knowledge and this thesis – my own. The first step? Understand the project Arvy had designed.

My first supervisory meeting on my first day in this exciting new chapter of my academic career culminated with me being handed a copy of Arvy's proposal. What a start to my literature review. I remember sitting in an empty office on campus, in Homefield House, all alone, reading that document. It was painful to read. Truly heartbreaking. It was written in the future tense. The pages were filled with hope and ambition. I had started my day driven to create change. And there it was, the exact same feelings and aspirations, staring back at me.

Unfinished.

Unaccomplished.

Unfulfilled.

At the time I was unaware of the specifics of Arvy's story, but it seemed everyone on the I.M. Marsh campus knew her, or at least knew her story. Very quickly I became *that* PhD student, researching *that* topic. New relationships were being formed with people who met me with sorrow, grief and gut-wrenching pity. Academics, administrators, fellow post-graduate students seemed lost for words when chatting to me about Arvy. Her story was tragic, but her story was fast becoming my story too. I'd been cast a leading role in this unfolding saga, with no awareness of the plot.

The following day, I arrived for my first official meeting at the BC offices in Manchester. I was met by Michelle, the lead administrator for the Education department. She knew Arvy's story. Of course, she did. It was obvious, in hindsight, that people at BC would. Yet it still shocked me. The feelings from yesterday flooded back. I felt out of touch. Off pace. Drowning, almost. I felt everyone knew parts of the

story, and I knew nothing. I was blind. I felt completely lost. I was trying to piece the jigsaw together and I hadn't even seen the picture on the box for reference.

Michelle told me the finer points of Arvy's back story. Everyone seemed to have had time to process the details. It sounded like this had all happened years ago, when in fact I learned it was merely weeks. She had only recently been buried and there was a charity cycle ride planned in the coming weeks to raise money for the hospice where she was treated. Yesterday I felt somewhat detached. Numb. I'd tried to process the limited information I had, and I thought, rather naively that I had a grasp of the key points. I was coming to terms with it a little, starting to feel some solid ground beneath me. Suddenly, during the conversations that day, that brief familiarity was shattered. The reality hit: this was fresh, raw and emotional for everyone. I was in an obtuse position: I wanted to be sad but felt guilty; I didn't know her and didn't feel I deserved to grieve her.

That day I learned that Arvy had collected data. Unsurprisingly it was relevant and was to be included as part of the continuation of the project. There was excitement from my supervisors around the quality and unique nature of the data. There had been a legal battle over ownership, which sparked uncanny flashbacks to Professor Morley's question during my interview. The project which I was to claim ownership over now had an added layer of complexity. There was someone else's data in the mix. How was I ever going to claim ownership of that?

It took weeks for the data to be released by Arvy's family. To feel some sort of progress, my mind turned to my own plans for the project. Those plans halted, however, the day that Arvy's data was dropped onto my laptop from her external drive. I felt I had lost even more time. I felt I had backtracked weeks. My task: analyse the data; see if it's worth using; let it inform the future direction of the project. Simple. The truth was, however, nobody really knew what the data said, what Arvy had

found. She had interviewed people, transcribed the interviews, saved the audio files and saved the signed consent forms. That was it. I decided to start by trying to understand who had been interviewed. What roles each person played and how they fitted into the organisational structure at BC. I started with the audio files.

I felt as though I had already gained a small glimpse into Arvy's world by reading her proposal. During this task, however, I was thrown right into the centre of her world. I didn't know what to expect. I'd never lost anyone close to me before. I'd never experienced grief. I'd never met Arvy, and so I didn't expect to feel anything, really. Before I hit play, I sat with anticipation, and a little excitement, to finally be able to get to work. Nonetheless, I also knew I was about to listen to the work of someone recently deceased. I sat on my own at home, with my laptop and pressed the play button. I heard her voice for the first time. My earphones pumped back her voice, her ideas – her PhD – into my every thought. Her nuanced South Yorkshire dialect balanced with delicate Indian tones, such innocence. She sounded ... young… enthusiastic… hopeful… she sounded … healthy… She sounded like everything her proposal had suggested, and much, much more.

The first interview I heard absolutely crushed me. I didn't know how to react. I was in the moment, listening to every word. Intrigued, balancing anxiety with guilt. This wasn't my work, and it felt wrong to even think about using it. I suddenly felt more connected to this story than ever before. Then, searching through the files I'd been handed, I stumbled across a photo of Arvy that had been included in some BC promotion about the PhD work she was carrying out. It felt so weird seeing her face now. I had been exposed to her plans, her work, her voice, and then, lastly, her face. It was out of synch with everyone I had previously ever met. It felt like we'd been pen pals in a previous lifetime. We'd never met, yet by reading her work, I was seeing a side of Arvy that very few had seen. I felt sick. It was becoming clear there was nothing

'normal' about this story. But it was becoming even more clear that I needed to use this work. The PhD needed it, and Arvy deserved it. Her work mattered. This was my chance to keep her work, and her memory, alive. A chance to prevent her, and her contribution to science, from disappearing and being forgotten. I'd never experienced responsibility like it. I put my well-thumbed 'how to prepare for your doctoral studies' text-books to one side. There was no self-help manual I could follow for assistance. I had to roll up my sleeves and get on with it – this was the beginning of my PhD journey.

Welcome along, Sam!

- CHAPTER I -
Introduction

1.1 Personal Background to the Research

I began this PhD following a successful application for an advertised studentship jointly funded by Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and British Cycling (BC). BC had at the time, a specific, fixed methodological and theoretical criterion by which this doctoral piece of work was to be achieved. However, the lens and approaches adopted in this work, and the subsequent results reported in this thesis, evolved as the PhD progressed. To be clear, the objectives for this work did not change, but an iterative process of refinement and re-development meant that the most appropriate and effective means of achieving and presenting the findings of this PhD was guided through the extensive fieldwork I conducted and the reflective discussions I had with my Director of Studies.

1.2 General Introduction

Traditionally, sport coaching has been conducted by a volunteer workforce, and this is ingrained into its culture, which demonstrates a weak(er) profile when compared against other professions (Duffy et al, 2011). Historically during the 1950s and 1960s sport was left to govern and arrange its own affairs (Jeffreys, 2012). In the 1990s, however, sport moved up the government's agenda, resulting in government funding being allotted to the building of facilities, increasing the school sports programme and developing elite success (Jeffreys, 2012). However, there was no ring-fenced funding to train a coaching workforce. This resulted in a coach education

system that was under-resourced, lacked leadership, direction and quality assurance (DCMS, 2002). As a result, formal coach education delivered by NGBs was reported to be inconsistent in quality, content and delivery, producing an unrecognisable profession and an underappreciation of coaches' value in the development of sporting potential (NCF, 2015; UK Sport, 2001). The government responded with the coaching Task Force in 2002, who called for the professionalisation of sport coaching (Taylor & Garratt, 2008, 2010). This aspiration led to the introduction of a national certification programme – the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) – which aimed for standardisation throughout the coaching sector across all sports, professionalising a historically volunteer workforce (NCF, 2015). Of course, other factors have influenced the professionalisation of coaching, including: increased finances in sport; the growth of undergraduate provisions of sport coaching courses; the increased trend to pay coaches; and the recognition that coaching is more than a generic process (Malcolm et al, 2014). However, this is contrasted against the lack of 'proof' that coach practice impacts athlete performance (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b).

The introduction of the UKCC brought with it a 'professional' image and a new definition of professional practice for coaching (Houlihan, 1991; Taylor & Garratt, 2010). This required NGBs to train and educate coaches in new and redefined ways to produce a predictable, controlled and efficient coaching workforce (Williams & Bush, 2017). Yet UKCC still regarded the professionalisation of coaching as a linear process (Piggott, 2012), neglecting the ingrained cultural and historical traits between sports, leaving some NGBs more professionalised that others (Taylor & Garratt, 2008; Piggott, 2012). Although UKCC attempted to legitimise the knowledge, ideas and autonomy of coaching, it offered no protection of the boundaries coaching operates within, due to the diverse occupational landscape of coaching making it difficult to regulate (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b).

Critically, there remains confusion over the coaching role, no evidence that coaching is held in high status by society or government, and a large proportion of unqualified coaches still remains (North, 2009). The diverse roles of coaches and the fact there is still no entry requirements for coaching, or a qualification threshold, impacts the professionalisation of the sector (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). There is still no development pathway, because access and progression through the UKCC pathway is unrestricted (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). This means that the UKCC has become more of a reference point than active policy that reforms development of coaching education and practice. Although UKCC intended to provide standardisation and consistency across the workforce, a lack of licensing, entry requirements and a recognised professional body leaves it the line of least resistance (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). As others have argued, this has contributed to perceptions that the UKCC has not been as effective as it was first hoped (Townsend & Cushion, 2017).

In some ways, the professional status of sport coaching rests on the delivery and regulation of formal qualifications (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Certification acts as a gatekeeper to coaching and ensures that competency can be both assessed and quality assured. In addition, formal qualifications also regulate the recruitment of coaches and standardise the delivery and expectations of practitioners. Moreover, formal education defines what knowledge is necessary for coaches to practice and how that knowledge can be 'best' transmitted. In this way, formal education accelerates the learning that takes place from experience and differentiates between good and bad experiences (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). The importance of education cannot be overstated because it directly impacts the quality of future practice, and in turn, shapes the development and success of the coaching profession (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Importantly, formal education programmes should prepare individuals for occupational practice, and it is assumed that coaches leave formal education courses

with a toolbox of strategies to effectively coach at the level they have been prepared (Cushion et al, 2010). To this end, formal education should be based on a clear set of intentions relating to what learners are expected to achieve and perhaps more importantly, implement in practice (Jones & Allison, 2014).

'Coach education' has been used, as a 'catch-all' term, for a number of years to capture a range of learning experiences and the broader process of coach learning more generally (Mallett et al, 2009; Cushion et al, 2010). However, coaches learn in a variety of ways, both inside and outside educational settings (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Different opportunities present different ways of learning and blending these is key to learning (Cushion et al, 2010). Coaches want education that is relevant, usable and easily applied to their coaching context, where theory is linked to practice in ways that will improve their coaching ability (Jones & Allison, 2014; Nelson et al, 2012). Coaches want educational experiences that are interactive and accessible to all, with coach educators that have depth of knowledge and close the theory-practice divide without imposing their personal agenda on them, as trainees (Nelson et al, 2012).

Following the introduction of the UKCC, the term 'coach education' has increasingly become synonymous with the formal qualifications delivered by NGBs. Formal education, as some have indicated, incorrectly places an emphasis on learning within 'formal' situations, when, in fact, education and training within sport coaching relies on formal, informal and non-formal provisions (He, Trudel, & Culver, 2018). The development of each coach is unique, and this means that the impact of learning experiences on coaches' holistic knowledge and practices, are not yet completely understood (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, 2017; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Subsequently, course content can conflict against the methods, routines and practices learned from experience, meaning only snippets of 'new' knowledge is integrated into coaching practice (Chesterfield et al, 2010). As a result, coach education creates a shared, more

than a personal meaning, among participants (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004). This means that coaches attach less importance to formal coach education. Many feel unable to implement new ideas because they feel abstract and removed from everyday practice (Gilbert et al, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lemyre et al, 2007). This leaves coaches questioning the information learned through their formal education experiences later in their careers (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Most UKCC programmes aim to develop standardised knowledge to overcome typical coaching dilemmas, suggesting that coach education could be labelled as 'training' (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Research investigating coach learning is yet to provide specific, structured, evidence-based suggestions that coaches can use to enhance their learning and effectiveness (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Consequently, coaching pathways do not build knowledge throughout qualifications, but simply polish trainees' existing practice (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c).

Coaching research, and the broader coaching community generally, has been criticised for a limited engagement with learning theory (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Delivering programmes that effectively embeds relevant learning theory, and appreciating the trainee as an adult learner, however, is only a starting point. Another consideration is the socialisation of coaches' knowledge. This is a topic that has received attention in the education research, but not within the sport coaching research. However, this is an important area to explore as education research has shown that early socialisation experiences greatly influence the quality and effectiveness of teaching (Pike & Fletcher, 2014).

This socialisation process has three phases. Firstly, trainees are socialised into the programme through their recruitment into the education programme. It is here that trainees' previous knowledge – for example, their preconceived ideas about education, beliefs regarding the quality and ideologies about professional conduct –

is challenged (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). If these ingrained beliefs are not effectively challenged, the education programme's potential to produce graduates with professional identities suitable for their socially diverse and ever-changing occupational context is significantly reduced (Dowling, 2011). The relative success of coach education starts with an individual's past experiences and networks of existing knowledge, beliefs and values (Cushion et al, 2003; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Crucially, this means that the same coach education opportunity has a different impact on different individuals, depending on each individual's unique starting point (Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Stodter & Cushion, 2016). Second is the socialisation through the formal education process, where learners' beliefs about their profession are either challenged or reinforced (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012; Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Lastly, is the phase where trainees' return to their coaching role with the 'Coach' title and where they learn the role, expectations and values associated with their occupation (Stroot, Faucette & Schwager, 1993). This final phase – occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) – means that the workplace is considered the main socialising agent where the individual progresses through an induction process and 'learns the ropes' to become accepted into that workplace and its culture (Pike & Fletcher, 2014).

Occupational socialisation links to the notion of 'wash-out' (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981), the process where knowledge from formal training is discarded in favour of accepted practices within the occupational setting. This has been identified as an enduring issue for beginner teachers (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009). Lawson (1989) offers a four-stage framework to examine 'wash-out'. Firstly, this encompasses the political and economic landscape, and highlights how a coach who aligns with the beliefs of the local curriculum and budget is less likely to experience the effects of 'wash-out'. Secondly, coaches' personal dispositions, including how they view

challenges and how their personal goals align with the club's goals, and workplace conditions (Lawson, 1989) can facilitate or inhibit 'wash-out' effects. Thirdly, situation factors, including the clubs' subculture and the other coaches within the club can facilitate or inhibit 'wash-out'. Lastly, the coach's desire for acceptance from learners and how learners resist certain activities, or how those activities are taught, might mean that a coach abandons the methods learned through their formal education experiences (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009). A lack of accountability for new coaches might result in novice coaches regressing in their development and implementation of what was learned in their formal training and revert back to previous knowledge (Capel et al, 2011).

When coaches transition from their formal education experiences back into their coaching setting, there may be gaps in their practice. There is little literature on how and where coaches learn what to coach, how to represent it – their use of metaphors, similes and questioning – and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding. Shulman's (1986) model of pedagogic reasoning suggests that teachers draw on subject matter, pedagogic content knowledge (PCK) and curricular knowledge. Shulman suggests that all three of these sources of understanding make pedagogical reasoning and action possible. However, PCK, which builds on, and with, content knowledge, appears to be the most important and distinguishes experienced teachers from novices (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). As such, teacher education programmes should focus on PCK and encourage student teachers to think about their subject in terms of pedagogic content. Here, student teachers need an awareness of the processes they have to undertake to make content knowledge available for students. Moreover, thinking about the curriculum in terms of the larger picture might protect some teachers from experiencing some of the difficulties teachers typically face in the first years of teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

1.3 Aims (and research questions) of the PhD

For brevity, I begin this section with a summary of the discussion presented above. Firstly, previous research is critical of formal coach education for being under-resourced, lacking leadership, direction and quality assurance. NGBs were inconsistent in the quality, content and delivery of the education provision, resulting in an unrecognisable profession. The UKCC was designed to standardise the sector by professionalising a historically volunteer workforce (NCF, 2015). The importance of coaches' education cannot be overstated and NGBs formal education still serves a role in the professionalisation of sport (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Yet the UKCC was not as effective as first hoped and has now become more of a reference point. Formal education programmes should prepare coaches with a toolbox of strategies to effectively coach at the level they have prepared (Cushion et al, 2010). However, coaches learn in unique ways, which means that the impact of learning experiences on coaches' holistic knowledge and practices are not yet understood (Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2009; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). As a result, course content can conflict against the methods, routines and practices learned from experience, meaning only snippets of 'new' knowledge is integrated into coaching practice (Chesterfield et al, 2010).

Although evaluating formal coach education has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, with the exception of Kolić, Groom, Nelson and Taylor (2019), there is a dearth of studies that have attempted to directly investigate, or evaluate, a coach education programme. Incidentally, these authors investigated two Level 4 coaching awards delivered with Higher Education institutions, not novice coaches. Research investigating coach learning is yet to provide specific, structured, evidence-based suggestions that coaches can use to enhance their learning and effectiveness

(Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Drawing on these reported shortfalls, this PhD was guided by four distinct research aims.

The first aim focused on the cultural and historical backdrop to the development, implementation and delivery of BC's formal coach education provision. The first aim of the PhD was therefore supported by the following research questions:

1. Why and how was BC's coaching pathway created?
2. What are the mechanisms used to deliver BC's formal education?
3. What are the intended outcomes for participants attending BC's formal education?

The second aim was to gain a deeper understanding and insight of the individuals who attend BC's formal education. The rationale behind this part of the PhD based on the notion of creating personalised models of coaching (Jacobs, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2016; Lyle, 2007).

The third aim of this PhD was to explore how these coaches experienced BC's formal education. This linked to the notion of socialisation – specifically recruitment and professional socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) – and to what extent BC's formal education changed coaches' ingrained biographies. This section of the PhD was addressed by answering the following research questions, which were refined following the analysis of the data from the research aligned with the previous questions:

1. How does each 'narrative type' experience BC's formal education?
2. How does each 'narrative type' experience professional socialisation?

The fourth aim of this PhD explored how effectively BC's formal education prepared participants for their coaching role as qualified coaches. Specifically, this was concerned with occupational socialisation and the effects commonly referred to as 'wash-out' (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). Pike and Fletcher (2014) suggest that researching individuals' experiences from their induction through the first year of their teaching would provide researchers and educators with strategies that would lead to sustained changes in practices or beliefs, or at least lead to an appreciation of a need for change. By following participants' experiences of exiting BC's Level 2 qualification and entering their coaching context, this project captured experiences of the three socialisation phases. If teachers' socialisation underpins how they think about and conduct themselves in their roles, then it is likely that coaches undergo the same process. There are strong and lasting implications for how these experiences impact the quality of coach education and learning. As such, this PhD will contribute to the absent socialisation research within sport coaching by addressing this concept. Lastly, this PhD explored coaches learning within their everyday coaching context. As such, this aim of the PhD had two objectives:

1. Explore the workplace conditions that both facilitate and inhibit wash-out
2. Investigate learning within the coaching microsystem, post-qualification

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis presents the complex and challenging journey that I embarked on in order to achieve these primary aims. As outlined in the Prologue, this research process started in a very unconventional way. I read numerous examples of successful PhD submissions and found it daunting that there appeared to be no template to follow.

However, I learned to embrace this freedom. I transitioned from seeing Arvy's work as the albatross around my neck to simply being part of my story. My overarching aim of this thesis is to not only make a novel contribution to knowledge, but to also present that story. In the section that follows, I offer a broad outline to the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 1 offers a general introduction to the PhD. First, it discusses my personal background to the research before positioning the PhD within the relevant coaching literature. Next, it outlines the structure of this thesis, the limitations of the scope and the key assumptions of this project.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework of this PhD. Receiving the secondary data *post eventum* meant that my preliminary involvement in the research process was data analysis – which is atypical and unusual for most neophyte post graduate research students. Negotiating this, and the associated challenges, meant that a large proportion of the early stages of this PhD were data-driven, rather than theory driven. With no theoretical perspective to adhere to, the findings from Arvy's data informed the consequent fieldwork that I eventually conducted. Through the data analysis, especially in terms of the presentations of findings, it emerged that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development (EMHD) was a conceptual framework that could be applied to this project. In some ways, this PhD proposed applying this model to the exploration of sport coaches' learning ecologies in an experimental manner. Chapter 2 explains this tentative application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in more detail.

Chapter 3 offers a review of the theories, conceptual frameworks, models and wider empirical literature in connection with coach education and learning. Following the presentation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 is

structured using the EMHD as a frame of reference, critically discussing the relevant literature as it applies to each level.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of this project. Specifically, this Chapter outlines my philosophical positioning by first explaining my ontological and epistemological stance as a researcher. Then I discuss Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism as the methodological framework that underpinned this project as well as my role as a participant observer involved in micro-ethnographic fieldwork. This Chapter also outlines my data capture methods and provides an insight into the participants recruited to this PhD, data collection procedures, participant observations, field notes, interviews and subsequent data analysis. This Chapter also considers my role and responsibilities as a researcher and how I managed the expectations of the research process. Here, I highlight some of the challenges I negotiated and the ethical considerations that impacted this research project. This Chapter concludes with a discussion of research quality and transparency in the production and presentation of this project's findings.

Chapter 5 presents the primary research findings and discussion of the PhD. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD as a structural framework this Chapter illustrates how this PhD researched each 'level' of coaches' learning ecologies from the macro- to the microsystem. Each section of this Chapter presents a different area of research that builds this overall PhD.

Chapter 6 presents the general conclusions of this project. Firstly, it outlines the conclusions to be drawn from the research findings, and what can be learned as a result of these findings. It considers the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this project. Next, it discusses the implications of these findings for the coach education provision and professional practice, as well as the implications for future research.

This Chapter concludes with recommendations for future research, and recommended changes in professional practice and procedures.

Lastly, it is worth noting the important role reflexivity plays in qualitative research and micro-ethnographic fieldwork specifically. Ontologically and epistemologically grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, I acknowledged the active role I played in the forming of the research questions, the data collection, analysis and presentation of findings. I wanted to have my voice present throughout this thesis, and consequently, I have included reflections and written in the first person where possible. Perhaps those early thoughts around ownership of this work, traced back to the interview question discussed in the prologue, shaped my approach to this PhD more profoundly than I first thought or envisaged. Or, perhaps it was an unconscious decision to establish myself as the researcher in this project, and, as such, have my voice dispersed throughout? Either way, rather than this being confined to a bespoke section of a standalone chapter, I offer these reflective thoughts throughout this thesis.

1.5 Summary

This Chapter aimed to present a general introduction to the research area within which this PhD was embedded, and outlined the research aims and research questions of this project. Lastly this Chapter outlined the structure of this thesis.

- CHAPTER II -
Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 began the process of highlighting how Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD emerged as a potential theoretical perspective to frame this PhD. Although this conceptual model was considered at the beginning of the research process, it was only when data collection was drawing to a close that it became a more crucial part of the overall project. At the start, there was little theory underpinning the research, but following an on-going, iterative examination of participant data, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD emerged as a potentially viable theoretical framework. The aim of this Chapter is to outline Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in more detail and explore how it might be applied to the current research project in a unique and novel way.

2.2 Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD: An Introduction

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD emphasises human development within the context of both the macro and micro – from the immediate to the remote environments within which the individual lives and develops (Figure 2.1). His model offers a holistic understanding of the learning environment, including the influence of peer culture, emphasises the principles of adult learners, the social (and humanistic) aspect of knowledge construction and the importance of context (Jessup-Anger, 2015; Jackson, 2016).

A key factor in Bronfenbrenner's EMHD is 'proximal processes' (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), which captured connections between aspects of the individual, for example their social class, and aspects of their context, for example, their culture.

These processes operate over time and are posited as primary mechanisms in producing human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). However, the power that these processes have in influencing an individual's development varies according to the function and characteristics of the developing person's immediate and remote environmental contexts, and the time periods in which proximal processes take place. Bronfenbrenner's EMHD (Figure 2.1) illustrates how the environmental processes surrounding the individual are the 'engines of development' (Tudge et al, 2009, p.200). It is through engagement in these activities and interactions that individuals make sense of the world and their place in it. Although attention is paid towards interactions with others (Tudge et al, 2016), proximal processes can also involve interactions with objects and symbols (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).
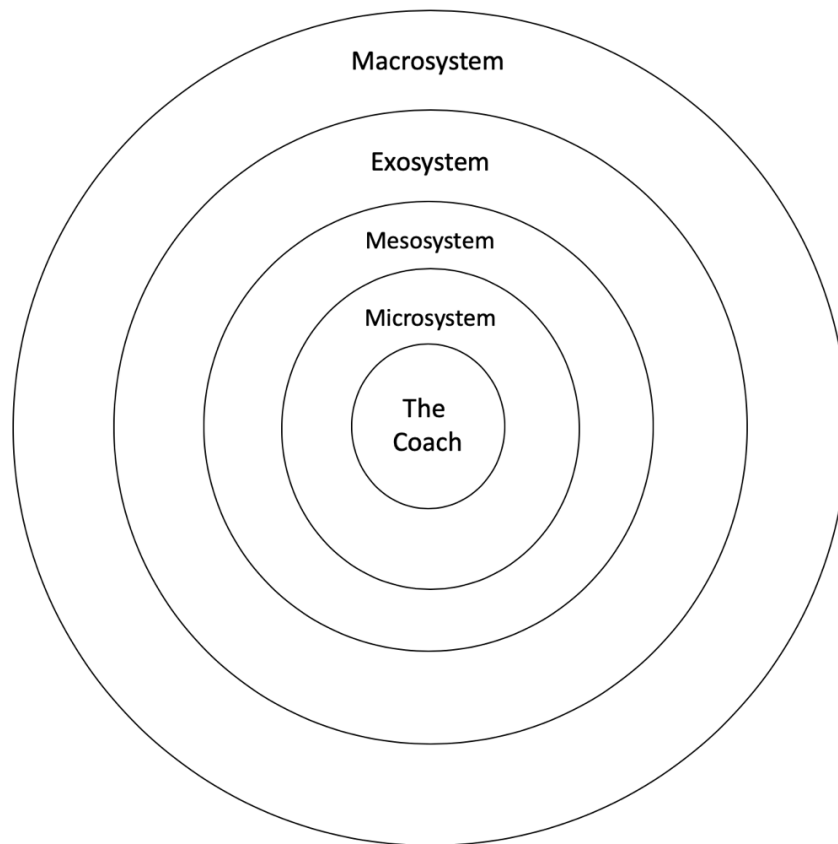
Figure 2.1 – Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD

2.3 Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD increases our understanding of the learning community by encouraging the consideration of what learners bring to the community, their experiences within it, and other factors that influence learners' experiences. Importantly, each 'level' of the EMHD impacts each individual's development differently and each individual has autonomy over constructing their learning ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this way, this model emphasises the role of the individual and their relationship with the 'levels' around them. This is important, because institutions and practices cannot be researched without paying attention to the relationship between society and social structures, meaning that there is a need to reconsider the whole structure of society within which education occurs (Gage, 2007). Within a sport coaching context, this includes distal factors, like the NGB, formal coach education, and the impact of government policies on practice, through to more proximal immediate factors, such as the sport club and available resources. This is something that the literature on sport coach learning has neglected to emphasise, with the cultural contexts and personal experiences often overlooked when investigating coaching as a social process (Jones et al, 2009). Moreover, as Cassidy (2010) suggests, novice coaches' development and mastery of routines is most affected by the nuances of their social conventions within their cultural setting. By applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching, for the first time, this research addresses this identified gap in the literature, and offers the chance to increase our holistic understanding of coach learning.

For these reasons, it is this theory – with a focus on ecologies of learning – which this doctoral piece of work explores, using the EMHD to conceptually frame individual's learning experiences. Applying this theory offers a novel and unique

contribution to understanding how coaches' educational – and broader learning – experiences are influenced by coach education. This section outlines each 'level' (Figure 2.1) of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in more detail, discussing how it might be applied to a sport coaching context in a specific way.

The Individual

The individual is embedded within the centre of their ecology (Figure 2.2). The 'self' includes the individual's beliefs, values, self-awareness, self-reflections, knowledge, experience, motivations, goals, ideas and suggestions. Aligned with the concepts of adult learning (discussed in Chapter 3), this model also respects the individual's past learning experiences – their previous coaching experiences, perceptions of what coaching 'should' look like, and their knowledge and experience of the sport – and how this is brought to the learning process. Importantly, the current learning and development is drawn upon in future learning ecologies, which might be inspired and influenced by distal goals. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD illustrates how personal attributes, what he termed developmentally instigative characteristics, create a 'reciprocal process of interpersonal interaction' (p.12) that affect learning. He outlined four of these characteristics. The first is perhaps the most relevant to conceptualising a learning community environment – personal stimulus characteristics, which details how an individual's actions invite or inhibit particular responses from the environment that disrupt or encourage psychological growth (Jessup-Anger, 2015). The second, selective responsivity, describes how individuals interact with their surroundings. The third, structuring proclivities, describes how people seek out increasingly complex activities. The fourth, directive beliefs, describes how people view agency in relation to environment.
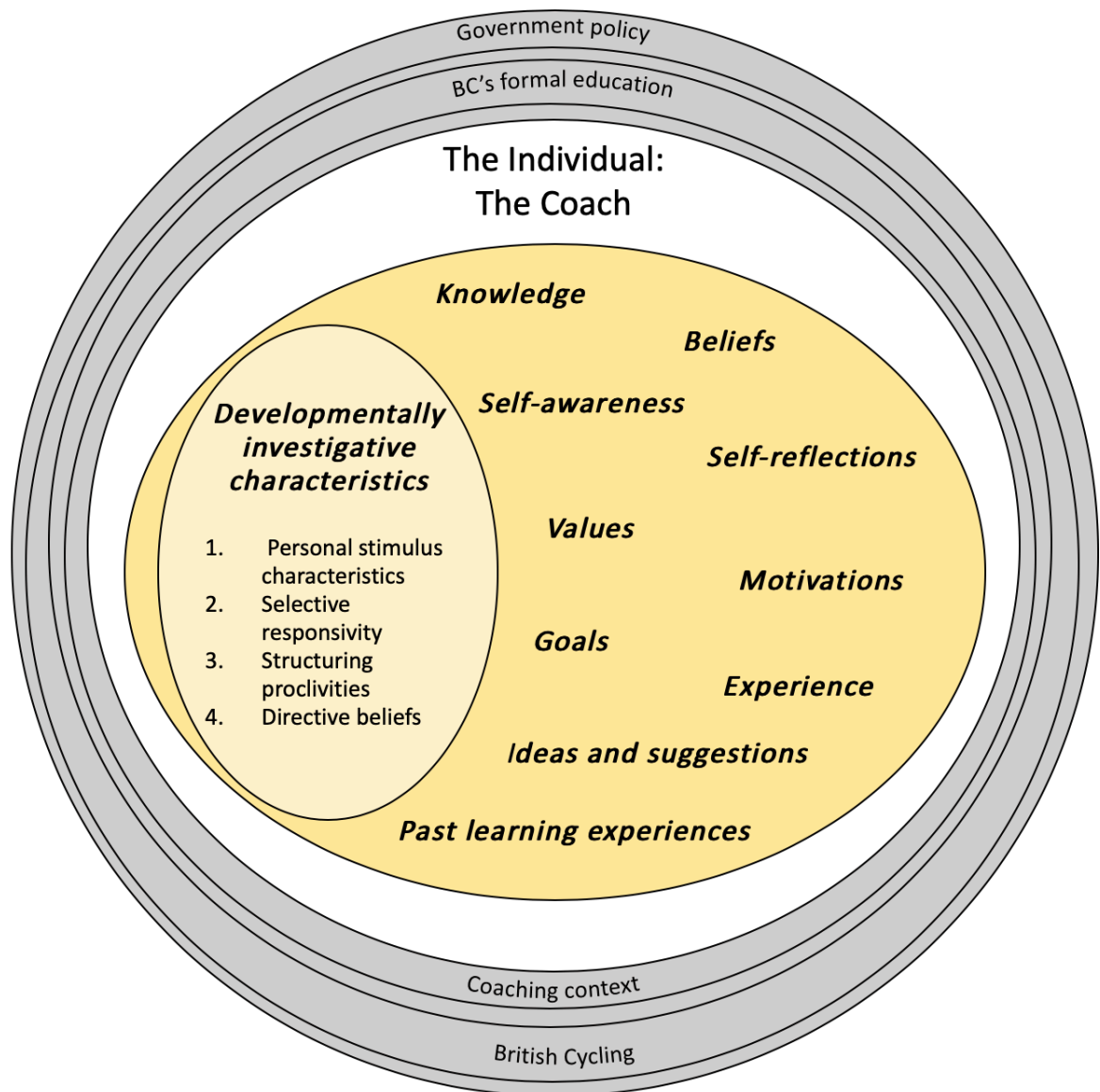
Figure 2.2 – The individual as 'Coach' embedded within their ecology

The Microsystem

Crucially, nested around the individual, in the EMHD lies a series of concentric circles, which represents a system of four environmental 'levels', from the proximal to distal, that highlight the context within which the individual operates. The first 'level', the microsystem, captures the immediate environment within which the individual interacts (see Figure 2.3). This is the most relevant level to understanding learners'

experiences in learning communities because it includes the learner within the context of the individual's learning community (Jessup-Anger, 2015). It includes an individual's daily encounters and the communications we have with the people we meet and interact with. It is at this level that we make decisions and plan what to do and how to do it, where we reflect on experiences and the effects of our actions (Jackson, 2016). It is within the microsystem that we enact the processes that enable us to explore possibilities within our environments that enable us to learn, achieve and develop, and provide a means to connect activities and experiences to create a more meaningful life. It is also within the microsystem that we explore our contexts – our physical, social and cultural environments.

Within coaching, this would represent the cycling club, because coaches' practice is likely to be impacted by the club's goals, motivations and the distinct cultural and procedural rituals they have established. This also includes the physical coaching space or facility. More subtlety, however, this includes the spaces created and inhabited by the individual where they explore, inquire and learn. Within the learning ecology, this is the dialogic space the coach has for discussions, the creative space they create for imagining their practice and the reflective space for meaning-making. Within this 'level' is also the relationships that the coach establishes, or might already have established, with the club themselves, other coaches and 'objects' within their social environment. Of course, this also links to the resources they have available to them and might include the coaching manuals provided by the NGB, the support they receive from the NGB and other 'things' that have value, which might help the coach achieve their goals and learning. In this way, Bronfenbrenner's EMHD recognises that learning cannot be separated from the physical, social and cultural environment within which learning occurs (Jackson, 2016).
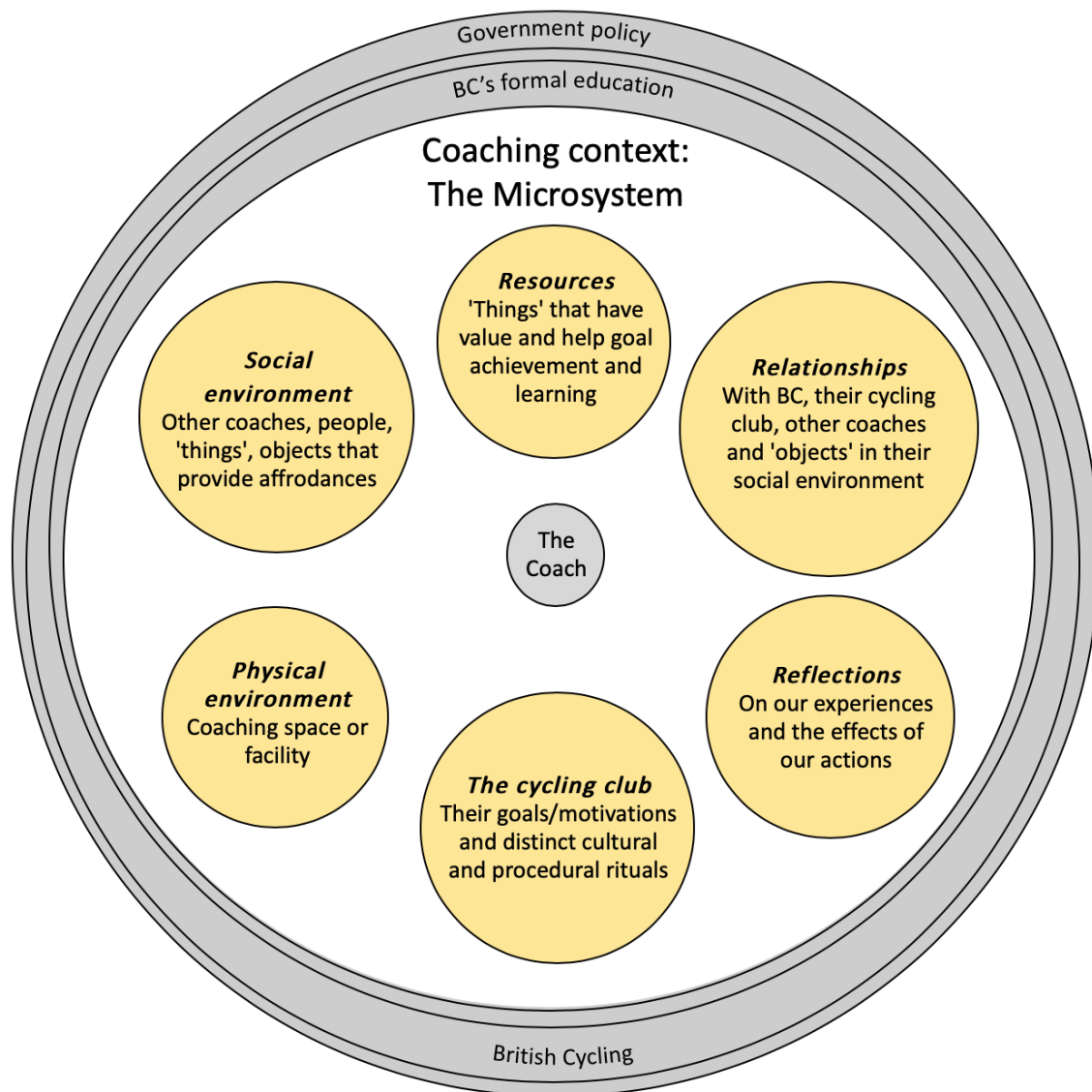
Figure 2.3 – The microsystem within coaches' learning ecology

The Mesosystem

The second 'level', the mesosystem, refers to connections among contexts – interrelations of two or more settings (Figure 2.4). For example, within coaching, this is the level where life experiences meet the formal education provided by the NGB. This 'level' involves people who have an interest in promoting and supporting learning, for example, the education team within the NGB workforce, including tutors and mentors. It is here where coaches receive the guidance and the necessary tools to help them fulfil the requirements of the coach education programme. As such, it is

where coaches are socialised into 'their way' of coaching through the implemented mechanisms to achieve the identified outcomes of the NGB's programme. However, importantly, it is within the mesosytem where coaches experience organised activity that enables them to learn more effectively within their microsystem.
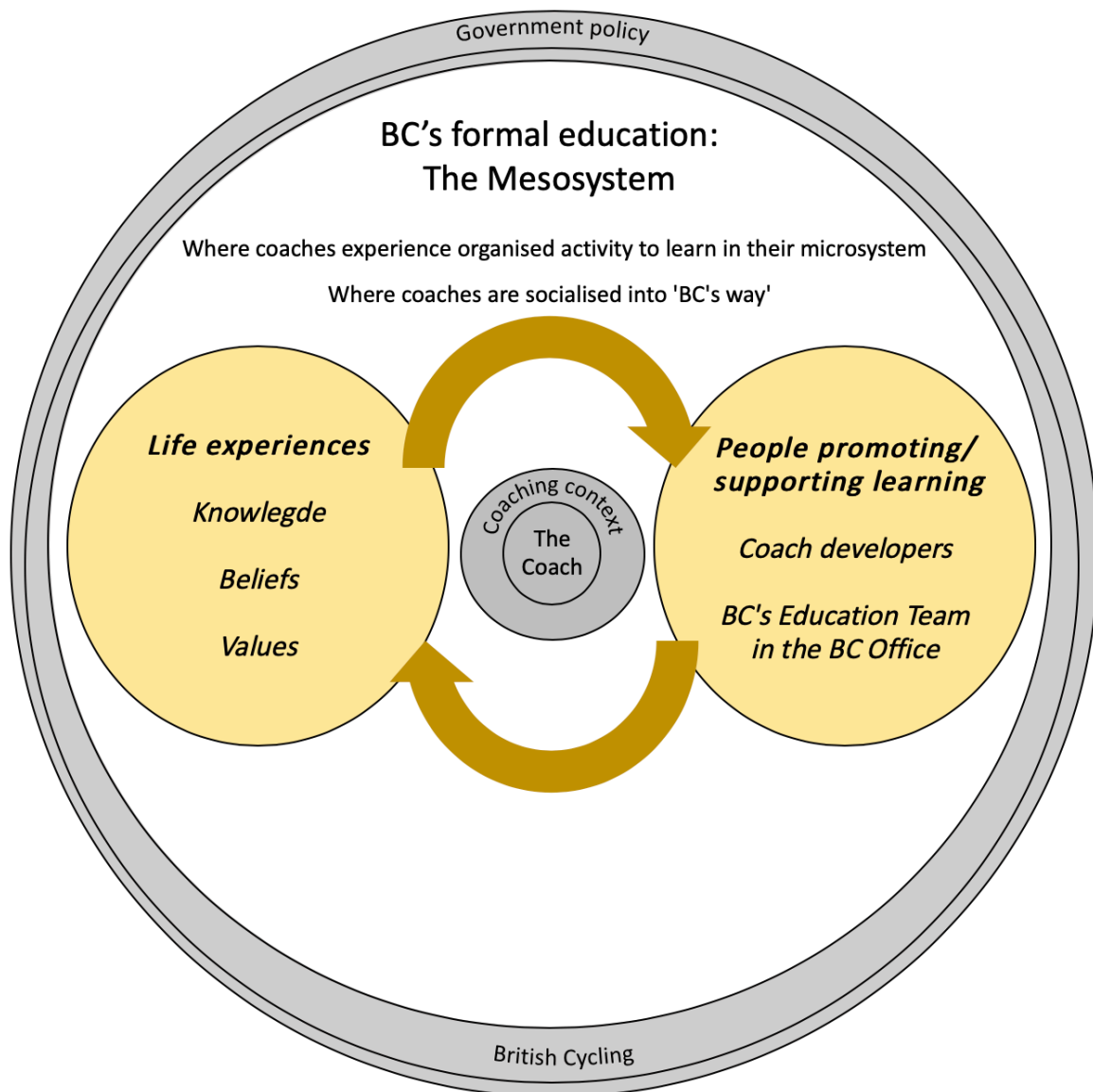
Figure 2.4 – The mesosystem of coaches' learning ecology

The Exosystem

The third 'level', the exosystem, refers to one or more setting that does not involve the individual as an active participant, but where events occur which affect the

individual and the setting the individual operates within (Jessup-Anger, 2015). This is BC, as an NGB, as they oversee all forms of cycling within the United Kingdom (Figure 2.5). This is where BC adopts and embeds policies and procedures and, in a broad sense, where BC decides their strategy, for both the performance side of the sport – Olympic medals – and the development aspects of the sport – including social cycling and promoting female-only riding through their Breeze programme. It is also here where BC decide their intended outcome of the education that they provide.
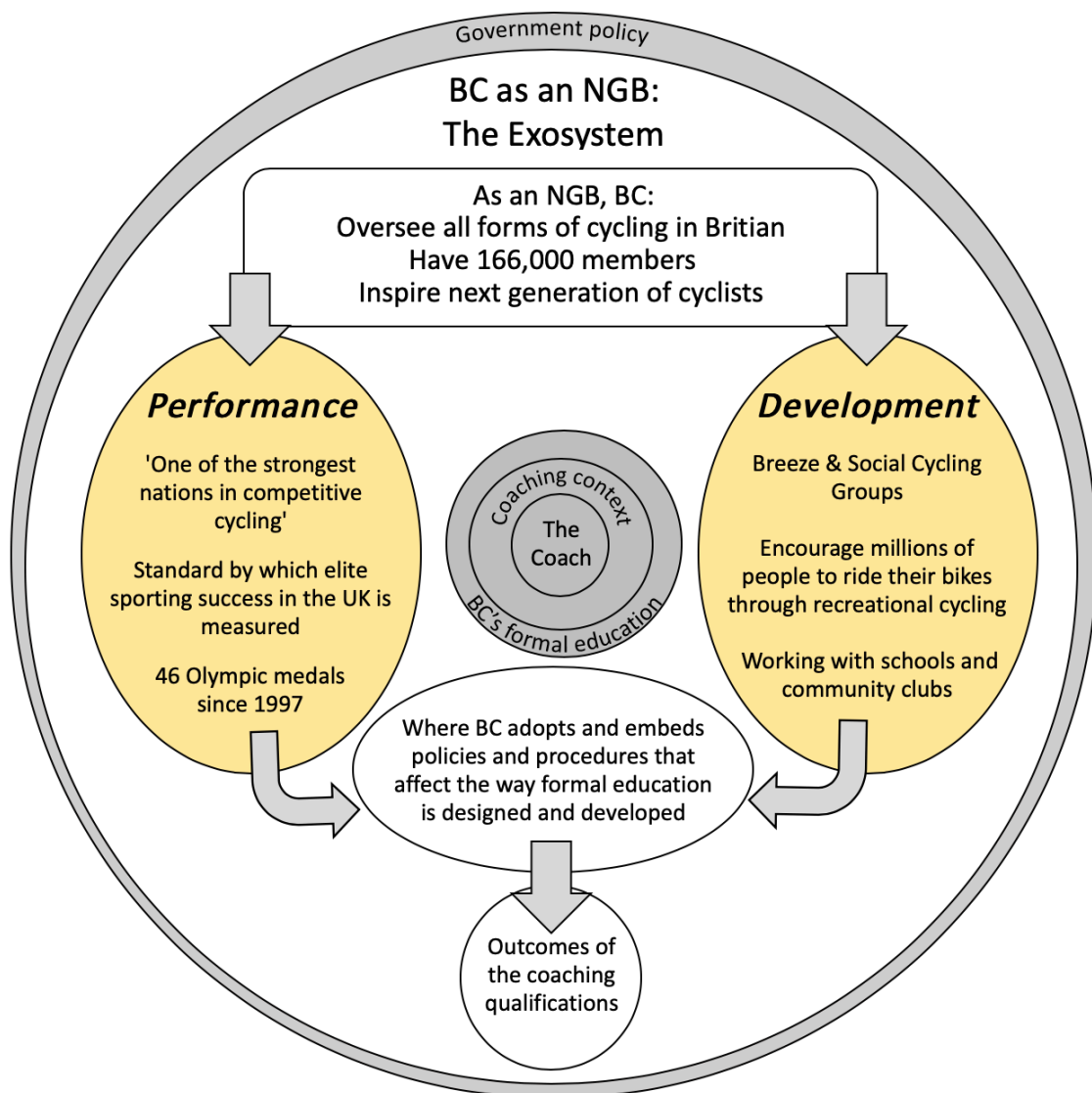
Figure 2.5 – The exosystem of coaches learning ecology

The fourth 'level', the macrosystem (Figure 2.6), involves the larger cultural contexts within which the individual operates (Jessup-Anger, 2015). This is the most distal 'level' includes the wider society, or community, in which other settings are nested. It includes the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts – the policies and laws that are incorporated within the exosystem and which indirectly influence the individual. For the field of sport coaching, this includes the government policies and strategies for supporting coaching, depending on where coaching 'sits' within the Government's wider political agenda.

Government policy:
The Macrosystem

Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Coaching Task Force Report (2002)

UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC)

British Cycling

Coaching context

The Coach

BC's formal education

UK Sport

Sport England

Includes the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts which other settings are nested. Includes Government policies and strategies for supporting coaching

Figure 2.6 – The macrosystem of coaches learning ecology

2.4 Summary

This Chapter outlines the key aspects of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD and explores how it can be applied, as a conceptual framework, to sport coaching research in a novel and original way. Firstly, applying the EMHD to this project addresses Gage's (2007) calls to consider the whole structure of society within which education occurs, especially the relationship between society and social structures when researching institutions and practices. Secondly, this Chapter highlights how using the EMHD as a framework for this research addresses the cultural contexts and personal experiences of individuals, which sport coaching research is criticised for overlooking when investigating coaching as a social process (Jones et al, 2009). As such, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD encourages consideration of what learners bring to the community and their experiences within it, as well as considering other factors that influence learners' experiences. Finally, the EMHD aligns with this project's aim to research the role that social conventions within novice coaches' cultural settings – their microsystems – have on their development and mastery.

- CHAPTER III -
Review of the Literature

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline theories, conceptual frameworks, models and wider empirical literature in connection with coach education and learning. Firstly, this Chapter outlines the wider socio-, political-, and economic context within which sport coach education operates, and the professionalisation of sport coaching. This Chapter then considers the literature around the role of, and criticisms of, formal education in sport coaching, the recruitment and occupational socialisation processes related to BC's formal education and the theoretical perspectives of teaching. This Chapter then discusses the literature in relation to occupational socialisation and 'wash-out' within an individual's microsystem, including an individual's informal learning and different learning theories – a topic that coaching research, and the broader coaching community more generally, has had a limited engagement with (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Following Chapter 2, this Chapter is presented with Bronfenbrenner's EMHD as a frame of reference, critically discussing the relevant literature as it applies to each ecology.

3.2 The learning ecology of sport coaches

As outlined in Chapter 2, applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching proposes a more holistic way of understanding coaches' learning environments. This discussion is structured using the EMHD as a unique frame of reference. Taking each 'level' in turn, the following section considers the relevant

literature in relation to each ecology, from the macro- to the microsystem, and the broader literature on sport coach education.

3.2.1 The macrosystem of sport coaches' learning ecology

This section critically discusses the macrosystem of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in relation to sport coaches' learning ecology. The macrosystem is the most distal 'level' and incorporates the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts within which sport coaching operates. It captures the policies and laws that indirectly influence the individual – the government policies and strategies for supporting coaching, depending on where coaching 'sits' within the government agenda. Hopefully, framing coach education against a wider cultural, historical and political backdrop may offer some insights as to why it is delivered, and received, as it is. This section begins with an outline of sport as a public policy concern, followed by a discussion on the professionalisation of sport coaching in the UK.

3.2.1.1 Emergence of sport as a public policy concern

Around the time of the Second World War, sport funding was not a priority for government. Consequently, there was essentially no government policy for sport. It is suggested the 1948 Olympics in London gained ministerial backing more because of its power to drive post-war economic growth, than the government's support of sport (Jefferys, 2012). The Conservative Government of the 1950s left sport to run its own affairs. Then, in 1960, the Wolfenden Report called for a national drive to improve facilities. However, this Report was not a direct government initiative, so ministers dismissed these recommendations. In 1964, when the Conservative government left Office, the only Wolfenden proposal to have been tackled was the introduction of a

Sports Development Council, tasked with the development of a new generation of public-use sport facilities (Jefferys, 2012).

In 1964, when Labour took Office, there was a significant shift in the perceived importance of sport. Prime Minister Wilson oversaw the success of the 1966 World Cup and, in relation to amateur sport, agreed with the deficiencies identified by the Wolfenden Report. Wilson appointed the first Minister for sport, and within months a Sports Council was established which stimulated local authorities to develop a new generation of municipal sports facilities (Jefferys, 2012).

In the early 1970s, the Sport Council was restructured, becoming the GB Sports Council, and granted executive powers through Royal Charter. Their aim was to raise the "standards of performance in sport and physical education" (quoted in Coghlan & Webb, 1990, p.67). The focus was on encouraging participation and improving provision of new sport facilities for the wider community. The Government increased the level of financial backing to British teams competing overseas, assisted clubs in improving their infrastructure and built 437 multi-purpose leisure centres between 1971 and 1981 (Jefferys, 2012). This marked the Government's commitment to targeting resources towards specific groups in society at that time (Green, 2006).

The 1980s marked a return to the 1950s views on sport, with Prime Minister Thatcher separating sport and politics. Her failed attempts at persuading British athletes to boycott the 1980 Olympics in Moscow as the Soviets invaded Afghanistan had lasting effects. Domestically, the Sports Council published their paper, 'Sport in the Community: The Next 10 Years' (Sports Council, 1982), which was a key political and policy event. The Sports Council struggled to retain the momentum it had experienced in its early years, however, and the organisational and administrative frameworks for sport, became fragmented, with continual disharmony between the various bodies involved in lobbying sport's interests (Green, 2006). With no coherent

or positive strategy towards sport in the 1980s, the development of elite sport was hindered during the 1980s (Jefferys, 2012).

That changed in the 1990s. Prime Minister Major's personal love of sport combined with a belief that sport offered political opportunities as a social and cultural phenomenon (Jefferys, 2012). Major brought about two key changes. Firstly, he raised the status of sport within government through the creation of the Department of National Heritage. Secondly, he established the National Lottery in 1994, signifying large-scale funding towards training elite athletes – perhaps the single most important factor in transforming the landscape for the development of elite sport (Green, 2006). In 1995, the Conservative government published a comprehensive policy statement, 'Sport: Raising the Game' (Department of National Heritage, 1995), which freed the Sport Councils from the government's control. The focus was on three key areas: the development of elite performers and elite sports academies and institutes; the development of higher education institutions that fostered elite athletes; and allotting funding to governing bodies, which would be conditional on the explicit support from government objectives (Houlihan, 1997). This was a big political shift. Remember, just thirty years before, sport held no prominence in government policy. On reflection, however, Prime Minister Major promised more than he delivered. His funding shake-up for elite athletes came too late for the Atlanta Games in 1996. However, the steps taken to that point provided a platform for 'New Labour' to build on after 1997.

By 1997, more people than ever had access to local recreational facilities and structures were in place to enable elite athletes to compete seriously at future Olympics. This became even more promising under Tony Blair's Government and sport policy temporarily established an unprecedented profile (Jefferys, 2012). Between 2001 and 2005, direct treasury funding doubled, which had a wide-reaching impact. By 2007 90% of school children were engaged in two hours of Physical

Education each week, compared to 25% a decade earlier (Jeffery's, 2012). Moreover, the Sport Minister at the time, Richard Caborn, clarified that Sport England (SE) would concentrate on increasing participation, UK Sport would focus on high performance sport and the Youth Sport Trust would monitor school sport. In 2005, however, Blair's administration delivered their most high-profile success in sport policy: successfully bidding to host the 2012 London Olympics. Britain made several promises essential to winning the bid, notably, that they would maintain its high ranking in the Olympic medal table – realistically possible with the highest-ever Lottery funding and UK Sport's 'no compromise' approach (Jefferys, 2012). At the Beijing Games, in 2008, Team GB finished fourth in the medal table; quite the turnaround from the humiliating 36th place finish in Atlanta twelve years previously.
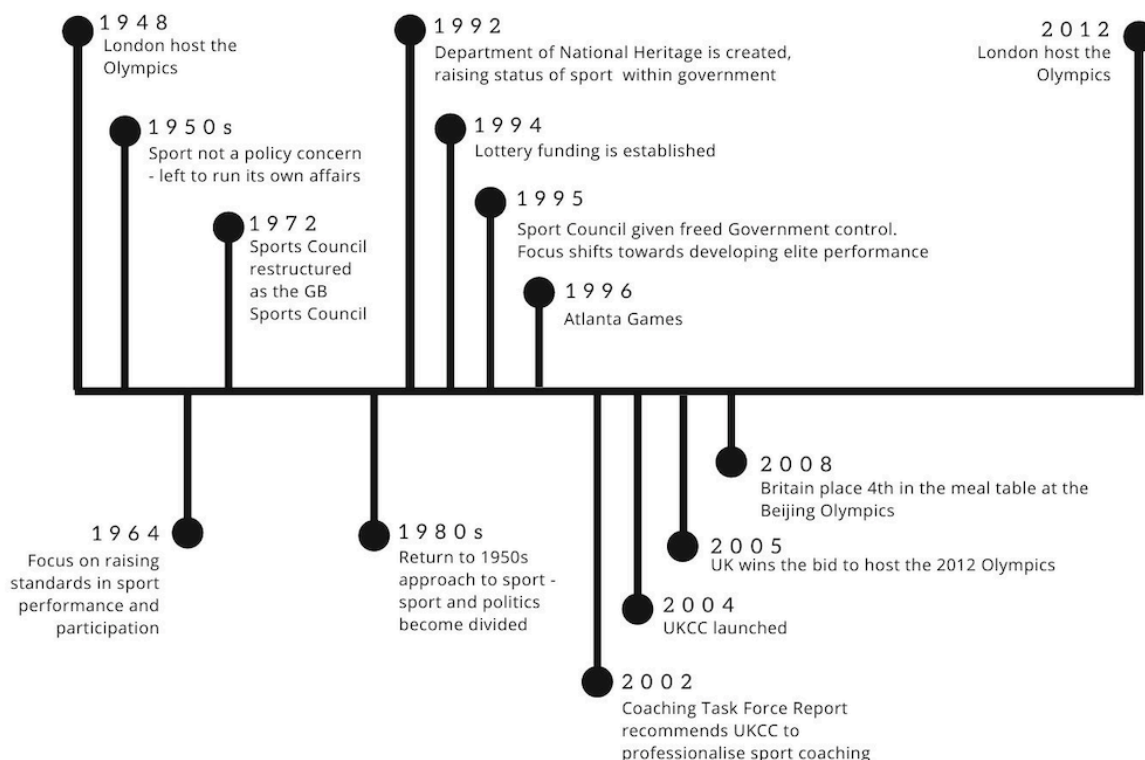
Figure 3.1 – Government sport policy timeline in the UK, 1948-2012

It is easy to overlook the strides that sport policy has made since the 1948 Olympics (see Figure 3.1). The implementation of policy in the 1960s to support Olympic athletes, improve recreational facilities and increasing participation rates have all been pursued by different governments with varying degrees of vigour. 'New Labour' used the injection of National Lottery funding to invest heavily at all levels of sport; reviving school sport and the success of Team GB from the Sydney Games onwards through their approach to elite sport. The government's involvement in sport has increased but has been overshadowed by some enduring problems. The DCMS has overseen sport policy since 1997. However, sport is still fragmented within Whitehall, with the Department for Education, for example, taking a role in school sport. This makes establishing a unified strategy more difficult to achieve. In the wake of the financial crash in 2008 and the Government's austerity measures since 2010, the government's sport policy has been reduced and is now practically non-existent. This leaves sport policy needing a radical statement to increase the value of sport to society (Jefferys, 2012).

3.2.2 The exosystem of sport coaches' learning ecology

This section discusses the literature relevant to sport coaching in relation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) exosystem. This 'level' is sandwiched between the government's policies and procedures – the macrosystem – and the formal education that BC delivers – the mesosystem. It is here that the BC adopts and embeds policies and procedures into their formal education. This section presents research relevant to the creation of formal education in coaching, specifically, the professionalisation of sport coaching and the role of formal education in sport coaching.

3.2.2.1 Professionalisation of sport coaching

Sport has had a chequered history within government policy. This is important within the broader context of coach education, because the way in which the government prioritises sport is reflected in the attention coach education receives. Historically, coaching has been a volunteer workforce and, reviewing the policy timeline presented already (see Figure 3.1), this matches the feelings of the 1950s and 1960s that sport should be left to its own affairs. Even with the raised status of sport in the 1990s, although funding was allotted to the building of facilities and increasing the school sports programme and developing elite success, there was no ring-fenced funding established to train a coaching workforce. Unsurprisingly, the coach education that began to appear was very under-resourced, lacked leadership, direction or quality assurance (DCMS, 2002). This created inconsistencies in the quality, content and delivery of coach education across sports, producing an unrecognisable profession and poor public recognition of coaches' value in the development of sporting potential (NCF, 2015; UK Sport, 2001). In response, the government launched the sport coaching Task Force, who in 2002 published a report calling for the professionalisation of sports coaching. They tasked Sports Coach UK (scUK), now UK Coaching, with launching the UKCC aimed at creating levelness across the coaching sector – and across sports – standardising and professionalising a historically volunteer workforce (NCF, 2015).

The concept of professionalism is not clear cut, however. Thinking, for a moment, about professionalism generally, society assigns the term 'profession' to particular job roles. Historically, medicine and law have been used as the 'paradigm professions' (Robson, 2006, p.8). The seminal work by Becker (see Robson, 2006) highlights the power relations that society assigns to those individuals deemed to be professional. Becker concluded that 'profession' was, for him, a 'symbol used in many ways by

different kinds of people for different reasons', rather than a neutral or scientific concept, 'divorced from the reality of professional practice' (Robson, 2006, p.8). Importantly, for Becker, 'profession' does not describe an actual occupation, but a way of thinking about occupations (Robson, 2006). As such, it could be argued that the term 'profession' is a 'socially constructed and contested concept, meaning different things to different people at various times' (Robson, 2006, p.11). Clearly, comparing coaching against other professions is not helpful. However, professionalism comes in many forms. Evetts (2011), focusing on the sociology of professions, suggests professionalism is about acting like a professional and that the idea offers protection and accountability. This means that coaches internally construct, and actively uphold and promote the image and identity of professional behaviour (Robson, 2006).

Malcolm et al (2014) identified four drivers that have influenced the attention professionalising coaching has received: firstly, the increased finance into sport; secondly, the growth of the undergraduate provision of sport coaching courses; thirdly, the increased trend to pay coaches; and lastly, the recognition that coaching is more than a generic process. In defining the professionalism of sport coaches, early discourse identified characteristics of traditional professions and compared these to sport coaching (Malcolm et al, 2014). Even within the field of sport coaching, there is discontinuity between participation sport and high-performance sport (Lyle & Cushion 2017b). Moreover, coaching had an ingrained cultural and historical 'image' of a volunteer workforce, meaning coaching demonstrated a weak(er) profile when compared against traditional models of professions (Duffy et al, 2011). This begins to highlight some of the mitigating factors that impacts on the professionalisation 'agenda' of sports coaching. For instance, a coach's services, or practice, do not directly impact the public in the same way practitioners within medicine or law would. This means that coaching is not sufficiently valued by society for the government to impose

education and training of coaches (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). Moreover, on the point of increased funding to elite athletic performance, and the way in which coaching has been neglected, this is somewhat understandable considering the lack of 'proof' that coach practice impacts athlete performance (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b).

Another approach to professionalising a sector is controlling the dissemination of knowledge, and to establish entry routes to the role (Sheridan, 2014). UKCC created a 'professional' image and a new definition of professional practice for coaching (Houlihan, 1991; Taylor & Garratt, 2010). This replaced existing practices and identities with new forms of knowledge – recasting, debarring, and even excluding some coaches from what once defined their existence (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). The implementation of UKCC required NGBs of sport to deliver education to coaches in new, redefined ways – a formal, 'institutionalised, chronically graded and hierarchically structured' system, (Coombes & Ahmed, 1974, p.8) – to produce a predictable, controlled and efficient coaching workforce (Williams & Bush, 2017). Here, coaches are shown a 'gold standard' model of coaching, which learners are expected to mimic (Abrahams & Collins, 1998; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Cushion et al, 2010).

Yet UKCC saw professionalisation of coaching as a linear process (Piggott, 2012), neglecting the ingrained cultural and historical traits between sports, leaving some NGBs more professionalised that others (Taylor & Garratt, 2008; Piggott, 2012). On a micro-level, athletic experiences internalise certain coaching methods, which influences perceptions of coaching, fostering a strong identity of coaching, adding further resistance to this professional image (Cushion et al, 2003; Chesterfield et al, 2010). Although UKCC attempted to legitimise the knowledge, ideas and autonomy of coaching, it offers no protection of the boundaries coaching operates within, due to the diverse occupational landscape of coaching making it difficult to regulate (Lyle &

Cushion, 2017b). There is a lack of distinct understanding of expertise, confusion over the coaching role, no evidence that coaching is held in high status by society or government, and a huge proportion of unqualified coaches still remains (North, 2009). Moreover, the diverse roles of coaches and the fact there is still no entry requirements for coaching, or a qualification threshold, impacts the professionalisation of the sector (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). There is still no development pathway, because access and progression through the UKCC pathway is unrestricted (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b). This means the UKCC is more of a reference point than active policy that reforms development of coaching education and practice. Although UKCC intended to provide standardisation and consistency across the workforce, a lack of licensing, entry requirements and a recognised professional body leaves it the line of least resistance (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b).

Perhaps, then, drawing distinctions between professions and justifying coaching as a valued occupation is not necessary (Lyle and Cushion, 2017b). Instead, there is a need to establish coaching as a knowledge-based occupation, built on tertiary education and appropriate vocational training. This requires mechanisms to encourage and monitor the diffusion of professionalism into coaching practice. This might mean restricting membership to coaching, or overhauling the registering and licensing of coaches, which appears an essential part of any professional occupation. However, rather than push for exclusivity, the focus should be on professionalisation of practitioners – including the conditions and environment within which coaches operate (Lyle & Cushion, 2017b).

In summary, sport coaching has made few steps forward in relation to establishing a professional status. This is because the nature of the sector makes it difficult, and it is unlikely any pursuit of traditional profession recognition criteria would be worthwhile. Although the UKCC intended to create professionalisation

across the coaching workforce, it has not been as effective as first hoped (Townsend & Cushion, 2017).

3.2.3 The mesosystem of sport coaches' learning ecology

Under Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, this section discusses the mesosystem of sport coaches' learning ecologies. This is where two contexts meet: the coach's life experiences and the formal education provided by BC. It is within this 'level' where coaches experience organised activity that enables them to learn more effectively within their microsystem – where they are given guidance and tools to help them fulfil the requirements of the education programme (Jackson, 2016). Therefore, the mesosystem includes people interested in supporting and promoting learning – the education team and coach developers.

The concept of socialisation has received attention in education research, especially with physical education (PE) teachers. For those learning to become part of the profession, teaching comes with its own processes of socialisation that influences teacher's beliefs, assumptions and values (Lawson, 1983a; Pike & Fletcher, 2014). As such, early socialisation experiences greatly influence the quality and effectiveness of teaching (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). However, little research has explored socialisation in coach learning, and consequently, this was one of the aims of this PhD.

In relation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, when coaches attend their formal education, they transition from their microsystem to the mesosytem and back again (see Figure 3.2). It could be argued that this transition captures a process of socialisation. The individual's microsystem has its own culture – the 'sum totality of knowledge, values and beliefs' of their social group (Jarvis, 2010c, p.13) – that is carried by each human being within their microsystem and transmitted through social interaction and informal learning. This means we learn the culture of our microsystem

through socialisation. Moreover, our microsystem changes as we join other groups, with their own subcultures, changing the culture of our microsystem as we are confronted with new knowledge, ideas, values and practices (Jarvis, 2010c). As such, we are part of the change process and active agents in socialisation (Jarvis, 2010c). Applying Lortie's (1975) theoretical framework, Lawson (1983a) identified three phases of socialisation within teaching: 'recruitment socialisation'; 'professional socialisation' and 'occupational socialisation' (Hushman & Napper Owens, 2012). The first two are discussed here, and the third, in section 3.2.4.1. Here, I will review the literature on socialisation, applying it the sport coaching context.
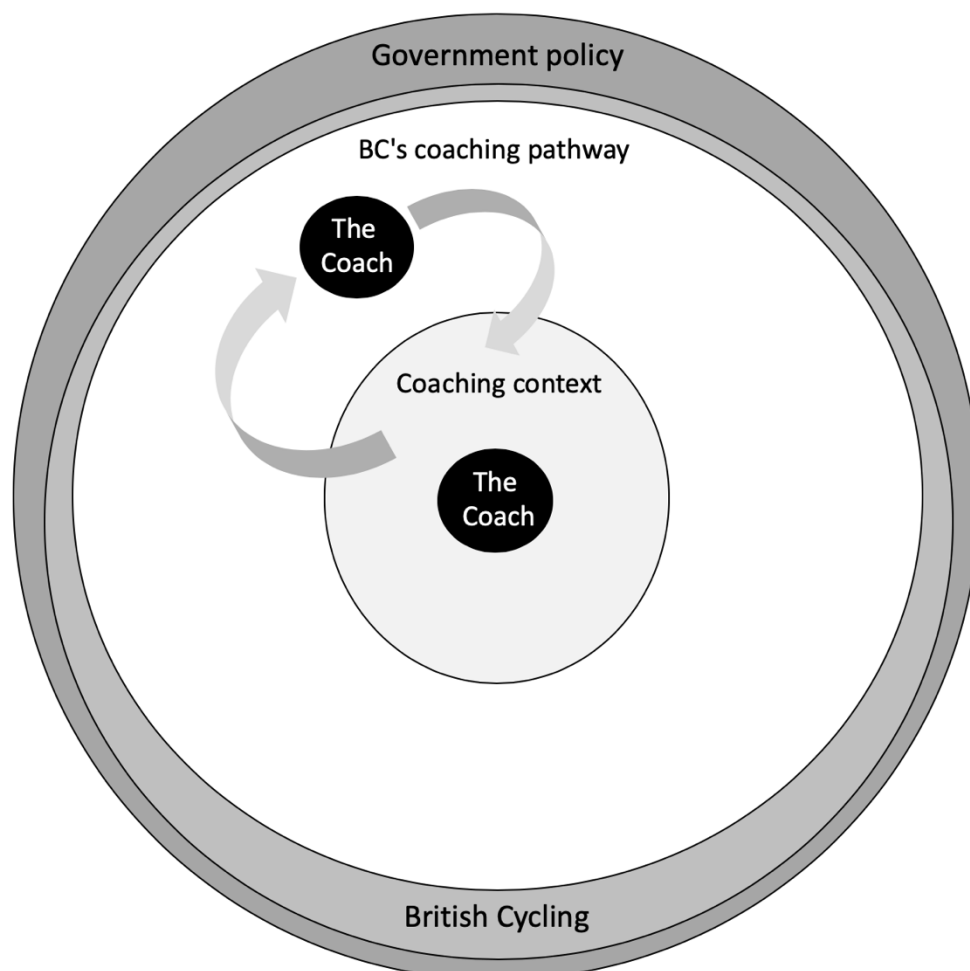
Figure 3.2 – Coaches' transition from the microsystem into the mesosystem

3.2.3.1 Entering the mesosystem – Recruitment socialisation

Recruitment socialisation relates to the learner's previous knowledge, which they bring to their formal education experience (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). The role that previous knowledge has in coach learning is discussed in a later section, but could include, for example, preconceived notions about education, previously gathered beliefs regarding what defines quality coaching and ideologies about professional conduct. Dowling (2011) stressed the need for education programmes to produce graduates with professional identities suitable for the socially diverse and ever-changing landscape of their occupational context. However, the strength of prior experiences and the individual's ingrained beliefs and knowledge structures limits the scope of change during the education programme because they prevent learners from being open to novel ideas and challenges (Dowling, 2011; Fengolio & Taylor, 2014). These ingrained beliefs can mean individuals feel they have to continue with the traditions that they perceive to be 'professional' (McCullick et al, 2012).

3.2.3.2 Socialisation within the mesosystem – Professional socialisation

Professional socialisation relates to the experience of going through a formal training process (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). It is in this phase of socialisation where learners' beliefs regarding their profession are either challenged or reinforced (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). During formal education programmes, teachers have been found to welcome, internalise knowledge, begin to think like other PE teachers and develop professional identities as teachers of PE (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). However, Capel et al (2011) concluded teacher training programmes in PE did not help trainees articulate, share, discuss or debate, let alone change, their beliefs.

Formal education that offers practical experiences of teaching gives trainees an understanding of the multiple roles of a teacher, helping them become more

concerned with pupil learning than the activity of teaching and developed their flexibility so they could modify lessons on the spot (Laker et al, 2003). However, poor experiences of teaching during their training led to ineffective restructuring of their views of teaching (Capel et al, 2011). Therefore, during such practical experiences, it is important that trainees have time to reflect on and question appropriate practice to develop knowledge in weak areas (Capel et al, 2011). BC's formal education offers learners the opportunity to coach within their clubs and it is possible that this element of the education programme offers learners this practical experience. Moreover, more experienced professionals within placements who do not challenge trainees' prior experiences or assumptions hinder their further professional knowledge, meaning that outdated practices are maintained (Lawson, 1983b). As such, trainees have been noted to be more impacted by their practical teaching, or the teachers they taught with, than by the education programme (Laker et al, 2003). Lawson's work highlights the importance of previous knowledge and discusses the programme's attempt to change these knowledge structures as a socialisation process, where formal education socialises learners into 'their way'.

3.2.3.3 The role of formal coach education

Historically, experience in sport was essential for coaches because coach knowledge was kept to kinship groups or shared within coach-athlete relationships (Day & Carpenter, 2016). Here, coaching knowledge was built through trial and error, where learning to coach and learning to be coached took place through socialisation and networking (Day & Carpenter, 2016). Consequently, coaches and trainers valued experience and networks over theory and formal education – they set up a community of practice (CoP) where they shared knowledge, stories and solutions (Walsh & Carson, 2019). This has created prevalent pedagogies – established practices and

processes, and normalised behaviours – which are ingrained in some sporting and coaching cultures (Walsh & Carson, 2019). However, these might not represent best practice for novice coach education or serve the profession in the future.

In some ways, the professional status of sport coaching rests on the delivery and regulation of formal qualifications (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Certification is deemed to act as a gatekeeper to a profession and ensures competency can be both assessed and quality assured. 'Graduating' a coach education programme shows that a coach has acquired, or at least demonstrated, the minimum competency expected by the NGB – structuring sessions, delivering information to athletes, and providing feedback in a prescribed manner (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c).

Although certification is important to a profession, coach education programmes serve a bigger purpose. Formal qualifications regulate the recruitment of coaches and standardise the delivery and expectations of practitioners. The inception and implementation of the UKCC developed, for the first time, an education pathway for coaching. Here, the vision was for individuals to progress through a series of structured and standardised levels (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Formal education defines what knowledge is necessary for coaches to practice, and how that knowledge can be 'best' transmitted. In this way, formal education accelerates the learning that takes place from experience and differentiates between good and bad experiences (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). However, evidence-based models, for example Cote and Gilbert (2009), which was used by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE; 2016) to develop draft standards to guide and assess coach education degrees, reflect the coach as a finished article. This leaves coach developers with an image of the knowledge required, but no signposts of how to navigate the journey (Walsh & Carson, 2019).

Importantly, formal education relies on coach educators to facilitate learning through active listening and effective questioning free from micro-political manoeuvrings (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Coach educators play a central role in coach learning and raising coaching standards by developing the coaching profession. They are key in analysing novice coaches' performance and simulating practice. In addition, by providing clear demonstrations, coach educators can persuade coaches that desired practice works, more than challenging deeply ingrained knowledge, values and beliefs (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). As such, the coach educator role is assumed to be a teaching role but may be more appropriately conceived as a facilitator role. The importance of education cannot be overstated because it directly impacts the quality of future practice, and in turn, shapes the development and success of the coaching profession (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Importantly, formal education programmes should prepare individuals for occupational practice, and it is assumed that coaches leave formal education courses with a toolbox of strategies to effectively coach at the level they have been prepared (Cushion et al, 2010). To this end, formal education should be based on a clear set of intentions relating to what learners are expected to achieve.

Nonetheless, learning about coaching and learning to be a coach is a complex and messy process because sport coaching involves the application and integration of different forms of knowledge and skills in dynamic and ill-defined contexts (Jones & Standage, 2006). Different opportunities present different ways of learning, and blending these, more than separating them, is key to learning (Cushion et al, 2010). As such, coaches use multiple, interconnected sources of learning, meaning a learning situation cannot be understood in isolation. Moreover, the development of each coach is unique; individuals encounter, or use different situations and sources of information, in diverse ways (Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). This

means that the processes involved, and the impact of learning experiences on coaches' holistic knowledge and practice, are not yet understood (Stodter & Cushion, 2017).

Formal coach education has received mixed reviews for its decontextualised approach that fails to replicate the complex nature of coaching (Cronin & Lowes, 2016; Cushion et al, 2010). Formal education incorrectly places an emphasis on learning within 'formal' situations, when, in fact, education and training within sport coaching relies on formal, informal and non-formal provisions. Research has consistently shown that knowledge is developed through experience, forming the basis for expertise in coaching (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Subsequently, course content can conflict against the methods, routines and practices learned from experience, meaning only snippets of 'new' knowledge is integrated into coaching practice (Chesterfield et al, 2010). As a result, coach education creates a shared, more than a personal meaning, among participants (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004).

This presents NGBs with a dilemma. Newcomers to coaching might have prior knowledge and experiences of the sport and its culture or enter coaching as a youth or older adult with different world views (Trudel, Gilbert & Rodrigue, 2016). Although experience plays a major role in coaches' learning – and that cannot be stressed enough – preparation to coach cannot be left to myopic experience alone (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). The relative success of coach education starts with the individual's past experiences and networks of existing knowledge, beliefs and values (Cushion et al, 2003; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Crucially, this means that the same coach education opportunity has a different impact on different individuals, depending on each individual's unique starting point (Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Stodter & Cushion, 2017).

As a result, coaches attach less importance to formal coach education. The fact that learners arrive on the course with knowledge and experience of practicing much of

what is covered on the course means little new knowledge is gained (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). In fairness, formal coach education programmes are a starting point, but that leaves many coaches feeling like the course only offered a basic understanding (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). In addition, learners feel unable to implement new ideas from their formal coach education experiences because they appear abstract and removed from everyday practice (Gilbert et al, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lemyre et al, 2007). This leads to poor motivation as coaches struggle to see the relevance of the course material – an overly technical, rigid curriculum – that is disconnected from the complex, messy reality of coaching in everyday practice (Cushion et al, 2003; Cassidy et al, 2006; Cote, 2006; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). This leaves coaches questioning the information learned through their formal education experiences later in their careers (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Lastly, the standardised curricula, presenting a 'tool box' of professional knowledge and a 'gold-standard' model which learners are expected to mimic, crams too much information into a short period of time (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Cushion et al, 2010; Lyle & Cushion, 2017c).

The content of formal education courses is normally gathered from the wisdom of more experienced coaches. In some ways, this makes sense as those coaches have the knowledge required to educate novice coaches. Yet this assumes that coach education is based on the practice of experts. In addition, reconstructed histories by experts can be problematic due to a tendency to combine present, past, true and false memories into a narrative that best represents themselves (Bernstein & Loftus, 2009). Critically, just as important is the developmental aspect of coach education – giving novice coaches the autonomy to move beyond existing practice, to be innovative, experimental, adaptive and reflective – to build the foundational knowledge and skills for higher 'levels' of coaching (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). This is in line with the concept of a coaching pathway building knowledge throughout qualifications, a system where

coaches accumulate knowledge, more than simply polish their existing practice (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Identifying the signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005) of coaching can be challenging because coaching, as a profession, is developing slowly, meaning they are often masked as prevalent pedagogies and hard to locate in coach education (Walsh & Carson, 2019).

Formal education within sports coaching can be placed on a continuum, from genuine 'education' to 'indoctrination' (Cushion et al, 2010). Most programmes fall on the less effective side of this because of flawed assumptions about coaches and coaching (Piggott, 2012). The overly simplistic approach that UKCC programmes adopt – that learning is a fixed capacity, where coaches are 'empty vessels' waiting to be filled with knowledge – is deskilling coaches through indoctrination (Cushion & Nelson, 2013; Day & Newton, 2016). Most UKCC programmes aim to develop standardised knowledge to overcome typical coaching dilemmas, suggesting that coach education could be labelled as 'training' (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). This raises questions about whether coach education should be conceived as an educational endeavour at all (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c).

Although coaches question the impact formal education has on their learning, they attend coaching qualifications because they are compulsory. This compulsory aspect means that coaches are unlikely to contest the coach educator, or course content, in fear of failing the course. Instead, they are likely to present an 'outward appearance of acceptance' whilst harbouring disagreement with the 'official coaching orientation' (Cushion et al, 2003; Chesterfield et al, 2010).

Research investigating coach learning is yet to provide specific, structured, evidence-based suggestions that coaches can use to enhance their learning and effectiveness (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). This means that formal coach education programmes, which are key to coaches' development, are linked to numerous

concerns for how coaches learn (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Lyle (2007) identified four themes scholars recommended to improve coach education. Firstly, that programme design needs to be more closely aligned to the perceived demands of coaching. Secondly, personal models of coaching need to be developed. Thirdly, education programmes need to be based on learning theories. Lastly, more attention needs to be paid to the cognitive skills underlying desirable practice.

With regard to what coaches value in formal coach education, Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) highlighted that coaches want education that improved their coaching ability. Crucial to this was relevant and usable, practically applicable content – information that is easily applied to their coaching context and theory that is explicitly linked to practice. Secondly, coaches do not want to be lectured to. They want interactive, practical activities combined with group learning, mentoring and multi-sport learning opportunities. They want problem-solving tasks and time to discuss ideas with their peers – to share ideas and experiences with other practitioners – facilitated by the coach educator. In addition, coaches want to be mentored, but this is far from being a functional, positive and unproblematic process (Cushion, 2006). Travelling large distances to attend formal education increased the chances of this being perceived as ineffective, especially if facilities were deemed unsuitable. Coaches also highlighted how internet-based education is more widely accessible, highlighting Stewart's (2006) call for discussions around how e-learning can be integrated into coach education. In connection to accessibility, Nelson et al (2013) concluded that providers should ensure funding is available for all coaches, not only those who are elite. When it came to coach educators, ineffective tutors were those who were perceived to be unprepared, had poor communication – for example, used too much jargon – and presentation skills, delivered poor demonstrations, lacked detailed knowledge, practical experience and status (Nelson et al, 2013). Conversely,

effective coach educators were 'experts' who worked at the cutting edge of their discipline; had a depth of knowledge because they had been there and done it; they closed the theory-practice divide; were well-prepared; enthusiastic; delivered good demonstrations; and did not push their agendas on trainees (Nelson et al, 2013).

In Summary

Reviewing the existing literature, this section provides an introduction to what we know about coach learning and coach education. Coach education is normally a series of activities packaged as large-scale certification programmes, which are developed by NGBs and higher education courses related to coaching and sport science (Nelson et al, 2006). NGBs should deliver formal coach education that satisfies the demand of government policy, whilst engaging learners, offering a learning experience that holds importance and relevance. Rather than aiming to change coaches' existing beliefs and values, it is suggested that courses evidence how 'new' methods can improve practice and be demonstrated in contextually applied 'live' coaching situations (Gutskey, 2002). A failure to do so may result in newly acquired knowledge at risk of being discarded – "washed-out" – post-course, when the coach returns to their coaching setting (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Evaluating formal coach education has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, however, few studies have attempted to directly investigate, or evaluate, a coach education programme. As a result, there is no evidence linking coach education certification with coaching competency in practice (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Therefore, it cannot be said that the coaching competency achieved at the end of participating in the programme is actually a result of the programme. Many researchers have made idealistic prescriptions for coaching, but the underpinning evidence of coach learning remains scarce. Lyle & Cushion (2017c) make calls for more robust empirical research that explains how coach learning works,

allowing development of pertinent frameworks that can improve learning and practice within different populations of coaches.

It is clear that coaches feel a disparity between what they experience on formal education courses and what they want to experience. By applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching, this research will explore the development of BC's formal education. The extant literature has been critical of formal coach education, but there is no research asking why formal education operates as it does. By studying the macrosystem and the exosystem, this work will gain a better understanding of why and how the mesosytem was developed and is delivered as it is. Moreover, it is clear that finding more effective ways to deliver formal education is an emerging theme in the narrative of coach education. Previous research has emphasised the importance of aligning trainees' perceived demands to the programme's design, developing personal models of coaching and basing coach education on theories of learning (Lyle, 2007). Again, applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching to explore the individuals who attends BC's formal education is the first step towards developing personal models of coaching and aligning content to trainees' demands. Lastly, although previous coaching research has questioned the effectiveness of formal coach education, research has yet to explore coaching practice as 'graduates' enter their coaching environment – their microsystem – and experience the nuances of their social conventions within their cultural setting. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD allows exploration of novice coaches' microsystems and the workplace factors that facilitate or inhibit their ability to coach as instructed on course.

3.2.3.4 Theoretical perspectives of teaching

Theories of learning are considered in a later section of this chapter. Here, I present a discussion of four theories of teaching from Jerome Bruner, Malcolm Knowles, John

Dewey and Paulo Freire. They are all grounded within the humanistic perspective, which is particularly relevant to the education of adults. These theories are discussed within the context of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem because they are relevant to the way in which coaches are taught, but also the way in which they are instructed to coach.

Knowles

Knowles' (1980) work on andragogy, and how he perceived adult learning, is discussed later as a theory of learning. However, his work also offers a theory of teaching because he regarded teaching as a process of designing and managing learning activities (Jarvis, 2010b). This emphasises the facilitative teaching style of humanistic educators of adults. Knowles embraced the progressive education for adults so that they are different in perspective from other approaches. By regarding the learner as an active explorer in their learning, Knowles saw teachers as resources for both the content and the process of learning (Jarvis, 2010b).

Dewey

Dewey (1938) was a major exponent of progressive education, recognising the scientific method of learning: an individual starts with a problem; develops a hypothesis; and tests that, by examining empirical evidence (Jarvis, 2010b). This means problem solving, freedom and experience were significant in Dewey's work. He believed individuals have an unlimited potential for growth and development, seeing education as an agency that facilitated that (Jarvis, 2010b). He argued genuine education came from experience, without the structure of knowledge and social rules.

This perspective results in a changed relationship between teacher and learner. For Dewey, teachers facilitate and guide learning by providing the right type of

experiences through which learners may acquire knowledge and understanding, facilitating growth and development. Within this view, teachers should not interfere with, or control, the process in the same way that a didactic teacher would. However, by the very nature of guiding learners through experiences which the teacher has chosen, teachers do, by consequence – even if only subtly – control learning (Jarvis, 2010b). Nonetheless, incorporating Dewey's ideas into adult education means many theories of teaching reflect a progressive educational perspective that can be traced to Dewey (Jarvis, 2010b).

Bruner

Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction recognises that human beings are natural learners and that schools fail to engage and sustain voluntary learning. Bruner argued that schools socialise learners, moulding them into sufficient problem solvers who are equipped to take up their role in society (Hargreaves, 2003). Therefore, it is arguable that teaching that fosters a didactic process creates dependent learners, rather than independent learners. This is crucial, because Bruner argues that this creates adults who expect teachers to instruct them and place pressure on educators to conform to their expectation of teachers being didactic and authoritarian (Jarvis, 2010b).

Bruner claimed that a theory of instruction should have four main features. First, Bruner maintained that instruction should facilitate and regulate the exploration of alternatives, which, in adult learning, is driven by curiosity. Sometimes, this is naturally present, for example when the socio-cultural environment no longer provides the relevant knowledge to cope with the present experiences. However, it is possible to use questioning so that learners' questioning is focused in a particular direction. This means that structure and form of knowledge is important when teaching adults (Jarvis, 2010b). Secondly, in relation to adult learning, Bruner suggests

that knowledge needs to be structured so that it is easily grasped by learners. Thirdly, for Bruner, knowledge should be taught in the most effective sequence. Lastly, all learners need reinforcement – punishment and reward – in the process of learning and teaching.

Bruner's theory only discusses one type of educational method – instruction, which is clearly a didactic presentation of knowledge (Jarvis, 2010b). As a teaching method, instruction controls the amount of knowledge students learn. However, when focusing on how coaches receive information on formal education, or indeed the ways in which coaches are instructed to coach, it is likely that this didactic approach is relevant. Importantly, many teaching methods, including informal methods, include direction and guidance from the teacher, meaning they are not as free from control as they may appear (Jarvis, 2010b).

Freire

Freire (1970/1993) criticised teaching approaches that deposit information into students who are waiting to be filled with intellectual wisdom – what he termed the 'banking concept of education' (p.53). He believed that this approach inhibited the development of critical thought and creativity, arguing this was an oppressive approach to teaching. Freire proposed moving away from a knowledge transfer approach, and instead, embraced a relational and dialogical understanding of practice. He advocated that educators should meet the learners' needs and listen to them. Here, the educator is thought to undergo a diagnostic process, where they can learn the language of potential learners and identify with them. This means bridging the gap between them and the learner, which creates the genuine relationship and dialogue crucial to the humanistic approach. In this way, the learner is seen as a 'co-investigator' of knowledge, rather than a 'docile listener' (Nelson, Potrac, Groom and

Maskey, 2016). Secondly, learners are encouraged to participate in dialogue and problematise the reality in which they are immersed. Here, there is a clear attempt to question what learners had previously taken for granted, which can make learners become aware that they have been socialised into an ingrained culture. Freire argued that by becoming aware of what has happened to them learners are able to reconstruct their universe of meaning. This captures how learners are not objects of the social process, but creative subjects within it.

Freire suggested that genuine dialogue results in a truly equal partnership: the teacher teaches learners, who learn and teach the teacher. Therefore, Freire emphasised that the teacher has to reach out to learners and learn from them in order to contribute to the teaching and learning process. Here, teachers should start where the learners are and encourage them to explore and learn from their experiences. As such, the educator is seen as a facilitator of learning and education is a process of change. Within this view, education is an active process in which the teacher neither controls knowledge of learners or learning outcomes. However, coach education does little to raise the critical consciousness of coach learners or help them better understand how coaching is shaped by, and helps reproduce, dominant sporting ideologies and experiences (Nelson, Potrac, Groom and Maskey, 2016).

In Summary

Bruner's theory of instruction views individuals as natural learners who are often disengaged with learning because teaching fosters a didactic process, which creates dependent learners. For Bruner, instruction controls the amount of knowledge that is learned and creates adult learners who expect teachers to be didactic and authoritarian. Knowles also agreed with this element of control, viewing teaching as a process of managing learning activities, emphasising the facilitative teaching style

of humanistic adult educators. Knowles saw the teacher as a resource for content and the process of learning. However, in contrast to Bruner, Knowles saw the learner as an active explorer in learning.

Similar to Knowles, Dewey supported the idea of progressive education. However, in contrast to Bruner's theory of instruction, Dewey argued that teachers should not control the process. He saw the teacher as a facilitator who guides learning by providing rich experiences through which learners acquire knowledge and understanding, which facilitates growth and development.

Likewise, Freire argued education is an active process where the teacher neither controls the knowledge of learners or the learning outcomes. Similar to Knowles, Freire saw the learner as a creative subject, not an object of the social process as they are encouraged to question the reality in which they are immersed and question what they had previously taken for granted. Similar to Dewey, Freire saw the educator as a facilitator, and learning as a process of change. However, unlike the other theories, Freire saw the teacher and learner relationship as an equal one, based on genuine dialogue. Here, educators learn the language of learners and identify with them to meet learners' needs. As a result, the teacher is thought to teach the learners, but the learners equally teach the teacher.

In summary, it is important to acknowledge that many teaching styles – including informal methods – have an element of control or guidance from the teacher, meaning they are not as free from control as they would appear.

3.2.4 The microsystem of sport coaches' learning ecology

Under Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, this section discusses the literature in relation to the microsystem of sport coaches' learning ecologies. The microsystem captures the immediate environment within which the individual interacts and is the

most relevant level to understanding learners' experiences in learning communities (Jessup-Anger, 2015). It includes an individual's daily encounters and it is at this level that we make decisions and plan what to do and how to do it, where we reflect on experiences and the effects of our actions (Jackson, 2016). Within coaching, this would represent the cycling club, the physical coaching space or facility, the spaces created and inhabited by the individual where they explore, inquire and learn – the dialogic space the coach has for discussions, the creative space they create for imagining their practice and the reflective space for meaning-making. Within this 'level' is also the relationships that the coach establishes, or might already have established, with the club themselves, other coaches and 'objects' within their social environment. In this way, Bronfenbrenner's EMHD recognises the physical, social and cultural environment within which learning occurs (Jackson, 2016).

3.2.4.1 Exiting the mesosystem – Occupational socialisation

Occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) is the final phase of Lawson's socialisation framework and occurs when individuals are awarded a job and are inducted into the workplace (Lawson, 1986; Lawson, 1988). The previous section highlighted the role of informal, social learning that coaches experience within their clubs, which implicitly means an element of socialisation within a subculture. A personal set of coaching views emerge from observing and interacting with existing coaches of 'how things should be done'. This is an inherent part of coach learning, which is captured by the concept of socialisation.

The transition from training programme to the workplace is not always smooth, and it is here that an individual learns the role, expectations and values associated with a specific occupation (Stroot, Faucette & Schwager, 1993). Consequently, the workplace is considered to be the main socialising agent, where the individual

progresses through an induction process and 'learns the ropes' to become accepted into the workplace and its culture (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Therefore, it is logical that within coaching, this phase is where trainees receive the 'coach' title, and step into their first year of coaching within their club. When novice teachers enter the workplace, they often experience a 'reality shock' (Stroot et al, 1993), where the teaching situation is different from those they were exposed to in their pre-service settings (Veenman, 1984). An example of this disparity is that formal education programmes often emphasise peer work to prepare and teach lessons. However, in reality, novice teachers are often isolated from other teachers in both the department and the wider school (O'Sullivan, 1989; Stroot et al, 1993). Coaches, especially those in the voluntary sector, are likely to have jobs outside of their coaching, they may experience role conflict (Stroot et al, 1993). This challenge means some coaches might let coaching skills slide in favour of other work commitments.

3.2.4.2 Socialisation within the microsystem – 'Wash-out' effects

Blankenship and Coleman (2009) concluded that much of what PE teachers learned in teacher training was 'washed-out' in induction years. 'Wash-out' (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981) has been identified as an enduring issue for beginner teachers. Firstly, they proposed that 'wash-out' occurs because teacher training has a weak impact on pre-service teachers, and therefore does not permanently impact trainees' beliefs and practices. Secondly, while teacher training promotes that trainees teach using inventive and creative techniques, teacher training actually supports traditional instruction methods. While the beliefs and skills that teachers learn through teacher training are 'washed-out' by difficult circumstances during their induction into the workplace, little is known about the concept of 'wash-out' – let alone in the sport coaching context.

Lawson (1989) provides a four-stage framework to examine 'wash-out'. First, the political and economic landscape – the national and local standards and economic constraints – mean that new ideas might not be supported or funded, which results in wash-out. Conversely, a teacher who buys into the standards and is supported by beliefs of local curriculum and budget is less likely to experience the effects of wash-out.

Secondly, if the goals of the organisation and the individual do not align, the induction process is more difficult. Aligned with personal factors is the individual's disposition: those who enjoy a challenge, independence and like to be a 'rebel' are less likely to experience wash-out. Other workplace conditions (Lawson, 1989) that facilitate wash-out include the amount of equipment and available facilities – teachers with inadequate equipment are more likely to experience wash-out than those who have the equipment they want. Equally, the control, supervision and evaluation of teaching performance offered by the organisation will impact wash-out. Giving teachers more control over what and how to teach will help inhibit wash-out. Lastly, those subjects afforded little respect, or prestige, will feel little incentive to teach as learned in training, because no one expects good teaching from them anyway. Whereas, teachers who have the support of authority figures within the organisation are less likely to experience wash-out than those teachers who are unsupported.

Thirdly, situational factors, which include the student subcultures of the school, the curriculum, an emphasis of learning and fellow teachers, can facilitate or inhibit wash-out. For example, if the student subculture opposes the teacher in various ways, instruction can be difficult and could lead to wash-out. Likewise, fellow teachers who do not see value in the subject being taught, or the importance of helping students learn, can make things difficult for beginner teachers, washing-out well-learned skills.

Lastly, most teachers desire student acceptance and enthusiasm for content (Lawson, 1989). This links to the personal-social factors that can facilitate wash-out. Students resisting activities, or how activities are taught, and a perceived lack of enthusiasm may mean that the teacher abandons the methods learned in teacher training (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009). This means that students are a powerful socialising force that can lead to wash-out (Curter-Smith et al, 2008).

Section 3.2.3.3 discussed CoPs and how peripheral participation means that individuals have small roles and responsibilities, and how this responsibility increases as the individual moves towards the centre of the community (Lave & Wenger, 2001). However, the concept of socialisation suggests that this lack of accountability results in individuals regressing in their development and implementation of what was learned in their formal training. Under this pressure, teachers have been found to discard most of what was learned on their formal training and revert back to previous knowledge (Capel et al, 2011). Conversely, supportive school cultures, where innovative pedagogic views aligned to views of the new teacher and where students proved less resistant with fewer behaviour and management problems, helped new teachers overcome negative workplace factors (Curter-Smith et al, 2008). It is also important to mention that socialisation can continue beyond the initial induction process. Pike and Fletcher (2014) argue that socialisation can occur up to four or five years into an individual's immersion in a workplace. Understandably, however, there is limited research on this, and this is outside of the scope of this PhD. Yet, it is worth noting that Henninger (2007), who investigated the careers of veteran teachers, found two distinct types of PE teachers. Firstly, lifers, who were characterised by a commitment to teaching and student learning, despite difficult organisational contexts. Interestingly, personal teaching efficacy, pupils, and supportive administrators were found to play a major factor in professional longevity of lifers

(Woods & Rhodes, 2010). Secondly, troupers, who were characterised by feelings of being 'stuck' in the system, biding their time until something better comes along.

3.2.4.3 Navigating 'wash-out' effects – Bridging the gaps

Within education, and indeed sport coaching, formal education intends to offer trainees the skills to prepare 'graduates' to meet the demands of their diverse occupational settings (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). However, when coaches transition from their formal education experience – the mesosystem – back to their microsystem, there may be a gap in their practice. The novice coaches' future behaviours are shaped by their understandings of values and constructs within the discipline (Parker, Chambers, Huber & Phipps, 2008). For example, how do they decide what to coach, how to represent it and deal with problems of misunderstanding? Where do their explanations, their use of metaphors and similes and questioning abilities come from?

This is an under-researched area of sport coaching, yet it is a concept that has been considered in the teaching literature. Most teachers, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that most coaches, begin with some expertise in the content they deliver (Shulman, 1986). Of interest, then, is how coaches' transition from being an expert learner into a novice coach. More specifically, how do they use their content knowledge to generate new explanations, representations or clarifications? In summary, this concerns the question: how does learning for coaching occur (Shulman, 1986)?

Shulman's (1986) model of pedagogic reasoning suggests that teachers draw on three categories of knowledge. First, subject matter relates to an understanding that something is so, and why it is so. Here, teachers understand why a given topic is central to a discipline and another is peripheral. Second, PCK extends knowledge of

subject matter to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching. This is the knowledge that promotes the expert learner to teacher. This relates to the way the teacher explains and demonstrates their subject knowledge to make it comprehensible to others. It is also here where the teacher has an understanding of what makes learning of certain topics easy or difficult. This is important when learners have preconceptions, which are usually misconceptions, because it equips the learners with strategies most fruitful in reorganising learning, emphasising that learners are unlikely to appear as blank slates. Lastly, and again, extending the previous point, is curricular knowledge. The curriculum is, essentially, a programme for teaching particular skills at a given level. This is the instructional materials available in relation to programmes and characteristics that serve as indicators and contradictors for use of particular curriculum materials in particular circumstances. Here, the materials are the tools teachers use for certain content and to evaluate student accomplishment. This highlights how experienced teachers should have an understanding of the curriculum to offer alternatives for instruction.

Importantly, Shulman's (1986) model describes how teachers' understanding is transformed so that they become teachers. Although this transformation process relies on all three of the different sources of knowledge, PCK appears to be the most important and distinguishes experienced teachers from novices (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). This is why teachers attend a Bachelors' degree, followed by a teaching qualification focused on teaching methods and theories of learning. PCK includes the numerous ways that topics can be taught – for example, knowing which simulations or demonstrations help explain certain topics, or which topics students find difficult or easy to learn (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) discuss a novice teacher who used content knowledge that he learned in college; employed activities his college professors used

in college classes; used examples from college textbooks; and used terms from his college class to describe or justify his pedagogic approach. However, after one year as an intern, he had developed his own ideas and begun to develop his PCK through teacher education classes and teaching experience. They concluded that expert teachers have seen the larger picture several times over, which builds their PCK and offers flexibility to select the teaching method that does justice to the topic being delivered. Conversely, novice teachers, who are constructing their PCK, start small and progress to the larger possibilities in terms of the curriculum organisation and pedagogic flexibility. As such, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman argue that teacher education programmes should focus on PCK and encourage student teachers to think about their subject matter in terms of pedagogic content. Here, student teachers need an awareness of the processes they have to undertake to make content knowledge available for students. In addition, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman suggest some teachers experience difficulties in their first years of teaching because the teacher education programme has not helped them think about the curriculum in terms of the larger picture.

It is during this phase of socialisation (Lawson, 1983b) that the novice coach learns to perform like a coach and apply knowledge to their practice – to develop their habits of hand (Shulman, 2005). Most NGBs provide structured, classroom-based training programmes (Jones, Morgan & Harris, 2012) with limited attention on developing interpersonal competencies required to be an effective coach (Vella, Crowe & Oades, 2013). Consequently, Walsh and Carson (2019) suggest that the non-formal and informal learning environments (within the coach's microsystem) are worth exploring to identify the deep and implicit structures of prevalent pedagogies – the habits of hand and heart relevant to the coaching profession and coach learning. Importantly, these authors stress that it is the process within and across places that must be

considered when identifying signature pedagogies, not necessarily the place itself. However, signature pedagogies – habits of hand and heart – are not necessarily easy to see as they do not fit into a category, place or process (Walsh & Carson, 2019).

In Summary

Lawson's (1989) framework has four important features. Firstly, each category contains several elements, and elements within each category often influence each other. For example, political factors influence NGBs, and the importance NGBs place on sport development impacts the funding available for clubs, which, in turn, impacts coaches. This links to the second point, that these four categories interact with each other. For example, the funding available, as a result of the 'political and economic category', influences the equipment available to coaches, which sit within the organisational category. This means that categories might have positive or negative influences on workplace conditions and wash-out. Lastly, it is important to remember that elements can change. If something is causing wash-out, changes can be made to stop it, so that it does not contribute to wash-out.

Furthermore, Gudmundsdottir & Shulman (1987) suggest that the reality shock and wash-out of novice teachers is impacted by a lack of preparation in seeing the curriculum in terms of the larger picture. Shulman's (1986) model described how teachers' understanding is transformed so they become teachers. His model suggests that pedagogic reasoning and action is possible because of teachers' sources of knowledge: content knowledge; PCK; and curriculum knowledge. Out of these, PCK is considered the most important because it distinguishes experienced teachers from novices. Importantly, this is learned 'on the job' and offers flexibility to select the teaching method that does justice to the topic being delivered. Consequently, Gudmundsdottir & Shulman (1987) suggest that teacher training programmes should

focus on PCK and encourage trainee teachers to think about subject matter in terms of pedagogic content.

Pike and Fletcher (2014) suggest that research that follows teachers from pre-service experiences through induction processes and into the first years of teaching would provide researchers and educators with strategies that would lead to sustained change in practices or beliefs, or at least lead to an appreciation of a need for change. This PhD aims to achieve that. By recruiting participants before attending the Level 2 qualification, this research will capture experiences through the three socialisation phases identified here. Moreover, given the highly contextualized nature of teachers' socialising experiences, it is hard to apply findings from studies to other situations. Nonetheless, if teachers' socialisation underpins how they think about and conduct themselves in their roles, then it is likely that coaches undergo the same process. There are strong and lasting implications for how these experiences impact the quality of coach education and learning. As such, this PhD will contribute to the absent socialisation research within sport coaching by addressing this concept.

3.2.5 Theories of (coach) learning within the meso- and microsystem

Part of professionalising coaching means building coaching on the foundations of effective education programmes and continual professional development (Armour, 2010). The term 'coach education' has been used for numerous years and encompasses a range of learning experiences and the broader process of coach learning (Mallett et al, 2009; Cushion et al, 2010). However, 'coach education', as a term, has become synonymous with the formal qualification provision – the UKCC pathways – delivered by NGBs. By contrast, 'coach learning' – a more recent term – places an emphasis on the person, rather than the system or curriculum, and highlights how learning can occur both inside and outside of educational settings (Lyle & Cushion,

2017c). Learning can be defined as the 'process of bringing about change in knowledge, skills, behaviours or attitudes' (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a, p.254). However, learning about coaching and learning to be a coach is complex and messy (Walsh & Carson, 2019). Coaching research, and the broader coaching community generally, has been criticised for its limited critical engagement with learning theory (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). Therefore, the aim of this section is to critically discuss the different learning theories and how they have been applied to coach learning.

3.2.5.1 Behaviourism

At one time, two perspectives dominated the debate on learning theory: nature vs nurture. Nativism argued that categories of human knowledge that underlie sophisticated adult behaviour are actually innate (De Lisi & Golbeck, 1999). However, the processing carried out by an adult is the same as that carried out by a child, adults are just better at it (Mitchell & Ziegler, 2013). As such, the nature-nurture divide might be more closely aligned, united even, in their perspective of continuity between childhood and adulthood because adults might have the same kind of knowledge, but more of it (Mitchell & Ziegler, 2013). This is the nurture argument of the debate: that categories of human knowledge are directly shaped by experience (De Lisi & Golbeck, 1999).

Synonymous with the experiments of Pavlov's dogs and Skinner's box, behaviourism argues that observable behaviour change is the result of external stimuli – a deterministic, stimulus-response. Operant conditioning (Skinner, 1974) captures the process through which certain behaviours are more likely to occur by reinforcement. Here, emphasis is on learning by doing – through repetition and drills – and attention is on specific feedback (negative reinforcement) and praise (positive reinforcement; Skinner 1974). Most coaches use both positive and aversive forms of

control within their practice (Groom et al, 2012). Yet, Skinner grounded behaviourist learning theory in the positivist paradigm, and as such, viewed learning as a measurable aspect of behaviour, which could be predicted and controlled by the environment (Delprato & Midgley, 1992). Although the ability to reproduce results in a reliable manner is a central strength of behaviourism, this in itself presents a criticism. Behaviourism does not acknowledge human agency in learning (Chalmers, 1996) and cannot explain how individuals negotiate between different potential rewards and goals (Funke, 2014; Eseryel et al, 2013; Hung, 2013).

3.2.5.2 Cognitivism

In the 1960s, proponents of the cognitivism perspective answered the criticisms of behaviourism by highlighting the role of internal mental processes in learning. Here, the learner is seen as an information-processing system – essentially, a computer (Eysenck & Keane, 2015). Within this perspective, people are rational beings who act as a result of thinking, rather than being programmed to respond to environmental stimuli. This perspective suggests that it is necessary to determine how processes like thinking, memory, knowing and problem-solving occur, where cognitive structures develop because of better knowledge structures, more efficient mental processes, and effective access to memory structures (Eysenck & Keane, 2015). This allows for a shift from simple tasks to more complex ones and treats development as a ladder on which people move upward, step by step to successfully higher stages in a linear fashion (Fischer & Daley, 2007).

Arguably, although this view to learning acknowledges the autonomy individuals have over the way in which they act, it neglects the social aspect of learning. Bandura (1977, 1986), a social-cognitivist, argued that social behaviour is not the result of trial and error, like the theoretical assumptions of classical and operant learning theories

suggest (Wulfert, 2005). For Bandura, people learn from experiences and by watching others, what he termed symbolic modelling. Within sport coaching, this explains why coaches learn to be coaches when they are the ones being coached, as athletes or participants. This notion of learning through modelling – observational learning – acknowledges the interrelations between individual, environment and behaviour is underpinned by reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, within this theory, expectations, self-perceptions, goals, and physical abilities all combine to direct behaviour in sport coaching contexts (Thomas, Morgan and Harris, 2016).

3.2.5.3 Constructivism

The work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Vygotsky (1886-1934) offered an alternative view: constructivism. Under their theory of social development, they both suggested that individuals reflect on, and organise their experiences to create order, which helps the individual adapt to their environment. This has two related meanings: first, a change process, different from maturation and learning, where existing cognitive systems develop, and refine, over time; second, the application of previously formed cognitive systems that confer meaning in the present context (De Lisi & Golbeck, 1999).

Piaget argued that knowledge is a process, rather than a state, where we come to know and understand something by acting on it, physically and mentally, to construct knowledge (Toner, Moran & Gale, 2016). Applying constructivism to sport coaching, coaches should not be seen as 'passive' learners, but active agents who construct meaning and internalise knowledge. Constructivism argues that learning occurs within the 'gap' between what's known and what's encountered. New information can be exploited, and cognitive structures become modified; conversely, new information can be ignored and discarded. Piaget (1950) termed this change process

'equilibration', where learners move from one equilibrium state to another. The conflict between being closed to change and retaining previous knowledge and understanding is countered by the individual's need to be open. This means equilibration is a self-regulating, dynamic process, where the tension between openness and closure serves as a motivational force for development (De Lisi & Golbeck, 1999).

At the core of Vygotsky's work is that all learning is social, historical and cultural in nature (Potrac, Nelson, Groom & Greenough, 2016). This view moved away from the various beliefs and ideas that underpinned nativist and behaviourist theories of learning discussed above. Vygotsky proposed two levels of mental functions: lower order mental functions, such as perception, memory and attention, which he considered more concrete forms of thinking; and higher order mental functions, more conscious and abstract thinking, such as, logical reasoning, selective attention and verbal thinking (Potrac et al, 2016). Vygotsky argued that these higher order mental functions are embedded in social contexts and relationships, where we share and negotiate with others, through the use, and application, of cultural and psychological tools – for example, objects, signs and systems developed to assist thinking in particular communities (Potrac et al, 2016).

3.2.5.3.1 Peer-learning

Educators within the constructivist paradigm should provide an environment that empowers individuals to take control of their own learning (Cooper, 1999). Constructivist educational environments are highly structured, physical and social environments, where educators provide well-planned experiences that challenge naïve, sometimes incorrect concepts, and offer numerous, appropriate opportunities to develop (Cooper, 1999). However, it is common for constructivist educational

environments to be misunderstood as unstructured, discovery zones (Cooper, 1999). Within these unstructured learning zones, coaches are often left sharing thoughts, ideas, experiences and practice with each other. Peer learning – where learners interact with others to attain an educational goal – remains a popular educational approach, which rests on the confidence we can assist others in building our own knowledge and emphasises that knowledge is discovered, constructed and then integrated into existing structures as needed (Cooper, 1999).

Within peer learning, Piaget outlined two types of interpersonal relationships that play an important role: first, unilateral authority relationships, where there is an imbalance of power, which leads to respect for the views of the authority figure without complete understanding of those views; and second, interpersonal relationships based on co-operation, where individuals contribute to interactions with more or less equal capabilities for communication and understanding (Hogan & Tudge, 1999). These relationships are more symmetrical in nature and imply that neither person holds a view without attuning to the view offered by the other. In summary, Piagetian approaches to cognitive development suggest that social interaction is likely to be most beneficial when the relationship between partners is socially symmetrical.

Vygotskian approaches to peer-learning, however, rather than addressing issues of social hierarchy, stress the importance of collaborating with a more competent partner – asymmetry in knowledge rather than social relations. When scholarly discussions include Vygotskian frameworks, the most common concept is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the gap that exists between what the learner can achieve alone and what they can achieve with assistance of a more knowledgeable other (MKO; Potrac et al, 2016). The ZPD is not a 'demarcated space' (Potrac et al, 2016, p.105), but created through collaboration, sharing and negotiation. The notion

of the ZPD, which emphasises teacher-learner collaboration and negotiation, captures teaching performance as a one-way communication process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The ZPD is often discussed in relation to the metaphor of scaffolding, but this can lead to viewing the teacher-learner interaction as one-sided, predominately led by the MKO (Stone, 1998). This risks learning reverting to a more traditional way of delivery, through instruction (Verenikina, 2008). Moreover, Vygotskian philosophy doesn't mean giving learners total ownership of their learning (Potrac & Cassidy, 2006). Although understanding may develop through active engagements in problem-solving activity, failure to check and assist learning could result in learners moving from one level of being wrong to another (Butler, 1997).

3.2.5.3.2 Mentoring

An increased focus on social and relational aspects of coaching development (Cassidy et al, 2009; Jones, 2011) has led to the coach educator becoming an embedded part of most coach education programmes. Coach educators support practitioners in integrating new ideas into situated action by scaffolding the reflection and adaptation process (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Applying Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), mentoring is the process where a person with greater expertise or experience guides a less experienced individual in an occupational or professional context (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a).

Mentoring subsumes various roles (Nash & McQuade, 2015), but there continues to be a significant amount of formal and informal mentoring in coach development. Indeed, many coaches want to be mentored (Cushion, 2006) and often learn from the head coach of their club, or model someone who they admire (Cassidy, 2010). In this way, mentoring is a common pedagogic habit that introduces novice coaches to the subculture of the coaching profession (Walsh & Carson, 2019). However, this

reinforces the need for novice coaches to question and critique the taken for granted pedagogic processes beyond the operational acts of teaching and learning (Walsh & Carson, 2019). Typically, mentors act as learning facilitators, role models, guides or experts in a master-apprenticeship relationship. The mentor-mentee dyad within sport coaching is often seen as a one-dimensional relationship where the mentor is the more powerful individual with greater age and experience (Colley, 2003). As such, the mentor's immediate feedback encourages the apprentice to develop error detection and correction of their work, which, within a Vygotskian view, supports the learner's more seamless transition from their current state to their new knowledge and understanding (Cooper, 1999).

Mentoring, however, continues to be a problematic concept, with little research exploring the complex relationship between mentor and mentee (Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). Mentoring practice is often unstructured, which leads to the uncritical recycling of practice and a skewed power dynamic (Cushion et al, 2003). Coach educators normally exert authority through references to their experience and status, typically muting any suggestions from beginner coaches referring to improving content and structure (Pigott, 2012). However, Tinning et al (2001) suggest that the emotional connection that mentees have to the instructional techniques taught to them by their mentor means they fail to recognise the power relations within the mentoring dyad. Moreover, the operationalisation of mentoring within coaching is impacted by numerous limitations. By nature, mentoring is heavily contextualised (Colley, 2003), and the expense of providing mentoring, in-situ, for extended periods of time, especially in a volunteer context, is challenging (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). In addition, a lack of time to engage with the process, as well as a lack of training and formal appointment of mentors impacts the effectiveness mentoring can have (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a).

Sawiuk, Taylor and Groom (2017) explored the concept of multiple mentors within elite sport, starting the necessary discussion to challenge the traditional concept of mentoring, and move towards the concept of mentoring in practice. Their research found four principle themes relating to mentoring in elite coaching. Firstly, the mentoring process lacked a clear and consistent definition. Secondly, mentors were often limited by their own knowledge, requiring them to direct the mentee towards a different mentor, or expert. Thirdly, the micro-politics within elite coaching hindered the open and honest environment required for effective mentoring. However, they suggested that a multiple mentor system could help to overcome inherent micro-political problems within formalised mentor schemes. Lastly, non-sport, or cross-sport mentors provided bespoke and personal support to coach mentees, which encouraged openness and was perceived as less threatening.

In summary, although highlighting that knowledge is socially constructed, Piaget and Vygotsky divorced the learner from their cultural contexts and practice (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Both Vygotskian and Piagetian perspectives on collaborative learning can result in learning that is one-way and characterised as a conservative progression from incompetence to competence with little analysis of horizontal movement (Jones et al, 2016).

3.2.5.3.3 Activity theory

Engeström (1999, 2001) deviates from this traditional view and embraces the radical notion of individuals rejecting the old, transforming action and creating culture. This extends Vygotsky's suggestion that all social action happens through mediational means and that action never occurs in a social vacuum (Jones et al, 2016). Activity theory interweaves learners' physical environment, social interaction and learning tasks with theory of learning that has strong implications for educators that

determines the effectiveness of peer learning (Cooper, 1999). In this way, activity theory provides a more ecological and holistic perspective – a view of learning that is culturally bound and where the connection between the mind and activity is inseparable (Nardi, 1996). This offers the opportunity to study artefacts as integral and inseparable components of human functioning. Social interaction performs an important function, focusing and refining cognitive gains from activity, preventing over-automatisation of tasks and triggering metacognitive operations (Cooper, 1999). Here, well-structured peer negotiation helps clarify and reinforce goals, maintain proper focus, increase feedback and raise cognitive and meta cognitive awareness and motivation (Cooper, 1999). Therefore, activity theory has the conceptual and methodological potential to forge new ways to help humans gain control over their own artefacts, and therefore, their future (Engeström, 1999).

It is worth noting that activity systems are multi-voiced and the division of labour across the system creates different positions and interests (Engeström, 2001). In addition, it is important to recognise that systems evolve and take shape over considerable time periods, which means that the issues individuals, or a system, face can only be understood in relation to their histories (Engeström, 2001). Crucially, this history needs considering at a local, context-specific level and in relation to more general ideas about what activity 'should' look like (Engeström, 2001). Here, contradictions that cause disturbances serve as an opportunity for innovation and progressive practice, which creates the possibility for expansive learning and transformations because of questions and deviations from established norms (Engeström, 2001). Within sport coaching, this could be when a coach adopts a coaching philosophy from a growing interrogation of their own practice or context and begins to construct an alternative one (Jones et al, 2016). Here, the aim of expansive learning is to produce new cultural patterns of activity – perhaps a new

way of coaching – where learning is an unfolding journey into the unknown (Engeström, 2001; Jones et al, 2016). This shifts away from the idea of a teacher imparting knowledge.

Activity theory is accused of assuming that all learners will be motivated to address and solve the contradictions they are confronted with, when some individuals might choose to avoid conflict, and go along with change to avoid further discord and dispute (Jones et al, 2016). In addition, activity theory might simply capture incidental learning (Young, 2001) and learning is still seen as an internal process (Cooper, 1999). Nonetheless, Engeström's work continues to provide thought and reflection at theoretical and empirical level (Jones et al, 2016).

3.2.5.3.4 Situated learning and Communities of Practice

The theories discussed so far present learning as an unproblematic process of transmission and assimilation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Moreover, these theories neglect the social and organisational contexts – rich in context, culture and emotion, which are powerful factors in effective learning (Griffith et al, 2018; Billett, 2004; Postoholm, 2012). Learning is never a simple process of transfer or understanding of knowledge. Learning, sometimes incidentally, implies becoming fully involved in new activities to perform new tasks, or functions, and master new understandings (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These activities, tasks, functions and understandings, however, do not exist in isolation, but are part of a broader system of relations in which they have meaning. Socio-cultural theories of professional learning conceptualise learning as an outcome of the social interactions within particular cultural settings (Bilett, 2004; Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Griffith et al, 2018).

Situated learning emphasises the importance of social practice and the active role of the learner, suggesting that learning involves the whole person acting and

participating more fully within the world (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Established in the field of educational psychology, rather than the social sciences, situated learning posits that learning occurs as a result of three factors: people in the context; the tools at hand, for example, objects, language and symbols; and the particular activity itself (Merriam, 2018). Here, the socially constructed world interplays against our subjective and intersubjective understanding, constituting to both the world and our experiences of it (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This participation requires negotiation, and renegotiation, of meaning, which means understanding and experience are in constant interaction (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Consequently, situated learning views learning as a result of people's activity in the social and cultural world (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Building on this, the notion of learners operating within CoPs links situated learning with the social structure of practice and power relations to define possibilities for learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that mastery of skill, or knowledge, requires newcomers to move from the peripheries of the community towards full participation within its socio-cultural practice. This provides a way to speak about relations between newcomers and old-timers within the community, activities, identities, artefacts and communities of knowledge and practice. Legitimate peripheral participation refers to the gradual adoption of tasks and roles within the community, as coaches learn from those around them. This links to the notion of occupational socialization (Husham & Napper-Owens, 2012).

Crucially, the concept of CoPs highlights how athletes learn to take on the role of 'coach' while they are still athletes. Rather than learning by replicating the performances of others, or acquiring knowledge transmitted in instruction, situated learning places an emphasis on all activity being situated and involving the whole person. As such, activity, the learner's agency, and the world are seen to mutually constitute each other (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

However, control, selection and the need for access are inherent in CoPs. Access is liable to manipulation because the organisation of access can either promote or prevent legitimate participation. Part of learning how to participate, legitimately, in a community involves learning how to talk, and be silent, in the manner of those individuals who fully participate within the CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Within the shared practice of the community, both forms of talk enable the individual to engage, focus their attention and bring about coordination, as well as signalling membership. So, for newcomers, the purpose is not to learn from talking, but to learn to talk as a key aspect of their legitimate participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Newcomers' tasks are small and simple, with little cost of errors because the individual has little responsibility for the activity as a whole. However, their contributions to ongoing activity gain value in practice, which increases as the newcomer becomes more adept (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Empirical studies of apprenticeship style learning focus on task knowledge and take the narrow approach of viewing skills as activities to be learned. Situated learning, however, acknowledges the value of participating within a community, and recognises the role the learner has in becoming part of that community. This means that becoming a full participant in practice involves more than simply increased commitment of time, intensified effort, more – and broader – responsibilities within the community, and more difficult, or risky, tasks. Becoming a full participant in the CoP requires an increased sense of identity as a master practitioner (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Here, learning and sense of identity are seen as inseparable aspects of the same phenomenon (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

One implication of the social reproduction of a CoP is that sustained participation of newcomers become old-timers. This must involve conflict between forces that support processes of learning and those that work against them (Lave & Wenger,

1991). Learning, transformation and change are always implicated in one another and the status quo needs as much explanation as change (Lave & Wenger, 1991). CoPs are engaged in a generative process of producing their own future, and learning processes are part of the working out of those contradictions in practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This social reproduction implies a renewed construction of resolutions to underlying conflicts. This reproduction occurs in cycles, which leave historical traces of artefacts – physical, linguistic and symbolic – and social structures, which constitute and reconstitute practice over time (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Importantly, it is easy to mislabel an organised layering of social engagement as a CoP (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). The defining feature of a CoP is that a common sense of purpose, mutual engagement and shared resources connect the community. This is clearly distinguishable from both networks of practice, which are looser, informal, and accessed for specific purposes; and specific mentoring relationships, already discussed (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). In addition, situated learning suggests that learning through legitimate peripheral participation occurs no matter which educational form provides context for learning or whether there is any intentional form at all (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This notion places context at the centre of learning, where learning is seen as specific to the event and specific circumstances. Here, knowledge is meaningless unless it is specific to a given situation. This means that even general knowledge can only be gained in specific circumstances and brought into play in certain situations. Therefore, learning is thoroughly situated in the lives of people and in the culture that makes it possible.

3.2.5.4 Humanism

Within the humanist perspective, learning is seen as a personal act to fulfil an individual's potential. This highlights the affective and cognitive needs of learners

and emphasises that learning is impacted by freedom and dignity. As one of the founders of the humanist perspective, Rogers (1969) suggested lives and education should be based on the assumption that there are multiple realities. Rogers (1969) argued that learners' autonomy and choice helps ensure activities are relevant to their needs and career-related interests. Receiving, building and applying knowledge within a particular context is important (Nelson et al, 2013; Armour et al, 2017) because cognitive processes are inextricably linked to the learner's physical and social context (Cooper, 1999). He suggested that we could enrich our lives by learning from one another through a process of open-mindedly exploring the many perceptions of reality that exist (Rowley & Lester, 2016).

Rogers encouraged educators to place trust in learners by permitting them to be active participants in the learning process (Rowley & Lester, 2016). This is because Rogers (1969) argued that learners are best-placed to understand the problems at hand, and that significant learning occurs when the topic is perceived by the learner to have relevance to their purpose. However, this threatens the careers of those with professional identities closely bound with the importance of knowledge and the role of 'expert' (Thorne, 2003). This has implications when considering the applicability of his work within sport coaching and coach education. Traditional approaches to coach education are aimed at developing a 'standardised' knowledge base and a range of strategies developed to overcome what is perceived as 'typical' coaching dilemmas (Nelson et al, 2014). This approach – where coaching is seen as a controllable, sequential process – has left practitioners dissatisfied and disillusioned with much coach education, which is perceived as fine in theory, but disconnected to reality (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac & Jones, 2009).

Aligned to the same perspective, Dewey (1902) suggested that people learn from experiences and their reflections on those experiences. Here, Dewey (1933) saw

reflection as a further dimension of thought and defined reflective thinking as active, careful and persistent reconsideration of beliefs and knowledge. Reflective practice has become embedded within sport coach education (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006; Miles, 2011). An internal cognitive process, reflection bridges the gap between experience and learning, where expertise develops by 'making sense' of an accumulation of previous events (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). The aim is for information, feedback and experiences to become personal understanding, retrievable for future application. At a basic level, the reflective process verbalises learning, even if internally, allowing coaches to think about their coaching. Critically, however, reflective practice needs to be 'situated' in real coaching events to make it meaningful and requires already developed cognitive structures (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). Moreover, beginner coaches find it difficult to reflect on coaching processes that become taken for granted (Cassidy et al, 2009). These two points suggest that reflective practice would be less useful to novice coaches, although blogs and CoPs can be useful (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a; Stoszhowski & Collins, 2014, 2017). Importantly, there is limited evidence that links reflective practice and effective coaching, hinting that it has become embedded in coach education because it is seen as 'good practice', performed by good practitioners (Cushion & Nelson, 2013).

Similar to Piaget, Dewey argued learning occurs when equilibrium is lost. However, Dewey suggested learning is initiated by doubt (Day & Newton, 2016). For Dewey (1938), teachers are agents through which skills are communicated and rules of conduct are enforced. Under Dewey's view, coach education programmes should be based on the principle that learning through doing is essential, since coaches learn from experiences and reflection on those experiences (Day & Newton, 2016). Here, learning experiences should be embedded within some realistic, meaningful, significant or authentic activity – for example, within the individual's social context,

with guidance from the educator – to enhance the learning process (Cooper, 1999). In addition, learners' involvement in tasks gives a more realistic picture of the components of expertise in a given domain, which allows learners to practice higher-order thinking and apply new knowledge in a variety of problem-solving contexts (Cooper, 1999). This suggests there is a difference between knowing how and being able to. As such, primary experiences – experiential learning experiences – are needed to understand what was learned through secondary learning experiences (Jarvis, 2009). Here, practical opportunities are important to convert personal understanding and practical coaching skills.

Dewey's perspective also emphasises the importance of coach educators quickly becoming familiarised with trainee coaches' backgrounds, especially the qualifications at the beginning stages of the certification system (Day & Newton, 2016). Within this view, coach education is the continued reconstruction of experience, where coaches re-think and re-examine their experiences in order to deal with the demands of the present (Day & Newton, 2016). This means that an individual's level of understanding is partially determined by prior thought, beliefs and knowledge (Cooper, 1999). Coaches' unique biographies act as a filter, or lens, through which they view and interpret new knowledge – guiding and influencing what is learned (Cushion et al, 2003; Trudel et al, 2013). Ludec et al (2012) found that coaches validated, changed, or intended to change their practice, depending on their existing biography. Coaches who changed their practice were thought to have transformed their biography – cognitively, emotively and practically – linking new learning to previous cognitive structures in order to re-establish accordance with the situation. However, coaches who did not change, cited that new material did not match their previous biography, or they perceived no gap between existing practice and the new information.

Stodter and Cushion (2017) extended this work, proposing that learning occurs through a double-filter: the first 'level' referring to personal knowledge, beliefs and practice; the second focused on context. They argue that any learning experience must pass through these two filters before new knowledge is translated into practice and integrated into a coach's cognitions. Their work highlights the active role coaches take in their learning and draws attention to the prominent role that personal biography plays in supporting and hindering change. They suggest that knowledge and practice is intertwined with beliefs about coaching and "what works", and that this frames the entire learning process. This double-filter concept fits with the broader notion of lifelong learning, encompassing self-directed, incidental learning overlapping with continual professional development (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Moreover, this work explains coaches' "cherry-picking" of information, where "matching" concepts are accepted and slotted together with little cognitive effort; whereas contradicting information creates cognitive dissonance, blocking a learning opportunity (Moon, 2004). Accordingly, coaches take the path of least resistance, reverting back to what previously worked in order to maintain harmony in their biography (Jarvis, 2009). This suggests a mismatching of knowledge is not the motivational force for development as it was once thought. Consequently, new material becomes fragmented and mutated (Piggott, 2013) and becomes at risk of becoming "washed-out" (Cushion et al, 2003).

Within this model, an individual's biography – and their engrained and historically robust belief systems (Taylor & Collins, 2016) – serves a 'guidance function' (Mezirow, 2009; Moon, 2001). Sometimes, this can be restrictive, and hold learners back from opportunities to be open to consideration of novel ideas and challenges (Taylor & Collins, 2016). However, it should not be underestimated how these signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005) act as a frame of reference, as sometimes,

it is impossible to separate these beliefs from who the individual is as a coach (Taylor & Collins, 2016). Stodter and Cushion (2017) reported that participants judged whether concepts fitted with their coaching context based on their understanding of their situation and their belief that concepts were usable and workable, or not. Here, if new concepts were seen as relevant, they could bypass the individual's biography. Crucially, this means that making coaches see the beneficial outcomes of using knowledge in everyday contexts could bypass barriers to learning (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). This aligns with Guskey's (2002) work that highlighted the importance of making learning practically applicable. Coaches want to see how a 'new' approach can be contextually applied to 'live' coaching situations. This supports why coaches find observation of other coaches a powerful learning source. However, once coaches believe knowledge can work within their context, they want to experiment using it in practice (Stodter & Cushion, 2017). As such, coach educators should recommend how their initiatives can improve learning practice, rather than focus purely on changing learner's beliefs and values (Nelson et al, 2013).

3.2.5.5 Coaches as adult learners

A common criticism of formal coach education is its lack of recognition of the adult learner. Mature learners are heterogenous groups who bring and often draw on established practices and roles (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). This means that one coach might prefer, or value, certain learning situations to another, which creates disparate learning for some coaches (Werthner & Trudel, 2009; Leduc et al, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2014). After asking adult learners about their learning experiences following professional development and education workshops, Race (2005) suggested a practical set of conditions for effective learning, which highlight that learning is more likely to occur when individuals want to learn; realise that learning is relevant

to them; learn through doing; learn through feedback; internalise learning and relate to what is already known; reflect on learning; and evaluate learning. Considering these points within the context of coach education, Knowles suggests that group discussions, problem-based learning activities and peer-learning all serve to capitalise on the experiences of learning, and by consequence, enhance adult learners' learning experiences.

Early research on adult learning adopted a behaviourist approach, exploring changes in observable behaviour. However, the shift towards the humanist perspective, in the mid-twentieth century, moved away from viewing learning as mechanistic changes in behaviour and emphasised aspects of personal growth and development (Merriam, 2018). Jarvis (1992, p11) defined learning as the 'everyday living and conscious experience' and the 'process of transforming that experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and beliefs'. This resulted in adult education becoming recognised as a field of practice in its own right (Merriam, 2018). Lodged within humanistic learning theory, three main theories of adult learning emerged: andragogy, self-directed learning, and transformative learning.

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles is generally regarded as the father of andragogy (Jarvis, 2010a). He is not responsible for inventing the term, but in the 1960s, he introduced the term to the United States and Western Europe (Merriam, 2018). He originally defined andragogy as the 'art and science of helping adults learn' (Knowles, 1980, p.43). He took adult characteristics and created a set of assumptions about the ways in which adults can take responsibility for learning:

1. Adult learners are self-directed and not as dependant as child learners. This means adults are responsible for their own decisions and treated as capable.

2. Adult learners have a wealth of experiences that form a rich resource for learning. However, this can also create pre-dispositions and biases.

3. Adults are ready to learn what they feel they need to know, based on the social role.

4. Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking their learning (Knowles, 1984).

5. There is a notable shift from the future application of learning seen in children, to the immediate application of learning in adult learners – here, adults are more problem-centred in their learning than subject-centred (Knowles, 1980, p44-45).

6. Adult learners are intrinsically, not extrinsically, motivated. This means adults' engagement in learning is impacted by the extent to which they perceive the new knowledge will help them perform tasks.

Providing a set of unique assumptions andragogy presents a holistic and integrative approach to learning, which, Knowles argues, is both realistic and pragmatic. However, Knowles' principles tell us more about the characteristics of adult learners than the nature of learning itself (Merriam, 2018) and neglects the nature of experience (Jarvis, 2010a). Nonetheless, Knowles' work highlights the learner as a self-directed learner, which is significant to learning theory. The concept of andragogy has become a popular term in adult education and, although it is not a theory of adult learning, it has profound implications for the practice of teaching adults (Jarvis, 2010a).

The concept of self-directed learning (SDL) emphasises whole-person learning and the goal of learning is a fully-functioning person (Jarvis, 2010a). It appeared around the same time as andragogy, and indeed forms the first of Knowles' assumptions. Rogers (1969) and Knowles were close in their emphasis on the self and the need for self-development and self-direction. Rogers frames the concept of SDL in regard to experiential learning, suggesting that experiential learning is self-initiated. Here, the teacher is seen as over-rated, because the learner is the agent, where social structures are not too oppressive (Jarvis, 2010a). Effective SDL, however, does not mean sitting in a classroom alone; it is a systematic process that allows the learner to take control of his/her learning. Although this approach may offer inspiration for teachers, it does not provide a comprehensive theory of adult learning, or consider the wider socio-cultural context (Jarvis, 2010a). Nonetheless, at the heart of SDL is a humanistic belief system that is fundamental to many who work in adult education. Indeed, most adults are engaged in SDL projects as part of everyday adult life – in workplaces, continual professional education, Higher Education, and online or virtual learning environments, where more successful learners are more self-directed (Merriam, 2018).

Transformative learning

Transformative learning is the most recent and most written about theory of adult education (Merriam, 2018). The focus here is on the cognitive process of meaning-making. Mezirow (2009), the main architect of this theory, suggested that learning is a process of making meaning from experiences as a result of the learner's previous knowledge, which means learning is a new interpretation of an experience. He argued that the learning process is initiated by a sudden, or dramatic experience, which causes the learner to challenge and examine their assumptions and beliefs that have

guided meaning-making in the past (Mezirow, 2000). In this way, Mezirow suggested everyone constructs reality – 'perspectives' – depending on reinforcement from various sources within their socio-cultural world, which change when it conflicts with experience. Quite simply, this causes the individual's reality to become transformed as a result of their reflection of their situation (Jarvis, 2010a). This means that most of Mezirow's work helps understand the learning process in socialisation and non-formal situations. However, his work restricts learning to the cognitive domain and, although he emphasises the role of experience in learning, not all people learn from their experience (Jarvis, 2010a).

3.3 Summary

This Chapter has outlined the relevant literature on coach learning and formal education within sport coaching. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to this project, this Chapter considered the wider literature in accordance with each 'level' in turn. Therefore, this Chapter began with a discussion of the wider socio-, political-, and economic context within which sport coach education operates, and the professionalisation of sport coaching. By studying the macrosystem and the exosystem, this work gained a better understanding of why and how the mesosytem was developed how it was and is delivered as it is. This Chapter presented a discussion on the literature around the role of, and criticisms of, formal education in sport coaching. The extant literature has been critical of formal coach education, but there is has been no research asking *why* formal education operates as it does. It is clear that finding more effective ways to deliver formal education is an emerging theme in the narrative of coach education. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching in an original and novel way, and exploring the individuals who

attends BC's formal education, is the first step towards developing personal models of coaching and aligning content to trainees' demands. This Chapter then considered the literature in relation to socialisation – recruitment socialisation and occupational socialisation as trainees attend formal education – and then occupational socialisation and 'wash-out' within an individual's microsystem. Although previous coaching research has questioned the effectiveness of formal coach education, research has yet to explore coaching practice as 'graduates' enter their coaching environment – their microsystem – and experience the nuances of their social conventions within their cultural setting. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD allows exploration of novice coaches' microsystems and the workplace factors that facilitate or inhibit their ability to coach as instructed during their formal education courses.

- CHAPTER IV -
Methodology and Procedure of Research

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter critically discusses how my ontological and epistemological assumptions, philosophical and paradigmatic considerations, the methodological framework and the employed methods all informed my approach to the procedure of this research. First, I will outline my philosophical positioning by explaining my ontological and epistemological stance as a researcher, before justifying my choice for employing a micro-ethnographic method(ology), outlining how this guided my fieldwork. Then, I will discuss symbolic interactionist theory as the methodological framework that underpinned this project. Following this, I will discuss the participants who engaged with this research, before outlining the methods used for data collection and analysis. Finally, I will discuss some of the challenges I faced while managing and negotiating the research field, outlining my roles and responsibilities as a researcher as well as the ethical considerations impacting this research project. To conclude, I will explain my understanding of research quality to demonstrate how I have attempted to achieve trustworthiness and transparency in this thesis.

4.2 Philosophical and paradigmatic considerations

In this section, I aim to outline how my chosen philosophical beliefs impact my personal views on coaching, but also underpinned this investigation into coaching practice.

As identified in the research questions, to evaluate the effectiveness of BC's coaching pathway, it is important to understand and evaluate coaching effectiveness. Arguably, improving our understanding of this will help the development of coaching practice and the professionalisation of coaching and coaches' accountability (Mallett & Tinning, 2014). Crucially, there is a paucity of published research that demonstrates systematic ways in which coaches are evaluated (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). It is well established that sport coaching is a messy, social activity that is not quantifiable or measurable in a positivist way (Jones et al, 2003; Cushion, 2014). Coaches are more than the product of rational, predictable and knowable processes, often acting in complex and unpredictable ways (North, 2013). Their thoughts and actions are value laden, situated in subjective, lived experiences, which create individual, self-conscious, intentional and reflective learners (North, 2013). The increased recognition of the social process of coach learning has led to interpretative approaches and associated methodologies being increasingly applied to coaching research (Cushion, 2014). As such, the current research project was positioned in the interpretivist paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm is founded on the premise that the social world is complex, where people – including the researcher and participants – define their own meanings within their individual – respective – social, political and cultural settings (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). As such, the social world is not absolute, and experienced in the same way by everyone, but is seen as something that is constructed within an individual's 'interests, emotions and values' (Sparkes, 1992, p.25). Therefore, what exists in an individual's social world is what the individual thinks exists (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). This means that at the heart of interpretivism is understanding the experiences of individuals and groups, which are, naturally, subjective (Coe, 2012). So, rather than discovering general scientific laws, which can

inform future predictions in the way that positivist research would aim to do, interpretivist researchers are concerned with uncovering how individuals make sense of their experiences and actions (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

Crucially, although the emphasis is on personal meaning-making, interpretivism does not take an uncritical attitude, where the mind creates what people say or do, or imply that the social world only exists in people's heads. Instead, it is suggested that the mind influences how we interpret movements and utterances, inclusive of the meanings that we attach to the intentions, motivations and actions of ourselves and others (Smith, 1989). As such, interpretivist research does not see the process of sense-making as fixed and stable, but changeable, based on an individual's experiences and sense-making capacities (Sparkes, 1992). This means that social reality is seen as a product of how people individually and collectively make sense of their social world (Smith, 1989; Markula & Silk, 2011). Moreover, the meanings that individuals attach to episodes in their social world can be revised and re-interpreted in a variety of different, sometimes contradictory, ways (Biesta et al, 2011; Goodson et al, 2010; Jones, 2013).

4.2.1 Ontological and epistemological positioning

In interpreting reality and knowledge, Pascale (2011) proposed an interwoven understanding of ontology and epistemology. Whereas ontology is concerned with 'the nature of existence, [within] the structure of reality' (Crotty, 1998, p.10), epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is acquired and what counts as knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Crucially, these assumptions impacted my approach to research and underpinned the current project.

The interpretivist approach assumes that individuals are active agents engaging in intra- and interpersonal encounters (Williams, 2016). As such, individuals operate

within numerous realities, which are created and re-created through social interactions (Hammersley, 2012). Here, individuals are seen to actively participate in their social world, and this means there is no reality independent of our own perceptions of the world. Philosophically, the interpretive paradigm dismisses the notion that the social world – for example, people, cultures, social practices and social institutions – can be reduced into constituent, nominal parts, and examined using the same assumptions and methodologies that the natural sciences use to study the physical world. Rather than seeking an absolute truth of an individual's experience, interpretivism aims to understand an individual's experience and what meanings they attach to the events of their lives (Grant & Giddings, 2002). To this end, interpretivism rejects the view that external reality can be objectively investigated through value-neutral research procedures. Instead, the interpretivist approach adopts an 'idealist/relativist ontology' (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014, p.32) and aligns with the epistemological position that knowledge is subjective, and socially constructed (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

Taking the social constructionist view of knowledge, all consciousness is intentional, and always directed against objects that present themselves in different spheres of reality (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). This means that we live in several realities, the basic one being our usual, everyday world, which we share with others and experience, most characteristically, in face-to-face situations (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Humans are social, and our experience of 'self' is developed through meaningful interactions with others. The objects we observe in our world – primarily signs, symbols and language – have certain meanings. This process of 'objectification' fills our everyday lives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, because we all experience our social worlds differently, human acting is confined to a 'social order' – an ongoing human product – which offers some stability to operate within (Berger &

Luckmann, 1966). Humans are social, but they are also habitual. The forming of habits and routines, which continually occur in human acting, is beneficial because it creates certain ways of acting that can be repeated in similar situations, offering predictability to our social worlds. The spread of those accepted habits between actors creates fixed patterns of thoughts and actions, and consequently, institutions emerge. For Berger and Luckmann (1966), these institutions begin to be perceived as something external, objective and given – they become objects in our world.

Through a need for meaningful co-operation in our social interaction, we integrate within and between institutions. In turn, the norms and values within our society legitimise these institutions, developing whole bodies of knowledge, which is externalised, and then carried back to individuals and internalised (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). For Berger and Luckmann (1966), this transmission of knowledge between individuals in society over time, and across generations, is how traditions arise. Our experiences and knowledge are stored as personal and shared memories. These are shared between actors in our use of language and disseminated by institutions to individuals through their use of rituals, symbols and physical artefacts. These institutions are not physical things and cannot exist without being realised by human enactments in roles. Crucially, it is only through human enactments that institutions are brought to life. Individuals participate in a social world, and playing and internalising roles, creates a subjectively real world for the individual.

So, taking a social constructionist view of knowledge, an institution is formed by the people who enact roles within that institution. The knowledge created within this institution is shared with the wider social world by the objects, language, symbols and artefacts produced by the institution. Legitimisation of the institution integrates different meanings to a connected whole, which produces another layer of objectification at both the level of the institution and level of the individual's

biography (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). This process is important when sharing knowledge to new generations and has four levels. The first, and most basic, is how knowledge is built into language use, the vocabulary of the institution, and this legitimises how we see things. The second is the legends of the institution, the sayings, mottos and proverbs we come to associate with that institution. The third level is any explicit theories the institution develops or reinforces. The last level, and the most important, is the creation of an entire symbolic universe, which orders and integrates within its framework, 'all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.114).

In this way, individuals are seen to create their reality, their institutions and their legitimisations (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Equally, this formed reality constructs the individuals themselves. This happens through a process of socialisation, where social norms and knowledge are internalised by social influence placed upon the individual. Knowledge is constructed through socialisation in either a primary or secondary sense. Primary socialisation occurs when we are children, via a 'significant other', who teaches us what's important in society. We see one another through the eyes of the significant other, reflect on this, and then successively generalise the experiences. In secondary socialisation, the process is fine-tuned. It involves less significant others, and is more formalised and abstract, and the people involved become more interchangeable, for example, teachers may take a role, more than parents. Within all of this, conversation is an important means of maintaining a person's subjective reality. What we discuss in conversation, and what is implied, continually confirms and reinforces our picture of reality. The need to maintain subjective reality also means it can change, continuously, as in secondary socialisation, when the present is interpreted in terms of the past; or radically, when the past is interpreted in terms of the present.

As such, interpretivism sees that the only way to explore the realities that exist in people's minds is through subjective interactions as it relates to the impact of an individual's biography, as well as the values and theories, both implicit and explicit, that the individual subscribes to (Sparkes, 1992; Kelchtermans, 2009). Consequently, interpretive researchers see research as a subjective, interactive, co-constructed activity, involving both the researcher and participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Howell, 2013). In this way, the questions I asked as the researcher – my observations of participants and my passing comments – shaped participants' actions (Manning, 1997); and participants' responses influenced my analysis and interpretations of the research. As a result, this thesis is the product of my interactions and relationships with participants as well as my analytical capabilities and choices as a researcher, combined with my understandings of – and subscriptions to – particular guiding theories.

4.2.2 Implications and limitations of my chosen philosophical positioning

Research positioned within the interpretivist paradigm does not seek to develop objective truths and predictive theories or functional models that can be tested, or 'proven', across various contexts. Instead, the focus of this research was on exploring the experiences of coaches, and other key stakeholders, in the development, delivery and attendance of BC's formal education pathway. Therefore, the strength of choosing to position this research within the interpretivist paradigm was the insight into given social complexities that this approach provides (Jones & Wallace, 2005). In addition, the interpretivist perspective allows researchers to better understand how coaches, and those involved with coach education more widely, may come to understand, or choose to respond to, ambiguities inherent within their respective settings (Potrac,

Jones & Nelson, 2014). Moreover, the interpretivist paradigm allows valuable insight into how emotion, cognition, self, context, ethical judgement and purposeful action are intertwined in the experiences of practitioners (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). Finally, the knowledge and understanding that this research generated will hopefully act as a precursor for practical action – something most coach education policy makers fail to grasp (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

Government and funding agencies prefer research that is quantitative, experimental and statistically generalisable (Cannella & Lincoln, 2004). Working in collaboration with BC, I felt they applied pressure, in the beginning, for this project to be quantitative and positivist in nature, questioning the generalisability of findings from qualitative research. Here, the decision makers within BC were unprepared and unable to appropriately evaluate qualitative analyses that feature ethnography and naturalistic data (Lather, 2004). Qualitative research engages in-depth studies that generally produce historically and culturally situated knowledge, which means knowledge can never be seamlessly generalised to predict future practice (Tracy, 2010). However, Williams (2000) argues that generalisation is simply a general idea or suggestion that is concluded from a particular case. The point of interpretivist research is to infer, from specific instances, something about a culture or group of people – by seeing the general in the particular (Berger, 1963). I ask that the reader considers whether the research findings presented in this thesis resonate with them. If there is overlap between the research findings and their own situation, I invite the reader to transfer these findings to their own action (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). In this way, personal knowing and experience can lead to improved practice through naturalistic generalisation (Stake & Trumbull, 1982).

4.3 Methodological framework

One of the aims of this PhD was to explore the physical spaces that coaches operated within and how the objects within those spaces facilitated or inhibited their coaching and learning post-qualification. As discussed above, interpretivism positively embraces social analysis, recognising that people continually construct and reconstruct social reality (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The interpretivist perspective allowed me to better consider how coaches understand and choose to respond to the subtle complexities of their respective settings (Potrac et al, 2014). This allowed for greater understanding of the day-to-day realities of coaches' social worlds and the meaning attached to the objects and physical constructs within them (Goffman 1963, 1959; Blumer, 1969). However, to gain critical distance, structure and evidence – to look for things that might not have been previously considered – it was crucial to have a methodological framework. This section discusses the methodological framework that aligned with this PhD: Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism.

4.3.1 My understanding of symbolic interactionist theory

Goffman (1963) suggested that we use physical space and structures in social drama. So, for example, the same group might behave in the same manner in different places, or, conversely, behave differently in the same space in front of certain out-group individuals. Here, there is a clear difference between place and context. Goffman argued that we use innate objects, or 'props', to extend the physicality of our social world (Goffman, 1963). However, Blumer suggested that the meanings that objects hold for us are modified through an interpretative, transformative process – an internal dialogue, as we choose, explore, reject and change meaning to guide and shape action (Blumer, 1969). Consequently, Blumer argued that we play an active role in constructing our social realities by autonomously attaching specific meanings to

objects and physical constructs and that we are responsible for the ways in which we act towards physical space, institutions, other humans, and their activities (Blumer, 1969). In this way, symbolic interactionism is a 'theory of experience and a theory of social structure' (Denzin, 1992, p.3) concerned with how people interpret interpersonal situations, define meaning in those instances and subsequently act. Therefore, symbolic interactionism facilitates a view of social interactions that evolves through interpretive efforts of individual stakeholders and groups (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016).

Variation in behaviour is natural among members of acting units, but mutual goals represent frameworks to make sense of the world in shared ways (Blumer, 1969). Interactions are informed by interpretations in-situ as reflections on past behaviour, future aspirations and settings within which people operate (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 2015). It is suggested that this process requires individuals to engage in self-indication when interpreting their own conduct in consideration of different perspectives that they believe others share with them (Mead, 2015). Individuals take account of things of interest and relevance, which informs thoughts, interpretations and behaviours. Under this view, the meanings that we have are defined by our past experiences and established understanding in a given context, termed 'schemes of definition', which shape our conduct (Blumer, 1969). Understandably, within this view, this leads to a variety of perceptions, interpretations and interactions (Blumer, 1969).

To evolve agreeable relationships, individuals must actively engage with their environment by taking into account specific interpretations, long standing assumptions and opinions of views that others share with them (Mead, 2015). Symbolic interactionism captures these collectively agreed behaviours that groups of individuals develop when evolving mutual understandings, expectations and meanings, termed joint acts (Blumer, 1969). When new situations arise, people need

to develop interpretations for these undefined scenarios. Here, individuals develop actions by aligning personal evaluations about one or more situations towards shared expectations, creating a shared understanding, which fit together with others' lines of conduct to agree some division of labour (Blumer, 1946).

Symbolic interactionism is a distinctive approach to studying human group life and conduct, built around a strand of general similarity. George Herbert Mead laid the foundations, but Blumer developed his own version, which dealt explicitly with crucial matters that were only implicitly considered by Mead (Blumer, 1969). This approach rests on three premises: that humans act towards 'things' based on the meaning that those 'things' have for them; that this meaning is derived from, and arises out of, social interaction with others; and these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process to deal with the 'things' that we encounter. I will now expand my understanding of each of these, explaining each premise in turn, before discussing Blumer's six root images. Finally, this section concludes by exploring how Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism has been applied to sport coaching research.

4.3.1.1 Blumer's (1969) three basic premises

First, humans act towards 'things' based on the meaning these 'things' have for them. This is such a simple concept that is often ignored or downplayed in contemporary social science. 'Meaning' is often taken for granted and pushed aside as unimportant or regarded as a stimulus-response link between factors responsible for human behaviour and the behaviour observed (Blumer, 1969). Psychology often explains human conduct as a result of an individual's attitudes, conscious and unconscious motives, perceptions and cognitions. Sociology often uses social position, status demands, social roles, norms and values, social pressure and group affiliation

to explain human conduct. For Blumer, however, both these views mean there is no need to consider meaning because the individual is merely seen to identify a factor and the resulting, observable behaviour. As such, Blumer emphasises the role that meaning plays, arguing that the meanings we hold for objects are central in their own right, and suggests that ignoring these meanings would be falsifying the behaviour that is being studied.

Secondly, the meanings we hold arise from our social interaction with others. Numerous other approaches make reference to the meaning of objects. This premise, however, the source of meaning, is arguably what sets symbolic interactions apart from other approaches. For Blumer, the dominant views of realism and mental construction of meaning accounted for meaning as being either: intrinsic – a natural part and objective make-up of the thing or constructed from sensations, feelings, ideas, memories, motives and attitudes – brought to the thing by the individual. However, Blumer argued that in the first instance, there is no process involved in the development of meaning, it just needs to be recognised. In the second instance, Blumer saw meaning of the object as the expression of psychological elements, brought into play and connected to the individual's perception of the object. Consequently, he argued the individual tries to explain meaning of the object by isolating particular psychological elements that produce meaning. As such, symbolic interaction sees meaning as arising from a process of interaction between people, where meaning grows from the ways in which other people act toward the person with regard to the object. In this way, for Blumer, it is their actions that define the object for the individual, viewing meaning as social products that form in, and through, the defining activities of people as they interact (Blumer, 1969). Viewing meaning-making in this way gives symbolic interactionism a clear stance, with big consequences.

Summarising the first two premises, Blumer suggests: firstly, that it is wrong to lodge meaning in the makeup of the object or regard meaning as an expression of an individual's numerous psychological elements; and secondly, that it is a mistake to assume that meaning is nothing more than an application of already established meanings. Combined, these views fail to see that meaning involves a process of interpretation, and Blumer views meaning as socially constructed through interaction with others. This links to his third premise: that meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process – a process that has two steps. First, the individual, or 'actor' to use Blumer's language, has to indicate to themselves the things towards which he is acting – he has to point out the things that have meaning. For Blumer, this is an internalised, social process, because the individual is interacting with themselves. However, he also argues it is more than the interplay of psychological elements because the individual is engaging in a process of communication with themselves. Second, Blumer suggests that this interpretation is a matter of handling meanings – an active process, where the individual selects, checks, suspends, regroups and transforms meanings in light of the situation at hand. As a result, for Blumer, this interaction should not be regarded as an automatic application of established meanings, but a formative process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments for guidance and formation of action. Therefore, meanings play a part in an individual's action, through a process of self-interaction.

4.3.1.2 Blumer's (1969) six 'root images'

Based on these three premises, symbolic interactionism is necessarily led to develop an analytical scheme of human society and human conduct that is quite distinctive. Blumer packaged this scheme into, what he termed, 'root images'. Taken together, these root images represent the way in which symbolic interactionism views

human society and conduct, creating a framework of study and analysis. What follows is a discussion of Blumer's root images, as I understand them.

The first 'image' places an emphasis on our engagement in action – the situations we are repeatedly faced with, and deal with, as we interact with others – and how this comprises our society and group life. Although we might act alone, with others, or on behalf of an organisation or collective group of other individuals, Blumer emphasises that our actions belong to each of us individually. Consequently, Blumer sees society as an ongoing process of fitting together the activities of others, which establishes and portrays structure and organisation. Symbolic interactionism respects that society consists of people engaging in action, and is, as a result, a leading principle of Blumer's theory, and the starting point of his empirical analysis of human life.

The second 'image' concerns how we respond to our interactions with one another. Here, symbolic interactionism acknowledges the vital importance of social interaction in its own right, which is something other approaches can take for granted. For example, sociology often explains behaviour as the result of status, role demands, norms and values; whereas psychology often uses motives, attitudes, hidden complexes and elements of psychological processes to account for behaviour. For Blumer, social interaction is the process that forms human conduct, more than a means to express or release it. So, when interacting with another individual, we take account of what each other is doing, or about to do, through the gestures we make – whether that be a request, an order, a command, cue or declaration – to indicate to others our intention and our upcoming, planned, action. Taking the example of someone shaking a fist to indicate a possible attack, someone's response is based on what that gesture means for them. Here then, gestures have meaning for both the person who makes it, and the person to whom it is directed. When a gesture has the same meaning for both individuals, there is mutual understanding. Any misunderstanding creates ineffective

communication, which results in impeded interaction and blocks the formation of joint action. So, to indicate what an individual is to do, one individual has to place themselves in the other person's shoes. This means we are able to change the intent or purpose of our actions to fit with others' actions. This mutual role-taking is the cornerstone of communication and effective symbolic interaction.

Blumer's third 'image' concerns the nature of objects and how our social world is made up of 'objects'. These are the product of symbolic interactionism and can be anything that can be indicated, pointed at, or referred to, and can be classified into: physical objects, such as, chairs, trees, or bicycles; social objects, for example, student, mother, or friend; and abstract objects, such as morals, philosophical doctrines, and ideas of justice, exploitation or compassion. Taking this view explains why we each experience things differently from one another, because we operate within different 'worlds'. Crucially, however, for Blumer, meanings are social constructs, and arise out of the ways in which they are defined by the people we interact with. In this way, the meaning of anything and everything is formed, learned and transmitted through a social process of indication. So, objects can have different meanings for different individuals, and it is this meaning that sets the way in which we see the object, how we are prepared to act towards it and the ways in which we talk about it. As such, symbolic interactionism suggests that human group life is a process in which objects are continually being created, affirmed, transformed and cast aside. Importantly, objects have no fixed status, unless their meaning is continually sustained through the indications and definitions that people make of that object. Consequently, our lives and actions necessarily change to reflect changes taking place with objects in our 'worlds'. Therefore, Blumer argues that to understand the action of people, it is necessary to identify their world of objects.

The fourth 'image' recognises that humans have the ability to engage in social interaction. We are each the object of our own action because we each possess a 'self'. The view we have of our selves guides our actions towards others, but this is only possible if we place ourselves in the position of others and view ourselves acting towards our self from their position. Through role-taking we address and approach our self, forming objects of ourselves (Blumer, 1969). For example, I am an object to myself, recognising myself as a young, male student, whose educational experiences has resulted in financial debt; and this view guides my actions towards others on this basis. Having a 'self' allows us to engage in a social, internal dialogue with ourselves, where we address ourselves as a person, and respond accordingly: I can feel frustration at wrapping my head around Blumer's work; spur myself on to finish writing this chapter; and remind myself that when it is written, I have the rest of the thesis to write. This self-interaction is continuously in play during our waking hours, where we indicate an object to ourselves and identify 'it' as a given kind of object before considering its relevance or importance – and potential changes – to our line of action. We note something, make an object of it, give it meaning, and then use this meaning as a basis for directing action. In this way, symbolic interactionism proposes that we interact with what is in our environment, and choose how we act and engage with our 'world', more than simply respond to what we note.

Our capacity to make indications to ourselves gives a distinctive character to how we act. We have to cope with situations that we encounter, deciding the meaning of others' actions and map out our own line of action in light of that interpretation. For Blumer, we exert autonomy when actively constructing and deciding our action. Now, I might make really poor decisions and act to a given situation in a really poor way. However, for Blumer, that does not matter; what is key is that I have to construct it. This is Blumer's fifth 'image', that rather than linking action to motive, attitude, role

or status demands – a scientific stimuli-response view of action – he suggests that we take into account our wishes and wants, our objectives, the available means for our achievement, the anticipated actions of others, the image we hold of our 'self' and the likely result of a given line of action. Identifying and interpreting what we are confronted with in this way forms and guides our conduct. Here, symbolic interactionism places an importance on this interpretative process in the formation of our actions. Blumer argues that human activity consists of meeting a flow of situations in which we have to act, where action is based on what we note, how we assess and interpret what we note, and what kind of projected lines of action we map out. Importantly, viewing action in this way applies to both individual and joint action – societal behaviour – where individuals fit their lines of action to one another. For Blumer, joint action is constructed through interpretation as individuals make indications to one another, not just to themselves.

For Blumer, societies consist of each individual fitting their line of action to other members of the group. This interlinkage of action is Blumer's sixth 'image'. It is possible to speak of a group without identifying the individual members, for example, when speaking of a family, University, sports club or NGB. However, Blumer argued that it is important to acknowledge that joint action of a group is the interlinkage of individual's separate acts. As such, group action is always formed, even when it is an established and repetitive social action, through the dual process of designation and interpretation discussed above. Nevertheless, each individual still guides their acts by forming and using their meanings. For Blumer, there are three implications of interlinkage that make up joint action.

Firstly, we share common, pre-established meanings of what is expected of us in most situations when interacting with others. We have an idea of how to act, and how others will act towards us in return, and this creates repetitive and stable joint action,

established through the meanings that underlie that action. For Blumer, these meanings may be challenged or affirmed, allowed to slip without concern or subjected to infusions of new rigor. In this way, Blumer suggests that it is the social process of group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life.

Secondly, Blumer argues that it is important to recognise that individuals occupy different points in the network of a group, engaged in their actions at those points on the basis of using a given set of meanings. Here, networks and institutions do not function automatically, but because people at different points do something, and that what they do is a result of how they define the situation, based on the sets of meanings they hold. These meanings are formed, sustained, weakened, strengthened and transformed through a socially defining process. For Blumer, group life is made up from the extended connection of individuals' actions. This means that the functioning, and the fate, of institutions are set by the interpretations by the individuals within the network.

Thirdly, for Blumer, any instance of joint action – newly formed or long established – arises out of our previous actions. When forming joint action, we bring our world of objects, sets of meanings and schemes of interpretation, meaning that joint action always emerges from, and is connected with, a context of previous action. We have to consider this linkage to preceding events when establishing meaning, because this joint action is born out of what has come before. When presented with a radically different and stressful situation, people may be led to develop a new form of joint action that is markedly different from those in which they have previously engaged. However, even in such cases there is always some connection and continuity with what went before. In this way, joint action not only represents horizontal linkage of

activities of the individuals in the network, but also represents vertical linkage with previous joint action.

4.3.2 Applying symbolic interactionist theory to sport coaching

Blumer's proposal of six root images, representing his perception of human conduct and society, has significantly shaped numerous learning theorists (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). Coach learning is both social and pedagogical, so applying Blumer's symbolic interactionism offers a lens through which to consider coaches' actions within this pedagogical context (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). Coaches interact and engage within a sporting society, and a coach's position within their society impacts their interaction with coaches, coach educators, other trainees, NGBs, sports clubs and those who they coach. Consequently, this impacts coaches' interaction with their surrounding objects and space – their coaching aids, the coaches they work with, the parents of the learners they coach, and the learners themselves (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016).

Symbolic interactionism is significant to advancing our understandings of coach education as an inherently social process of making sense of meanings defined from interaction with each other, personal experience and individual beliefs (Kolić et al, 2019). Blumer's six root images capture the social nature of coaching, specifically participants' social context, allowing the opportunity to further investigate coach learning and the socialisation of coaches' knowledge. Therefore, this research used a micro-ethnographic methodology to explore the ways in which culture, context and networks impacted coaching practice. Together, coaches' internal thoughts and sense of self empower their ability to respond to the situations they face (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016), which symbolic interactionism recognises (Blumer, 1969). Consequently, coaches consider their previous actions, weighing up how their current

interactions might impact their future and how others perceive them (Blumer, 1969). Moreover, coaches present themselves how they feel is socially appropriate, considering the setting they are in and the company they share (Goffman, 1959). Pressure to deliver sessions under this guise might impact a coach's ability to transfer course content into their coaching practice.

Kolić et al (2019) applied symbolic interactionist theory to coaching in order to gain a deeper understanding of the value that coaches place on education and how this shaped their interactions with others. These authors concluded that symbolic interactionist theory was useful in making sense of coach education as a coherently social and context-dependent process that is informed, and informs, individual's opinions and interpersonal practices of coaches, coach educators and CEMs (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). Kolić et al (2019) used symbolic interactionism to consider the role education played in the social and contextualised interactions of coaches as they attended formal education, and the status that formal qualifications offered qualifying coaches. Here, symbolic interactionism captured the social settings that humans engaged in and continuously evolved skills and moved between social positions (Strauss, 1997). Kolić et al's (2019) findings extend previous research, which has simply explored coaches' perceptions of coach education programmes, by developing an in-depth appreciation of interactions between key stakeholders and meanings that these key stakeholders attach to education experiences.

4.4 Ethnography as a method(ological) choice?

4.4.1 Defining ethnography

It is perhaps easier to describe what ethnographers do, more than what ethnography is. Literally translated, ethnographers paint a picture, through their

writing (graph) about people (ethno) (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011). In its basic sense, ethnography is a form of social, or educational, research that emphasises the importance of studying, first hand, what people do and say in particular contexts (Hammersley, 2006). The aim is to understand the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members (Wolcott, 1995; Tedlock, 2000). Ethnography is often used as an umbrella term (Krane & Baird, 2005) – a tool (MacPhail, 2004) – and both a process and product, because ethnographers' lives are embedded in the field of their experiences (Wolcott, 1990; Tedlock, 2000).

As a term, ethnography attempts to capture an ill-defined singular meaning for its intricate history (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). As a methodology, ethnography developed in the field of social anthropology, initially employed to understand human group life through researching tribal cultures, where researchers would live among 'other' cultures for months and years (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011; Hammersley, 2006). Between the 1920s and 1950s, sociologists started applying ethnographic principles to study the patterns of urban, human group life (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Since then, ethnography has been applied across many disciplines of social science. This wide, and varied application has resulted in a recurrent and varied re-contextualisation of ethnographic principles, which has created confusion and misunderstanding (Hammersley, 2006). Savage (2006), however, argues that the many different forms of ethnographic approaches are informed by researchers' differentiated epistemological and ontological perspectives.

4.4.2 The fundamental, basic principles of ethnography

Despite the numerous perspectives in ethnography, there are essentially, two criteria at its core: it is a field-orientated activity; and it has cultural interpretations (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011). Firstly, ethnography typically employs

lengthy, regular contact with participants, primarily through observations in relevant settings, and it is observations, as a method, that remain the most common feature of ethnographic work (Hammersley, 2006; Wolcott, 1999). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) wrote that ethnography involves the researcher participating in people's everyday lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, questioning, both formally and informally, and collecting documents and artefacts. This use of multiple methods is another key feature of ethnography (Hammersley, 2006). Secondly, ethnographers are concerned with finding repeated, identifiable thoughts and behaviours in various situations, with various participants – finding cultural patterning (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011). In addition, ethnographers incorporate the specific context and the meaning that participants attribute to, and the ethnographers understanding of, the scene or event (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011). When applying ethnographic techniques, it is important to consider some of their trademark features, namely: collecting data in the natural environment; contextualising behaviours and activities; focusing on a small sample size; employing multiple data collection methods; presenting multiple perspectives; and considering ethical implications.

Today, it is much more common for researchers to spend months, more than years with their participants. Arguably, a danger of an ethnographic approach, aligned in some ways to the use of observational methods, is the likelihood of the researcher's presence impacting participants' behaviour. This can lead to a misunderstanding of what usually happens in the setting being studied. Likewise, it is important to remember that what happens in the setting, in any given situation, might well change over time – actions might be cyclical in short or longer-term patterns – and it is important to take account of how these trends affect the situation being studied (Hammersley, 2006). Moreover, brief fieldwork runs the risk of such trends not being

detected. Therefore, it was important to have sustained contact with participants during this PhD – a feature typically associated with ethnography.

Ethnographic research can be placed along a continuum, from the macro – where multiple communities and complex societies are studied – to micro – where a single situation, multiple social situations, or a single social institution is examined. Through diversification and re-contextualisation across the social sciences, ethnographies have shrunk in scale, meaning micro – or mini, short, focused studies over a number of weeks or months, rather than years – are more common (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron, 2011). Here, micro-ethnographies focus on a specific behaviour in a particular setting, rather than trying to portray a cultural system in its entirety (Wolcott, 1990). Of course, this presents problems of sampling and generalisability, and does not address the issues of failing to recognise the cyclical variability and fundamental patterns of change (Hammersley, 2006). However, micro-ethnography – the detailed, micro-analysis of what is said and done on particular occasions – is an increasingly common approach to systematically address these problems. Consequently, this PhD employed a micro-ethnographic methodology.

4.4.3 Use of ethnography in sport coaching research

As previously highlighted, coaching is a complex, social phenomenon, more than a benign, linear process (Cushion & Jones, 2012). Cushion (2014) argues that there has been an over-reliance on quantitative methodologies when studying sport, partly because policy is decided on survey data. This means that most coaching literature is undertaken using a quantitative, positivist methodology. There is a push towards qualitative methods, but, again, as Cushion identifies, there is an over-reliance on interviewing as a method, which provide one-off examinations. Because of this trend to use interviews, the literature, generally, pays little attention to the social and

cultural aspects of experiences in coaching (MacPhail, 2004; Cushion & Jones, 2012). Ethnography in sport coaching allows the researcher to gain an insider's perspective, shining a light on why coaches think and act in the different ways that they do (Fetterman, 1989).

The field-based approach that ethnography operates within offers a unique immersion in participants' lives and practices. This allows the opportunity to capture routines of everyday activity of participants – the hierarchies involved – and offers a chance to understand the meanings of activities from participants' points of view. This allows an opportunity to go beyond the surface, producing "thick" descriptions (Cushion, 2014). By entering close and relatively prolonged interaction with coaches in their everyday life, I became closer to being an insider and gained an understanding of their beliefs, motivations and behaviours better than any other approach (Cushion, 2014). Gaining this insider perspective offered the opportunity to understand the distinctive cultural realities of each participant. Moreover, the prolonged nature of ethnographic research allowed for rapport to be built with participants and gave an opportunity to understand the language associated with the context (Cushion & Jones, 2012).

The extant literature pays insufficient attention to coaches' thoughts and feelings, ignoring the subtlety and scope of the coaching process in specific contexts and the impact of context on practice (Cushion, 2014). As outlined, my philosophical positioning argued against reducing the complexities of coaching to simple statistics, and instead, aligned with a naturalistic methodology to produce insight about coaching practice, in context. As such, extensive fieldwork and intense familiarity with a setting resulted in a comprehensive, descriptive, detailed, conceptually framed understanding of coaches' practice (Krane & Baird, 2005; Loftland, 1996; Tedlock, 2000). Ethnography offered the opportunity to experience direct personal contact with

coaches, riders and key stakeholders – both within clubs and within the organisation of BC – which meant I was better able to understand the context within which coaching operated, and this helped gain a holistic perspective (Cushion, 2014). Moreover, ethnography provided an opportunity to see routines that might have escaped participants' conscious awareness, which offered a chance to learn things about the coaching process that participants were unwilling to disclose or contradicted what they shared in interviews (Cushion & Jones, 2012).

4.4.4 My use of the ethnographic principles

Through my reading of ethnographic research, three key values seem to guide researchers in this form of inquiry. Firstly, ethnographers commit to studying environments over prolonged periods of time and participate in the contexts of those who they study (McCall, 2006). This allows for the researcher to engage with a limited number of cases over a sustained period of time, which, it is hoped, produces rich accounts from "lived experiences" (Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014). Secondly, ethnography happens 'in the field' – it is unstructured, employing numerous methods, which can include naturally occurring conversation and informal observations that occurs in surroundings that are considered natural to the participants being researched (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; McCall, 2006; O'Reilly, 2005). This exposure to participants in their context creates a negotiation between the researcher and those who are both at the centre of the study and other crucial contacts, for example those who act as gatekeepers (i.e. those who facilitate access to the research field; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; McCall, 2006). This helps the researcher gain an awareness of their own and others' positions, roles and responsibilities. Thirdly, ethnography is an iterative process that allows the researcher to evolve the study design over the course of their fieldwork (O'Reilly, 2005). In addition, in the

interpretation and analysis of participants' experiences, researchers draw on tacit and explicit information recorded in field notes to contextualise meanings, perceptions and implications of human action and institutional practices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Moreover, this explorative approach is valuable when conducting longitudinal fieldwork in order to study various processes in people's lives, their interpretations and the views of others and themselves in social surroundings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

During this PhD I followed eight participants for fifteen months and engaged with BC's education team and the broader situations of coach education within BC for three years. This helped to develop an in-depth understanding of the individual and social aspects that shaped perceptions of learning in these settings (Finlay & Gough, 2008). Financial and time constraints meant that the research conducted in the field was restricted to a fifteen-month period (Wolcott, 1995). Nevertheless, this time helped develop relationships with those who I researched, allowed time to revisit the thoughts and opinions of myself and the participants, refined the questions I asked and allowed me to appreciate the unexpected and mundane observations (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Wolcott, 2008). In this sense, I employed ethnographically-inspired research, where the implementation of these ethnographic assumptions allowed me to dig deeper than what appeared obvious (Atkinson, 2017; Ellis, 2004). Aligned with the interpretivist paradigm of this PhD, I acknowledged I had an active role as the researcher and contributed to the research field, and I engaged in reflexive practice about how stakeholders and myself interpreted social situations. Some might argue against this view of ethnographically-inspired work. However, based on the above reading, I feel comfortable to suggest that this PhD employed a micro-ethnography as a method(ological) choice that framed this project.

4.5 Setting and context of the PhD

This PhD was conducted within the context of cycling. The project was concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of the formal education provision provided by BC. As such, the PhD was immersed within BC's Office, and the governing body more broadly, as well as cycling clubs across the UK. It was important to track coach's learning over time and every effort was made to recruit participants from different cycling disciplines. As such, this project was embedded across Mountain Biking, Road and Track Clubs, and their associated facilities.

4.5.1 British Cycling as an NGB

BC is the National Governing Body (NGB) for all forms of cycling within the UK – BMX, mountain bike, cyclo-cross, road, track and cycle speedway – representing a 166,000-strong membership. Following unprecedented success at Olympic, Paralympic and major championships, BC have transformed the UK into one of the strongest nations in competitive cycling. Harnessing mass participation from international success has arguably placed them as one of the world's leading NGBs, setting the standard by which elite sporting success, in the UK, is measured. BC manage domestic racing events, ensuring those who want to race can do so in a motivating environment, overseeing cycling's development across all disciplines. In addition, BC encourage millions of people to ride their bikes through recreational programmes and aim to inspire the next generation of cyclists through their work with schools and community clubs to ensure more young people are taking up the sport than before.

Figure 4.1 – The BC Offices in Manchester (© Samuel Wood)

Based in Manchester, they have firmly established the city, and their offices (Figure 4.1), as the home of cycling. This, alongside National Lottery funding, has seen BC enjoy immense success, both in terms of Olympic and Paralympic medals, as well as general participation. BC operates under the leadership of Bob Howden, the President, supported by the Board, which comprises seven elected, and three appointed, members and the chief executive. The board meets six times each year, and board elections by the membership take place annually at BC's National Council. Day-to-day, BC operates under the guidance of the senior management team, overseen by the chief executive. BC's 250-strong workforce is mainly based at BC's headquarters. However, around 80 employees are regionally based and work with ten English regions and clubs, event organisers and local authorities to improve cycling in communities across the nation.

4.5.2 Reflections on becoming embedded within BC

This PhD commenced in March 2017. I came from outside a cycling context and felt an outsider to the organisation, a feeling that riders echoed in the media (BBC Sport, 2017a). For context, BC were experiencing some challenging times. Jessica Varnish was in the news, claiming she was unfairly dismissed from the Team GB

squad, which started an investigation into bullying claims within the organisation (BBC Sport, 2017b; 2017c). This caused a cascade of negative allegations around the 'medal at any cost' mentality of BC's 'performance arm' that created a 'culture of fear' (BBC Sport, 2017d). Indeed, staff within BC felt the organisation, in their side of the building (the other side of the building was dedicated to Team GB and Team Sky), did a lot of good work when it came to educating the coaching workforce and broadening participation across the nation. However, they felt that the negative press surrounding 'the other side' meant their work was lost. One member of the education team told me that he hoped my PhD would highlight the good work they do (see also BBC Sport, 2017e).

One criticism that surfaced was the way in which Team GB's Track coaches operated independently to BC as a whole organisation. During one conversation with a member of the education team, he interjected:

> See that guy over there? At the IT Support desk? An older guy with glasses? He's one of the best sprint coaches in the world. He's German. He works next door. Maybe you'll get access to him as part of your PhD? All my friends think I'm best mates with all the Olympic riders and they find it weird that I only know as much as them. But you might get to speak to them that side - I'll never get the chance to access them, not like you might get access to them - and that's really exciting!

This highlighted to me how the Team GB coaches were like celebrities here. In some ways, that is understandable. They had created a success narrative that was so ingrained into BC's story that the organisation had become what it had because of their work. I would see them in the cafe, grabbing coffee, or walking through the atrium – they were ordinary people. Yet they were greeted with an air of awe. I recognised their faces from the television footage from the velodrome at the London and Rio Games. It really was as though they were 'locked' away in the other side of

the building, and infrequently mixed with the BC staff. However, during informal conversations, it became clear that some BC events, like Christmas dinners and staff social events, were organised when Team GB staff were busy with training sessions. Consequently, during this conversation I realised it was wrong to assume these coaches wanted to be distant and detached from BC when it might be that BC do not actively attempt to include 'the other side'. It felt that with the level of success that the staff within the velodrome were producing, it became acceptable that they could have their freedom – allowed to operate however they needed to – to deliver results. Again, for context, BC have won 42 Olympic medals since 2004 – 24 of which were Gold. Unfortunately, because of UK Sport's funding requirements at that time, results were measured via medals at World Championships and Olympic Games. However, UK Sport distanced themselves from these allegations, denying any responsibility for this approach (BBC Sport, 2017f; 2017g) and accused BC of watering down the findings of an earlier internal review in 2012 (BBC Sport, 2017h).

In March 2017, a leaked interim report following Varnish's bullying accusations stated that the actions of the board were 'shocking and inexcusable' calling into question their ability to govern the NGB (BBC Sport, 2017c). Varnish claimed she was the victim of 'a cover up' and told BBC Sport that the entire BC board should resign after the internal review concluded that her claims of bullying had been reversed. At that time, SE had allocated £17m to BC for them to boost participation in cycling, and UK Sport had provided £26m for BC's Team GB Olympic and Paralympic teams' preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Games. In total, BC were receiving £43m of public funding over the four years from 2016-2020. Within months, the government had introduced new national governance guidelines. All NGBs needed to come in line with these guidelines to continue receiving public funding. However, because BC was

so well-funded, they were the first to undergo this process. Unfortunately, it appeared that these changes were occurring because of the bullying claims made against them.

Nonetheless, the impact of Varnish's claims had far-reaching implications which rippled throughout the whole sector of elite sport within the UK. Within the first few months of this PhD, the whole organisational structure of BC was overhauled. There was a public apology from the Chairman in March (BBC Sport, 2017i), a new Performance Director and a 'people director' (BBC Sport 2017j). By July 2017, at an emergency Extraordinary General Meeting, the Board of Directors was replaced, in line with new national governance guidelines. All of this played out in front of the backdrop of a UK Anti-Doping investigation over allegations of wrongdoing and a continued review into medical practices (BBC Sport, 2017k).

I hoped that the appointment of a new Performance Director from a Sailing background would change perceptions of 'outsiders' in the organisation. However, the broader publicity presented issues with regards to me gaining access to the site and to the organisation. I was not allowed a BC laptop, although I had been told Arvy had been given one with certain software installed. I was not allowed to turn up unannounced and told that my thesis would be looked over by a team of lawyers, and anything painting BC in a bad light would be embargoed. I had to sign-in on the visitor log at the front desk each visit and was not assigned a desk within the organisation. Whenever I was in, I was assigned to a member of staff, who I felt was tasked with babysitting me. I felt like my presence was a drain on their resources, hindering their abilities to effectively continue with their jobs. I wanted to feel part of the team, but I felt I was an outsider, in the way and constantly outstaying my welcome. I arrived one day at the start of April 2017, one month in, and one member of staff commented that they 'couldn't keep me away', which was probably an innocent statement, but made me feel really unwelcome. On this particular visit, I

asked a member of staff if I would be able to speak to the administrative team, to discuss the possibility of recruiting participants from the enrolment process. The team were not busy, but I was told they 'couldn't speak' to me right now. It was clear that BC were the gatekeepers to participants.

4.6 Participants

This project is the result of the time and effort numerous people – both from cycling clubs across the UK and within BC as an organisation – dedicated to answering the research questions posed by this work. This section acknowledges those individuals and the contributions they made to this work.

The first part of this PhD recruited forty-seven participants from across BC. A more detailed outline of these participants is presented in section 5.2.3, where I introduce the first study of this project. However, here, I present a brief outline of the participants recruited for this study. The research questions for this section of the PhD focused on the creation and development of the education pathway. As such, purposeful sampling recruited those individuals who offered insight into this process (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This sample also included individuals responsible for the delivery of the programme – seven members of the tutor workforce and nine members of the Regional Development Management (RDM) workforce – and twenty-four BC qualified coaches across Levels 1, 2 and 3.

The second part of this PhD recruited eight participants and I followed their coaching journeys for fifteen-months. Data from the first section of the PhD indicated that Level 2 coaches make up the majority of BC's coaching workforce and that not all coaches enrol on Level 1. As such, recruitment focused on trainees enrolling for BC's Level 2, with participants who had attended the Level 1 asked to recall past experiences. These eight participants were recruited from across England (see Figure

4.2). This PhD explored these participants' biographies – their motivations, beliefs, values and previous knowledge and experiences – their learning experiences through BC's pathway, and their transition into coaching following their qualification. A brief summary of each participant is outlined below and captured in Appendix 1. All names are pseudonyms.
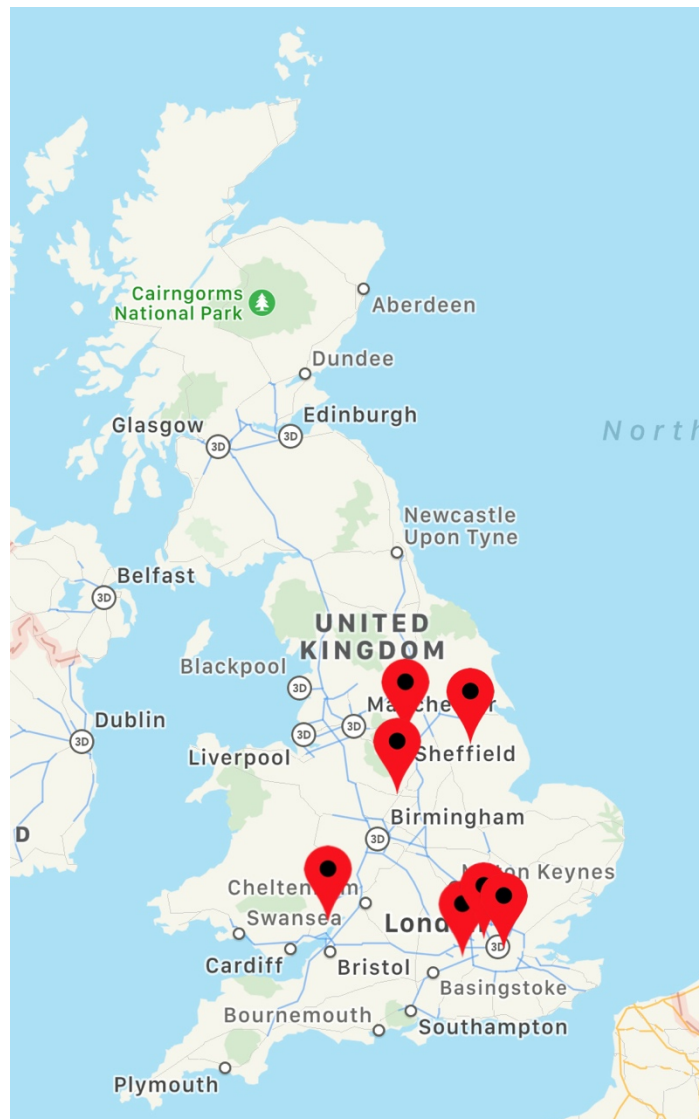
Figure 4.2 – Map illustrating the geographical locations of participants

Joe

Joe is a White British, 34-year-old male. He is married to Jessica, a primary school Headteacher. He is the Dad of two young boys, Alfie, aged four, and Jacob, aged six.

The four of them live in their family home in South Yorkshire. Joe attended a comprehensive secondary school, attended college, and then entered full-time employment. He joined a plastics company, sweeping the floors, and progressed through the organisation to his current position of General Manager. He has had a lifetime involvement with cycling, starting on two-wheels before he could walk, and always enjoyed playing sports in school. He has trained to take part in a number of triathlons over the years, but due to an injury, which prevents him from running, he has spent the last five years focused on cycling. As a result, he has experimented with every discipline except Cycle Speedway. He has never received formal coaching in cycling, meaning his only experience of coaching is what he has witnessed first-hand – sessions that he has observed – led by other coaches. On a personal level, he feels his two boys have gone past the age of constantly needing him, which means he has more free time on his hands – time he wants to fill.

James

James is a White British, 54-year-old male. He lives in Surrey with his wife and two teenage children, aged 15 and 19. The youngest, his daughter, Rosie, is a competitive road-racing and track cyclist. He's a family-man with a no-nonsense approach to life. He works hard and plays harder. James attended a comprehensive secondary school before starting a job in sales. He now owns a successful signage company. James had tried a number of sports over the years, but cycling was the most recent and an interest he shared with his daughter. He had planned early retirement for a few years, but a period of ill-health made this more important. James hoped his early retirement would coincide with an increased amount of cycling coaching, easing his transition from retired businessman to part-time cycling coach. James injured himself in a road-riding accident during his participation in the research, which hindered his coaching

activity and, consequently, the number of observations I was able to attend. Nonetheless, he maintained his participation in the project and contributed to these studies through the other data collection methods.

Oliver

Oliver is a 42-year-old, White British male. He lives in Buckinghamshire with his wife of twelve-years, and their three children: Liam, aged ten; Emma, aged eight; and Mason, aged five. Oliver attended state school, before attending Sixth Form and then studying Biochemistry at University College London. When entering employment, Oliver started in clinical trials, and then took some marketing and management qualifications at night school, before moving into that side of pharmaceuticals. He is been in his current role, as Marketing Director, for the last eighteen years. Oliver played numerous sports at school, including football and rugby. He played a huge amount of golf, aged 10-18, before taking up rowing at University for three years. At work, he regularly plays badminton and five-a-side football, plays around five games of golf a year, and commutes to work three days a week on his bike. Oliver feels his job has always required him to go out and approach people, which has always required strong communication skills – a skillset that he feels helps his coaching. Moreover, he feels that being a parent means that he approaches explanations in coaching in the same way he would ask his children to do something, to ensure clear communication and setting out exactly what he is trying to achieve. He has been taking his children to a local cycle club for the last three and a half years and feels that his children's involvement in the club is the major driver for his role in coaching cycling.

Peter

Peter is a 61-year-old, White British male. He is a retired teacher, having spent fifteen years working in Primary education. He lives in the East Midlands with his wife, a retired Deputy Head Teacher. They have one daughter, who is in her second year of University. He attended Grammar School but does not consider himself particularly academic. He left school and took up catering, after being refused to enrol on the childcare course he wanted to study because they wouldn't accept 16-year-old males for the course. After college, he entered a job in industrial catering, before taking the role of Catering Manager at a Boarding School, reigniting his interest in working with children. He left catering and attended the local University Centre to study a degree in Business Technology, before deciding to be a stay at home dad while his daughter was young. Conversations with his wife during this time made him want to realise his ambition of working with children. He enrolled for an eighteen-month, part-time PGCE, which he recalls was a new challenge for him. After qualifying, he worked at one school for ten years, and then moved to another school for the last five years of his teaching. Peter and his wife both retired in the same year.

Growing up, Peter played numerous sports at school, but was a keen rugby player. He cycled as a teenager, mainly as a means for transport. After a 35-year break from cycling, feeling unfit and overweight, he pulled out an old Raleigh bike, rode six miles and collapsed. This rekindled his love of cycling as he headed into retirement. He found a local club and headed out every Sunday. Quickly outgrowing the group, he searched out a more suitable club. Four years on, in the last year alone, Peter cycled 7,000 miles through social and charity rides with the club. For Peter, his interest in working with children, combined with his cycling ability, meant coaching seemed a logical decision.

Chris

Chris is a 73-year-old, White British male. He lives in the same village as Peter. He is married with two children both in their 40s. He still works full-time, from home, as a self-employed architect, although he works two half days each week to sneak a ride in. He attended Grammar school before attending London South Bank University and then entering work as a regulated and chartered architect, in partnership with another professional. It is the only job he has had.

Chris played numerous sports at school, taking a particular interest in rugby and cross country. Like Peter, cycling was a big part of his childhood, but primarily functioned as a means of transport, up until he moved to central London for University. In London, he joined a rugby club and took up running, which he continued to do until he was 50, when he started with a bad back and then took a break from exercise all together. Fifteen years later, frustrated with the NHS after numerous hospital appointments, Chris ended up having both hips replaced. Five years on, he wanted to get back into exercise, and, aged 69 bought his first bike since childhood. He fell in love with cycling again: he found it de-stressed him; gave him a chance to meet new people; he loved being outdoors; and felt his waistline decreasing. Fairly quickly, he joined the same cycle club as Peter, and, realising he sat in the background too long in other aspects of his life, he volunteered to become both the welfare and health and safety officer of the club. From there, he figured he should take up coaching as well.

Beth

Beth is a 38-year-old, White British female. She lives in the South West of England with her husband and cat. She attended her local Comprehensive school, before studying for an Art degree, sparking an interest in working with prosthetics and

special effects make-up. Quickly realising that was not the industry for her, she studied her PGCE, landed her first teaching job and never looked back. She has worked in Primary education for the last thirteen-years and loves her role. Beth's interest in cycling started in 2011 years ago when she met her husband who was into endurance races, and her involvement in cycling started there. The South West lends itself to mountain biking, and preferring the faster stuff, she specialises in downhill, regularly racing in local and National events. In her coaching capacity, Beth is an advocate for female riders, actively trying to recruit more females into mountain biking through her 'Ladies do Downhill' events. She is self-funding herself through her coaching qualifications, not really attached to a Club, but operating under the local cycling organisation. She attended the Level 1 a few months before attending the Level 2 and plans to attend the Level 2 Mountain Bike Specific course so that she can coach on the trails of the Forest of Dean.

Louise

Louise is 32-years-old. She is Mixed-British, originally from Ireland, but currently living in London, and works for the National Sports Council. Her job role massively influences her coaching role, especially because of the people she engages with through work, but equally her coaching benefits her approaches to her work. She comes from a racing background and still actively races herself. She is competitive and performance driven, with a specific focus on increasing female participation. During her participation in the PhD she was nominated for Talent Development Coach of the Year at the UK Coaching Awards in recognition of her valuable contribution to supporting talent and BC's foundation programmes. She also volunteered, through her work, at the UCI World Road Race Championships in Yorkshire, in the autumn of 2019. During her participation, Louise completed the Level 2 generic qualification,

attended two discipline-specific courses (in Road and Track) and enrolled on her Level 3 qualification. The way the programme operates meant it was practically impossible for her to complete the Level 3 qualification within the timeframes of her participation.

Adam

Adam is a 58-year-old, White British male. He is married, with one daughter, now aged 34. After leaving school he completed a BTEC National Diploma before starting work at a gym and then training to be a personal trainer in the '90s. Now he works as a self-employed instructor across Derbyshire. He has always cycled, initially as a means of transport, but after attending a time trial race as a spectator, he become involved in competitive cycling. He went on to specialise in time trial events, with highlights including a Bronze medal in a road race championship and becoming the fastest senior rider in his club. Now he no longer rides with a Club, instead, training on the track, focusing on sprint events. He now teaches spin classes, and with his knowledge from the gym instructor training, skipped BC's Level 1 qualification. He thought the coaching qualifications would complement his role as a gym instructor, and equally, felt his gym instructor knowledge would complement his coaching. Once he started coaching at the velodrome, following his Track-specific qualification, he underwent training to ensure he could deliver the 'in-house' rider programme. This stalled his ability to coach independently. During this time, he was reluctant for me to observe him coaching, and as such, I did not observe his coaching at any stage. However, he continued his participation in the research and contributed to this project's findings.

4.7 Methods of data collection

The interpretive paradigm acknowledges that researchers cannot come to a study with a pre-established set of neutral procedures to investigate a given problem. Instead, it is argued, researchers are invested in the research question and can only choose to do something over something else based on what seems reasonable, given their interests, purpose, motivations and the context of their given situation (Smith, 1989). Within this paradigm, the researcher is the primary research tool with which they must find, identify and collect data (Ball, 1990). Therefore, data collection is not a process that is guided by a specific set of techniques, but, rather, an 'inquiry process carried out by human beings' (Wolcott, 1990, p.202).

In line with the interpretivist approach, the focus of the data collection for this project was on depth and detail from small populations, rather than breadth of data to formulate generalisations from a large sample (Howell, 2013). The emphasis was on highly detailed accounts of what was seen, heard and felt from participants – 'thick description' – and the analysis of events within the research context – 'thick interpretation' (Potrac et al, 2014, p.34). In the second part of this PhD, the eight participants discussed above were recruited for fifteen-months, engaging with a range of methods to understand their meanings as they lived their experiences. The methods employed across this PhD included interviews, observations, document analysis and the use of photography and film. The aim of this section is to discuss each of these methods, justifying how each one contributed to the project's data collection, and combined to produce the data produced. Finally, this section will conclude by discussing the methods used for the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the research findings.

4.7.1 Interviews

Interviews are one of the most widely used qualitative data collection methods in sport and exercise science (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This is perhaps unsurprising, considering that humans are conversationalists and that it is through conversations that we get to know other people (Brinkman, 2013). Interviews aim to create conversations that invite participants to tell stories in relation to their perspectives or insights, experiences, feelings, emotions or behaviours in relation to the study's research question (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). However, interviewing is a craft, more than a prescribed technique (Demuth, 2015).

From an interpretivist and constructionist perspective, I played an active role in the co-construction of knowledge – best described as a 'traveller' who journeys with the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Smith, 2010). Within this paradigm it is impossible to separate myself, as the researcher, from the researched because I inevitably played a part in creating an external reality (Smith, 2009; Smith & Deemer, 2000). Consequently, within this ontological and epistemological positioning, interviews, as a method, are unable to secure procedural objectivity or provide an objective route to the truth (Smith & Hodkinson, 2009).

Conducting one-to-one interviews allowed for an in-depth examination of an individual's attitudes, opinions, beliefs and values when researching a particular phenomenon (Purdy, 2014). The data captured by interviews generated insight into people's contexts and provided an opportunity to view the ways in which societies and cultures shaped personal experiences, meanings, decisions, values and motivations (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). In addition, interviews were flexible, which allowed me to ask unplanned questions as conversations unfolded and curiosity was stirred (Smith & Sparkes, 2017). In this way, they led to unexpected, and even contradictory, data that was produced, rather than simply collected (Purdy, 2014). As

such, conversations constituted experience rather than simply reflecting or reproducing what was experienced, creating narratives that were event- and experienced-centred (Smith & Sparkes, 2017; Riessman, 2008). Therefore, interviews offered the potential for learning about a process and gaining a 'rich' insight into participants' individual perspectives, from their perspective (Riessman, 2008).

Within the context of sports coaching research, interviews allow the researcher a chance to develop a better understanding of what coaches do and why they do it, how they interpret their work and their role, as well as how athletes, or other key stakeholders, understand the coaching process (Purdy, 2014). Importantly, participants' narratives allowed me to infer something about what it felt like to be in their story world (Riessman, 2008). Through permitting insight into people's opinions, feelings, emotions, experiences and the meanings that participants placed on their experience, interviews were interactive and situation specific (Purdy, 2014).

Indeed, the in-depth nature of interviews meant that they were time-consuming, limiting recruitment to a smaller number of participants (Purdy, 2014). However, this was not a limitation, as, in line with the interpretivist paradigm, the focus was on the depth of participants' experiences, rather than shallow, broad and generalised findings across large samples (Purdy, 2014). Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, others via telephone. Telephone interviews are increasingly used (Smith and Sparkes, 2016) and can broaden the sample size. Phone interviews lack the visual cues of face-to-face interviews, which can facilitate rapport and inform the interviewee if the interviewer is listening (Holt, 2010). However, phone interviews can still produce rich, detailed data (Holt, 2010).

As a method, interviews are often criticised for only consisting of one interview (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). They have been criticised for only representing one source of knowledge about a phenomena or group, and are therefore often complimented by

other methods (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This research combined interviews with observations and document analysis. Interviewing the eight participants longitudinally helped build rapport, empathy and trust (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Interviews can either be structured, semi-structured or unstructured in nature. This PhD employed both types of interviews across the studies that built the overall project. The specific nature of the questions asked in the interviews are discussed in Chapter 5. However, below, I present a broad discussion of both interview types.

4.7.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews include pre-determined questions, which build the interview guide, informed by both the existing literature and the research questions. This guide outlined the main topics of conversation to be covered, and the main topics of discussion. However, this approach allowed for flexibility in exploring additional areas which emerged during the discussion (Purdy, 2014). Likewise, the phrasing of questions and the order they were asked was adaptable, which meant I could react to the discussion, and the issues that emerged during the interview, rather than restricting the interview to a fixed agenda, like a structured interview (Purdy, 2014).

4.7.1.2 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured, narrative interviews were employed with a focus on the key areas to discuss, but the interview was more spontaneous – more conversational in tone – with an emphasis on the natural flow of the interaction, knowledge and experience of, and between, myself and the participant. This was achieved by varying the question order and being flexible in my approach to the interviews. I adopted the rules of everyday conversation: turn-taking, relevance; and entrance and exit talk (Riessman,

2008). This followed the epistemological and ontological positioning of this research, that researchers participate in the creation of narratives, rather than simply uncover them through the interview process (Riessman, 2008).

It was in participants' longer responses that the difference in interview styles was so dramatically felt compared to the semi-structured interviews (Riessman, 2008). This created some sense of anxiety, because control of the interview was handed to the participant, where they were able to discuss anything that they felt was important or relevant. Participants had the ability to rework questions so that they could discuss what they feel was important, rather than simply responding in scripted ways to planned questions (Riessman, 2008). Although coaching was the centre piece of the research project, it was only part of the participants' 'self', which meant they were able to discuss whatever they felt was important, however much it appeared to digress from the interview agenda. Consequently, this format gave greater equality in conversation, albeit equal levels of uncertainty (Riessman, 2008). Importantly, every attempt was made to ensure participants felt there was no pressure to discuss their story, as they might not have had a narrative to share. Lastly, the longitudinal nature of these interviews developed narratives over time. Combined with some ethnographic principles, mainly, following participants in their settings, this approach offered the best storytelling opportunity (Riessman, 2008).

4.7.1.3 Recording of interviews and transcription

All interviews were audio-recorded to accurately capture the complete conversation that occurred between participants and myself. In sum, the interviews across this PhD totalled 83.65 hours of audio material. A specific breakdown is presented in Chapter 5 when interviews are discussed again in relation to the specific sections of the PhD.

During face-to-face interviews, the Dictaphone was placed out of view to prevent participants being distracted, or continually reminded, that they were being recorded. This problem was, naturally, erased in phone interviews. Audio recording interviews meant that I could concentrate on the topic and dynamics of the conversation. In addition, the audio files provided an opportunity to review and re-listen to the interview dialogue (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). I appreciated that the interpretative process began during the interview itself (Riessman, 2008). Through the chosen probes, whether to gain further clarification on a given point, or to delve deeper into the participants' response, it was important that I listened attentively so that I could effectively participate in the interview and actively contribute to the data collected.

All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, which produced 694,070 words across 1,380 pages of single-spaced text. These transcripts highlighted the 'actual words spoken' by participants (Riley, 1990, p.25) and highlighted the culture of specific disciplines across the sport of cycling. They represented the complex verbal exchange between myself and the participants, and consequently, presented dynamic talk in a linear, written form. This was challenging and, as a result, the transcript could not capture the fluid dynamics of words and gestures (Riessman, 2008). As a researcher, I could not stand in a neutral, objective position during the transcription process, and, as such, I implicated the transcript every step of the way, constructing the transcript in line with the interpretivist and constructionist perspective of this PhD (Riessman, 2008). In this way, the transcripts played a role in creating the narrative, more than simply "finding" the narratives discussed in the interview.

4.7.2 Participant observations

The previous section discussed interviews as a method and acknowledged the need to compliment them with another data collection method. Participant

observations, like interviews, are interactive and compliment interviews: interviews provide leads for the observations, and the observations provide probes for the interview (Tjora, 2006). Consequently, participant observations have value in understanding information gathered through other means (Adler & Adler, 1994). Combining interview data with observations offered an insight into what participants actually did in their everyday coaching, rather than just what they said they did. This combination of data captured a more complex understanding of people's mundane and taken for granted events and activities that might not have been disclosed in interviews (Smith, 2013).

Observations presented the opportunity to record coaching as and when it happened in the participant's setting, rather than solely relying on individual's recall of events at another time (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Importantly, observing coaches in their setting saw coaching occur in their natural surroundings, including the typical spaces within which they coached. This allowed comparisons to be drawn between the coaching they saw or delivered as part of their formal qualifications, and the coaching that occurred in their setting. As such, observations offered a contextual understanding of participants actions, interactions and emotions in situ and a route to knowing the participant(s), more than simply knowing about the people participating in the study (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

In line with the interpretivist paradigm, I entered observations with empathy for participants' specific meanings, rather than testing theories and concepts (Markula & Silk, 2011). As a method, these observations were intended to understand participants' subjective experiences and interpret their meanings to better understand coaching practice (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). Aligned with the relativist ontology, observations captured the multiple meanings of participants' social worlds based on their experiences in particular contexts and in relation to others. Similar to the co-

construction of knowledge in the interviews, these observations oriented towards a subjective epistemological positioning. Consequently, it was important to acknowledge that the data collected could not be neutral; as the researcher, I was involved in the production of the knowledge during these observations (Thorpe & Olive, 2016).

One consideration when employing this method was the frequency of observations (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). The research question, focused on the activity of coaching and the physical spaces of coaches' practice, guided these considerations. As such, participant observations were limited to the delivery of BC's Level 2 coaching programme and the participants' delivery of their coaching sessions. In addition, observations included visits to the BC offices, which provided insight into BC's culture. Committing to observations over a period of time required energy, time and patience (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). I understood it was unfeasible to visit participants' every coaching session and was mindful of the seasonal aspect of cycling. Moreover, riders moved through coaches' groups, which resulted in them coaching different riders through my observations. This hindered the chance to observe rider development, longitudinally. However, this did not detract from the research question of observing the progression in participants' coaching abilities. Observations were conducted longitudinally, which aimed to limit the impact that my presence had on participants' behaviour because they felt more at ease with my presence over time (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Observations were overt in nature, where participants knew my role as a PhD researcher attached to a University, collaboratively working with BC. It was important to acknowledge that I was an outsider to the cycling community: I was not a cyclist; I was not a cycling coach; I was an adult attending child only sessions; and, sometimes, a male observing female only sessions. I had no cultural knowledge of cycling, I had

not participated in cycling and had a low-level of pre-existing physical activity. As an outsider, it was possible that I misunderstood the phenomena being observed (Gratton & Jones, 2004). However, an outsider role also offered critical distance in observations as I was more able to question practices and behaviours that may be familiar and taken for granted by someone already encultured in cycling (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). I was supported by BC staff on a 'reconnaissance mission' as they guided my socialisation into cycling offering some contextualisation of the data Arvy had collected. Yet, my lack of cultural knowledge allowed participants to play a guiding role, teaching me aspects of the sport from their perspective. I feel they responded well to this approach and enjoyed sharing their enthusiasm for their sport with me, rather than seeing me as an annoyance. Conversely, the fact that I came from a coaching background offered some social capital.

4.7.2.1 Recording observations and the use of field notes

To observe participants in their coaching environment, I travelled 4,958 miles – equating to over 100 hours of driving – visiting nine different locations, over nineteen visits. This produced 36.5 hours of observations with coaches: 12 hours with the relational narrative coaches; 16.5 hours with the discovery narrative coaches; and 8 hours with the performance narrative coaches. In addition, I spent 160 hours in BC's Office and 24 hours, across three separate days, observing the delivery and assessment of BC's Level 2 qualification.

During observations I adopted an etic position (Sparkes & Smith, 2014), sat on the side lines, undisturbed, making detailed and extensive notes about: the delivery of the courses; interactions within BC's Offices; and coach's actions and interactions during his/her delivery of a session. Some of the environments, and some examples of my positioning during observations, are illustrated in Figure 4.3. I entered the field with

complete openness (Glaser, 1978) and gathered data in a manner that presented the most complete picture of what occurred from my perspective in the research setting (Erlandson et al, 1993).

Figure 4.3 - Some environments in which I conducted participant observations
(© Samuel Wood)

The data collected during participant observations were recorded through systematic note-taking, in the field (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). As a novice ethnographer, although observations were framed by the epistemological and theoretical lenses outlined above, I felt I needed a structured approach to recording field notes. I took guidance from Wolcott's (1981) approach of observing and recoding everything, yet looking for nothing in particular and being mindful of the problems confronting participants. Similarly, I found Markula and Silk's (2011) stages of observations a useful guide. Firstly, they recommend taking descriptive notes, capturing all possible

details. These descriptive notes focused on issues such as: Who was in the setting? Who dominated the setting and who was in the margins? What did people do, versus what they said they did? What was the space people moved in? What happened in these settings, and what was the order of events? What were the material artefacts, goals and what did people accomplish in these settings? What were the emotions, both within the group and my own personal emotions? What could I see, touch, smell, taste and hear?

Markula and Silk (2011) then suggest progressing to more specific observations, concentrating on more defined activity within the field, before further selecting specific aspects of the activity or location to focus observations on. This 'funnelled' approach to observations (Adler & Adler, 1994), progressively narrowing and directing my attention deeper into the elements of the settings within which I was immersed, proved useful to guiding and structuring my observations and systematic note-taking. I made notes during my observations, and then reflected after the observations (Jones, 2004). For accuracy, field notes were dated, and the time and location of the observation was recorded. Further, my field notes were supported by the use of photography and film, which is discussed in section 4.7.4 as a data collection method in its own right. The use of my iPhone meant voice-memos and video-recordings prompted multi-dimensional memories of socially, physically, sensually loaded phases of my fieldwork. However, ethically, this was not always possible in sessions where children were participating because of the associated safeguarding considerations. Nonetheless, this added flexibility and creativity to meet some of the challenges of the spaces I conducted observations and the physical requirements of the activity of observing (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). For example, some of the language participants used proved to be a barrier to my understanding of the events I observed, which made my visual observations more important. These notes and reflections were

mainly descriptive at the start of the research process and became more specific and critical as the research progressed. Therefore, field notes were the method of recording observations and a space for reflection and analysis during the research process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

4.7.3 Informal conversations – the power of 'small talk'

The two previous sections have outlined how interviews and participant observations collected data in an ethnographic framework. However, during this data collection, informal conversations occurred during the unstructured parts of my observations or interviews. For example, at the start or end of interviews, over lunch breaks, breaks in coaching sessions, over meals or coffee that I had with participants prior to, or following, their coaching sessions. These informal conversations have been referred to using different terms within the literature: Cushion and Jones (2006) termed it 'shop talk'; Selleck (2017) referred to them as 'ethnographic chats'; and Driessen and Jansen (2013) referred to them as 'small talk'. Nonetheless, these interactions with participants were a valued, central part of the research process and the necessary flexibility for these interactions to occur was built into the research design (Driessen & Jansen, 2013; Selleck, 2017). The distinction between formal interviews or observations and small talk is rather fluid and often an underappreciated research technique (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). However, this section aims to highlight the contribution this method had in this project's data collection.

The fine line between small talk in fieldwork and daily life is perhaps the reason why small talk has received little systematic attention in written accounts of fieldwork (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). Indeed, there were times that I underappreciated I was 'collecting' data, because I felt I was simply having a conversation with someone. As a novice ethnographer, my reflections from my observations in the field often

captured feelings of being fraudulent because it seemed too natural – too easy. I could comprehend that a semi-structured interview, where I asked questions to address a given problem with an interview guide and Dictaphone, was collecting data. Conversely, 'small talk' felt like 'chit-chat', or 'gossip', and irrelevant. Over time, however, I came to realise that it was the natural aspect of 'small talk' that was so crucial.

'Small talk' is arguably a basic, social skill used in daily life, and, as such, it is a central ingredient of working in the field and important in terms of the production of field notes (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). I felt that through both my coaching and education – especially my degrees in psychology, which had briefly covered counselling skills – I had developed the interpersonal skills to be able to successfully engage in 'small talk' in order to build rapport. A concern of recruiting participants for a longitudinal study lasting fifteen months was the potential for disengagement and drop-out from the project. I appreciated that participating in this PhD was a small act to them. I understood I needed to maintain perspective: I was living and breathing this PhD, and their involvement meant my research would thrive or simply survive; yet this PhD played only a small part in their lives. I believed that the key to engaging participants was to build and maintain strong relationships with those who I recruited. I employed a few techniques for this. For example, at the close of a phone interview I would ask if participants had any plans for the coming months. At the start of out next encounter, whether that was an interview or an observation, I would ask how those events had gone – whether it be in relation to a holiday, a cycling race, or a birthday. This built continuity from conversation to conversation and showed that I cared about participants' lives beyond their superficial engagement in my PhD. I asked about their work, their partners and their children. I emailed at Christmas to wish them, and their families, a Merry Christmas. I sent emails during 'down times'

of their participation to thank them for their participation in the study and to stress the importance of their continued engagement and contribution to the data collection. I aimed to make them feel valued and appreciated.

Figure 4.4 – Text conversation with one participant following a coaching session

These informal encounters achieved what I intended with all eight participants engaged with the PhD for the duration of the fifteen months. However, the result was beyond anything I could have expected. The most surprising outcome was that participants began to contact me (see Figure 4.4), shifting the dynamics from a typical

'top-down' relationship between researcher-participant, and creating more balanced channels of communication.

Yet, on reflection, the relaxed nature of these conversations also caused issues regarding informed consent. During my first days in the BC Office, I wanted to keep stopping staff who were engaged in conversations with me and remind them of my role and gain their consent to continue our conversation. Of course, this was impractical, and in some ways, unnecessary. I came to realise that the people who I came into contact with as a result of the PhD, and those who engaged with 'small talk', simply needed to be informed of my fieldwork's goals, but not constantly reminded of my research intentions (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). This would have been eased if BC had communicated my role to the whole office in a blanket email or announced my role in a monthly newsletter. This possibility was discussed but never realised.

My ability to engage in cycling-specific 'small talk' however, did hinder my abilities to fully engage in some settings and situations. When in the BC office there were conversations that I was excluded from simply because I did not understand certain acronyms. For example, in one meeting the education team discussed the work of CIMSPA – which I later discovered, via Google, was the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity – in relation to developing some professional guidelines for sport coaches. On one occasion I was in the Office on a Monday morning, the day after the charity ride for Arvy, and couldn't understand why people were referring to it as 'Sportive'. Even understanding the different disciplines, and the associated culture to each discipline, was challenging, let alone the language used in those settings. At observations I heard quite generic terms, like 'M check', which I quickly understood linked to the 'M' that traced across the bike frame during the physical bike check – from the front wheel, up to the handle-bars, down to the pedals and chain, back up the seat and down to the rear wheels. Similarly,

'Ready position', which related to the riders' pedal position before setting off, was used rather generically. However, I also heard language specific to each discipline. For example, on the velodrome I observed 'Flying Sprints' and a 'Flying-200', which simply referred to moving starts. There was a focus on timings and race 'lines', 'attempts' were called 'efforts' and 'marginal gains' – Sir Brailsford's trademark term – was used countless times. This contrasted quite sharply to the mountain bike clubs I spent time with. Here, I heard pedalling being called 'cranking', tough sections of a trail were 'gnarly', and I saw a lot of 'sweet' (good) attempts at skills. Sunny days were 'prime', I learned wet days created 'loose' conditions, and I saw how cycling 'rim-deep' in mud often resulted in stopping dead and falling off, referred to in these contexts as a 'dead soldier'.

4.7.4 Use of visual research methods (VRM)

The visual is central to the cultural construction of social life in the contemporary Western society (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). Visual imagery is constructed through various practices, technologies and knowledge and offers insights into the mundane, every day activities that are not always captured through written or spoken word, or not deemed important or significant (Phoenix & Rich, 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). I used VRM as the process of taking visual material and integrating it as part of the evidence to explore the established research questions (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). This can result in new knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon being studied and, by producing knowledge differently, provides the opportunity to disseminate research findings to wider audiences outside academia (Phoenix & Rich, 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This means that VRM presents empowering possibilities to show, more than tell, things about the social world.

Figure 4.5 - Examples of the photos I captured as part of the VRM
(© Samuel Wood)

The camera is part of the ethnographer's 'tool kit' and photography continues to be the primary means of documenting, representing and analysing VRM in sport and exercise science (Pink, 2011; Phoenix & Rich, 2016). Moreover, photographs offered a way to represent the context-specific actions and complex, micro-realities of learning contexts (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). The photographs that I collected throughout this project helped produce representations of the sport of cycling, BC and the activity of coaching cycling – specifically, the variety of settings in which coaching occurred (see Figure 4.5). Here, the camera was an extension of my eyes (Delgado, 2009) and captured observable phenomena in natural settings, which complemented my field notes (Harper, 1988). However, although the photos collected might appear to capture the 'real', they captured 'image-ideas' of the real (Kember, 1996, p.145) and representations of aspects of the cultures I observed, not the whole culture or symbols

that had complete, fixed meanings (Pink, 2011). It was important to maintain reflexive awareness that I exerted autonomy over where I directed the camera lens and the scenes I captured, dictated by what appeared important to me, shaped by the specific methodological and theoretical frameworks (Pink, 2011).

4.8 Data analysis, interpretation and presentation of research findings

Following the discussion of the methods this PhD employed for data collection, it is important to outline the methods used to analyse and interpret the findings.

4.8.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing, examining, evaluating and interpreting documents, both printed and electronic, to discover meaning, understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). This research method has proved an effective way of understanding certain aspects of sport by uncovering relevant insights to the research problem (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Documents contain data that has been recorded without the researcher's intervention, and are 'social facts' that are produced, shared and used in socially organised ways (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was employed in triangulation with interviews and observations, which allowed corroboration of findings across data sets, and therefore reduced the impact of potential biases (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 1994).

Documents provide context and historical insight for participant observations (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was relevant in the analysis of policy documents, especially in relation to the professionalisation of sport coaching through a formalised qualification system. These documents provided insight into why BC's formal

education exists and highlighted the historical roots of the specific issues surrounding formal education within sport coaching. This provided context that framed the analysis of the secondary data from Arvy. In addition, analysis of the coaching handbooks and resources provided by BC informed interview questions and highlighted areas that needed focus during observations.

I intended to conduct analysis of participants' session plans in order to capture the 'what' of their sessions, to compliment the 'how' captured in observations. I hoped this would track changes and development in participants' practice and gather data from sessions that could not be observed and corroborate findings from other methods. However, not all participants engaged with the planning process following their formal education, which limited this analysis. I felt part of this was fear of me judging their work. Conversely, those who did were either scribbling plans in little notebooks, or on the backs of envelopes, and throwing them away after sessions. One participant used Google docs to write his sessions and continually saved his new plan over the old one, so lost majority of his 'catalogue' and, consequently, could only share a limited number of plans with me. As such, not all participants engaged with this aspect of data collection.

Nonetheless, document analysis proved efficient and cost-effective because the data was already collected. The majority of documents were readily available, especially public records such as policy documents from both local and central government, or some documents produced by BC, which could be accessed without the author's permission. These documents covered a large time span and captured data from numerous events across different settings. Unfortunately, some documents were blocked, especially within the office, because of the bullying claims occurring in 2017 when this PhD began. I joined BC at a defining time in the organisation's history. Bullying allegations referring to the way the Olympic Podium Track athletes were

being treated surfaced, sparking a whole cascade of NGBs being accused of similar practices. This initiated UK Sport's review into the way elite level sport is funded and coincided with BC's restructuring to meet new Governance requirements. The image of BC as the medal powerhouse of the Nation was fracturing right in front of me, and you could see BC struggling to maintain any sort of positive image they could. Consequently, analysing the media articles surrounding BC captured this process and provided context for the NGB during the time of this PhD. However, it was obviously important to consider the target audience, accuracy of the information and any possible distortion of the 'facts' within these articles (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Yet, importantly, the media's coverage of this story helped balance the 'inside story' I was privy to from my time in the Office with the media's story that the wider cycling community was hearing.

4.8.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for 'identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data' (Clarke, Braun & Weate, 2016, p.297). In this way, it is a technique – a tool – that can be applied across a range of theoretical frameworks and research paradigms (Clarke & Braun, 2016). This is not to say TA is independent of theories, it simply allows flexibility in embedding TA within the theory most appropriate for the research (Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2019). The TA conducted throughout this PhD was across data sets – interviews – and aimed to find repeated patterns of meaning in relation to participants' lived experiences, views and perspectives, behaviours and practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2016).

4.8.2.1 Considerations when employing TA

TA provided an accessible and systematic procedure for generating codes – the smallest units of analysis – which are the building blocks for larger patterns of meaning underpinned by the central organising concept – 'themes' (Clarke, Braun & Weate, 2016). Themes capture something important about the data in relation to the research questions, represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this way, TA provided a framework for organising and reporting my analytic observations, not just simply identifying a pattern (Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2019).

TA can be used for inductive and deductive analysis to capture obvious and underlying meaning within the data (Clarke, Braun & Weate, 2016). My use of TA was both inductive and deductive in nature. For example, the data set I received from Arvy was not contextualised within research questions, theoretical frameworks or the broader literature around this topic. As such, I experienced the analysis of this data as one of the most extreme examples of inductive analysis, where the process was data-driven more than driven by my theoretical interest in the topic area (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My coding process was not focused on trying to fit data into pre-existing coding frames or analytic preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, the specific research questions that I developed for this section of the project evolved through the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Conversely, the analysis on the data that I collected was more deductive in nature. Although the exact theoretical framework that this research became embedded within developed over time, this analysis was driven by specific research questions and my chosen methodological framework.

The literature once discussed the 'themes' as 'emerging' from the data, whereas now it is acknowledged that themes are interrogated, constructed and developed through an analytic process (Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2019). This highlights my

active role in this process, as a researcher, in line with the interpretivist paradigm this project was positioned within. As such, it was important to acknowledge that this analysis was framed by the theoretical and epistemological position I held as a researcher and was not coded in an epistemological vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Epistemological positioning is usually considered when the research project is being conceptualised but plays a role during the analysis and guided what I said about the data and informed how I theorised meaning. Epistemologically positioned within the constructionist perspective, where meaning and experience are deemed to be socially produced and reproduced, this analysis did not seek to focus on individuals, but, rather, on the sociocultural context and structural conditions that enabled the individual accounts provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, analysis was at the latent level (Braun & Clarke, 2006), identifying and examining underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that sought to identify features that give form and meaning. Positioned within the constructionist paradigm this involved interpretative work to generate themes and meant that the analysis produced was already theorised, rather than simply being descriptive (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.8.2.2 The process of conducting TA

TA allowed flexibility for me to decide themes and prevalence of codes in numerous ways. There are no rigid rules with TA, but it was important to be consistent in how I analysed my data, produced codes and developed themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I engaged in a recursive process, back and forth between the entire data set and coded extracts of data that I was analysing and the data I was producing, to develop my analysis over time. I conducted TA following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases: I started by looking for patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data; and finished with reporting the content and meaning of patterns in data.

As such, I appreciated that writing my findings was an integral part of the analysis process rather than a derogatory act at the end of the research process. Here, I provide an account of how TA was conducted within this PhD and how I strived to achieve trustworthiness by using Braun & Clarke's (2006, p.96) 15-point checklist at each phase of the analysis.

<u>Phases 1 and 2: Familiarisation and coding</u>

The first and second phases focused on familiarisation and the coding of data. As mentioned above, because I did not collect Arvy's data I had no previous knowledge or analytic thoughts regarding her data, although I did have an interest in the topic area. This meant that my familiarisation with this data set resembled a 'reconnaissance mission' to gain a deep and broad understanding of the data's content, which was a daunting task. I grouped participants by job role to manage the workload and undertook the time-consuming task of repeatedly reading and re-reading the data in an active way, with a pencil in hand underlining key words or sentences and summarising sections in the margins. Here, I noted my ideas for codes for a later phase while I continued to immerse myself within the entire data set. My coding continued to be developed and defined throughout the entire analysis. It was important that the verbatim transcription had captured enough detail, retained the information needed and were 'true' to the original nature of the interview dialogue to effectively inform my constructionist TA. Sometimes, with Arvy's data, it was important to take more time to familiarise myself with the data, and often necessary to check the transcript against the original audio for 'accuracy' (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once I had read and familiarised myself with the data – for both Arvy's data and the data I had collected – I moved to the second phase of analysis and generated an initial list of ideas about what was in the data and what was interesting about them

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). My codes identified features of the data that appeared interesting in the most basic sense. These codes formed the basis of repeated patterns across the data set and could then be grouped in a meaningful way. With Arvy's data, this process was data-driven, but with the data I collected, coding was driven by my research questions, relevant literature and methodological framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I worked systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data set in order to be thorough, inclusive and comprehensive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I did this manually: I wrote on the transcripts; used highlighters to identify extracts of data; and used post-it notes to identify segments of data. I kept the surrounding data of code extracts for context and coded for as many potential patterns ('themes') as possible. I had contradictions in data patterns and relationships between codes and was mindful not to ignore these tensions or inconsistencies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I copied extracted data and the attached code to an Excel spreadsheet, which I then colour coded to group similar codes into as many themes as they fitted into. This captured the overall conceptualisation of data patterns and created a thematic 'map' for use in Phases 3 to 5.

Phases 3-5: Theme development and refinement

Once the data had been initially coded, my focus shifted towards the broader level of themes, more than codes. This first phase involved searching the different codes for potential themes and collating relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, I used a combination of the Excel spreadsheet, the post-it notes and mindmaps to organise similar codes into groups ('themes'). Next, I considered the relationship between themes and different levels of themes, for example, overarching themes and sub-themes within them; some initial codes formed main themes, some formed sub-themes, and some where discarded. On some

occasions, it was necessary to create a temporary 'miscellaneous' group – a holding pen for codes that did not fit anywhere. Sometimes these merged into developed themes, but sometimes they were discarded. This highlighted the process of how codes were combined, refined, separated or discarded. By the end of this phase, I had a collection of 'candidate' themes, sub-themes and extracts of data that have been coded in relation to them, which allowed me to see the significance of individual themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The next phase involved the refinement of the themes. It became apparent in this phase that some main themes – or candidate themes – were not really themes at all. Sometimes, this was because there was not enough data to support them as standalone themes, and these themes were collapsed and merged into others. Other times the data was too diverse and needed breaking into separate themes. This resulted in themes that were clear, identifiable and distinguishable between themes, and fitted together in coherent, consistent, distinctive and meaningful ways (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process had two stages. First, I re-read all collated extracts for each theme and considered whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern. Once I had reached the stage where candidate themes captured the landscape of coded data, I had created a candidate thematic map. The second stage involved a similar process, but in relation to the entire data set, considering the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set. Here, 'accurate representation' aligned with the constructionist perspective I employed, searching for participants' lived experiences, views and perspective, behaviour and practices. Here, I re-read the entire data set for two reasons: first, to see whether themes 'worked' in relation to the data set; second, to code any additional data within themes missed in earlier coding stages, which highlighted the organic, ongoing process of coding. When the thematic map worked, I had a good

understanding of the different themes, how they fitted together and a grasp of the overall story they told about the data. At this point, I moved to the next phase.

The last phase of this process defined and further refined the themes that I presented in the analysis. This meant identifying the 'essence' of what each theme was about and determining what aspect of data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, it was important to develop 'goldilock' themes: themes that did not cover too much; were not too diverse; or too complex (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I achieved this by going back over collated data extracts for each theme and organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account within the accompanying narrative. I identified what was of interest about the themes, and why, and wrote a detailed analysis of each (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, I also identified the 'story' that each theme told and considered how it fitted into the broader overall 'story' I was telling about the data in relation to the research questions to limit any overlap between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, it was important to consider themes in relation to others. By the end of this phase, I had clearly defined themes. My developed themes had working titles, but as I progressed towards the last phase of writing up my findings, I refined those titles.

4.8.2.3 Using thematic narrative analysis

As I conducted TA on the interview data focused on participants' biographies, it became apparent that there were similarities between some participants regarding cycling experience, motivations, beliefs and values. As these narratives began to be discovered it felt as though standard TA was fragmenting the narratives. As a result, I employed thematic narrative analysis (TNA), which is the most commonly used type of narrative analysis in sport and exercise science (Riessman, 2008). Here, the focus was on the content – the themes in stories and the patterns and relationships among

these (Smith, 2016). TNA uses a similar iterative process to that discussed above in relation to TA. However, when immersing myself in the transcripts of these interviews, I thought with, not simply about the stories they contained (Smith, 2016). This facilitated patterns that ran through the set of stories being identified. To ensure that stories were kept intact, I focused on the thread of each story and the recurrent instances within the whole story. Similar to the process outlined above, I developed themes by making notes on the thread of the story and regular occurrences throughout the story, highlighted key sentences and phrases, and wrote notes in the margins of transcripts that summarised apparent and underlying meanings of the data (Smith, 2016). Here, as I worked back and forth between the data and my notes, I described each theme that I had identified in detail. This process focused on more than just the themes I had developed though, and focused on describing themes of the story and, therefore, what the story was about (Smith, 2016). Throughout this interpretive process, I continued to write, revise and edit my interpretations of these descriptions.

4.8.2.4 Presenting the interpretations from the analyses

The final phase of the TA and TNA involved the final analysis and write up of the report. I focused on sharing the complicated story of my data in a way that convinced the reader of the merit and validity of my analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The aim was to ensure my write-up effectively communicated the overall story that my themes revealed about the topic being researched. I found it useful to consider what each theme meant, the assumptions that underpinned it and the implications of each theme However, it was important to provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data with enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme. I wanted to choose vivid examples without unnecessary complexity and frame these with an analytic narrative that illustrated the story being told. I understood this story needed

to make an argument in relation to the research question, rather than simply describe the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Across this project, I presented the narrative analysis from the position of both storyteller (creative nonfiction) and story-analyst (TNA; Smith, 2016).

I employed the creative nonfiction to present the secondary data from Arvy. I acknowledged that Arvy's data captured an important point. Moreover, her data told a story and it was important for me to demonstrate the purpose of the story I presented to the reader in a clear way. I conducted the analysis as a story-analyst and conducted formal analysis of the data outlined above, and then assembled these results in terms of what content the story was about. It was important that the story that I crafted came from a thick and rich analysis of the transcripts (Smith, 2016). The story developed over a period of months. This gave the story chance to breathe as I sketched the story and scribbled new ideas, casting and recasting the plot and the characters while staying close to the purpose of the story (Smith, 2016). It was hard starting the first draft, but I found comfort knowing it was private. I had not written a piece of creative nonfiction before, and initially struggled with writing research findings in this way. However, the more I felt the stories were my own – and that the data was my own – I felt more comfortable telling the story as it was my own while respecting that I would never really know the others' stories (Smith, 2016). I developed characters who would drive the story. Selecting the number of characters was logical – one character to represent each group recruited. The way in which the characters interacted was organic and developed alongside the setting and plot. I used conversation where possible, complimented by the embodiment of characters and evocative emotions to create suspense and engage the reader, cognitively and emotionally (Smith, 2016). These rich, vivid descriptions created images and conjured

up emotions with the reader that allowed the research findings to be shown to the reader, more than told (Smith, 2016).

I felt that illustrating the findings from the analysis of Arvy's data using creative nonfiction honoured her involvement in the research process yet balanced this alongside my contribution. Initially, I struggled to understand the sheer scope of the data she had collected. As discussed in the prologue, I considered not using the data. However, that did not seem right. I felt a responsibility to share her work. The challenge was asserting ownership of the data: interpreting the transcripts my way and presenting the data my way. At first, I felt as though this was the most extreme form of inductive analysis because I had no understanding of the significance of her data. However, over time, as I gained an insight into her research questions – as well as refining and merging them with my research questions – it became a very deductive process. I grouped transcripts by workforce and created themes across groups. It became clear that there was very little about this that seemed conventional. I had my themes, and putting the transcripts to one side, I could reframe Arvy's data and cut the metaphorical albatross from around my neck. Using her data was enough to maintain her memory. Using her work fulfilled my responsibility to share her data with the world. My contribution then – my ownership – I came to realise rested in my presentation of my findings. As such, I chose to present the findings of her data using a literary form of creative nonfiction.

Having used creative nonfiction for the first study of this PhD, I decided to present findings from the other analyses in a more traditional way. TNA developed three narrative types (Frank, 1995), which are discussed in more detail in section 5.3. These narratives were used as a theoretical frame to present the TA of other studies presented in sections 5.4 and 5.5.

4.8.3 Analysing VRM

Using VRM embedded creativity and artfulness to the data this project collected (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). However, it was still important to justify my interpretation of this visual imagery. The photographs that I captured during the data collection phase were analysed using compositional interpretation (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). Here, rather than quantifying certain characteristics of the photograph – the content – the analysis focused more on descriptions of the composition of the photograph – for example, the content, colour, spatial organisation (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). This analysis was triangulated with the interpretations from other analyses and interspersed throughout the write-up of this project.

4.9 Managing the research field

It is increasingly accepted that researchers 'cannot adopt a neutral role in the field' (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p.73). As such, my personal beliefs and values will have, implicitly and explicitly, driven the research by shaping my assumptions and theoretical orientations (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). In turn, my subjectivity will have affected the way in which I approached and conducted the research, how findings were interpreted, and importantly, how findings were presented (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Consequently, my beliefs and values have underpinned the research design, the chosen methodological approach and the interpretation of the data. I have outlined an explanation of the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods selected to denote the direction and philosophical positioning of this doctoral body of work. However, when managing the research field, these personal beliefs and values also impacted how I perceived my role and responsibilities as a researcher, how I handled the ethical considerations I was presented with, as well as the reflexivity I engaged in.

4.9.1 Roles and responsibilities

Responsibility is often treated as a question of ethics, morality, duty or complying with the institutional review board (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). However, researchers' responsibility should be more than procedural. Responsibility is deeply ethical, shaped by questions of goodness, knowledge, values and anticipated implications for practice (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). Of course, researchers have a responsibility to protect participants and avoid causing them harm, but they also have a duty to make informed philosophical and scholarly decisions. For example, it was important to present Arvy's work, while avoiding plagiarism. The difficulty – the scholarly-moral challenge – was keeping enough of her work visible, so as to respect her contribution, and presenting it in a way that felt as though it was my work. Philosophically, I had a responsibility to choose a methodological approach that best suited the research question – an approach that would produce quality research – rather than follow the narrative of methodological effectiveness that simply reinforced easy, uncomplicated decision making (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016).

In this way, then, researchers are arguably responsible for following set protocols and guidelines which position them as technicians more than intellectuals, or scholars. Responsibility can be viewed as: relational, where responsibility cannot be divorced from social interaction or cultural contents (Todd, 2003); from an individual perspective, where responsibility is concerned with choice, vision, intentionality and rational action (Feinberg & Shafer-Landau, 2008); or as actions, or consequences attributed to reflective self and responsibility as rationality (Cartwright, 2006). As such, Koro-Ljungberg (2016) advises researchers reflect on notions of responsibility, and ask where those notions come from, which can be captured in a journal documenting reactions to unknown and uncertain situations. For me, this was captured in reflective field notes, both written and voice notes, as I made various

decisions regarding the qualitative data that did not have the clear rules or laws that I often felt I needed to operate within. For example, when participants resisted to disclose information during interviews, or addressing unexpected changes in the field. From here, it was possible to consider ways in which different forms of duty created me, as a researcher, and my approach to the research project. Moreover, I viewed scholarship, data, interpretations and presentations as questions, more than answers (Patrick, 1997).

Some aspects of responsibility, however, can include more than simple aspects of philosophy and scholarly practice. Firstly, I had a responsibility to produce research that was valued by coaches, coach developers and BC's education team. In this sense, I needed to communicate my findings to the wider community, especially the staff and key stakeholders at BC. Moreover, I was mindful that this needed to be made accessible – both in terms of the platform that it was shared, and the language used. Following the successful completion of the PhD, I will produce an executive summary document of the findings. This will allow me to fulfil my responsibility in collaborating with BC to inform potential, sustainable change in their formal coach education provision. Thirdly, I felt a responsibility to offer participants something for their commitment to this project. In discussions with participants throughout the project, they would often express feelings of being isolated from other coaches, and ask for feedback, not only on their own practice, but on how their practice compared to other coaches and clubs. This was ethically challenging, because I did not want to share the coaching practice that I was observing in case it influenced their development during their participation in the study. However, I understood their curiosity to compare themselves to others and acknowledged that I was regularly visiting other clubs and observing coaches' practice across different contexts. Following the completion of the PhD I feel a responsibility to share some of the

coaching practice I observed, perhaps offering participants with a learning opportunity.

To this end, in qualitative research, responsibility is an infinite task and always becoming. As such, my responsibility, and my responsible decision making, was never finished or accomplished, which called for different ways to evaluate and reflect on my responsibility (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). I prepared for the decisions I would need to make by continually revising and reconceptualising research purposes, processes, techniques and approaches as well as interactions with participants and the data I collected. In this way, responsibility is not a binary choice – right and wrong – but an ongoing response, and a set of decisions and choices. If other theories, approaches and methods were possible, it was my role, as a "responsible" researcher, to decide and respond accordingly.

4.9.2 Ethical considerations

Having a clear understanding of my own identity, politics, ethics, relationships to the culture and the place of the fieldwork, facilitated the process of making ethically informed decisions. In this section, I reflect on the ethical considerations I encountered throughout this project and highlight the attempts I made to uphold this as an ethical research project.

In the first months of this project, I demonstrated my commitment and ability to adhere to ethical research, as outlined in the University guidelines and regulations (Palmer, 2016), by completing the mandatory on-line ethics training offered by LJMU. An amended version of Institutional ethical approval was approved for this study, by addressing some administrative points to Arvy's original proposal. As the primary researcher involved with this project, I was granted full ethical approval and the project was permitted to continue. This, however, presented the first ethical dilemma.

I understood that Arvy's data was the property of the University, and I was satisfied that it was secondary data that had been passed on to me. However, I was mindful of how I ethically made this work my own. I knew that it was my role to interpret this data, and to present the findings how I felt appropriate. Ethically, however, it took some consideration of how to do this while upholding the upmost respect for Arvy as a researcher and the work she completed. It was important to balance my work alongside hers – putting my stamp on it, without losing her influence. I hope I have achieved this, and I hope I have done justice to her proposal while realising the work that she was unable to see through.

When my role turned towards data collection, I produced informed consent forms and participant information sheets, and re-communicated my ethical position with staff at the BC Office, specifically regarding their continued engagement in my research even though I had no plans to interview them. Texts discussing research ethics tend to imply that ethical considerations end at this stage in the research process (e.g. Silverman, 2013). I was familiar with the institution's procedures because of research that I had conducted as part of my undergraduate and postgraduate studies. However, because of the field-based nature of my research and the continued, sustained interaction I would have with participants, I struggled to understand that I no longer had to consider ethics from this point onwards. Consequently, I regarded it my methodological responsibility to review the ethical implications of my actions throughout this project (Koro-Ljunberg, 2016).

Primarily, this research project was concerned with working with people. Therefore, it was paramount to establish and maintain positive relationships with the people who agreed to participate in this work. I feel initial buy-in from participants came from emphasising how their involvement would help answer a shared problem across the sport of cycling. This project did not address the struggles of an individual

coach, or the struggles faced by a few; it addressed an issue faced by the masses, which most coaches could connect with, and therefore, increased participants' interest in engaging with work that could help improve our understanding of the problems at hand. However, it was important to understand, as the researcher in this project, that working with people is also emotional work (Lee-Treweek 2000). Through a reflective process at the beginning of this project, I realised my personal biography – my beliefs, values, previous experiences and existing knowledge – would impact the lens through which I saw the research problem, and the approach I chose to address researching it. Yet, as the research process progressed, it became apparent that it was not possible to switch off my personal needs and emotional reactions simply because I was conducting a research study (Stoler 2002; Dickson-Swift et al 2008). During all aspects of the project, I experienced a whole range of emotions. However, when dealing with participants, I had to decide which emotions to show, suppress and allow myself to feel. Further, reflecting on these encounters, I considered how these decisions impacted participants' engagement and participation during the project, especially the data collection phase. During the project, I also found myself managing the emotions of participants. The emotional pains experienced by researchers is rarely mentioned (Shaffir et al, 1980) and something that needs further attention in the literature (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). I hope this work goes some way towards raising the awareness of this topic.

When I recruited the eight participants who I followed for fifteen-months I did not expect to develop such strong relationships with them. I have had discussions with participants over coffee after observations and arranged to meet one participant for breakfast before an observation. On a basic level these seemed very normal, human activities. As a researcher, I assumed this was regular practice and a chance to build rapport. One participant invited me for dinner at his house, with him and his wife,

after each observation. Being introduced to participants' families and being welcomed into their homes in such a way, was a relationship far beyond anything I expected to form. One participant even invited me to his family home one weekend, which included dinner out and a few drinks in his local pub. On a deeper level, these activities offered a unique opportunity to see participants as people, more than simply coaches, or worse, solely as participants in this project, and allowed an opportunity to engage in 'small-talk' and capture participants' reflections. This countered the argument that, as a method, interviews are often criticised for unthinkingly viewing participants as nothing more than data sources (Chamberlain, 2012). However, I also considered the moral challenge of presenting participants' data in ways that did justice to their stories.

As part of the research process, I also had 'what/if' reflections regarding my actions if I had witnessed bad coaching practice, of if, for example, I had overheard discriminatory comments. In addition, my safety as a researcher was paramount and the result of good planning to help avoid difficult situations. I told my supervisor and a family member of all fieldwork trips – the dates, times and locations – and confirmed when I had returned home. Although I read guidance on the safety issues connected with visiting participant's houses, and although I communicated these details with my supervisors, reading ethnographies did not offer guidance on how to handle relationships with participants that develop in this way. Moreover, I planned to speak to participants at specific points of data capture, but this quickly developed into a continual conversation over fifteen-months. This included text messages and emails after sessions, where participants would share their thoughts and feelings around their coaching experiences, as shown in Figure 4.6. Participants would also ask to schedule phone calls to discuss their reflections, which proved valuable to my research, but also to them. During one interview one participant shared:

I love this, talking through my coaching - I find it really useful for my own learning… thank you for finding the time to chat
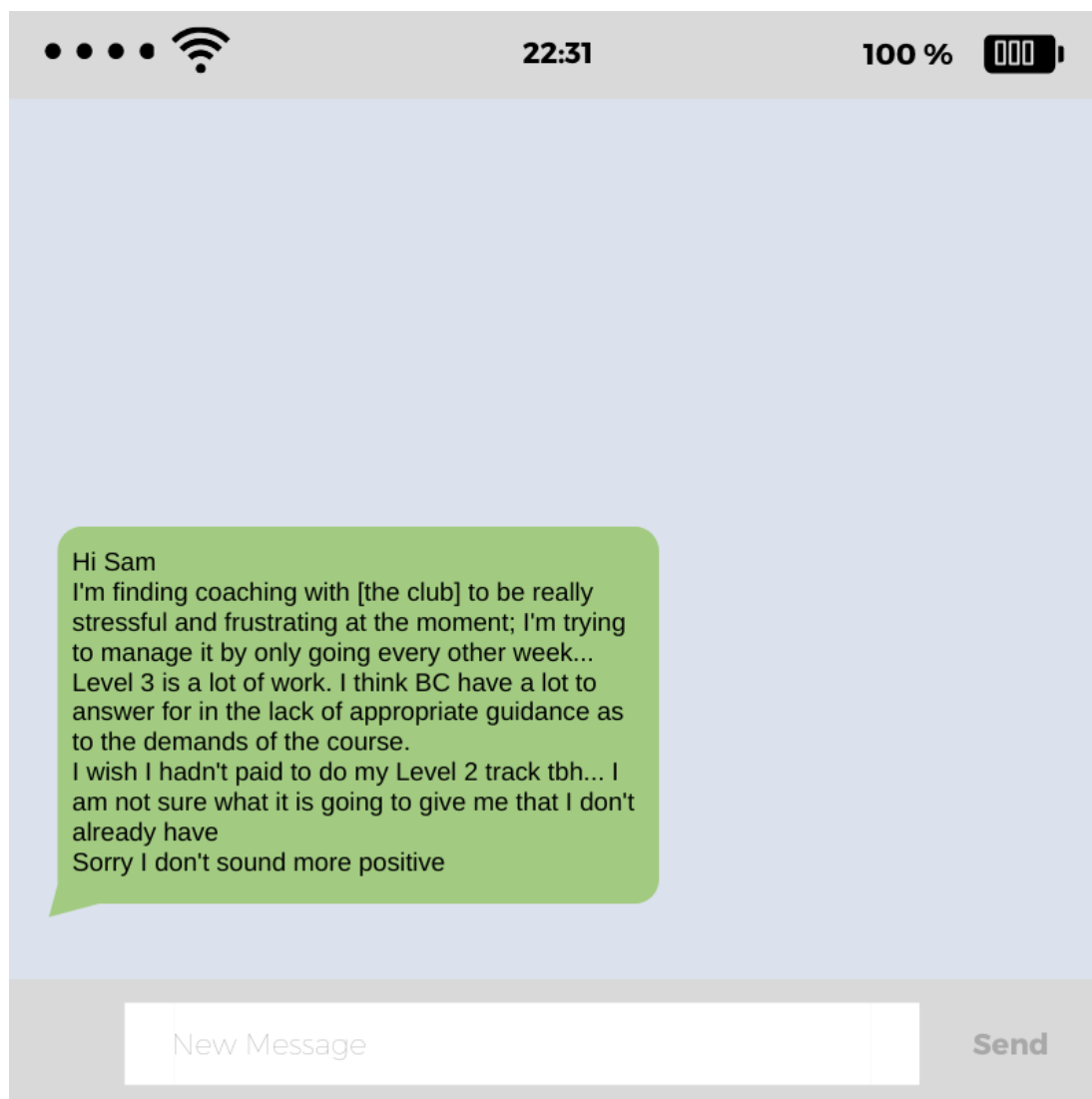
Figure 4.6 – Text conversation with a participant

It was touching to hear that some participants gained something from their experience of participating in this project. I remember, in the very beginning, I attended a Level 2 course to recruit potential participants and one candidate asked what "was in it for [him]" if he participated. I couldn't answer this question, other than re-state that participation was voluntary, and voiced some inspirational statement about making change for future coaches. However, on reflection, it was a

valid point. What immediate benefit was I offering participants? The answer was not a lot, and I remember thinking, "If this was me, would I participate?" To hear that, for some participants, the simple act of participating in this research was enough, without some extrinsic reward, was refreshing.

I had come to realise that I would influence these participants' learning experiences during their participation in this research. How could I question them on their learning, and ask them to reflect on their experiences without impacting, in some way, how they felt? I was content that my philosophical positioning acknowledged the joint role we both played in developing their narratives, and the research process was far from value-free. However, when reflecting on this particular interview, the above quote also raised concerns for me about my planned exit-routes for participants. My ethics training focused on the recruitment of participants and how to manage participants' withdrawal from a research project, on their terms. However, I felt that, with some participants, ending their participation was similar to breaking up with someone, something one participant captured perfectly during our last phone interview:

This is it then, you're breaking up with me?

Although this statement was followed by laughter, it hit hard. It was easy to forget that in the same way that these participants had become part of my life over the course of this project, I had also become part of their lives, too. These reflections link to Cavallerio et al's (2020) discussion on relational ethics.

4.9.3 Adopting a reflexive stance

Reflexivity is often seen as a key feature of qualitative research (Gemignani, 2017). Although my reflexivity could not be limited to this section and is discussed throughout this thesis, here I present a discussion on my reflexive stance.

As a researcher, I conducted this project within the philosophical approach of interpretivism, and the epistemological and ontological assumptions associated with this paradigm. However, these assumptions cannot be solely confined to the research project. My philosophical approach is embedded in the ways in which I see the world as an individual first, and as a researcher second. I cannot be separated from these assumptions – they are not a research tool to be picked up, applied to the research project, and placed back on the shelf. The way I see the world implicitly underpins my approach to research, the way I see myself, my existence and my place within my social world. I view realities to be dynamic and ever changing, closely aligned with the alterations that we, as individuals, make to our perceptions, in light of cultural, political and social experiences (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). As such, it was crucial for me, operating within the interpretivist paradigm, to be reflexive. This enabled me to become more in tune with the realities of the research experience and provided a richer understanding of the research process (Purdy, 2014).

I acknowledged that I was an integral part of the data-gathering process. As such, my previous experiences, especially my inexperience of the culture, my gender, age, nationality, race and sexuality all played a role in influencing my interactions, relationships and observations (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). It was important, in order to fully understand the sociocultural processes, to turn observation skills on myself, especially in relation to the ways in which my experiences interfaced with others in the same context (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). Recognising the respective social differences and similarities between myself and the participants across this research project,

acknowledged that the respective social roles shaped the interview process (Purdy, 2014). Being a young, white male, from a middle-class family meant that some participants may have felt that I "fitted" into their club scene. In other instances, however, I felt that I was perceived as "just another man" who fitted the cycling stereotype. Importantly, I was unfamiliar with the cycling context, and had no previous cycling experience or knowledge. In some ways this proved useful, as participants often spoke with a sense of security, finding comfort in the ways in which I was removed from certain individuals within the sport. During the interviews, every attempt was made to investigate certain areas further through 'elaboration' techniques (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Often, being an insider to the culture being investigated, it is easy to skip over areas you assume everyone knows, and not probe for in-depth explanation regarding the topic (Purdy, 2014). Consequently, being an outsider to the culture of cycling was useful, because the sense of naivety that this brought meant that all efforts were made to not assume anything.

4.10 Research quality, trustworthiness and transparency of data

I begin this discussion on the quality of this research with an outline of this project's philosophical positioning. The epistemological and ontological perspectives of this project viewed participants' worlds as evolving, built from constructive interpretations of their experiences (Smith and Sparkes, 2016). Participants could not be transparent reporters of an independent reality and, therefore, could not be 'truthful' witnesses of a world that was independent of their interpretations of it (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Positioning this research within the interpretivist paradigm, it was impossible to separate myself as a researcher from the research. Interviews, as a method, are not neutral, but socially constructed and, therefore, I unavoidably

played a part in creating the truth (Smith, 2009; Smith & Deemer, 2000). This means that the methods outlined in section 4.7 offer an interpretation of experiences, rather than procedural objectivity (Smith & Hodkinson, 2009). Accounts, stories and conversations constituted experience, reflecting their narrative truth, rather than an objective truth in some pristine form (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This moved away from a concern about whether a participant was speaking the *whole* truth, towards a concern of them sharing *their* truth; a participant's story about an event is their truth about the event (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This perspective meant that rather than searching for an objective truth, I explored the analytic opportunities that the data offered (Smith & Sparkes, 2016).

There have been three widely used ways to demonstrate rigour in qualitative research: member-checking; inter-rater reliability and a universal criteria (Smith & McGannon, 2018). I discuss each of these below in relation to the quality, trustworthiness and transparency of this project.

Firstly, following Smith and McGannon's (2018) calls to reflect on member-checking, I did not employ this technique in the sense of sending whole interview transcripts to participants. This is because the ontological assumptions of member-checking – where reality is seen to exist independently to us and we can get to know it – clashes with the ontological relativism – where multiple realities are deemed to exist (Smith & McGannon, 2018). As highlighted previously, transcription is an interpretative process, and as such, my interpretation of the dialogue would naturally be different from the participants'. Therefore, asking participants to confirm the correctness of my work would not be aligned to the interpretivist perspective. In addition, Morse (2018) suggested that although participants can comment on transcripts, they cannot confirm results of the study as they are missing the understanding of the theoretical basis of the analysis. However, to increase credibility,

I clarified participants' points during interviews, sharing my interpretations of their comments, often asking them if I had understood correctly or used consequent probes to clarify certain points. Here, participants engaged in a reflexive collaboration, offered feedback and affirmed or disagreed with my understanding and interpretation during interviews. Moreover, these member reflections offered additional data and insight as I still committed to a dialogue with participants.

Secondly, inter-rater reliability – where two or more researchers are brought together to independently code interview data, compare codes and seek high level of agreement through discussion – has been a method commonly used (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). However, the effectiveness of this method is increasingly questioned for numerous reasons. For example, there is no agreed-upon threshold that constitutes a high level of agreement (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Moreover, there are often power relations between coders that profoundly shape these discussions and the researchers are often rooted in the same theoretical background and share the same interests, which means they often read the same similarly (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Likewise, researchers from opposing positions would disagree and come to have little similarity, and therefore, not reach a level of agreement. As such, inter-rater reliability does not work in terms of ensuring reliable results, or that a single truth has been found in an objective way (Smith & Sparkes, 2016).

Lastly, is the concept of universal criteria. Historically, the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research has been judged using the same criteria as research positioned in the positivist paradigm. However, this produces problems because of contrasting and conflicting epistemological and ontological assumptions between paradigms typically associated with quantitative versus qualitative research. As the voice of relativist researchers has grown louder, there has been a paradigmatic shift within sport and exercise research, from empiricism to relativism (Burke, 2016).

As such, it is important to evaluate qualitative research using a 'relativist' approach that applies 'quality criteria' in a contextually situated and flexible way (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). This approach is more closely aligned to the interpretative assumptions – that, ontologically, there are multiple realities, created and mind-dependant; and, epistemologically, that knowledge is constructed and subjective (Burke, 2016). It is important, when judging the quality of this project, to move away from a universal criteria and apply an alternative, in-situ criteria that does not ontologically and epistemologically contradict the relativist paradigm (Burke, 2016).

Burke (2016) offers alternative criteria to consider the quality of qualitative research in sport and exercise science, which frames the following discussion. This thesis offers a substantive contribution to the understanding of holistic coach learning and is deeply grounded in a socially scientific perspective – Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, which informed the construction of the thesis; and Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism. This research is theoretically significant, because it extends our knowledge and understanding of coach learning and the socialisation process of learning, both within formal education settings and occupational settings, post-course. In this way, this research builds on past research but provides a new conceptual understanding that can be used, and pursued, by future researchers who are inspired, or curious, to explore the new discoveries this research offers (Tracy, 2010). In this way, this research develops novel concepts that can be further explored in other settings and has practical significance in recommending ways in which BC's formal coach education can be delivered in more effective ways. This highlights the quality of this research, by offering a strong potential for change – politically, socially and personally (Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014).

I acknowledge the importance of quality, trustworthiness and transparency within this project, but I also place a responsibility on the reader to judge the quality of this

project (Rolfe, 2006). I ask the reader to consider if this research impacts them –
emotionally and intellectually, whether it generates new research questions or moves
them to try new research practices. I hope this research opens up meaningful dialogue
among different people, creating a platform to debate and negotiate as the research
cuts to the core of the issue of increasing the effectiveness of formal coach education
(Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014). This highlights how this work is relevant and
timely: formal education is needed more, now than ever (McMahon, 2020) and this
research both challenges the dominant narrative in the extant literature and suggest
possible ways to increase the effective delivery of formal coach education. This
research is worthwhile because it questioned taken for granted assumptions and
challenged well-accepted ideas (Tracy, 2010).

Combining different sources of data, as well as the frameworks of
Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD and Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, allowed
for different facets of the research problem to be explored. This increased the scope
and offered a deeper understanding, encouraging consistent (re)interpretation of the
data and findings (Tracy, 2010). This aligned with the interpretivist paradigm of this
research, where the goal was not to provide a valid, singular truth, but to open up a
more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue
(Tracy, 2010). The rigour of the data resides in the number of interviews and
observations, and the numerous quotations that facilitate the reader's judgement of
evidence and its interpretation (Tracy, 2010). In addition, by providing the reader with
a clear and transparent explanation regarding the process of sorting, choosing and
organising data to transform the raw data into the thesis (Tracy, 2010). Providing
'thick descriptions' – an in-depth illustration that explains culturally situated meaning
(Geertz, 1973) – illustrates the data's complexity by providing enough detail that
readers are able to come to their own conclusions about a scene, more than simply

told what to think (Tracy, 2010). For transparency, my supervisor acted as a critical friend, scrutinising theoretical preferences, the breadth of my interview sample and the process of sorting, choosing, organising and analysing the data. Here, my supervisor acted as a sounding board who encouraged reflections and exploration of alternative explanations and interpretations as they related to the data.

This thesis presents findings in a coherent way, aligned with existing theories and previous research. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD acts as a golden thread, structuring the thesis, creating a complete and meaningful picture of this project. Demonstrating self-reflexivity throughout the thesis highlights my vulnerability, honesty and transparency throughout the research process. This offers authenticity and genuineness with myself, my research and my audience (Tracy, 2010). Choosing to write in the first person, my aim is to effectively and appropriately remind readers of my presence and influence in participating and interpreting the scenes that I observed. (Tracy, 2010).

4.11 Summary

This Chapter explored some reflections on the issues I faced as a researcher in managing the research process, some ethical considerations I encountered and thoughts regarding the quality, trustworthiness and transparency of the data. However, this Chapter also outlined the philosophical positioning of this PhD and the methodological framework adopted. These are summarised below.

Coaching is a messy, social activity (Jones et al, 2003; Cushion, 2014). Coaches often act in complex and unpredictable ways – their thoughts and actions are value laden, situated in subjective, lived experiences, which create individual, self-conscious, intentional and reflective learners (North, 2013). The increased recognition of the social process of coach learning has led to interpretative approaches and the

associated methodologies being increasingly applied to coaching research (Cushion, 2014). This PhD used a micro-ethnographic method(ology) to explore the ways in which culture, context and networks impacted coaches' practice, by employing three main ethnographic principles: prolonged exposure to the environment being researched; data collection 'in the field' – interviews, participant observations, informal conversations, and VRM; and an iterative approach to the PhD, where the study design evolved over time. This PhD analysed the data collected using document analysis and TA.

The interpretative paradigm acknowledges the complexity of the social world and that people, including the researcher and participants, define meanings within their individual social, political and cultural settings (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). As such, this PhD is positioned within the interpretivist paradigm. Ontologically and epistemologically, this PhD aligned with the assumptions that individuals were active agents in their intra- and interpersonal encounters who operated in numerous realities, which were created and re-created through social interactions (Williams, 2016; Hammersley, 2012). As such, this PhD did not seek an absolute truth, but an understanding of each individual's experience and the meanings they attached to the events in their lives (Grant & Giddings, 2002). This PhD adopted a relativist ontological position and epistemologically assumed that knowledge is subjective and socially constructed (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). Here, the research was a subjective, interactive, co-constructed activity involving both myself, as the researcher, and the recruited participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Howell, 2013). Consequently, this thesis is the product of my interactions and relationships with participants, my analytic capabilities and my choices, as a researcher, combined with my understandings and subscriptions to particular theories. The interpretivist paradigm offered insight into the coaches and other key stakeholders in the

development and delivery of BC's formal education. Moreover, it allowed insight into how emotion, cognition, self, context, ethical judgement and purposeful action are intertwined in the experiences of coaches. Although this paradigm limits generalisability of findings across contexts, generalisation is simply a general idea or suggestion that is concluded from a particular case (Williams, 2000). As such, this research was arguably packed with generalisations.

As a methodological framework, this PhD employed symbolic interactionist theory. This aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, because it is a theory of experience and social structure (Denzin, 1992). Blumer (1969) argued individuals play an active role in constructing their social realities and are responsible for the ways in which they act towards physical space, institutions, other people and their activities. In this way, symbolic interactionism facilitates a view of social interactions that evolves through interpretive efforts of individuals, stakeholders and groups, which has significantly shaped numerous learning theorists (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). Coach learning is both pedagogical and social, so applying symbolic interactionist theory offered a lens through which to consider coaches' actions within this pedagogical context (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). This is significant to our understanding of coach education as an inherently social process of making sense of meanings defined from interaction with each other, personal experience and personal beliefs (Kolić et al, 2019). Coaches' internal thoughts and sense of self empower their ability to respond to the situations they face, which symbolic interactionism recognises (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016; Blumer, 1969).

- CHAPTER V -
Research Findings & Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents and discusses the findings of this PhD. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD as a structural framework, this chapter presents research connected with each 'level' within coaches' learning ecologies, from the macro- to the microsystem.

First, Section 5.2 relates to the exosystem and development of BC's coaching qualifications. In considering the ways in which the historical and cultural context impacted the implementation of BC's formal education pathway, this section also addresses the macrosystem.

Second, section 5.3 addresses the individual by researching the different narrative 'types' of cycling coaches and discusses the possibility of developing 'streams' of the coaching pathway aligned to different typologies. The discussion of this section links these findings to recruitment socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) highlights the power of individual's biographies and how these frame and guide coach learning (Mezirow, 2009; Moon, 2001).

Third, section 5.4 relates to the mesosystem by researching participants' experiences of the mechanisms and outcomes that form BC's formal education. The discussion of this section links these findings to the concept of professional socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) as participants' were socialised into 'BC's way'.

Finally, section 5.5 relates to the microsystem by exploring participants' microsystems post-qualifications. The discussion of this section links this to

occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) and how workplace conditions (Lawson, 1989) either facilitated or inhibited a wash-out effect. In addition, this section explored these participants' development of professional knowledge, specifically to their PCK and curriculum knowledge.

5.2 Developing a coach education pathway: Establishing BC's formal education – A policy trajectory

5.2.1 Introduction

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD frames the individual (i.e. the coach) within a series of nested circles. These represent the parameters – the ecosystems – within which individuals operate. This first study explores the most distal 'levels' from the individual: the macro- and mesosystems. The macrosystem involves the larger cultural contexts within which the individual operates (Jessup-Anger, 2015). This 'level' evolves over time and includes the wider society within which other settings are nested – the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts. Importantly, this 'level' includes policies and laws that are incorporated into the exosystem, which directly influence the individual. Within the context of this study, this includes the government policies and strategies for supporting coaching, depending on where coaching 'sits' within the government agenda. So, the exosystem is where BC adopts and embeds the policies and procedures from the macrosystem that affect the way the formal education programmes are designed and developed. As such, it is within this 'level' that the NGB decides what they want to see as an outcome of the education programme they deliver, which forms the mesosystem.

5.2.2 Aims and rationale

The aim of this study was to research the cultural and historical backdrop of BC's formal coach education provision. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Why and how was BC's coaching pathway created?

2. What are the mechanisms used to deliver BC's formal education?

3. What are the intended outcomes for participants attending BC's formal education?

5.2.3 Participants

This study recruited participants from across BC as the NGB for cycling. To answer the research questions relating to the development and creation of their formal education pathway, recruitment focused on individuals who had insight to this process and included: The Director of Coaching (DoC); BC's six coach education officers (CEO); and their manager, the Coach Education Manager (CEM). The DoC was responsible for establishing BC's initial coach education programme and oversaw the alignment of these qualifications to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) following the Coaching Task Force Report (CTFR) in 2002. The CEM and CEOs had a range of backgrounds, which combined to produce an experienced workforce from diverse sectors of sport.

To address the research questions regarding the mechanism and intended outcomes, seven members of the tutor workforce were recruited. These participants offered insight into: the challenges they face in the delivery of the programmes; the opportunities available to facilitate the dissemination of course content and the programmes' outcomes through the available mechanisms; and how they perceive formal education is received by coaches. In addition, nine Regional Development Managers (RDMs) were recruited. This group operate remotely from the BC Office, and, along with the BC employed 'Go-Ride' Coaches, are the face of BC in Clubs across the UK. As a workforce, their remit is varied: they assist in the delivery of formal education; support newly qualified coaches in Clubs; and help clubs connect with BC

training. Primarily, however, the RDMs' role, linked to BC's SE funding, is concerned with the growth of cycling within their designated region. Crucially, this can place pressure on local clubs who are not resourced to handle the quota of riders BC expect the RDMs to recruit. Consequently, RDMs are often left organising formal coach education programmes within their 'Region' to support clubs, because there is no strategy to recruit and train coaches, only riders. Lastly, this study recruited a sample of twenty-four coaches across Levels 1 (8 participants), 2 (7 participants) and 3 (9 participants). This sample offered insight into how the formal qualifications were received by the 'end users' of the programme – the coaches – and their perceptions of formal education across the pathway. This allowed comparisons to be drawn between how the programme was intended to be received, and how it is actually received.

As a result, this study recruited forty-seven participants from throughout BC, from those 'at the top' who developed the programmes, through to those 'on the ground' who deliver them, to those 'at the bottom' who receive it. Consequently, Study 1 captured, for the first time: the creation of the coaching pathway, and the historical, cultural and political context within which this was developed; the intended outcomes of the programme; and the ways in which these outcomes were impacted by the mechanisms used to deliver the programmes.

5.2.4 Methods and data analysis

Semi-structured interviews produced 2,280 minutes of audio material (interviews ranged between 52 minutes and 162 minutes; M=86, SD=39). Questions asked BC staff, tutors and RDMs to explain the role they played in the development, delivery and assessment of the pathway, before considering their perceptions of the outcomes and mechanisms of the qualifications within the pathway. Specifically, the RDMs and Tutors were asked how well they thought the qualifications were received by those

attending them and the opportunities and challenges they perceived to facilitate or hinder the dissemination of course content. Lastly, these participants were asked their perceptions of the impact formal education had. The coaches who participated in this study were asked about their experiences of BC's formal education to explore how it was received. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, producing 238,847 words across 409 pages of single-spaced text. The transcripts were then analysed using TNA, within the storyteller approach, where the data was recast to produce a story (Smith, 2016).

5.2.5 Findings

The findings for this study are expressed using creative nonfiction. These are real stories, told by real people and based on real events, captured through the interview data in a systematic way (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As such, the following passage is grounded in the research findings, presented using literary techniques to create an emotional and compelling story. The story is real and committed to the 'truth'; fictional in form, but factual in content. Using this method, I hope to show, rather than tell, the reader the results from this study (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). On the following pages, you will be introduced to five central characters: Steven, Tracey, Matt, George and Hannah. Each character represents a group of participants, and expresses the thoughts, opinions and generated themes from the data analysis relevant to the group that character represents. A brief description of each character's biography, typical of the participants recruited from that workforce, is outlined below.

The Characters

Steven

Steven is the DoC for BC. He joined the governing body just after the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, USA. During Steven's time at BC, they achieved unprecedented

success on the international stage. Not long after joining BC, he realised there needed to be an established coach education programme to support athlete development and performance at an elite level. He created a role for himself, and, starting from scratch, he led a small team to formalise a national coaching award for cycling. He assumed the role and portfolio associated with the Director of Development, justifying that such a move aligned coach education and rider development, strengthening the development of the sport. This influenced his philosophy for coach education: a skilled coaching workforce would develop skilled riders, which would, in turn, link to sustained elite performance and, consequently, more Olympic medals. Through his time at BC, it was the best Government-funded NGB within the UK.

Tracey

Tracey is a member of the core education team. She is employed by BC and based at their Head Offices. Before joining BC, she completed a degree in sport and exercise science, but at a time when 'coaching' played a peripheral part of her undergraduate studies, and then worked in Further Education as a course leader. She is a Level 2 qualified cycling coach with an interest in mountain biking, but, interestingly, she does not actively coach. She works as part of a team of six, some with higher degrees, some with coaching qualifications from other sports, and some with experience of developing coach education frameworks in sports such as swimming and rugby league. It is a transient workforce, with knowledge, skills and experiences being constantly lost and gained depending on the individuals who make up the team at any one time. Her philosophy for coach education? To produce a workforce able to deliver safe sessions for riders in clubs.

Matt

Matt is a member of the tutor workforce, responsible for delivering the Level 2 core and Level 2 specific courses in road and time trial. He is a qualified Level 3 coach, and operates a successful self-employed coaching business alongside his main job as a police officer. He believes effective coach education relies on teamwork with his fellow tutors, complimented by the staff in the Head Office and the RDMs. Matt's role involves a lot of travelling across the country, which he finds detracts from the enjoyment of tutoring. However, he regularly tutors with the same colleague, which he feels offers familiarity and encourages honest peer-feedback across the workforce. His tutor training consisted of: a four-day initial induction held at the Head Offices of BC, which taught Matt the structure of the day and how to click through PowerPoint slides; SE tutor training; and a six day Sport Coach UK course. However, Matt feels training from BC is limited when the courses are changed, leaving tutors powerless to change. Consequently, he feels that tutor training is reactive, rather than proactive.

George

George is an RDM. This job role was introduced following the CTFR (DCMS; 2002) and is essentially a Sport Development Officer (SDO) role, specifically for cycling. George is employed by BC, and responsible for encouraging clubs and coaches to maximise the support offered by the governing body. George's main role is to help BC reach the participation figures agreed in the Whole Sport Plan (WSP), linked to SE funding. However, he is frustrated how the strategy to increase participation in cycling, led and agreed by BC, besides being on the limits of what is possible, is not aligned with a strategy to increase the number of qualified coaches. George regularly works with clubs who have a large number of riders without the coaching staff to meet that demand. Consequently, to ensure his region meets the participation figure agreed

with SE, George's role often requires him to recruit coaches to coaching courses, sometimes tasked with organising the course in his area. This is outside his remit, but essential to alleviating the pressure on Clubs.

Hannah

Hannah is a qualified cycling coach, who completed her Level 2 core course three years ago. She would describe herself as a recreational cyclist, although has experience of racing at an amateur level. She had a break from the sport in her late twenties and became involved in the sport again taking her two sons along to the local cycling club. She would often volunteer during coaching sessions and decided to make it more official by attending the Level 2 course to be become a qualified coach.

Setting the scene – The National Get-Set-Ride Conference

This story is set during a BC Get-Set-Ride conference held at the National Cycling Centre (NCC). These conferences serve as an opportunity for all workforces across the governing body to come together and engage in professional development through organised seminars and workshops. Of significance at this conference is a keynote presentation by Steven outlining the development of BC's formal education programme and the parameters it operates within.

The audience is gathering in the NCC's atrium. The translucent white walls reflect the sunlight streaming through the opaque glass roof, which contrast against the dullness of the grey tiled floor. The building reeks of success and there is an aura of invincibility and superiority. Action shots of successful cycling gold medalists captured from the Beijing, London and Rio Games are everywhere. There is a line of framed portraits: a BC Hall of Fame. Centre stage are the headshots of the two most successful cyclists in Olympic history, Chris Hoy and Jason Kenny, each

photographed with their Olympic medals: six Gold and one Silver. Next to that, the headshot of Sir Bradley Wiggins – the most decorated British Olympian – with his eight Olympic medals: five Gold, one Silver and two Bronze. A few frames later, the headshot of Laura Trott, the most successful female Olympian for GB with her four Olympic Golds. There are no sporting manufactures branding their products here. This is an environment to celebrate cycling; to celebrate the combined success of the home countries. This is, well and truly, the home of BC.

The atrium is buzzing with conversation. Circular tables and chairs are set out across the atrium floor, it looks as though no expense has been spared. The front of the room is marked by a lectern, placed on a podium in front of a large projector screen. Steven is at the front of the room, making small talk with a few people he knows, but hasn't seen for a while. These events always remind him how much his desk job prevents him from engaging like this and with the broader organisation. Tracey, Matt, George and Hannah are all in the audience for Steven's presentation, and have all taken seats at the same table.

Steven steps onto the platform and takes his position behind the protection of the stage stand. He takes a deep breath, and clears his throat, before announcing that it was time for the conference to start. The noise in the atrium subsides, and those still standing take their seats.

The story

Steven opens his presentation with one bold claim: "We have the best coach education system in the world." The silence in the room is momentarily interrupted by pockets of low-level chatter as people began challenging this statement with those around them.

Hannah reaches for a piece of paper and pen from the centre of the table. She was infuriated at Steven's statement. How could he be so naïve? The best coach education system in the world? She began scribbling: The theory stuff is dry and tedious – and really generic; there's loads of reading, which was frustrating for her as a slow reader; Moodle, BC's online learning platform, made the online element clumsy; the workbooks were boring; the practical sessions were hard to schedule, where clubs would only let you deliver the sessions they wanted you to deliver; and there was no difference between the Level 1 and Level 2 courses, which made it all quite repetitive.

Matt and George looked at one another with confused expressions etched on their faces. They both turn to their notebooks and begin scribbling.

Like Hannah, Matt was also angry at Steven's claim. Clearly, BC's familiarity with the programme and the pathway had left Steven blind to the issues it has. If it was the best programme in the world, why didn't it feel like he was delivering the best in the world? Astounded, he too began writing in the hope he would be asked to express a view: Coaches have a varied ability, which places increased pressure on the tutor – one course does not meet the needs of all the learners in the pathway; the courses are focused on qualifying coaches, more than developing coaches; there's no clear vision – no clear outcome for each module that's communicated across the workforce. His last two points: Insurance impacts practice more than the content of the course or the knowledge they gain from the course; and coaches are there to tick a box, not because it's the world's best coach education programme.

George picked up a pen, confused why Steven would make such a statement, and started scribbling: Coaches' experience depends on the tutor – delivery should be consistent, but that is increasingly not the case as BC push tutors to deliver with less and less resources; the Level 2 course needs reviewing; course content is tied to a

framework that restricts coaches' practice, more than structures it; it's heavy going; the content isn't relevant to the age and abilities coaches are coaching – it's removed from the realities of coaching; the assessments are confusing; and courses are expensive. Finally, at the bottom of the page, George wrote two final points: The pathway falls apart when coaches skip Level 1; and the pathway is too long, leaving coaches just ticking boxes.

Tracey sat a little longer than the others on her table. She saw the impact of Steven's statement. The noise in the room was growing louder. Muffled discussion had turned into full grown open debate on the delegates' tables. She glanced up at Steven, but he looked on impassively. She couldn't see what the others were writing, but she guessed that it must be their thoughts on BC's coach education. She picked up her pen, and simply wrote one sentence in her notebook, placed her pen on the page, and closed it.

Steven had remained impassive following his opening statement. It soon became clear that he had wanted to provoke this reaction all along. "Ok, that seemed to get the room talking," he joked. The room fell silent once more. "Why the best in the World?" He asked, rhetorically. "Well, why not? How would you measure whether it was or it wasn't? It's completely possible that it is the best in the world. Now that's not to say it doesn't have its flaws, but I didn't say it was perfect."

The tension that had built in the room, began to subside. He cleared his throat and continued.

"I understand that our coach education provision isn't perfect, and I would like to take this time to talk to you today about how the pathway came about, and why it operates as it does – to try and highlight to you the parameters it works within, and share with you why it is compromised. But, to appreciate why we are where we are, I think it's important to understand how we got here. I am proud of the success British

Cycling has had in recent years. We are currently the highest government-funded sport in the UK, and we have become one of the most successful governing bodies in the world. Our performance at an elite level is respected, globally. But it wasn't always that way."

Steven flicked his PowerPoint presentation to a picture of Chris Boardman on the podium at the Atlanta Games in 1996. He stared in silence at the screen for a few seconds, reminiscing.

"There's Chris receiving Cycling's only medal – a bronze – at the Atlanta Games. This was just before I joined the organisation. Those Games were one of Britain's worst Olympics. We finished 36th in the overall medal table. Those Games were a significant moment in our Nation's sporting history and marked a change in the way Government funding was distributed. The National Sports Council was rebranded UK Sport, and tasked with distributing money to improve elite sport within the UK. The focus? More Olympic medals."

Steven flicked to his next slide. A picture of the medal table from Beijing 2008.

"Fast forward eight years – two Olympic cycles – to Beijing: Cycling bagged fourteen medals, eight of them gold! Quite the turnaround, right? You'd assume it was more funding that was responsible for that improvement. Without doubt that helped. Trouble is, in their push for Olympic medals, UK Sport invested money into the athletes, but there was no coach education programme – no qualification and no awards for coaches. That had to change. Quite strange to think now, isn't it? A world without formal coach ed. Some of you might remember it, but for those of you who started coaching post-2004, it's the only world you'd know. For me, coach education was a crucial piece of the performance puzzle. See, we had riders who were very capable – very talented, physiologically gifted riders who were more than capable of winning races. But, they lacked the basic bike handling skills necessary to win races.

For example, they couldn't ride one handed, so struggled to stay in the pack when drinking water… or if it rained, they couldn't get their ponchos on without dropping to the back of the pack. They were losing races because they didn't have those basic skills, and that was because they hadn't been taught those basic skills coming through the rider pathway.

"For me, there was a clear link between coach education and building that level of elite performance. That became my role: to develop a coach education pathway for BC. Improving our elite performance would increase our ability to win medals at the Olympics – and more Olympic medals matched the funding demands being introduced by UK Sport. My guiding thought was, 'If you've got 50 young people who you've found, or you think are talented, what skills do you need to provide them with to be able to put them on the Olympic podium?' It was a case of getting a group of people together and saying, 'What do we want to be teaching coaches, and how do we want to be providing it?'"

At this point, Hannah scribbled on the reverse side of her piece of paper, 'Does that mean I'm meant to be coaching Olympic champions every Saturday?' and pushed it in front of the others at her table.

Matt laughed, "Apparently so!" He then tapped George on the arm, and pointed to his open notepad, smiling: "The courses are outcome, not process driven."

"But it's just about getting coaches qualified now, not getting riders on the Olympic podium," George whispered.

"Very true," Matt agreed.

"See, you can't get 2-3-4-5,000 coaches just by telling them to go and find out for themselves how to coach," Steven continued. "You have to provide coaches with

that information. It was a case of figuring out what riders needed and what coaches needed to know."

George had always assumed this is how the programme should have been developed, mapping coach education to the rider pathway. He nudged Matt and pointed to his notebook: 'Course content isn't relevant because it's removed from the realities of coaching'.

"Who did they ask for input on the programme?" George asked the table.

"Not sure," replied Matt. "But this is why the content needs reviewing. Cycling isn't the same sport now that it was then. If coaches are so crucial to the development of the riders in the sport, why hasn't the programme been updated in so long?"

George turned to Tracey, and asked, "Who was responsible for the development of that first programme?"

"I don't know, it was before my time." Her reply was guarded and defensive. She clearly wanted to distance herself from the development of the course.

The three of them refocused on Steven's presentation as he started to discuss that very point.

"The challenge was that the actual coaching points for these bike handling skills didn't exist anywhere in the world," Steven explained. "At the turn of the century, there were less than ten track skills written down. Coaches were ex-riders, and most of their cycling-specific knowledge just sat in their heads, and they just sort of passed it on to riders in a Grandfather rights fashion. But that explosion of medals in a relatively short amount of time raised the profile of cycling to levels we couldn't imagine. People wanted to cycle, and we didn't have the coaches to support that. Reality is, we need coaches more than they need us. We need anyone who puts their

hand up and says they're interested in coaching. So, we put down on paper what was already in coaches' heads and produced a manual able to train a new workforce and developed a three-day course. It was a heavy technical curriculum and a one-size fits all programme. But we felt every coach needed that information – it was the first of its kind, anywhere in the world. The UCI lifted some of our resources, and essentially, rolled it out across the world. We effectively developed the programme that the UCI deliver. For me, that was a huge achievement, and really positive for the future of cycling, globally."

Hannah turned to Tracey, "Impressive. But surely it contradicts the main objectives of developing the programme to strengthen Britain's sporting success at an elite level? Why push for a programme geared towards putting British riders on top of the podium, and then share it with the rest of the world?"

Tracey had no reply, but George nodded.

"It's all very contradictory," Matt added.

"But we didn't just sit around a table and develop this course ourselves," Steven continued. "We spoke with coaches. We developed it based on feedback, based on research – on evidence. We read textbooks and research journals. We had a guy with a PhD in exercise physiology writing our course. That helped shape the best educational experience possible. We got coaches from across the way, from the Velodrome, and sat them down with some coach educators, and tutors – a whole group of people – and said, 'When you first started out, what did you want to know?'. We developed the course by talking to people, asking them what they wanted, what they needed, from us."

Hannah pointed at her piece of paper: 'The theory is dry and tedious'.

"No wonder, if it was written by a guy with a PhD. It's enough to send you to sleep, and not exactly the sort of stuff I need to know for the level rider I'm coaching," she whispered to the other three.

"No, I scribbled the same thing earlier," George replied, pointing to his notebook. "A lot of the course resources are detached from the realities of coaching on the ground."

"It really doesn't help with coaches' engagement, does it? I mean, they need a coaching handbook, not a science textbook," Matt added. Looking at George and Hannah, he asked, "Have either of you been involved in these feedback sessions?"

"No, never," answered Hannah.

"Well, you filled in that form at the end of your course," Tracey reminded her. "That was a chance for you to feedback anything about the course."

"Come on!" George laughed. "We all know those forms aren't worth anything!"

"But we need them to be something. It's our main way of engaging with coaches and their feedback to us about how the course is," Tracey continued. "Coaches can't really complain the course isn't what they were expecting, or poor in anyway, if all their feedback is positive. We can only create change if we have the evidence to support it, and that evidence comes from those feedback forms."

"Do you think coaches really fill those things out accurately?" Matt asked George.

"I think they're bad at capturing any real problems coaches might have," George replied.

"To be honest, any issues I encountered I asked my tutor, or one of the coaches in my club. Now I'm qualified, I'd take any questions or concerns to my RDM," confessed Hannah.

"I think that's how most coaches operate, Hannah," George assured her.

"I think a lot of coaches are supported by their clubs, Tracey, and I think that masks a lot of the support coaches miss from BC during their time on the course," Matt explained. "So, when they come to filling out those forms, they're through all the hardship and they just tick the boxes to wrap-up the course. Just because the form isn't highlighting any real issues, doesn't mean coaches aren't having any."

"What about you, as the workforce that delivers the course, though?" George asked Matt. "Surely you have chance to feedback any changes, and the chance to be involved with those focus group-type meetings?"

"Any feedback sessions I've been invited to take part in has always had really tight time restraints on it," Matt explained. "Last round of tutor input I was emailed about needed replying to within, like, three hours of receiving the email! That's just not possible when you're working full time. Or they'll need you to travel up to Manchester. I can't do that at the drop of a hat. It means that, although everyone is invited to participate in those meetings, only the same few tutors can logistically be involved."

"That doesn't sound good for getting fresh ideas," Hannah muttered.

"Not at all," answered Matt.

"But, again, by simply not replying, we just assume you're not interested in engaging with that feedback," Tracey argued. "We need you to tell us that's not practical for you, rather than just sit on it, quietly."

The table turned their attention back to Steven.

"And that's why I see coach ed as a compromise," he was explaining. "People seem to value the level of support they get during their course, and that's evident in the positive feedback we get from coaches completing the course."

"See, that just contradicts everything we've just discussed here" George highlighted to Tracey, laughing in disbelief.

"But how can the organisation see it any other way if the feedback forms aren't telling us anything different?" replied Tracey, despairingly.

"Those feedback forms serve as our customer satisfaction," Steven continued. "If we consistently score highly on those evaluation forms, I think we're right to assume we have a successful course. Look at it this way, coaches who attend our courses consistently rate their experience as 90% or higher for satisfaction. They're not telling us we need to do any better. As I said at the start, we have the best coach education system in the world – those who attend it agree!" Steven paused, and smirked. "We deliver around 120 courses each year, and coaches are having good experiences. For me, good is good enough. Pragmatically, the extra effort it would take to get that satisfaction rating to 95% just isn't worth it, in terms of investment against return."

"It's a long way from the talk of marginal gains, isn't it?" Hannah whispered to the others.

"You're right," replied George. "Seems to contradict the importance of coach ed, doesn't it? I thought he started out by explaining how important coach ed was to Olympic medals?"

"Makes you wonder how many of the top-level coaches working with the elite squad are actually BC qualified, right?" Hannah questioned.

"It's such a shame when the courses cost so much money, and the pathway is so long and tedious for coaches to navigate," added Matt.

"That's one of the misconceptions about coach ed though," Tracey interrupted. "People think it has lots of money because the courses are deemed to be expensive, but it's really not a well-funded sector of sport. Hopefully, Steven will highlight that when he talks about the UKCC."

"So why is coach ed compromised?" Steven asked the room. "What's stopping our course being the best in the world? Well, to start with, it's not fit for purpose. Why?" Steven asked, rhetorically. "Because the framework it's based on isn't fit for purpose." There was another increase in audible chatter across the room.

"Let me explain," he continued. The room quietened in anticipation. "In the early 2000s there was a policy push towards the professionalisation of sport coaching. The government decided all sports needed to train, qualify and accredit their coaching workforce. One of the first things they introduced to begin that professionalisation was the UKCC. It brought about standardisation and levelness across sports. Trouble is, this was like a bomb hitting the sector. There was no one around trained to develop these courses, and to make it worse, there was no framework for course developers – for national governing bodies – to work to. Talk about the blind leading the blind. It left us trying to bolt coaching qualifications to frameworks established for the workplace or education. That resulted in courses that over assessed learners and produced a workforce who were not fully equipped for the skills needed to coach. But it was the only framework we had at the time, and the best we had.

"So why buy into it, if we knew it wasn't great? Well, we were heavily encouraged to – offered funding to, and promised more funding as a result through the channels of adult education. Trouble is, that never came off… We were sold a dream…" Steven paused, registering what he had just said. Then he continued, summarising, "UKCC isn't fit for purpose."

There were a few mutters around the room. Tracey pushed her notepad in front of the others to show the statement she'd written at the beginning of Steven's presentation: 'The pathway isn't fit for purpose'.

Hannah, George and Matt couldn't believe Tracey had written a statement so critical of BC's coach ed. Moreover, they were shocked that she already knew this.

"So strange to hear that admission," Matt mumbled.

"And that lack of funding links with another criticism of our pathway," Steven continued. "The funding we received didn't pay for a trained workforce. Although, to be honest, there wasn't anyone around qualified to do what we were being asked to do. We were all just trying to figure it out as we went along. We had sport scientists with good knowledge, and we had good coaches who knew the sport. But none of us were educators or course developers. Remember, nothing like this existed anywhere in the world. We had this bombshell dropped on us to develop a programme, and very little time or resources to deliver it. We were reactive, rather than proactive. Moreover, that lack of funding limits what we can offer on our programme. Coaches; coaching your peers during assessments isn't ideal, I know. But it's the best we can offer. Assigning physical mentors in your coaching setting would be ideal, but that's just not practically feasible."

"Sad, isn't it, to hear that?" George confessed. "How were they so unsupported?"

"Where's all the money go, though?" Hannah asked in disbelief. "How can they say coach ed is poor, or underfunded? The Level 2 costs, what? Just short of £500? The Level 1 is £300? That's a just short of a grand that coaches are paying out, without travel expenses. Just to volunteer! And then they say they don't have the money to provide anything more?"

"She has a point," Matt agreed. "They're squeezing coach ed more and more, making cuts wherever they can to make it cheaper. But that's not good for coaches' experiences."

Again, the table hushed, turning their attention once again to what Steven was saying.

"I know different people learn in different ways," he continued. "But our sector isn't funded well enough to consider offering different courses for different learners. It's a one-size fits all programme, because that's what's financially possible… Does our pathway effectively address the needs of development and elite coaches? No. But, as I said, it's a compromised system. UK Sport run an elite coaches' apprentice programme, so we can outsource high level performance coach ed to that. That means we're responsible for the rest – the main bulk of the coaching workforce. Our pathway is a large investment in a large number of people. We're in the business of qualifying coaches, to give coaches the tools to train riders to win bike races. That's our goal. As I said, we need coaches, and for me, we're smashing it. Riders are coming through the rider pathway and winning races, which has allowed us to maintain our performance at the highest level.

"For me, this is what our pathway strives to achieve: continued, world-class performances from our riders. If we mark our performance in coach ed by our ability to realise the intended outcomes of our programme, I'd say we're pretty damn successful. Moreover, coaches come through our pathway, from our Go Ride clubs, and move into Academy and Podium coaching roles. We produce a coaching workforce with the ability and knowledge to produce riders capable of delivering medal-winning performances at an Olympic level. Coaches are happy with our courses, and we are qualifying coaches to grow the workforce. And that's our business, isn't it? To take someone interested in coaching and giving them the technical knowledge and skills needed to develop riders."

"That's the power of formal coach ed, right there," Tracey told the table, agreeing with Steven's point.

"That was my experience for sure," Hannah confessed. "I'm just a mum, learning to be a coach."

"Yeah, but this guy's obsessed with winning races, isn't he?" George joked. "Is that what he deems to be the outcomes of the programme?"

"Easy to see why you said that the course content is removed from the realities of coaches' everyday practice, right?" Matt replied.

Steven clicked to his last slide, "So, as I wrap this up then, I hope I've managed to explain why our coach education programme operates as it does. Thank you for listening. Does anyone have any questions?"

Hannah, George, Matt and Tracey all raised their hands immediately, amongst a few others. Steven went to their table first, and started with Matt.

Matt stood up and addressed the room. "Hi, yeah, I just wondered… You said about coaches moving through the pathway, from qualifying, to Go Ride clubs, and then coaching roles within the Academy and Podium potential riders?"

Steven was taking a drink. He nodded, swallowed, and then replied, "Yeah…?"

"Well I'm just interested in the selection process for those coaching roles. On the courses I deliver, there's normally two types of candidates: those that I would call participant-level riders, you know, the mum's and dad's of the cycling world; and ex-racers. I don't think both groups need the same sort of information. For example, the ex-racer group are likely to have a far greater technical knowledge than a mum or dad learning to coach. I understand each candidate receives the same coach education programme, but surely, if there was a coaching role with the Academy or Podium potential, the 'ex-racer coach' would get the role over a coach from a participant-rider background, right?"

"Well, not necessarily. But yes, you would assume, on the face of it… I don't think I can recall a time when a coach who wasn't from a racing background would apply for one of those coaching positions though?"

"And there lies the point of my question," Matt answered. "We don't need a coach education programme for both type of candidate. And isn't it likely the coaches working within those positions are normally recently retired? It's like BC use their profile to connect with the next generation of rider, more than their coaching abilities, or knowledge. My point is, why are we delivering the same course to everyone, when there really are two distinct groups of candidates on courses, who have different needs because of their different starting points."

Steven paused. "Look, it would be great to have two programmes, say a Level 1 and 2 style course directed at those coaches working with developmental level riders and another, performance-type pathway developed around Level 3 and 4 of the

UKCC framework. But that's not financially viable, to establish that system across the whole six disciplines. Besides, UKCC was always presented as a pathway, from Levels 1-4, not two, separate, split pathways."

Matt had taken his seat again. When Steven stopped talking, George stood up. "Sorry, Steven, just to build on the back of that question, if I may?"

"Go ahead," Steven said.

"Thanks. Yeah, I just wanted to ask why the UKCC still exists? Or at least why BC are still using it as a framework. If it's been identified as not being fit-for purpose, why, after fourteen years, are our qualifications still linked to it?"

"Great question," Steven started, and then paused for thought. "Well, as I said, the UKCC is the only framework we have."

"Yeah, but why not throw it to the wall? If it's not effective, why don't we redevelop the quals and bolt them to a new – more suitable – framework?" George continued.

"Well, it's not quite as simple as just free-styling without some sort of new framework," Steven answered. "Some governing bodies are moving away from the UKCC, but what would you replace it with? While the UKCC isn't fit for purpose for coaching quals, it doesn't cost us anything to have our quals endorsed by UKCC, and it offers us external quality assurance, which adds national, even international weight to our qualification. I'm not sure what you would replace it with if you took the UKCC endorsement away. It seems like it would be a step backwards, in my opinion."

"Ok, thank you," George said, retaking his seat.

"Tracey, did you have your hand raised?" Steven asked.

"I did yeah," Tracey replied. She stood up to address the room as she asked Steven her question. "I just thought you could go back over the comment you made

about the lack of trained workforce, and explain the dynamic of the coach ed workforce?"

"Yeah, sure," Steven assured her. "Look everyone, we were in a bad way when we developed the course, but we are a long way from the team we had. I think we are really good at identifying gaps in the team's skillset and recruiting to fill those skill gaps. So, we decided to put stuff online, and trained our staff to implement and manage that. Then we realised things were a bit textbook-like. We had some great minds write the initial course material, but identified we needed it grounding in some educational theory, so we recruited two teachers to the team. We have a team member who comes from a similar role of delivering coach ed for swimming and rugby league… the workforce is dynamic, well trained, and one of the best in the sector across all governing bodies. But, it is fluid, and naturally, with that fluidity, there is often a loss of skills from the team… and we're powerless to that, because it comes back to funding. You're not going to get a guy with a PhD in coach education, with 30 year's experience come and write our pathway for us on £30,000. Our lack of funding as a sector limits what we're capable of doing. But, they're a great group, doing an amazing job on the resources available. Again, as I said, we operate within a compromised world."

"Thank you," Tracey said as she retook her seat.

"And you, you had your hand up?" Steven asked, pointing to Hannah.

"I did yeah," Hannah replied, as she stood, copying the others at her table as she addressed the room. "Just following from George's question, really. I just wondered how many of BC's top-level coaches – like, those working with the performance riders – are BC qualified? Because I thought a lot of them were foreign coaches?"

Steven laughed. Opening the floor to questions always created the possibility for questions like this. "All of them," Steven lied. "Ok, I saw some other hands up. Who else had questions?"

Hannah took her seat, looking at the others at her table, confused. Was Steven telling the truth? Matt and George stood up and suggested that they make a swift exit to continue their discussion outside. Hannah agreed, and invited Tracey along.

They headed for the exit of the atrium and found some seats inside the cafe area.

"I'm really confused about the course outcomes," Hannah started. "Steven talked like the course was created to develop world-class coaches, who could coach world-class riders… but then seemed to hint to you, George, that not every coach on the pathway would be equally likely to reach those top-level coaching positions? So, what does the course aim to achieve?"

"I think it's confusing because the outcomes for each unit, each module, aren't clearly and explicitly communicated across the tutor workforce," Matt said. "And that's only getting worse, as we are encouraged to move away from PowerPoint slides as tutors."

"But Steven just said BC can't ditch the UKCC framework… and he said two pathways weren't possible, because the UKCC pathway was meant to be progressive, and chronological?" George said. "So, let's start with the Level 1. Tracey, what would you say is the course outcome for the Level 1?"

Tracey neatly summarised the Level 1, "Well, quite simply, it's an entry level qualification, where coaches deliver session in a generic cycling context… it's focused on basic bike-handling skills in traffic free zones."

"And it preps for the Level 2, doesn't it?" Matt clarified. "Or at least it should. That's when the pathway works, but it has to be respected, rather than coaches diving in at Level 2."

"Yeah, that Level 1 course really focuses on planning, and drives home the importance of good basic skills," George added. "You can spot the coaches who have dived in at Level 2."

"For sure, those who go straight to Level 2 find the planning hard," Matt joked.

"And let's not forget, the Level 1s gain experience coaching as a Level 1, so they're stronger Level 2 candidates because of that too," Tracey added. "Coaching with that Level 1 qual gives coaches the chance to practice their craft in a safe environment. Done well, the assistant coach can really grow, and develop strong foundations for the Level 2.'

"Like an apprenticeship?" Matt asked.

"Yeah. A lot of Level 1s don't actually coach though, they just end up facilitating sessions," George added. "That means they tend to rely quite heavily on the Gears books."

"And Level 1s don't show a lot of differentiation between learners, but that's probably because they're delivering other coaches' sessions plans," Tracey reminded the group. "The Level 2 coaches, however, should plan, deliver and evaluate progressive coaching sessions to groups. So, it's that they plan and deliver their own sessions that's the crucial difference between a Level 1 and Level 2 coach."

"That's why most coaches skip the Level 1, isn't it? Because of that pressure to be able to plan and deliver their own sessions. That's where the pathway breaks down," George said. "Clubs increase their rider membership without a strategy to increase their coaching workforce. The reality is, clubs need coaches who can independently take their own groups, and the Level 1s can only assist coaches, which

doesn't increase the Club's capacity or ease the pressure on the clubs… The Level 1 should be a separate qualification, it's not really worth anything… At least not in relation to the Level 2. I also think the Level 2s are more creative and tend to have more technical knowledge because they're usually more able riders."

"I find the Level 2s have more progressive sessions too, rather than fragmented, isolated sessions. They tend to have more rapport with their riders, but they're more able to deliver more specific feedback to riders within their groups, as well," Matt added.

"Yeah, I always feel Level 2 coaches place a greater emphasis on improving rider development. They have quality technical input, where the focus is on developing riders' technique," Tracey said.

"So what's the difference between a Level 1 and Level 2 coach?" Hannah asked.

"In a nutshell? The technical content of the session," Tracey replied.

"Which is tied to insurance," Matt said.

"The different groups are insured to deliver different skills, yeah," Tracey answered.

"Which is why coaches seem to be reliant on the Gears books," George said. "They know the content of the Gears books is what they're insured to deliver. If they stick to the Gears books, they know they're safe. Their session is covered."

"Which is why the Gears books contain relevant exercises, as you said before, George," Matt confirmed.

"Exactly," George agreed.

"Just going back to your point about the Level 1 being a separate course though, George," Matt continued. "I think it could be a different qualification, you're right. I have to admit, a lot of the time, especially when coaches attend the discipline specific units, they don't seem to carry a lot of their knowledge forward from the Level 2 core.

Steven talked about the pathway being seamless, but they're essentially a series of separate quals. The Level 2 is repetitive for those who attend the Level 1, and there seems to be little linkage between the Level 2 and discipline specific units. And the Level 3? That seems to be a different qual all together – a totally different course, developing coaches' abilities to design training plans on a one to one basis, which isn't necessarily linked to the planning and delivery of the group sessions Level 2s are trained to do."

"No. The only linking between the courses seems to be the building of technical content through the Gears books," George added.

"So, the pathway isn't quite as Steven described?" Asked Hannah.

"Not in practice, no. At least not from what I've seen," Matt confirmed. "Which is why I don't understand why there can't be different quals for different coaches: a qual specifically for assistants, solely for assistants; a qual for youth coaches working in clubs, delivering basic skills sessions; and then a qual for performance level coaches, coaching more advanced skills. Two split pathways as Steven mentioned. It may contradict what the UKCC was about, but it seems a direction worth pursuing, in my opinion."

The group sat in silence. It had been refreshing to hear Steven talk about the influences on the pathway, why it existed and how it had been developed. The group agreed that they had not considered the complexities of the whole system within which formal coach education operated, nor fully understood the different facets contributing to the make-up of the pathway. Each of the group could see that their workforce operated in a silo, each oblivious to the practical realities of the other. This conversation had created the opportunity for each individual to appreciate, and begin to understand, the pathway as a whole. They had identified the course was built on a technical curriculum because of the drive to improve elite sporting performance, and

that the UKCC qualifications were developed using qualification frameworks intended for education and workplace settings, and not specific to a sport coaching context. They had learned that the UKCC framework never came to fruition, but that the UKCC pushed for the professionalisation of sport coaching. They had heard how BC had been sold the dream, with other NGBs, that the UKCC would attract further funding to develop their programmes, which never came to fruition, resulting in a coach accreditation programme, more than a coach education programme. Finally, they had concluded that there was confusion around the outcomes of the courses across the different workforces; that there is little difference between the Level 1 and 2 qualifications, and that there is little linkage between the Levels within the pathway, which created fragmented qualifications, more than a seamless pathway that extends and cements knowledge.

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The pathway that Steven developed is presented in Figure 5.1. Moving from left to right, trainees start at Level 1. This course covers the role of the coach, the planning and delivery of coaching sessions, techniques and skills, equipment, safety and risk assessment. BC label this qualification the 'foundations to coaching cycling', and state that on completion, trainees will be 'able to coach the essential cycling techniques to groups of riders' (BC, 2020). The Level 1 qualification lasts five weeks and includes online and face-to-face learning, supported by mentoring from the course tutor. This qualification consists of an online theory assessment.

Next is the Level 2 'generic' qualification, which is aimed at Level 1 qualified coaches who have had experience of delivering sessions to groups of people. This course is focused on 'developing' trainee's coaching (BC, 2020). This qualification covers where to and what to coach, rider performance, creating safe coaching

environments, developing coaching sessions and evaluating trainees' coaching practice. This qualification allows coaches to coach independently and create, deliver and evaluate a series of coached cycling sessions. The course lasts twelve weeks and includes online and face-to-face learning, again, supported by a course tutor throughout. This qualification has an online theory assessment and three practical assessments.

Level 1	Level 2		Level 3	Level 4
	Generic	Discipline-specific		
Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Cycling	Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Cycling	Level 2 Track Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Track Cycling	Level 4 Certificate in Coaching Cycling
		Level 2 Road/Time Trial Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Road/Time Trial	
		Level 2 BMX Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching BMX	
		Level 2 Mountain Biking Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Mountain Biking	
		Level 2 Cyclo-Cross Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Cyclo-Cross	
		Level 2 Cycle Speedway Coaching Award	Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Cycle Speedway	

Figure 5.1 – BC's Coaching Pathway

The next 'stage' in the pathway is the discipline specific qualifications. BC govern six disciplines of cycling, and these are accommodated, here. However, as discussed above, not all of these qualifications have been developed for the Level 3 award. As such, there are currently only the Track, Road/Time Trial and Mountain bike disciplines on the pathway at Level 3.

The Level 3 qualification is the highest coaching award BC offer and is for coaches who want to have the ability and knowledge to plan, deliver and evaluate

detailed periodised training programmes for individual riders within a specific discipline. This qualification still has a core element to it, as well as a discipline-specific part, but these can be completed in a combined, seven-day course, or a five-day fast track course. This qualification covers topics such as analysing a rider's performance – testing and benchmarking – prescribing and evaluating training plans, delivering advanced techniques, understanding training theory, the coach-athlete partnership, sports science and nutrition, and enhancing rider performance (BC, 2020).

5.2.6 Discussion

The formal coach education provision offered by NGBs has been heavily criticised in the extant literature (Gilbert et al, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lemyre et al, 2007; Cassidy et al, 2006; Cote, 2006; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). This piece of creative nonfiction uncovers the untold story of formal coach education in BC. Steven's presentation explains how BC's formal coach education pathway was created and why it is delivered in the way in which it is, within the parameters it operates within. Here, we re-live, for the first time, the counter arguments to some of the criticisms that formal coach education has received. Researchers working with alternative literary formats have argued that pieces of creative nonfiction can stand alone, requiring no further forensic interrogation (Smith, 2013). This approach allows the story to speak for itself and empowers the reader to build connections in the development and construction of knowledge (Smith, 2013), which can be especially important if the story is used as a catalyst for social change. However, by providing the following theoretical discussion I hope to illustrate how this work can contribute to furthering our understanding of the development of a formal coach education pathway within

the sport of cycling. Reading this story, you cannot help but sympathise with those responsible for developing UKCC-endorsed, formal coach education pathways.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD: From the macro- to the meso-, through the exosystem

Firstly, within the discussion, it is important to identify which level of Bronfenbrenner's EMHD these findings relate to. The macrosystem is the most distant 'level' from the individual in Bronfenbrenner's EMHD. It is this system that captures the wider society – the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts within which the individual operates. Within coaching, this includes the government policies and strategies for coaching, and where coaching 'sits' in the government agenda. Of importance, here, are the policies and strategies relating to the professionalisation of coaching, which resulted in the creation of BC's formal coach education programmes – the exosystem. The exosystem, the third 'level' of Bronfenbrenner's model, is sandwiched between the wider context of government policy and the coach education programme, the mesosytem. Importantly then, the exosystem captures how BC adopted the policies and procedures from the macrosystem, and how this impacted the development and design of their formal education programme, the mesosytem. It is this 'level' of the model, the exosystem, that is explored in detail within this section of the PhD. What follows is a theoretical discussion, pulling together the key themes from the creative nonfiction above and the existing literature.

Powerless to the Government's focus on elite sporting performance

Hearing Steven describe the political backdrop behind which BC developed their coach education pathway, it is clear that the focus on improving elite level performance following the Atlanta Games in 1996 was an influential factor. UK Sport's

purpose, at that time, was on more medals and funding athletes to realise that ambition. However, Steven is critical of how the DCMS, through UK Sport and SE, neglected to include funding for coach education. Steven believed that the purpose of coach education is to improve rider development. He discusses how riders' technical inability – their lack of "basic bike-handling skills necessary to win races" – hindered elite performances, arguing that "there's a clear link between coach education and building that level of elite performance". Steven believed that the coach education programme he developed had to inform coaches of how to coach the skills that riders needed to perform in order to be successful on the world-stage – "to take someone interested in cycling, and [give] them the technical knowledge and skills needed to develop riders". Clearly, Steven was motivated to develop a coach education programme which improved elite riders' performance on the world stage and contributed towards improving cycling's development.

Research has sought to explore actual and preferred sources of knowledge and demonstrated that coach education programmes are not necessarily useful in practice, especially when compared to less structured learning opportunities (He, Trudel & Culver, 2018). Coaches want education that improves their coaching ability, not the development of their sport at an elite level (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2012). Crucially, a disconnect between the topic and the learner's perception of what is relevant can result in less significant learning (Rogers, 1969; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). However, the findings of the current project offer insight into why course content on formal qualifications was built the way that it was.

Crucially, with Steven deciding the 'problem' that needed addressing, he inhibited the learners themselves from deciding the problems that they were best-placed to identify (Rogers, 1969). Here, the programme represented a format of coach education that has to be accommodated with trainees' existing practice (Blumer, 1969). Yet, the

course that Steven launched in 2000 was revolutionary in cycling. Internally assessed, with a curriculum developed by BC staff, it contained, as Hannah described, "loads of reading" which is "dry and tedious" with language that depicted technical cycling content and emphasised world-class performance. Steven discusses in his presentation how coaching, up to that point, was delivered by coaches who were ex-riders, so technical knowledge "sat in their heads", passed on to new riders through "grandfather rights". Here, Steven acknowledged both the importance of developing knowledge through experience and the role that previous knowledge plays in effective learning (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c; Cooper, 1999). Even before the creation of the UKCC, BC was moving away from informal learning and creating coach education which placed an emphasis on formal situations. However, it appears that the initial motivation behind this was to share this untapped knowledge with a broader audience. In themselves BC's resources have no inherent meaning. However, by printing information that was previously locked away in only a few coaches' heads, BC placed a value on these manuals, only accessible through paying to attend a course and certifying as a BC coach (Blumer, 1969). This defines a network of certified coaches, which excludes those who are uncertified (Castells, 2011). Further, this network establishes in-group and out-group – "them" and "us" – where certification creates a collective, shared identity (Tajfel, 1972).

Steven and his team produced cycling-specific coaching resources, which made cycling coaching knowledge more accessible than ever to the masses who wanted it: "You cannot get 2-3-4-5,000 coaches just by telling them to go and find out for themselves how to coach". In this way, Steven's vision was to grow the coaching workforce by qualifying as many coaches as possible, which demanded a technical curriculum. Consequently, BC's formal education is focused on habits of mind (Shulman, 2005), helping trainees to understand knowledge that characterises the

coaching profession. However, this heavy technical syllabus, which orients towards Shulman's (1986) subject knowledge, neglects developing trainees' PCK and curriculum knowledge. In relation to Collinson's (1996) triad of knowledge, it is important for coaches to develop their professional knowledge, but not at the detriment of neglecting interpersonal knowledge – their "people skills" – and intrapersonal knowledge – their individual ways of doing things and thinking about things (Collinson, 1996). Although these findings highlight course content is simple technical information (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999), they illustrate the backdrop behind which the pathway was developed – why the coaching programme was framed around performance, and consequently, built around a heavy technical syllabus.

UKCC: An impossible ambition

The initial motivation for Steven's coach education programme, launched in 2000, was to increase GB's medal winning performances on the world stage. BC's formal education programme was the first of its kind for cycling, anywhere in the world.

Two years later, however, the CTFR was a catalyst for change across the whole sector of coach education. Under the new policy, NGBs were required to educate coaches in new, redefined ways in an attempt to produce a predictable, controlled and efficient workforce (Williams & Bush, 2017). BC lacked an ingrained culture of coach education, and, in Steven's presentation, we hear how UKCC was "like a bomb hitting the sector". This highlights how the provisions were not in place to support the development and implementation of the UKCC pathway. We hear from Steven that there was no recognised framework for NGBs to work from. Steven had used the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and National Occupational Standards (NOS) to guide his original formal education programme in 2000. Although not ideal,

these were the only frameworks available at the time. UKCC promised a more suitable framework, but that never arrived.

In some ways, BC were in a better position than some NGBs: they were familiar with the NQF and NOS, so they could lift some areas and stretch others so that their qualifications met the expectations of UKCC. However, they were also more aware that the NQF and NOS, with a focus on education and employability, were unfit for purpose. This created qualifications that ineffectively prepare coaches for their role, compromised the outcomes of the pathway and, as Tracey (coach ed) says, leaves BC's current coaching pathway unfit for purpose. As George (RDM) suggests, the NQF and NOS led to qualifications that are aligned to a framework that restricts, more than structures, coaching practice and over assesses learners in confusing ways.

Yet, as Matt (tutor) argues, coaches' practice is further impacted by the insurance restrictions of each qualification. This links to the broader issue of the introduction of different coaching levels as part of the UKCC pathway, and how this left NGBs trying to introduce both a professional image of coaching (Houlihan, 1991) and define different coaching roles, responsibilities and coaching environments for coaches at different levels (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). For BC, insurance became embedded in establishing differences across Levels. As Matt (tutor) suggests, this approach has created a pathway that is too long, which as Hannah (coach) suggests, leaves little difference between Levels 1 and 2. In addition, the insurance implications on coaching practice mean that the remit of Level 1 coaches does not increase Clubs' capacity for more riders. As George (RDM) argues, this results in coaches feeling pressure to skip the Level 1 qualification, resulting in a consumer-led system, where the pathway, inevitably, falls apart.

UKCC's aim for standardisation across the sector treated the professionalisation of coaching as a linear process (NCF, 2015; Piggott, 2012). As we hear from Steven's

presentation, this neglected the subtle complexities of each sport's cultural and historical biographies. BC governs six disciplines of cycling, making the creation of BC's formal coach education a much more complicated process than other sports. This means that some NGBs have been left more professionalised than others (Taylor & Garratt, 2008; Piggott, 2012), evidenced by the fact that BC are still yet to produce all of their qualifications that were originally funded in 2004. Moreover, this lack of standardisation was further impacted by the autonomy central government gave each NGB to include whatever indicative content they felt appropriate within each of their qualifications. Here, all controls were lifted, meaning that the standardisation across sports – as UKCC proposed – was practically impossible.

The implementation of the UKCC coincided with the growing success of BC's elite level riders. When BC's UKCC-endorsed programme launched in 2004, BC's riders had won three Gold medals – and eight in total – across both the Sydney and Athens Games. Remember, in Atlanta, two Olympics previously, BC's medal tally was one. BC's Olympic success increased GB's national participation, and consequently, the demand for coaches. This left BC training, as Steven said, anyone "interested in cycling", to be coaches. As Matt (tutor) comments, coach education is about "getting coaches qualified more than developing coaches", which results in BC needing coaches more than coaches need BC. Within the compromised world that coach education operates, BC are left giving coaches as much knowledge as they need in order to deliver safe, practical sessions. The result is quick, knowledge giving courses, with quick assessments, based on the minimum competence.

Coaches progressing through the UKCC pathway were meant to accumulate knowledge through the qualifications (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). However, the compromised state of formal education creates partial linkage between Levels, creating stand-alone qualifications. Further, as Matt (tutor) suggests, coaches "don't

seem to carry a lot of their knowledge forward" from one Level to the next, which, in practice, results in a "series of separate quals", rather than a progressive, 'institutionalised, chronically graded and hierarchically structured' set of courses (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8), like UKCC intended. Consequently, two coaching pathways should exist, with Level 1 and 2 focused on community coaches out in Clubs, and Level 3 and 4 focused on performance coaches working with pathway to podium level riders. However, UKCC pushed for one system, leaving BC accommodating community and performance coaches within the same compromised pathway, fighting the tension between training new coaches and developing better ones.

One-size-fits-all approaches to coach education have been heavily criticised (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Cushion et al, 2010; Day & Newton, 2016), but Steven stresses in his presentation how coach education is a compromise: "Our sector isn't funded well enough to consider different courses for different learners. It's a one-size-fits-all programme, because that's what's financially possible." Poignantly, the sector has lasted ten years without funding, with BC lacking a ring-fenced coaching pot to fund coach education. As Tracey (coach ed) says, it is often frustrating how coach education is commonly misconceived to be a well-funded sector of sport. Steven discusses how UKCC "sold them a dream" regarding initial funding to develop a pathway, as well as continued funding from the adult education sector. However, accessing funding streams targeted for adult education proved problematic, because rather than solely looking at registration figures, adult education funding emphasised completion rates of qualifications. This meant that BC had to double their completion figures from around 40% - which were in line with the average for coach education – to around 80%, to be in line with the expectations of the Further Education sector.

In response, BC introduced the mentor role to support learners through their Level 2 and Level 3 programmes. The mentor role is meant to offer learners guidance from a more experienced individual, within their occupational or professional context (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). By offering mentors, BC structure the mentoring process. Assigning time for the mentoring prevents the uncritical recycling of practice often seen in sport coaching (Cushion et al, 2003; Lyle & Cushion 2017a). Conversely, offering the coach educator as a mentor means there is no emotional connection between the mentor and learner, and because the mentors are not 'on the ground' they are not immersed within the context of learners' practice (Colley, 2003). Nevertheless, it is clear from this piece of creative non-fiction that BC introduced the mentor role to improve the completion rates, as dictated by funding requirements.

The delivery of the pathway across the organisation

BC's formal qualifications offered standards to the recruitment, training and qualification of trainee coaches. The interview data, combined with informal conversations with BC staff and document analysis of the BC materials and resources, identified the mechanisms used to deliver BC's qualifications. These included: BC coach developers; BC's materials, including the Gears books and coaching handbooks; practical, in-situ coaching; and assessments strategies. Another original contribution of this work was the way in which it captured the thoughts, opinions and experiences of different workforces across the organisation. A full discussion of organisational psychology is beyond the scope of this PhD. However, Rogers' (1995) work on diffusion of innovations across organisations offers some insight into what is described above. He identified four main elements to how ideas are shared between individuals. However, the element of time is perhaps not relevant here because BC's implementation of the UKCC was enforced by national policy. As such, only three

elements will be discussed here: the innovation; communication; and the social system.

Firstly, is how the idea, procedure or system – the innovation, which here was the UKCC – is perceived by whomever is adopting it. Rogers (1995) argued that the more individuals perceive the new idea to offer a relative advantage, create observable change, perceive it to be compatible with existing procedures, and how complex it appears to be all impacts the rate at which individuals 'buy-in' to the new idea. Steven saw the benefit of the UKCC: it offered the advantage of standardising coach education, offered observable change in improving rider development, and it was compatible with existing procedures because BC were already delivering Steven's initial, 2000 version, of coach education.

Secondly, the way in which an idea is communicated impacts 'buy-in'. There is an important relationship here between the source of the information and the rate at which the idea is adopted where the idea will be adopted faster if the source of information aligns with the individual adopting it (Rogers, 1995). Consequently, the diffusion of the new idea is a social process, relying on effective communication between individuals who perceive themselves to be similar in beliefs, status and education (Rogers, 1995). Here, the message from scUK was clear, but unsupported and the promise of the UKCC framework was never realised. However, Steven perceived UKCC to be beneficial, so the rate of adoption was facilitated because of this alignment.

This research, however, draws attention to the 'buy-in' across the organisation of Steven's emphasis on elite performance. Tracey (coach ed) shared the belief that Level 2 coaches offer riders quality technical input, emphasising rider development, but with a focus on delivering safe sessions. Matt (tutor) suggested the focus for coaches is on progressive sessions, more than fragmented, isolated sessions. George (RDM)

views the Level 1 coach role as a facilitator of sessions, arguing that Level 2 coaches are often more able riders, and therefore, more creative as coaches in the sessions they deliver. However, it appears that because BC's qualifications are tied to insurance, the only difference between a Level 1 and 2 coach is the content of their session. Of interest, neither Matt, George or Tracey mentioned the role of coach education in improving elite performance. Lastly, George highlighted the importance of the Tutor in coaches' experiences of BC's formal education, suggesting that the delivery is increasingly inconsistent across the tutor workforce. Matt (tutor) argued this is due to a lack of clearly communicated outcomes for each module shared across the workforce. This confusion impacts the tutor workforce's 'buy-in' of UKCC. Moreover, Matt highlighted how the tutors are pressured to deliver consistency, which is difficult when there is such a spread of ability across the candidates – stemming from some coaches skipping the Level 1, and consequently, breaking the pathway. Understandably, this impacts the communication of the programme aims to the end-user – the trainee coach. Each workforce appeared to operate in a silo, each oblivious to the practical realities of the other. A breakdown in communication meant there was confusion around the outcomes of the course across the different workforces. This resulted in little linkage between the Levels within the pathway, which created fragmented qualifications, more than a seamless pathway that extends and cements knowledge.

This links to the social system (Rogers, 1995). BC operates through the actions and interpretations between the employees and volunteers, meaning that educators and coach learners need to interlink their actions through ongoing interpretation (Blumer, 1969). Here, BC are actively involved in defining meaning (Kolic et al, 2019). Importantly, BC exists because of the interaction between various networks, rather than in isolation (Crossley, 2010). Within BC, most of the power and control reside

with Steven and the education team (Castells, 2009). In some ways, this is perhaps necessary to ensure that a certain standard of education is delivered to all learners. However, this limits the innovation of the tutor workforce and the RDMs. Clearly, some social actors have more power that others within the network (Castells, 2011). Rogers identified three people within each system who have the ability to influence diffusion of innovation: opinion leaders, change agents and champions. Steven is an innovation champion (Rogers, 1995) within this scenario who had a key role in influencing the adoption and implementation of the innovative idea of formal education within BC and then the UKCC. Rogers (1995) argues that the champion contributes to the success of the innovation within the organisation. Steven certainly served this role. The education team are the opinion leaders (Rogers, 1995), whose expertise, competence and leadership in conforming the system's norms places them in the centre of the communication network when disseminating BC's coach education programme. Lastly, the Tutor workforce and RDMs are the change agents (Rogers, 1995) – external to Steven and the education team, working remotely, but process special knowledge and expertise.

5.2.7 Conclusion

This part of the project researched the following research questions: why and how was the BC's coaching pathway created? What are the mechanisms used to deliver BC's formal education? What are the intended outcomes for participants when attending BC's formal education? This section concludes these findings in relation to these research questions.

These findings identified the mechanisms through which BC deliver their formal education. These included: BC coach developers; BC's materials, including the Gears books and coaching handbooks; practical, in-situ coaching; and assessments

strategies. However, this work goes further by uncovering, for the first time, the untold story of developing a formal coach education in sport, appreciating the task placed upon those responsible for delivering the demands of UKCC. Quite simply, NGBs deliver sport, and not necessarily education. Consequently, this piece of creative nonfiction tells the story of how an untrained, unqualified and inexperienced workforce were left developing the formal education courses that UKCC demanded. BC's education team did not come from an education background and therefore did not understand assessment or course design. Worryingly, every NGB was in the same position, with no examples – no blueprint – to follow, leaving, as Steven explains, "the blind leading the blind… trying to figure it out". From this perspective, it is unjust to be critical of the programmes that were developed.

These findings illustrate how formal coach education is not standardised like UKCC intended, because each NGB had freedom in deciding the indicative content of each qualification however they deemed suitable. A UKCC framework was never delivered, meaning qualifications were built on the NQF and NOS, consequently resulting in formal coach education that is unfit for purpose. Crucially, BC's formal education is not well-funded. UKCC promised increased funding for coach education, but these findings illustrate that this was not delivered. This means coach education is delivered as a one-size-fits all approach. Shockingly, BC govern six disciplines of cycling and still have not developed all courses originally funded in 2004. This means that UKCC failed to fully professionalise the sport of cycling, let alone offer standardisation across different sports. Lastly, the explosion of Britain's success through the Athens and Beijing Games meant cycling's popularity increased exponentially. This resulted in a shift in focus towards growing the coaching workforce. Here, this balance means BC's formal education operates in a compromised state.

Formal education is criticised for being technically focused. Yet these findings suggest teaching coaches the necessary skills to coach riders is important for two reasons. Firstly, BC's formal education put coaching knowledge on paper for the first time. Secondly, BC's focus on coaching technical skills was thought to improve rider development and result in more medals, which aligned with the national drive for GB to maintain world-class performances. Importantly, this highlights how formal education focuses on increasing trainees' understanding of knowledge that characterises the coaching profession – habits of hand (Shulman, 2005). However, there appeared to be confusion on the intended outcomes of BC's formal education. The initial aim for the coach education programme was to result in better rider development, which Steven hoped would result in consistently improved performances at the elite level. However, for the coach education team the focus was on producing coaches who delivered safe sessions, with quality input. The importance of the tutor workforce was highlighted, but inconsistencies in the standard of delivery were common as tutors were encouraged to be more creative. Moreover, the tutors found that coaches skipping the Level 1 qualification – because of the insurance restrictions impacting practice – meant the pathway was broken, resulting in varied abilities on the programmes.

5.2.8 Reflections on the research process

On my first day in the BC office, I had coffee with some of the education team. One of the more senior members of the team discussed how the formal education BC offered often changed, based on the coaches' evaluation forms, to reflect and adapt to the coaches' wants and needs. This hinted that BC's formal education operated in a cocoon, isolated from the national policy and UKCC. However, this was thirteen years after the UKCC was introduced and suggested that BC's coach education was moving

away from the 'unfit-for-purpose' UKCC and transition back to an education system that resembled something similar to Steven's pre-UKCC programme. This conversation made me realise the transient nature of the coach education team. Different teams clearly had different motivations and goals, and staff appeared keen not to be associated with the work of previous teams. At that time, the team had six members, headed by an 'Education Manager'.

During this visit, I was invited into a meeting of the education team. The meeting discussed a restructure of the coaching pathway. I felt as though my PhD would be useless as the data already collected, and the research I was yet to conduct, would be based on an 'old' pathway. Nonetheless, it was a valuable insight into how the team operated, and who were the prominent figures in the team – the opinion leaders and innovation champions within the team. Within the meeting there was one member of the team who was an established coach and part-time tutor for BC. He knew what coaches need and what coaches realistically take away from their formal educational experiences. In this scenario, he was the innovation champion, with age and experience on his side. This was unfortunate, because there were two young members of the team with creative, dynamic and evidence-based ideas. They appeared to be on the peripheries of the team and their knowledge did not appear to be valued by the rest of the team. The two, most senior members steered the group's strategic plan.

I felt isolated from the meeting – a real fly on the wall experience. This team had a shared love of cycling that bound them together. I could not connect with that. There was a secret language of cycling that I could not understand. Every now and again, one of the team would turn to me and offer an explanation of what they were talking about, creating a crash-course in cycling. However, I felt as though they were becoming frustrated at the extra noise this created, or the rate at which this slowed their meeting down. I felt that some of the team were annoyed that I did not have the

same love of cycling as them. I did not feel very accepted and understood that I had a lot to learn about the culture of cycling and about the sport in general. This made me question the usefulness of my findings, and how respected my research would be, and consequently, how much impact it would have on shaping BC's formal education.

5.3. The individual as 'Coach': The different narratives of cycling coaches

5.3.1. Introduction

Section 5.2 focused on the development of BC's formal coach education. In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1974) conceptual framework, this part of the PhD was concerned with exploring the ways in which the wider societal, political and cultural context (the macrosystem) was embedded and adopted by BC (within the exosystem) to produce BC's formal coach education (the mesosystem). Logically, the next stage of the PhD was concerned with exploring the coaches' experiences of the mesosystem; their experiences of BC's formal education. However, before exploring how individuals experience the formal education, it is important to understand the individuals who attend the formal qualifications – their motivations, beliefs, values, existing knowledge and previous cycling experience. This was addressed in this section of the PhD, where the different narratives of cycling coaches were identified and explored.

5.3.2 Aims and rationale

This study was concerned with the individual within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, specifically individuals' biographies – their motivations, beliefs, values, existing knowledge and previous experiences in relation to both cycling and coaching. The rationale behind this study was that by finding commonalities between participants, it would be possible to form different 'typologies' of cycling coaches. Aligning trainees to a 'typology' would answer calls for coaching programmes to account for the specific backgrounds of coaches' practices and personalised models of coaching (Jacobs, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2016; Lyle, 2007).

5.3.3 Methods and data analysis

Semi-structured interviews with the eight participants described in section 4.6 produced 410.88 minutes of audio material (interviews ranged between 30.72 minutes and 74.48 minutes; M=55.2, SD=12.87). Interviews invited participants to share, talk and reflect on: their motivations for coaching and attending BC's formal education; their coaching philosophies; their previous experience of receiving and delivering formal coaching; and their previous cycling experience. Interviews were transcribed, verbatim, producing 61,332 words across 129 pages of single-spaced text. Epistemologically and ontologically grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, deductive TNA of the transcripts found that different narratives occurred across participants

5.3.4 Findings

A narrative type (Frank, 1995) is the 'most general storyline that can be recognised underlying the plot and tensions of particular stories' (p.75). Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009, 2015) used Frank's (1995) concept to identify three narratives types in sport contexts: performance; discovery; and relational. These narratives aligned with the data captured in these interviews, specifically around participants' motivations for attending BC's formal education and their expectations of the course. Although the specific details of different individual's stories varied according to their life circumstances, all participants' stories broadly followed one of these three identifiable plots. As such, these narratives, described below, are used within this PhD as a theoretical frame.

"Mediocre to magnificent" - Louise and Adam: the performance narrative

Participants who aligned with the performance narrative – Louise and Adam – were still involved with competitive cycling themselves. They were oriented towards achieving specific goals within their coaching, such as achieving coaching qualifications for their professional development and striving to be the best. Louise was driven and highly motivated to be the best person – the best version of herself – that she could be, demonstrating a natural reflexivity. Nevertheless, she discussed being a very competitive individual in most aspects of her life. Conversely, Adam was motivated to coach because of money, and the increased business opportunity that coaching offered by giving him the ability to take participants from his spinning classes on to the velodrome track. Coming from a background as a qualified personal trainer, Adam was all about performance. With his physiology knowledge-base, stemming from his personal trainer qualification, he felt that he would be 'more qualified than everybody else'. He discussed ambitions of wanting to coach a race team. Here, then, Adam felt superior to the other coaches – too good, in some ways, to have to attend the same training:

> What they should do, really, is have you send in your qualifications, send in your accreditation and all that for the Track - how long you been riding at the Track, your background on the Track, whether you've raced or not… At least if you've raced you can at least give people the information you've learned through racing, so when you go on the course you've got even more information, whether it's to do with power meters on the pedals, or the lines on the track, or what gear you're using… To me, it's a bit like one cap fits all, if you understand what I mean? You're all going to pay this money to do this, and then this other element is more money if you want to get to that… This is meant to be a GB thing, and they want you to promote what they're doing… Yet you're paying for that really.

In addition, both were similar in their motivation to improve the future of competitive cycling in the UK. For this group, coaching was about improving someone's performance, with a real focus on developing riders' technical skills, to

improve elite cycling: 'part of me is like, "Yeah! Bring on Paris 2024!"' In addition, Louise had the specific aim of improving female participation:

> I'm really interested in women cycling, and generally, equality across the board. I'm a woman and feel that we get treated like crap… we're horrendously underrepresented… there's amazing talent that people at the top hasn't even heard of. Cycling is male, pale and stale in terms of the NGB and the international federation… it's crazy the way that cycling is super, super, male-dominated - in all ranks. People in key leadership positions of British Cycling are all men, I can't think of one female performance coach… There aren't enough women - female leaders - in sport, and that means there are so few female riders at the Club level, there's no competition for them, so they end up racing against boys, and they can't compete, so they become despondent, and drop out… we need to be doing more to keep the girls we have, without adding more barriers for them.

Here, Louise believes there is a need for women coaches to be coaching at competitive levels to show that 'it's possible' for women to ride at an elite level. Combined with Louise's comments about wanting to race for her club, it is clear that Louise is motivated to be a role model for young female riders. These two were particularly interested in supporting elite cycling, though, with Louise attending the 2018 UCI World Road Championships in Austria as a spectator, and then volunteering at the 2019 event in Yorkshire, an opportunity that came about through her work. For these two participants, then, coaching was more than a volunteer role; something that they wanted to make a life – and business – out of. This altered their approach to the work-life-coach balance, because they both saw coaching as something that complimented their lives, and existing jobs, as described by Adam:

> I teach spin classes at Nuffield, so I go between Derby and Nottingham, and that's the easiest thing for me to teach. With the Track, I just wanted to go and have a go, and then I got addicted to it. I passed my accreditation, and then started riding… Then a few people that came to my class started coming to the Track because I said, "You want to go on [the Track], it's really good"… then it got about that I was teaching the spin classes at Nuffield, and then I was speaking to the Track manager at Derby, and I said, "What do I need to get this coaching qualification on the Track?" And he said, "You just go on this site", so that's where we are now.

These two participants saw that education played an important role in their personal development. Louise discussed wanting to undertake a Masters' degree to better understand the importance of 'good leadership and culture to get good performance'. In relation to BC's formal education provision, Louise explained how she had been supporting 'more experienced coaches' as a Level 1, on a weekly basis from October 2015 to the Spring of 2017, before stopping in order to focus on her own cycling. She recalled how she learnt, during that period, 'that you could spend a lifetime teaching kids how to use gears, how to pedal, corner, and use their brakes'. Nevertheless, Louise reflected, critically, how she had not applied her learning from the Level 1 in a 'constructive way', and hoped that coming back to coaching now, the Level 2 would serve as a 'refresher', more than a repetitive, negative experience. In addition, for Louise and Adam, the Level 2 allowed them to take coaching 'more seriously'. Adam and Louise both saw the Level 1 and 2 as a 'means to an end' in order to progress onto the discipline specific units, as Adam said:

> I've always liked cycling, and I like going fast… I want to teach sprinters on the Track, [so was told] "Well, you need to go on this course then"… I need to pass this, and then I need to get that Track done, because even the Manager said to me that I can have a coaching job at Derby as soon as I've passed the Track course.

For Louise, the Level 2 was a necessary part of the pathway in order to undertake the Level 3 qualification, because, 'if there's a Level to achieve, [she wants] to achieve it'. Both participants saw value in BC's formal education, viewing the qualifications as a way of legitimising their knowledge, giving them the ability to 'stick [their] head above the parapet' and say, '"I'm endorsed"… more than a maverick trying to coach'. Moreover, they understood that, 'coaching is about the techniques, skill and tactics' as well as the personal skills that they already possessed. These two felt that they knew what they needed to know in order to develop themselves and hoped the Level 2 qualification would give them the skills they needed, 'to be able to deliver good

coaching'. Interestingly, however, because of Louise and Adam's knowledge of elite cycling, using examples of elite coaches within the system, they questioned the worth of BC's qualifications:

> Tom Stanton, who was the coach for the Paralympic Team, used to be a Gymnast coach, and then went into para-cycling coaching, became the National endurance coach for four years, and is now the pathway manager for BC. Look at Matt Parker, as another example. He joined BC in 2006 as a physiologist. Dave Brailsford asked for his help. He coached the Team Pursuit team to the Gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, and he's not a BC qualified coach.

These participants' desire for self-development was evident. However, for Adam and Louise, coaching was about performance, with a focus on enabling 'someone to achieve their potential by assisting and taking them through it' – an 'athlete-centred' and 'athlete-led' approach: 'They've turned up to a training session, so the idea is to help them'. Here, these participants believed that coaches should be supportive to those who they coach, and dynamic in their delivery: 'athletes should want to come back again to another session… If you're crap at something, a good coach doesn't make you feel crap'. Adam shared Louise's view: 'You're there to teach them, not belittle them or anything like that. You're trying to make it as enjoyable as you can'. However, Adam's description of fun sessions depicted the technical language typical of these two participants:

> You can't let the enjoyable aspect of the session cross the line between safety and not safe because one of the things about cycling is safety - whereabouts they ride and things like not under lapping the wheel, making sure you can overlap so you can get out the way if somebody has to brake quickly

Louise also demonstrated 'performance' language when she described how good coaches 'need to be able to flex what they're doing' to 'meet the needs of the athlete they're coaching'. Her language here aligns with the "flex" and "cope" terminology of performance sport.

In addition, these participants had considered their coaching philosophy more deeply. They believed that "good" coaches 'help find solutions and understand what the athlete needs to do', by explaining 'what they're not doing right or wrong, or what they could improve on'. Adam stressed the importance of having the 'ability to talk' and highlight 'teaching points'. Louise stressed the importance of coaches having 'emotional intelligence to read how what they're doing is impacting the person', referring to the need for coaches to be empathetic, good communicators and good listeners. Noting Louise's language use, she refers to the people who she coaches as 'athletes', rather than 'riders' or 'learners'. Louise and Adam had both undertaken formal coaching themselves, in order to reach their respective level in sport. These experiences shaped their opinion of coaching and coach behaviour. Louise remembered how one running coach she had, 'was really softly spoken', but, 'got you doing what you needed to do and got you working hard'. Reflecting on this emphasised that she understood the importance of communication. However, both recalled how they had experienced 'some really bad coaches'.

With regard to this group's view on BC, they discussed how they were more about 'mass coverage', than 'getting people to a higher standard'. They showed frustration of how 'elite coach education is often side-lined to UK Sport's apprentice programme, because it's there and it's free', rather than taking an active role in that part of the coaching pathway. Louise, because of her experiences within her job role, argued the importance of investing in coaches at all stages of the pathway, but specifically, emphasised the underestimated role Level 2 coaches have. Again, however these thoughts were linked to athlete development, stressing that Level 2 coaches develop skills at an early, 'formative' stage of the athlete pathway, which have impact at a higher level:

> I'm not sure what BC want from Level 2 coaches. Is it damaged limitations [sic], like the minimum standards in as many coaches as possible around the country, versus

making incredibly good coaches who do x, y and z, and demonstrate a, b and c… If you want that, you need to be more harsh on whether or not every single candidate becomes a coach straight away. People should probably fail… I don't want to do the tutor a disservice, but nobody is going to get failed, right? I suspect BC just want lots of coaches across the country delivering the minimum standard… But coaching is a huge responsibility. If you want coaching to be professionalised and have more recognition for the impact it has, there needs to be certain qualities - certain standards - that are upheld.

This view was further supported by Louise's experience of enquiring about a BC bursary for attending a discipline specific course:

I said I was really passionate about coaching girls, and had some really talented girls in my club, and want to get them to a better standard, so that they can advance up the pathway. But the response from BC was, "That's not a priority for us. We're about getting basic coaches and DSU coaching isn't a priority"… they said their priority is GoRide activity, not [discipline specific skills] in clubs

This highlights how this group's focus was on developing strong technique in young riders, which created confusion for Louise and Adam. There was a clear disconnect between what they thought BC's role should be and what they perceived their role to be.

In summary, Louise and Adam align with the performance narrative because of their focus on achieving specific goals within their coaching – their drive to achieve coaching qualifications and develop themselves, professionally – and their drive to improve the competitive cycling provision in the UK.

"I'm just a Dad learning to coach" - Joe, James and Oliver: the discovery narrative

Participants who aligned with the discovery narrative were Joe, James and Oliver. These three were oriented towards the ways in which coaching offered a chance to discover a new role, and the possibilities that this new role would bring. Part of this was formalising their volunteer role within the club:

> My kids are riding bikes, and I'm going along to the session, so I'm there anyway. Instead of standing around, moving cones, I might as well get involved and help with the session. I've felt a bit of a spare part, on the sidelines of the Club. But the Level 2 will make me more useful - I'll get insurance, and the ability to do it on my own.

Yet, part of this was linked to identity, where qualifying as a coach was a chance to be, for example, 'Oliver the coach', rather than 'Oliver the Dad', or 'Oliver the work colleague'. But coaching also offered these participants the chance for a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. Joe discussed:

> I've reached a point now where the kids don't need me constantly, so I have a bit more free time now, and I sort of want to fill it… and I feel good about coaching at sessions. There's a need for me to coach, and I get something out of it too - that feel good factor.

With Joe and Oliver, it is clear that coaching is about establishing a 'coach' identity and learning to balance that with their 'parent' role: 'my son thought it was amazing that Daddy was helping during the sessions'. Here, coaching offers a journey for Joe and Oliver. Whereas, for James, coaching offered the opportunity to build a closer relationship with his daughter, who was a competitive cyclist. As part of this journey, James was 'excited to gain more knowledge' so that he could 'help to improve [his] daughter's cycling' – whether that be inspirational quotes that he read, or links to useful websites that he found. Here, James placed a high importance on the role his coaching qualification had in forming a foundation for this new journey that the two of them could experience together. Participants who aligned with the discovery narrative, then, all cited their children's involvement with cycling as a reason why they were involved with coaching.

For Joe, James and Oliver, their children's involvement in cycling clearly had a role in their motivation to qualify as a coach, sometimes in more subtle ways than first expected. For example, Joe had been involved with various disciplines over the years, but his current involvement with mountain biking was because that's the club where

his children currently cycle. In addition, James explained how he felt that, in discussions with his daughter, having the coaching qualification would add weight to what he was saying when he coached. However, these participants were also motivated to attend the Level 2 course in order to increase their club's capacity. As Joe described:

> We've got kids wanting to be involved and wanting to participate in cycling, and we've got the facilities, we just don't have the coaches to coach them. Unfortunately, a lot comes down to funding the quals, and the lack of funding available to attend coaching quals… You need a rich club who can afford to fund your course. Of course, you can self-fund your way through it, but that's a barrier to some looking to get involved… it means there's a regional shortage of coaches, and that needs addressing… The Level 1 remit is quite limiting. The club wanted me to do the Level 2 qualification because it allows me to lead a session on my own, within the club, which means they can take on more riders.

Here, it is clear that these participants were motivated to coach by more than their parental role in sport. Oliver talked about the excitement of sharing knowledge that coaching brings and being motivated by the process of seeing 'someone who didn't have a clue, just get it', developing from 'where they were'. This point links to this group's coaching philosophy. For these participants, coaching, in its simplest form was seen to be about, 'trying to influence people'. On a deeper level, it was about creating an encouraging environment, where importance was placed on praising 'the effort that riders are putting in' so that 'riders leave smiling, and happy, wanting to come back'. Good coaching was summarised as having 'good rapport and communication with riders' and working to meet the needs of the riders. As for motivations to qualify as coaches, this group wanted the "Coach" title, wanted to be shown the "Gold standard" and wanted more knowledge – specifically, the skills to work with newcomers to cycling.

Compared to Louise and Adam, this group of participants did not consider their previous cycling experience as important when coaching, arguing 'it's not about what

[they] can do as a rider'. That's not to say that this group lacked a background in cycling. Joe had been involved in a variety of disciplines and discussed how cycling had always been a part of his life. James started Road cycling, socially, as an adult, meaning he gained most of his knowledge 'being out and about on the street, in groups of riders' – a self-confessed, 'weekend-warrior'. Oliver had been involved with cycling since University, mainly as a means of commuting. Consequently, this group had not received any formal coaching for cycling themselves, confessing their skill was 'mostly self-taught'. Having not received any formal coaching, most of this group's ideas of coaching were based on what they had 'witnessed first-hand' as Level 1 coaches, or when volunteering with the Club. They rated their basic cycling knowledge as 'above the national average' and acknowledged how their experiences carried into their formal coach education. Oliver felt he had the knowledge to skip the Level 1, supported by conversations with coaches in the club, but due to work commitments at the time, completed the Level 1 before the Level 2. Joe discussed how the Level 1 built his self-confidence and his technical knowledge, creating a 'strong base for coaching'. However, Joe noted that attending these formal coaching qualifications were the first piece of formal education he had attended for ten years.

In summary, participants who aligned with the discovery narrative were volunteers in cycling clubs who wanted to formalise their volunteer role. They were parents of children already involved in cycling clubs, although they had personal cycling experiences as riders. These participants discussed how their motives for qualifying as a coach oriented towards discovering a new role, and the possibilities that this new role would bring.

"Riding by the seat of our lycra" - *Peter, Chris and Beth: the relational narrative*

Participants who aligned with the relational narrative – Peter, Chris and Beth – were best described as social riders, involved with cycling because of the connection the sport gave them to their friends. For these participants, coaching was a by-product of their relationship with the sport, with narratives revolving around creating, experiencing and sustaining relationships with others. This was captured, quite neatly, by the story of Peter and Chris: two friends, who established and strengthened their friendship through the same cycling club, venturing on their coaching journeys together. These participants' motivations to coach were centred on growing cycling within their local community – to spread their enjoyment of cycling. Here, coaching was about 'investing in people' first, and then their cycling, as Peter summarised:

> I want to introduce cycling to youth riders, but it's bigger than just building the club numbers. I want kids on bikes, riding safely - that real-life aspect to cycling is a high priority for me. And although the focus is on young riders, it would be great to get parents on their bikes too, maybe organise a few evening social rides with everyone out together… Maybe even look at connecting with other clubs in the area?

In contrast to the others, participants within this group were motivated to attend the Level 2 to access knowledge. For Peter, Chris and Beth, one of the primary drivers for attending the course was receiving the BC coaching resources. Moreover, as Peter summarised, 'knowing the course is there, it's stupid not attending it'. However, similar to the comments of Joe, James and Oliver – those participants aligned with the discovery narrative – participants within the relational narrative group understood that attending the qualification expanded their coaching remit, which in turn, helped their club's capacity:

> The Level 1 coach is a helper role, with no responsibility. It has a purpose for those who want an involvement in cycling without the responsibility of a Level 2 coach. But the restrictive nature of the role once qualified means that it became more of a stepping stone

However, Beth, who was involved in a mountain bike club, felt that the Level 1 'was a waste of time and money', and something that she only did because she 'was told that's what should happen'. Nevertheless, all participants in this group had attended the Level 1, and 'expected' the Level 2 to be 'roundup of the Level 1'. They also wanted to be shown the "gold standard" of coaching. However, two of the members in the group – Peter and Beth – came from a teaching background, and that's how they 'learned as a teacher', by watching demonstrations. These participants carried this through to their expectation of the formal coach education.

The idea of coaching cycling, for Peter, Chris and Beth was born out of their relationship with the sport. Peter and Chris were social riders, with no reference to competitive cycling at all. Chris had a casual and social engagement with cycling, where he viewed it as a way of keeping fit, being outdoors and meeting new people. Peter's only relationship with cycling had been as a means of commuting, or the social aspect of social rides. Beth's relationship with the sport started with her boyfriend – now husband – and the initial group of female riders that she met; first she rode with them, and then raced with them. However, in line with the relational narrative, the racing was never at the forefront of what she was doing; it was about the people involved, and her relationship with those people. She progressed pretty quickly, and as a strong, female rider, she was being asked by friends for help and advise on cycling technique. As a teacher, she found it easy giving pointers, and enjoyed helping people. For Beth, coaching is not necessarily about bettering the sport, or bettering cycling in the wider community, but just about bettering cycling within her club community. Beth often discussed the frustrating battle of balancing coaching with her own riding. Here, her disappointment centred on the fact she missed time with her friends, where they would be having fun without her. Unlike Louise, Beth's frustration was not

because of a lack of training interferes with her chances of racing, but because missing riding means missing time with friends, and that's a crucial difference.

With regard to philosophy, Peter and Chris discussed the importance that they placed on 'fun learning'. All three discussed how they thought "good" coaches give those who they are coaching something to work towards. However, this was framed around developing an interest in riding that would create lifelong cyclists. Moreover, this group were motivated to coach because of the possibility of growing cycling within their community, focused on getting riders to love the sport that had given them so much.

In summary

It is clear that these three groups are distinctly different. These eight participants each had unique stories. Their reasons for wanting to coach and attend the course, their philosophies for coaching, their previous coaching experience and the previous coaching they had received themselves, were each individual and valuable to this research. However, as has been illustrated here, there were some commonalties in the way participants told these stories, allowing them to be aligned, broadly, to one of the three identified narratives. These findings suggest that coaches enrolling on formal education qualifications are likely to align to one of these three narratives. Establishing these three narratives, and aligning participants to them, offers a theoretical framework to better understand these participants' experiences of the course.

5.3.5 Discussion

Nested in the centre of the four environmental 'levels' of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD (Figure 2.1) is the individual – the 'self'. This 'level' includes the individual's beliefs, values, self-awareness, self-reflections, knowledge, experiences, motivations, goals, ideas and suggestions. Moreover, within the context of cycling coaches, this 'level' captures the individual's previous coaching experiences, perceptions of what coaching 'should' look like, and their knowledge and experiences of cycling. Bronfenbrenner's EMHD acknowledges that the individual brings this 'whole self' to the learning process.

Aligning participants to one of the three narrative types occurred quite organically. When interview transcripts were initially analysed, especially with regards to the participants' context and themes related to the individual, it became apparent similar narratives were identifiable across participants. These similarities allowed participants to be aligned to one of the three narrative types (Frank, 1995; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009, 2015) – performance, discovery and relational. This created three groups of participants – essentially, three coaching typologies – which created a theoretical framework to discuss how coaches can be broadly grouped based on certain similarities. Generalising across narrative groups allowed the contrasts to be drawn across each group. What follows is a critical discussion of each of the three identified narratives, pulled together using the extant literature. The 'individual', or 'self', will be referred to as 'the coach'.

The performance narrative

Figure 5.2 summaries the biographies of the participants aligned to the performance narrative. These participants were oriented towards the specific goal of being the best and wanting to coach the best. They had strong cycling backgrounds,

with competitive experience. They believed the coach's role was to develop technical skills in order to help riders reach their potential, so there was a performance focus to these participants' sessions. They were motived to improve the standard of competitive cycling in the UK and were frustrated that BC's attention was focused on mass-coverage, rather than developing elite coach education. They did not expect role conflict between coaching and another job because they believed that coaching complimented their existing jobs and, ultimately, wanted to explore full-time careers in coaching and the potential business opportunities associated with that. As such, coaching was more than volunteer role, but something they saw as a potential business opportunity. As such, they saw the Level 2 as a necessary stepping stone to progressing to higher levels of the pathway.
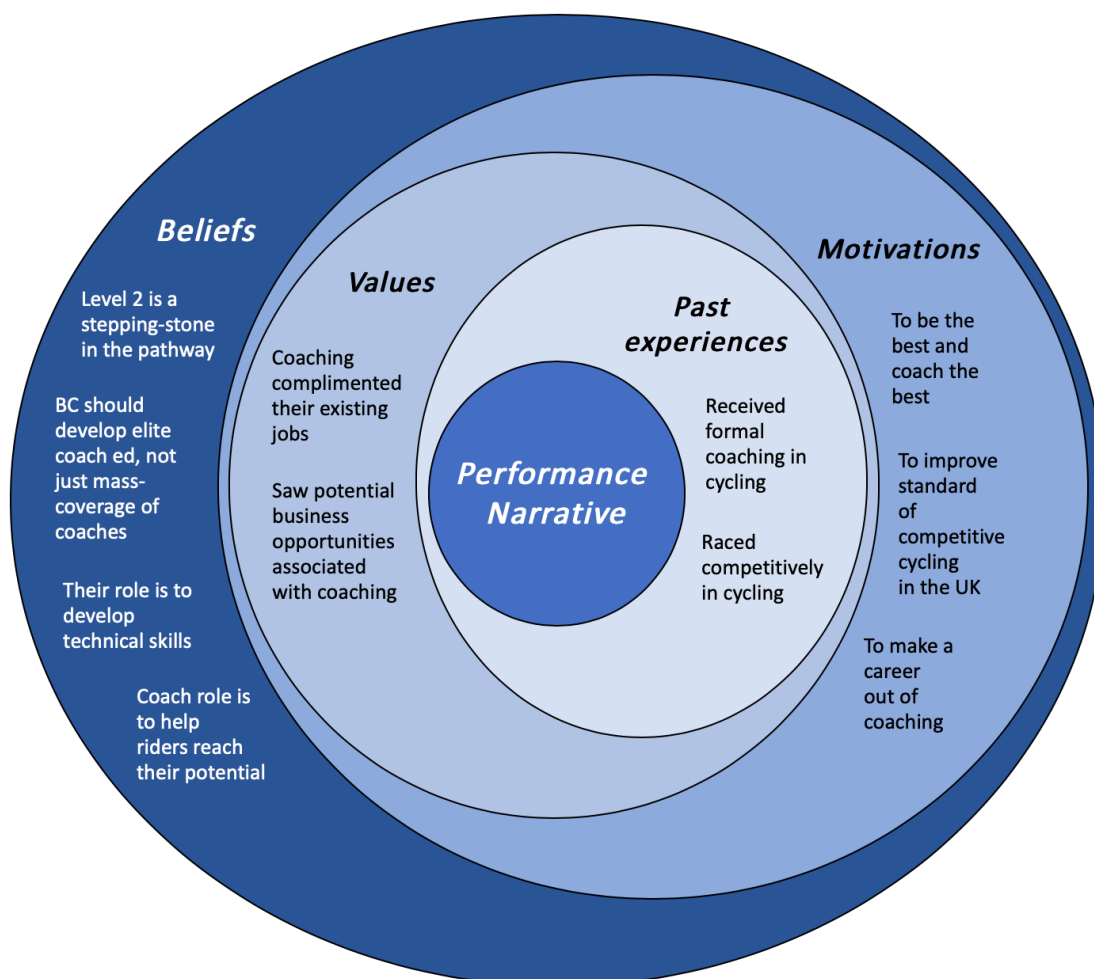
Figure 5.2 – 'The Performance Coach'
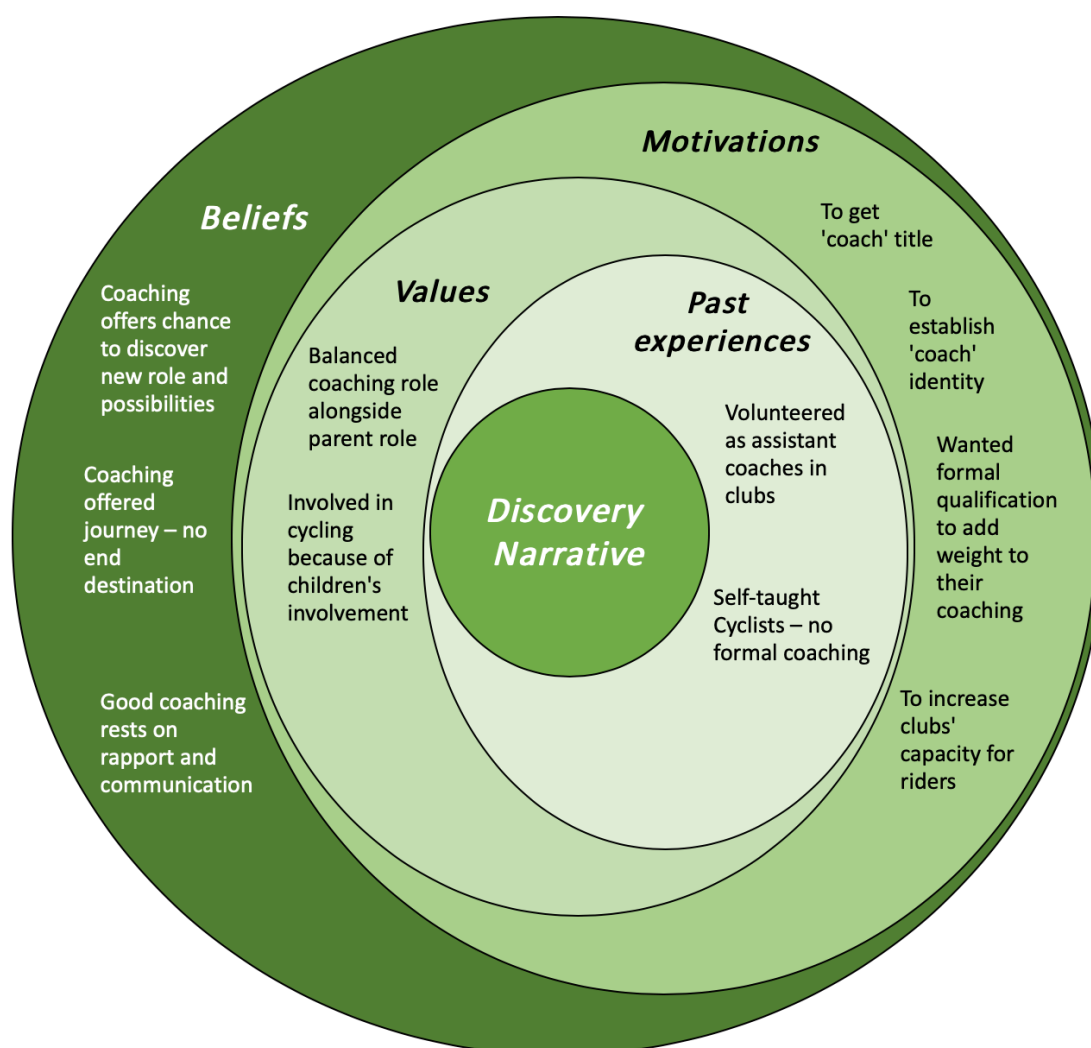
Figure 5.3 – 'The Discovery Coach'

Figure 5.3 summaries the biographies of the participants aligned to the discovery narrative. These participants were oriented towards the ways in which coaching offered chances to discover a new role and the possibilities that this role would bring. In this way, coaching offered these coaches a journey with no set destination. These participants were already volunteering in cycling clubs, involved in cycling because of children's involvement in cycling, and wanted to formalise that by establishing a 'coach' identity and gaining the "coach" title. As such, they perceived that BC's formal qualifications would add weight to what they were saying when coaching. They were

motivated to qualify as coaches so that they could share their knowledge with riders and perceived their value was in increasing the clubs' capacities, enabling them to recruit more riders. For these participants, good coaching rested on good rapport and communication with riders. Unlike Louise and Adam, these participants did not see their own abilities as important or advantageous to their coaching. They had limited cycling knowledge, receiving no formal coaching, which meant most of their knowledge was self-taught and their opinions of coaching were based on what they had witnessed as assistant coaches These coaches balanced their coach role alongside their parent role.

The relational narrative

Figure 5.4 summaries the biographies of the participants aligned to the relational narrative. These participants were social riders, involved in cycling because of the way it created and sustained relationships with others. Here narratives centred on creating, experiencing and sustaining relationships with others. They valued the people with whom they connected with through their cycling and the social engagement cycling offered, the fact it kept them fit, kept them outdoors and allowed them to meet new people. Unlike the other two groups, these participants were balancing their own riding, their socialising, with coaching, and coaching was a by-product of their relationship with the sport. They were motivated to coach to grow better cycling within their local community, to spread their enjoyment of cycling and create lifelong cyclists. They believed good coaches invested in people first and cycling second. They wanted to attend BC's formal education to gain access to knowledge and resources – the handbooks and Gears books – and to be shown 'gold standard', because that is how they learned as teachers. Unique to this group was the role conflict in relation to the tension between being a coach and cyclist. They valued the social aspect of their

own cycling and felt that the changed social role that coaching offered would isolate them from their cycling communities.
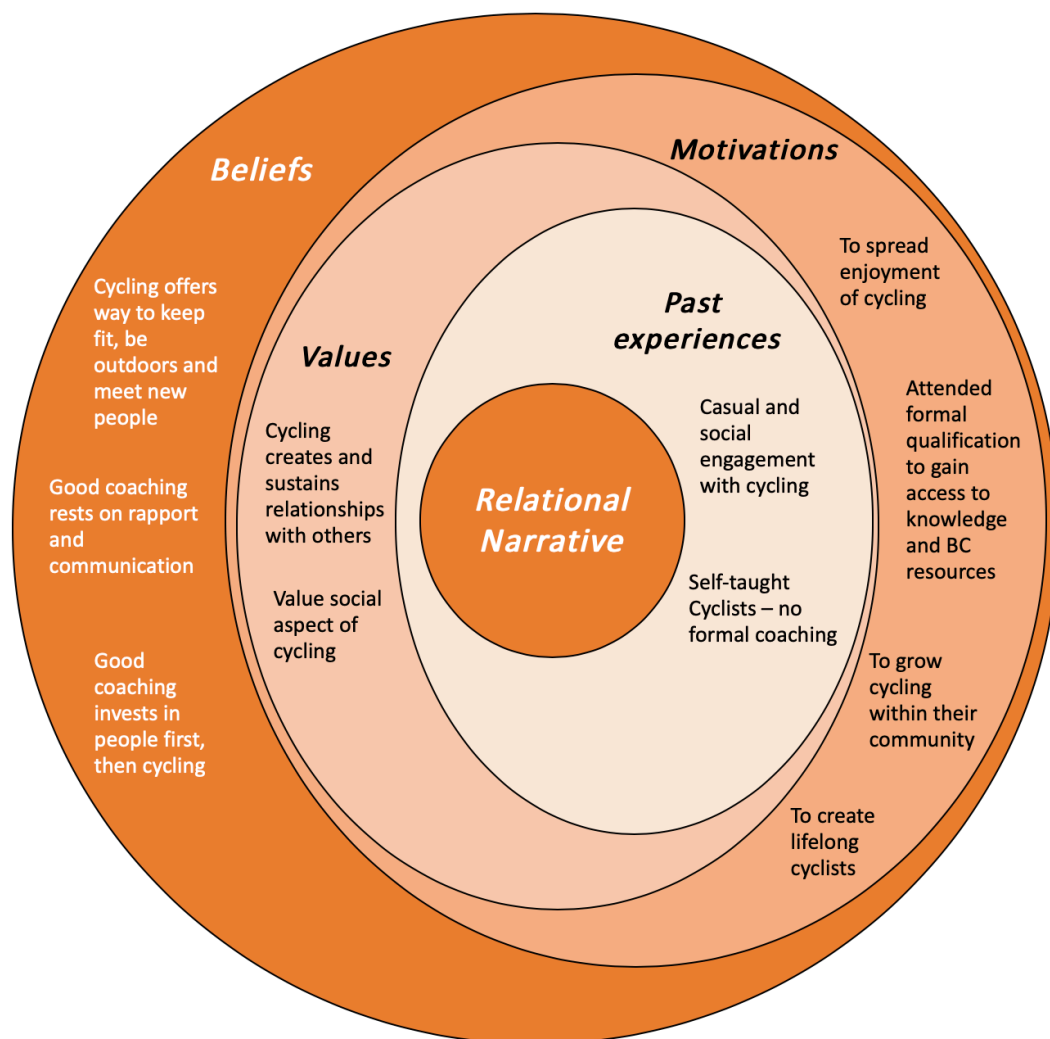
Figure 5.4 – 'The Relational Coach'

5.3.6 Conclusion

It is clear that coaches aligned to each narrative had previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs and values specific to their narrative type, which they brought to their formal education experiences. This relates to recruitment socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). These ingrained beliefs, thoughts and values can limit the impact that the formal education programme can have (Dowling, 2011; McCullick et al, 2010). This relates to the first 'level' of Stodter and Cushion's (2017) double-filter

model, meaning that any learning occurring within the mesosystem passes through this filter first. Moreover, the 'performance biography', 'relational biography' or 'discovery biography' acts as a frame of references, which serves a 'guidance function' (Mezirow, 2009; Moon, 2001).

Formal coach education is often criticised for not recognising the adult learner. Race's (2005) summary of effective learning environments highlights how formal education works best when coaches want to learn; when they realise content is relevant to them; and when they can relate content to what is already known. In addition, Jacobs, Claringbould and Knoppers (2016) call for more practice-oriented coach education which takes into account the specific context and backgrounds of coaches' practices; and Lyle (2007) called for personal models of coaching to be developed. Findings from this research begin to answer those calls by proposing trainee coaches, at enrolment, could be aligned to one of the three narrative 'types' identified. Here, trainees would be grouped by similarities in relation to previous cycling experience, coaching experience, their values and beliefs. As such, it seems possible to generate three streams, or pathways, each embracing the general background of the individuals aligned to that narrative and emphasising the skill areas deemed important to that group. Moreover, it would be possible to link content of the formal education programme to existing knowledge, making content relevant to trainees aligned to that narrative. In addition, it could be argued that this approach to formal coach education would create stronger alignment between the expectations of the coaches and their actual educational experiences. This would positively impact coaches' willingness and capacity to learn, reducing their disengagement and potential drop-out (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019).

5.4. Experiences of BC's formal coach education

5.4.1 Introduction

Analysis of the exosystem within coaches' learning ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Jackson, 2016) explored how BC adopted and embedded the governmental policies that impacted the creation of their formal education – the mesosystem – and why the pathway was designed the way in which it was. As such, this 'layer' of coaches' learning ecology is considered the link between the programme (the exosystem) and the coaches' practice (the microsystem). Importantly, the mesosystem offers guidance and the tools necessary to help learners fulfil the requirements of BC's programme. It is this 'level' that socialises learners into 'BC's way' (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) and includes people who have an interest in promoting and supporting learning – members of BC's education team and the coach developers responsible for delivering the pathway and assessing coaches' practice to qualify as coaches (Jackson, 2016). Here, it is the organised activity – the mechanisms used to deliver the pathway – that enable learners to learn more, and more effectively, in their own microsystem. As such, this section of the PhD builds on the findings in section 5.2 which presented the outcomes and mechanisms of BC's formal education.

5.4.2 Aims and rationale

Extending the findings presented in section 5.3, the rationale of this study was to research how the different narrative 'types' experienced BC's formal education. In addition, this study researched participants' professional socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) through their formal training process. In summary, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How does each 'narrative type' experience BC's formal education?

2. How does each 'narrative type' experience professional socialisation?

5.4.3 Methods and data analysis

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews, over a fifteen-month period, produced 2,328 minutes of audio material (interviews ranged between 13.42 minutes and 101.62 minutes; M=56.04, SD=20.37). Participants were asked to describe their experiences of the mechanisms of BC's formal education and to consider what they took away from those experiences. In addition, participants were asked to consider in what ways their formal education experiences impacted their previous knowledge, values and beliefs. Conducting interviews for one-year following the completion of the Level 2 qualification captured participants' engagement with the formal education pathway beyond their initial Level 2 qualification. Interviews were transcribed, verbatim, producing 348,891 words across 842 pages of single-spaced text. Deductive TNA developed themes surrounding participants' thoughts and experiences of the educational activities they engaged with during their formal education experiences, how closely their experiences aligned with their expectations, and how each narrative 'type' experienced professional socialisation.

5.4.4 Findings

5.4.4.1 Mechanisms

Data from the exploration of the exosystem, which explored how BC adopted and embedded the governmental policies that affected the programme design, uncovered the mechanisms that BC employ to deliver their formal education. These mechanisms – the organised activity that enabled learners to learn more, and more effectively, in their microsystem – included guidance and tools to help learners fulfil the requirements of BC's programme. In exploring the mesosystem, interviews focused

on capturing participants' experiences of BC's mechanisms, which are outlined below. In line with the findings presented in section 5.3, these findings are presented under the three identified narratives: performance, discovery and relational.

The Coach Developers and BC materials

The coach developers – the tutors and mentors assigned, by BC, to trainees – were an integral part of the way in which BC's formal education was delivered. They were responsible for delivering the face-to-face elements of the qualifications, were trained, experienced and flexible facilitators. They were highly knowledgeable and passionate about cycling, and provided learners with feedback on their practice, both verbal and written. The BC materials were the resources printed and distributed by BC once trainees were enrolled on the qualification. These were both printed and online materials but had restricted access as they only became available to learners once they had enrolled on the course.

The performance narrative: "Being coached to coach"

The participants aligned to this narrative came from a background in competitive cycling and were oriented towards achieving specific goals in their coaching, striving to be the best. Their competitive cycling experience was something that these participants felt connected them with their coach developers; Louise and her tutors shared a passion for competitive cycling and racing, while Adam's tutors came from a racing background and 'understood' racing and 'was on [his] level'. These participants, then, placed their focus on performance and racing, and this impacted their own coaching sessions. Louise's feedback after her final assessment highlighted this:

> My feedback after that final assessment was, "Ok, remember, you're just coaching people for, you know, skills, not race stuff,"… I'd made the session too advanced, so had to bring it back in a little bit.

Interestingly, Louise and Adam saw their coach developer in a similar way to the coach-athlete relationship who helped them improve, like a coach would. Perhaps this was because of their connections over racing. However, it could also be because they felt their extensive cycling experience gave them a similar level of knowledge as the coach developers. Adam described himself as more than 'someone who's just come off the street and needs knowledge to be able to do this job', rating his 'cycling knowledge at 8 out of 10':

> I got a good comment from [the tutor], he said, "Your knowledge is way above a Level 2, you need to be on a Level 3 track," type thing… I thought that was a good compliment from him. He said, "You know things that people wouldn't normally know," just things to me that I class as normal, whether that's because I've raced, I'm not sure.

However, they wanted more – to be developed to be better, as Louise explained:

> Development in most jobs comes from line managers, which coaches don't really have. So it's impractical for coach developers to develop coaches because it requires being with them, when they're in the field? You need a coach developer to perform that intense, in-situ role […] It's sad there's no real push to create amazing coaches… I wonder if they feel bad because they haven't actually given me anything… they're not really doing a lot of tuition, so it would be unfair to fail someone if you haven't actually tutored them through it anyway […] A coach developer should be someone who is really invested in your development, which should be someone you work with. […] I wonder to what extent we're being coached and to what extent we're just being told what we should have done instead… obviously it takes longer to coach someone to be better and to improve something than it does to just tell them how to do it better.

Louise explained how BC described the face to face contact with the coach developer as a 'development day' and an 'assessment day', but how there wasn't a lot

of developing going on during that first day'. Here, she was disappointed how she was simply 'told' what to do, because it was quicker to tell someone how to do it, rather than improve something:

> The tutor delivered a session, like, "This is how you would run a coaching session"… "Let's go through a coaching session and talk about the coaching session"… that first demonstration kind of set the standard expected, and then that was just reiterated - so we delivered sessions in pairs on that first day - and in the feedback at the end of the session, that expected standard was reiterated […] She just conveyed the message, "This is what's expected of you"… It was very much, "Let's do these things".

Equally, the coach developers' feedback pushed learners to deliver sessions in a particular way. Adam explained that there was no 'faffing, iffing or butting', with feedback 'more of a "Don't do it like that, you should be doing this"'. He felt that the coach developers 'forced' you into the BC way, through their demonstrations and feedback:

> You could see people's faces when she was saying it, "You've got to do this", "You can't do this", "You've got to do it by the format of the GB", when in actual practicality that might not be possible. I'm feeling forced into doing something that they want me to do, even though I'm going to coach and do other things that I know I'm going to do right, all I get told is, "No, we don't want you to do that bit. We want you to do this."

Yet, in being shown the BC way, Adam felt he was shown the importance of the coach role and learned that it is more than leading a coaching session. Part of this was because the tutor demonstrated the skills of a "good" coach. These participants felt their tutors were 'very professional', 'informative', 'knowledgeable', and 'very good at explaining' what they did. Adam recalled how his tutor 'would have made the ideal coach':

If you wanted to know anything, you just asked him and he got you an answer. He didn't even have to think about it. […] he made it so that you would understand yourself… You can see why they do this job, they're very knowledgeable and they explain things really well.

Similarly, Louise respected the skills of her tutor:

She stood out as a teacher because she had the right values and principles - she was a good communicator. It could have been killer boring, but it wasn't. She covered what needed to be covered, but did it in a good way… she was really good… and I loved that she was female.

Consequently, these participants saw the coach developers as model coaches. For Louise, the tutor was a role model for female coaches, which reflected her personal views on how coaches are role models for the riders they coach:

I think I warmed to her because we were similar personalities - both fairly confident females, engaged in competitive cycling […] It's been awesome having her [as a mentor]… she's really responsive to my emails, and replied within a day. That's really helpful… it's great to have someone there supporting me through the process… I picked her brain about what I'm doing, generally, with the coaching offer [at my club] - we talked for about half an hour on the phone. We seem to connect on road racing, and coaching, and racing - that's her specialty area.

However, she still felt that BC could do more to support the development of female coaches in cycling, describing her frustration with BC's 'Ignite' programme:

I was interested in the Ignite programme, which BC launched in 2015. The idea was that female coaches would be paired with female mentors. I emailed, but I didn't hear anything. When I was talking to my tutor, I mentioned it, and she said to email again, so I did, and they replied to say they'd made it into a Facebook group, which had 44 members. It's a space where people share information about upcoming events - like First Aid courses, or the fact UK Sport's Women in High Performance Programme has opened for applications… other than that, someone might share that there's a workshop running, or just simply introduce themselves. It's quite a passive way of supporting female coaches, I'd say. I was looking for more than that - a mentor,

not a chat on Facebook. Some people won't be as confident as me, and this will be a massive fail for them.

Part of her frustration appeared to be the way in which this programme had been pushed to an online platform, and consequently lacked a human, face-to-face element. It is understandable, considering the way in which these participants viewed the coach developers as a "coach" that they would appreciate the human element of this role more than an online provision. These participants discussed how the value of 'getting to know' the coach developers was of higher importance to them than the course material they covered, as Louise explained:

> It was the opportunity to get to know this really experienced coach and learn from him, rather than learn the course curriculum, per se […] He was very good […] If it had been a different tutor, it might have been a really rubbish experience, but he had so much knowledge and experience.

The tutor's experience, because they had been 'doing it for 50 million years', created a 'relaxed' environment for these participants. It is clear that Louise understood the impact the coach developers had on their overall experiences of BC's formal education. However, this relaxed approach was sometimes frustrating for these learners. As Louise progressed through BC's coach education pathway, she enrolled on the Road and Track discipline-specific units and the Level 3 Road programme. She was sent BC materials before the face-to-face elements of the courses, which were 'mainly technical' or focused on 'values and behaviours and safeguarding-esque stuff', so 'wasn't ground breaking'. Although the Gears books were 'super handy' for planning sessions, Louise felt it divorced the 'activity from actually where it fits'. She was critical of how there was no guidance on which sections to read and admitted 'you're not going to read the book unless someone makes you read the book'. Moreover, she found that a lot of the Level 3 course material was

missing, because BC said 'it was out of date', which left her 'searching online' and accessing potentially unreliable sources. Similarly, Louise was frustrated by how the tutor told them they would 'cover the Level 3 theory at a flexible rate and go according to the pace and style of what people need'. Louise 'liked that, in principle', but was frustrated at how vague that was and felt very unsupported by these coach developers:

> [The tutor] offered to arrange a call, which I felt much better after, and he said, "You know, we can have this any time', so he is available. But rather than thinking, "Oh shit, I'm panicking again, I better call [my tutor] and ask how I do this', I'd rather it be proactive, and it be a structured course with more education and more formal touch points, as opposed to me going, "Ahh, help me!" […] It's frustrating, fighting for information… Every time I feel like I had a question, I feel like I'm just sat in a dark room, fumbling my way around, trying to find out what the answer is… I shouldn't have to arrange a phone call with the course tutor every time I have a question about something.

In summary, participants aligned to the performance narrative expected the coach developer to be similar to the coach-athlete relationship. Here, participants felt the focus was on simply being told what to do, because the coach developers do not have the contact time, or play an in-situ role in learners' practice, to develop or improve them as coaches. These participants had a shared interest with the coach developers because of their background in competitive racing. These two felt that they had strong cycling knowledge and, therefore, did not want to be shown how to coach. They felt the BC materials were divorced from coaching, that they knew the content covered on the entry level qualifications and did not receive enough information on the higher-level qualifications as they progressed through the pathway. Here, they were left disappointed with their development and the support they received.

The discovery narrative: "Being shown 'gold standard' coaching"

This group of participants were motivated to attend BC's formal education to be awarded the "Coach" title and to be shown 'gold standard' coaching. Joe explained how the tutor 'shows you' the skill, then 'you would have a go'. This captures how this group felt the coach developers 'pushed BC's way of doing things, from the resources', but combined this with 'knowledge and experience'. However, Joe recalled how, although the tutors on his generic course 'were very much, "This is by the book. This is what's written in there. This is what you do,"' the tutors on his specific course were more relaxed. Here, the conflicting message to learners – a more 'just go with it' approach – highlighted a 'different way to get to the same place' if 'something works better'. This caused an element of confusion for Joe, because this group desired to be shown how to coach. Equally, James was frustrated by his tutor's attempt to structure learning through group discussions on the Level 2 road-specific course:

> The instructor was very, very, very good. But she took too many questions from the floor to be honest with you. We got pulled from pillar to post all over the place. She was just asked stupid questions - they were questions you'd ask the Tour de France organisers, not a British Cycling coach. I just sat and thought, 'Can we just do the syllabus that we're here to learn?' I wanted to learn the syllabus. If I wanted to learn something else, I'll go on another course - let's just do the syllabus.

Nonetheless, this group trusted the competency of their tutors, with James recalling how his tutor had 'coached at a high level' and therefore was 'very, very good'. Joe's tutors 'had both been high level racers themselves', and Oliver discussed how his tutor had 'done a lot' and was, therefore, 'very knowledgeable', a 'good trainer' and 'very proficient'. These participants positively received their tutors' 'direct' and 'critical' nature, as Joe summarised:

> I sent my session plans in, and normally it comes back ripped apart. Then I have to do a revision, and resend it, but I think I'm getting there. I definitely feel that I've grown as part of the process, because the feedback from the mentor was valuable. The difference between my first and last session of Task 3 is like night and day.

In their search for 'gold standard' coaching, these participants were open to feedback in order to 'improve', as Joe recalled – to become a better coach and 'to get good at it'. However, James felt that the tutors could offer more guidance: 'Don't just say, "Use open questions." I want someone to say, "These are the questions you use for this thing," and list them out'. Although this sounds as though James wanted spoon feeding information, this quote aligns with the way in which these participants wanted to be shown how to be more effective, and how to coach better. James was also frustrated by the lack of communication he had from his mentor:

> My session plans might come back with two or three points that need amending, and then I'll resubmit it. But that could be another week or two, and then that's another month passed, and then it's the end of the summer and I still don't have a coaching badge.

Joe agreed:

> It's frustrating when you're waiting for an email to come back - in my job, if I haven't got a reply by 4pm, I'm ringing someone up, giving them grief… [it means] sometimes I've run another session by the time I get feedback from the last session - I could easily be repeating the same mistake twice - that means I have the potential to have wasted a lot of time doing the same thing over and over again… Everyone is time poor these days, and a little clarification would be really appreciated.

These participants felt that good coaching was built on good communication and rapport, so it is understandable they expected this from their coach developers. They also discussed wanting more social support than simple email communication. James

explained how it 'would have been nice to have a phone call' at the start of the mentoring period' and Oliver recalled how some learners on his course had a WhatsApp group with their tutor, which he felt was better than the Moodle discussion forums of BC's Level 1. This suggests that the social support of staying engaged with other candidates and the coach developers themselves, through different mediums, was of high importance for these participants. For James, this lack of communication culminated in the way that he left his formal education experience unsure if he had passed. This frustration is understandable considering that these participants wanted the "Coach" title.

With regards to the BC resources, these participants appreciated a session planning template to 'try and follow'. They also found the way the Gears books showed planned activities to be valuable. However, James was confused by his tutor's comments to use these resources as a basis:

> I used the Gears books to plan activities, but my Mentor said I'd just copied it and had to re-do it - but it was great, why would I change it? The coaching points are really helpful, and they made the sessions really fun… I'm hoping the Gears books can help build session ideas, because they're a good reference point, offering a strong, concrete base, and some practical tips.

The frustration here was that the Gears books presented James with the 'gold standard' he was searching for. Being told to be creative and to plan a session around these points was confusing. Moreover, James suggested the Gears books and Coaching Handbook 'could easily be mashed together' to 'just have one book'. In relation to the content of the formal education, Joe was critical of how the focus was on the technical skills of cycling and 'teaching people bike handling skills'. Moreover, he found that the Gears books for the mountain bike-specific course did not have coaching sessions or exercise ideas, 'just skills', which forced him to have some creativity. Although these resources were 'brilliant', he suggested that some content

on 'the practicalities of setting up a club', specifically, 'the admin side of it' and 'some guidance on how to best go about it' would be useful.

In summary, the participants aligned to the discovery narrative wanted their formal education experience to show them 'gold standard' coaching. They felt that BC's printed resources – especially the Gears books – offered this so effectively that they risked being dependent on them and struggled to be creative. These participations respected their 'proficient' coach developers and trusted their abilities. Lastly, these participants wanted peer support from other learners.

The relational narrative: "Access to knowledge

The participants aligned to the relational narrative wanted the BC resources to give them access to knowledge – the 'standards' and the 'organisation' of coaching that 'British Cycling expect' – brought to life by the coach developer, who would 'explain the coaching process'. Beth recalled that the coach developers were 'passionate people' who had been biking 'practically their whole life'. She felt they delivered the content 'really well', and 'broke it down easily' and 'explained things'. Peter felt the coach developer's role was to 'develop the individual', and found his tutor to be competent and someone who 'knows what needs to be done, and gets it done': 'He wasn't trying to put on this facade of, "The Coach", it was just, "We are coaches, and this is what we do, together."' Chris described his tutor as 'approachable', 'not offensive at all', and 'very relaxed'. Peter felt the relaxed environment came from the 'you say, I say, they say' approach to 'highlighting what was good and bad':

> It was relaxed. He'd say, "Go have a go, then we'll chat about it." Then it was, "Ok, I felt ok about that" - and he just ticked boxes as we went through the session. Then he'd lead the peer-feedback, with the whole, "what went well" and "even better if" framework, and that gets people thinking about what they'd do at that point, and starts that reflective process... My teaching background definitely helped me, and I appreciate not everyone has had the same experience. Teachers probably know a lot of this stuff, but everyone else

is left trying to figure it out.

Chris praised how the tutor balanced a wide range of abilities across the group – both in relation to cycling and coaching experience. He found the concept of being creative 'daunting', having not 'been in a classroom for fifty years'. However, he felt he was offered 'instant and specific' feedback after everything he did, so 'if it's wrong, you're quickly told, and why'. He recalled how the 'focus' was on 'riders making progress' and 'having a variety of activities in the session', a 'warm up and cool down', and how the 'feedback' helped him 'concentrate on those bits'. Although this hand-holding was helpful, Chris understood it risked developing a 'dependency' on the coach developers' approval, or acceptance, of his coaching. Peter relied less on the coach developers' feedback but valued that he was 'there if you need him' and not 'hounded' by him. Conversely, Beth, struggled to engage with the coach developers' feedback, feeling there was a disconnect between what was expected on the formal qualification and what was possible, 'moving forward':

> He said I need more detail in my session plans, but that's not sustainable, moving forward, long-term. It's just about ticking a box… I'll go through them at the end and fill in some missing details.

Peter felt that the feedback from the coach developers could be more formal, and suggested written feedback 'would be better, and more detailed'. Interestingly, he highlighted how this 'could link to future CPD opportunities'. Beth did not particularly rate the coach developer's feedback very highly and did not appreciate learning through participating in her peers' sessions. Here, she commented on how she would have preferred the opportunity to observe more of the coach developers' sessions, because she trained to teach by watching effective teachers.

Chris explained that the handbooks were 'really well thought out' and 'instructive', containing 'good knowledge'. Beth explained how you could give them to 'any teacher and they could deliver a decent session', which was 'kind of frustrating'. Peter agreed that the Gears books 'build your technical cycling knowledge' and found it useful how they list 'the key coaching points for each skill or technique', and offered 'coaching activities' which save you 'reinventing every time' and helped 'keep things interesting for riders'. All participants aligned to this narrative agreed they would continue to use these resources after their formal qualifications. However, Peter felt the resources were 'good for teaching how to coach cycling' but lacked content on how to handle children – 'class management' as he called it – and saw little relevance to the fitness module because it 'went on a bit' and 'doesn't pertain' to the six- and seven-year olds he coaches.

Overall, Beth described her formal education experiences as 'good'. She felt the Level 1 was 'a waste of [her] life', and, coming to the pathway heavily rooted in a specific discipline, found the generic nature of the Level 2 a 'waste', but felt the mountain bike-specific course was 'fantastic'. Peter felt, that although some aspects of the content could be improved, he was 'happy' with what he received, and felt the 'materials were an integral part' and the coach developer 'helped how to use it'. This group of participants were satisfied that their formal education experiences showed them the standards and coaching processes expected by BC, although they would have preferred more demonstrations from the coach developer. This group valued the Gears books, feeling that they built their technical knowledge and offered creative ideas to keep sessions interesting.

Practical in-situ coaching

The practical in-situ coaching mechanism was embedded throughout the formal education qualifications on the pathway. Here, participants observed Tutors' "mock" sessions, participated in sessions delivered by their peers, and delivered sessions to their peers during formal assessments. This mechanism also included practical sessions in the cycling club, under the guidance of a BC mentor, or a more experienced coach in the club. Some of these coaching sessions were observed and assessed by the coach developers; for other sessions, only the written session plans and reflections were assessed. This mechanism incorporated both experiential and peer-learning, focused on providing opportunities to practice what had been learned – habits of hand (Shulman, 2005). Generally, this mechanism was positively received by all participants, regardless of which narrative they were aligned to. Participants' experiences of this mechanism, and the ways in which it shaped their experiences of their formal qualification on the BC pathway, is discussed below, again, taking each narrative in turn.

The performance narrative: "Practise makes perfect"

This mechanism was positively received by the participants aligned to the performance narrative. For them, this offered the chance to practise, in order to develop, as Louise explained.

> I liked the experience of learning to actually plan, and then deliver a session, rather than sitting in a classroom, being passive and just receiving information. You're not going to get better at coaching just sat in a classroom, talking about it. You need to learn the theory, but you need a chance to apply it, too… And there's always something to learn, even if it's, "Oh my God, I will never do that when I'm coaching!"

Yet, these participants discussed how the coaching on the course limited their exposure to the variety of possible skills they could coach, as Adam explained:

> If there are 18 things or somewhere there about, but only 6 people on the course, you're not learning anything else apart from the 5 skills covered by other people's sessions… you're just learning what everybody else had picked.

Moreover, Adam explained how the riders on the course had 'more skill' than the average rider, which led to some sessions that were 'really good'. However, Adam highlighted how these sessions only had relevance if he was going to be coaching the same skills, and that he did not learn anything from observing his peers' sessions:

> Yes, it was interesting to do the [skills in others' sessions] because I'm from a Road background, not a mountain bike background… a lot of it was going over my head because it's never things I'm going to use… talking to you now, it's probably something I will never do again.

This disconnect between the coaching delivered on course to peers and that delivered in the club setting was further highlighted when Louise discussed her experiences:

> I planned for progression, and planned more steps to build on, but people started doing stuff in advance. Like, the coaches on the course just naturally moved through the stages of progression, because they were of a higher level, and had done similar sessions before. But that didn't throw me, I just left them to it and didn't get stressed out because I knew it would work out, eventually, even if the task didn't go right initially. It would have panicked me before, but now I'm just able to think, "Ahh, it's fine… it's great, actually, that they are already doing that", I don't feel a need to pull it back a step.

This emphasises how the coaching within the club proved a valuable experience for Louise, as it gave her a chance to 'see the impact' of her coaching, while 'engaging with the kids' and 'having conversations with parents and coaches'. This opportunity

to coach and reflect 'proved a great learning curve', which she valued more than 'being on the course'.

Here, we hear how this mechanism offered these two participants the opportunity to better themselves through practise. They felt confident delivering their sessions and compared themselves against their peers. These participants were strongly embedded in their disciplines and focused on coaching competitive riders so, therefore, felt that sessions from other disciplines lacked relevance.

The discovery narrative: "All in the same boat"

The participants aligned to the discovery narrative felt that this mechanism gave an opportunity to experience working together with other candidates on the course, which they positively rated. Joe was 'shocked how much practical there was' compared to 'so little time in the classroom', which meant he 'got a lot more out of it' than he thought he would. He explained how 'ideally' you need to be able to successfully execute the technical skills covered in the Gears books – especially on the specific course – but that it was not essential as you 'didn't need to practise what you preached'.

Unlike the coaches aligned to the performance narrative, these participants felt more equally matched to their peers on the generic course. Joe described the 'banter between the blokes' as 'quite calming' because that is what he is 'used to in the workplace'. Joe found comfort, then, in the connections he made with his peers, which created a 'nice atmosphere' and you 'forget you're there training to be a coach'. However, on the discipline-specific course, James explained that two learners were 'BC coaches' who 'knew the buzzwords and how BC coaching goes', which he felt contrasted with the other learners who had 'normal, everyday jobs'. He discussed how he 'might not be quite as polished as some of the others' but felt he 'got a fair bit more

out of the people [he] coached'. Here then, James felt a greater variability in learners' abilities on the discipline-specific course than on the generic. Conversely, Joe's experience of the discipline-specific course offered the opportunity to learn 'experiences and techniques' from 'quite experienced' peers through 'great discussions' – discussions he was able to engage with because of the confidence he had gained through his practical, in-situ coaching.

Similarly, Oliver described taking part in others' sessions as 'enjoyable' because 'everyone wanted to do well' so 'everyone made sure they played good pupils to help each other out'. James also explained how he 'did exactly what he was told to do' when taking part in others' sessions:

> I didn't play hard work, or difficult at any point - I just tried to help everyone as much as I could - we all did, to be fair… There were a few sessions I was lost, but you feel bad putting your hand up and saying you don't know what you're meant to be doing… you don't want to put them off or show them up.

Here, Joe was surprised he 'actually [picked] up a few things being coached by other people on the course', and he 'took something away from everybody else's sessions' and 'found it really useful':

> There was a big range of cycling abilities on the course - some had done bikeability stuff, some had done a lot of assistant coaching, some had done nothing and had no experience at all… I think everyone was in the same boat, though, in the sense that we were all confident riders. You have to challenge the group quite quickly. That took me a while to get my head around on the Saturday, and then again, into the Sunday.

Oliver agreed that he felt other learners 'had a different take on some of the sessions in the books, which was interesting to see'. He enjoyed seeing 'bits' he 'hadn't thought about' – to see others' perspectives on the course content – and 'to see bits [he] could improve on':

It was great, bouncing ideas off other people, seeing what other people were doing and ideas they came up with… I'm definitely stealing some stuff, and incorporating those ideas into my future sessions… One coach delivered a session on cornering. You'd normally have an oval with one corner getting sharper, or narrower, and the other one set out as bigger and flatter. This coach just had two lines of 5 cones, and we rode down one side, round the end, and down the other side - so it was a 180-degree corner. It was all about body weight and looking in the right place… I'd definitely steal that idea for one of my own sessions.

However, although these participants found the practical coaching a useful mechanism, they felt there was a disconnect between the coaching they delivered to their peers and the coaching they delivered in their club. Joe explained how he struggled to offer feedback to his peers because they 'knew what they were doing', which meant having to 'up the ante' because of the higher technical ability and bike handling skills than he was used to in the club. Moreover, Joe and James attended their discipline-specific courses with injuries, leaving them observing others' sessions from the side-lines. Joe explained how he 'realised when participating in sessions you're not always taking it in' and felt he 'took more from it for observing'. Similarly, James described how he 'could see what everyone was doing and saying', and that it was 'good not to be doing the riding'.

In summary, these participants appreciated how this mechanism offered a relaxed environment and a chance to learn from their peers on their courses. They explained how there was a real camaraderie, where candidates helped each other out, through cooperating with each other to create a useful and enjoyable experience. They felt this mechanism increased their confidence in coaching, but highlighted how observing other coaches was just as, if not more, useful. They highlighted there was disparity between coaching their peers and coaching riders in their clubs. Lastly, this mechanism left these participants questioning whether there was a 'gold standard'.

Peter described this mechanism as 'active from the word go' and discussed how people 'want to be outside coaching' with some 'classroom stuff' around it. Chris agreed: 'It was cycling, I was always going to enjoy it, no matter what'. For these participants, this mechanism offered a peer-learning opportunity to experience a variety of creative sessions that were not 'just lifted out of the manual'. For Peter, this offered an 'enjoyable experience' to 'see other coaches, coach' and see 'interesting, but simple' sessions:

> It's about sharing ideas and practice to help each other out… there's lots of variety to people's sessions, and you can store those ideas for later use… One guy did a similar session to me, but included breaking, so that's a learning point for the next time I do that session… Everyone's in it together during those sessions - you make a mistake, and everyone learns from it.

Peter described others' sessions as 'very cone-ified', learning that simple exercises was better than exercises that take 'forever to explain'. Equally, Beth felt that the focus was on 'how to set out cones' more than how to coach. She did not find the peer-learning aspect particularly informative because peers' feedback simply 'repeated the things [she] said needed to improve'. Yet Peter found the peer-feedback offered a valuable learning experience:

> The biggest part of the course was the practical that we did, and the breakdown after of the good points or the improvements. That was my come-away memory of it […] The most important part was going through the feedback after each person's input. So it's not whether they were good at what they did or not, it was how they did it. Did they use visual aids? Did they explain it too quickly, or too slowly? Did they get you riding? Was it all theory, or was it, "Let's get out there and do it, and get on with it?" That's where you learn… that, for me, was the valuable part - the actual feedback… You're in that situation whereby people don't feel too threatened or intimidated… you can give it your best shot and you can be open and honest in the nicest possible way. That's how you pick stuff up and learn.

In this way, Peter explained how this mechanism allowed him the chance to establish his coaching practice: 'You offer an explanation and demonstration, then pass it over to them to give it a go […] coaching is coaching, and there's only so many ways that [skills] can be delivered'. However, Chris criticised how the course content 'assumes everyone you coach can ride a bike'. He recalled how he found that 'challenging' when he was coaching children 'who couldn't ride'. So, although these participants rated the BC materials as valuable, they struggled when practically coaching, feeling that some content was missing. However, they felt that this mechanism of the formal education qualifications allowed them the opportunity to experience the variety and creativity of others' sessions and highlighted the social aspect offered by this mechanism – sharing ideas with others.

Assessment

The formal assessments were a mechanism BC used to assess learners' habits of mind and hand (Shulman, 2005) – their coaching competency. This included an online, multiple-choice test, some practical assessments, and, for Louise's Level 3 Road qualification, a portfolio of work.

The performance narrative: "Just ticking a box"

These participants felt that this mechanism was a case of ticking a box. For example, Louise discussed how the plans and reflections that she submitted for assessment did not document the sessions she coached because there was 'disparity between the expectation of the sessions delivered on the course and the reality of what you have to put up with when coaching "in the field"'. This is because Louise was delivering the sessions her club 'needed' her to deliver meaning that she delivered sessions that 'didn't tick the box' that she 'needed' it to for BC. Consequently, she

submitted paperwork that reflected what she felt BC wanted to see, rather than what she actually delivered. Louise explained that for the sessions observed by the coach developer, she was expected to demonstrate 'all aspects' of coaching and 'clearly articulate what [she was] doing' but expressed frustration at having 'to go with exactly what the Gears books [said]'. The notion of the assessment mechanism being abstract from the realities of coaching was further summarised by Louise's views on the robustness of the assessment strategy:

> I now have this qualification, right, based on one online test, which is bullshit, because if you're coaching to go around a corner in wet weather, do you (A) tell them to slam it, (B) tell them to perfectly consider all the conditions and ride more carefully because it might be slightly wet, (C) give no instruction at all, or (D) equally ridiculous wrong answer. And you're like, 'Ok. I can definitely pass this exam' […] It was testing I was a human being with the ability to click a box or maybe search a few answers in a book I've been given. There's not a lot that I'm going to have gained, or changed, for having paid £250 to have done that course.

Here, Louise felt that completing the assessment was simply a case of 'ticking the box'. Nonetheless, she had been 'using pen and paper' to 'think about things' after her sessions in order to 'be better'. This highlights her drive for self-improvement and professional development, suggesting that she was aware of the role reflections can play in developing her practice, not just part of the assessment mechanism. She approached her assessments in a similar way to how she would approach a race, explaining that it was important to have 'confidence in your process' and know you are doing 'the right thing':

> I set out a slalom course, and one girl was on a mountain bike. She was like, "What? We're going to go through that?!" … The three guys in front of her found it really easy, another three found it not so easy, so it was just the right level… But instead of trusting my process, and trusting what I'd planned, I thought, "Oh God, I've got it wrong. I hope it works!" … I'm getting better at it, but I do quite care what people think… I don't trust my gut.

Again, she discussed how she felt that she needed to 'gain confidence in delivering the sessions [she'd] planned', acknowledging that she still had areas to improve her practice. Her racing background also manifested itself in her session content, with Louise planning a 'coach-led race'. Moreover, following one assessment, she reflected how she had not considered riders of different abilities and how this would impact the session resulting in 'a bit of a struggle'. Likewise, Adam confessed his tendency to plan too much content – 'data' as he called it – for his assessed sessions, explaining that he had learned 'not to flood the content'. This demonstrates how these two participants were able to self-reflect on their performance, and highlights their tendency to be self-critical, in their push to be the best coach possible. However, Adam discussed how you 'don't see many track coaches who actually come [to sessions] with a session plan', because 'they judge the session […] just by the ability of the riders', hinting at the challenge of session planning long-term.

Adam praised everyone for having 'improved, without one shadow of a doubt' through this mechanism. Whilst he described this mechanism as 'enjoyable', he was critical of how some learners did not align with his perceptions of 'good coaching'. For Adam, you should 'tell' riders 'everything', but instead, his peers were delivering sessions 'like they were taking some friends out for a ride', more interested in 'showing everyone how to go over jumps and things like that'. Louise also commented on the way in which everybody passing the assessments lessened the achievement of gaining the formal qualifications:

> It doesn't feel like a whole of achievement… I did pass, but I felt a bit rubbish for not having done a great job… my intent to do a good job was there because that's the kind of person I am. It was nice to have it confirmed that I'm good at coaching, but it was worrying to see at least one person doing really appalling and still got passed - there's no barriers to coaching, no one ever gets failed, and that detracts from your qualification […] it makes it a bit of a joke really.

Louise felt that this mechanism offered a chance to gain validation, that it was like 'holding up a mirror and showing [her that she's] really good'. However, Louise was left feeling disheartened that there was a lack of worth to these qualifications, especially in relation to the Level 3:

> [The coach developer] was super harsh [on this one guy] on the first practice day. Literally he did it and [the tutor] was just like, 'That's not coaching. What you're doing is not coaching, sorry.' It was proper harsh feedback, but it was also true. On the one hand the tutor was like, 'This Level 3 qualification is the best qualification in the world. UCI doesn't have a Level 3. We get coaches from all over the world coming to do our qualification.' And, well, that's great, but you've let some absolute numpties on the course. And if they all do their paperwork, you're going to say that they're a 'Level 3 coach'. Then, what does this qualification mean?

In summary, the participants aligned to the performance narrative described the assessment mechanism as enjoyable but questioned the role it served in producing good coaches. These participants were critical of how some candidates on the course did not demonstrate the behaviours that they would associate with the coach role and were frustrated in how they had to plan content aligned with the Gears books. Nonetheless, they shared how their reflections – somewhat naturally occurring – encouraged them to think through their performance on this mechanism and their drive to develop better practice. Lastly, these participants discussed how their approach to this mechanism was similar to how they would approach a race, but felt that improvements in their delivery would only come from more experience.

The discovery narrative: "Showing 'gold standard'"

These participants discussed the coach developers largely influential role in this mechanism because he/she was responsible for whether they passed their

assessment. These participants felt that they had been shown 'gold standard' coaching through the demonstrations delivered by the coach developers and pushed towards the required standard by their feedback. Therefore, to be successful, they felt they simply needed to demonstrate the same 'gold standard' they had been shown. Remember, these participants were motivated to complete a formal qualification for the "Coach" title and successfully completing the assessment mechanism was a requirement of being awarded that title.

However, Oliver was critical of how the 'pass or refer' outcome suggested 'you couldn't fail'. Similarly, James felt 'everyone passed the course' because 'British Cycling don't like to fail anyone'. James, like Louise, questioned the robustness of the online test. He recalled he 'didn't overly study too much and got 93%' because 'they were simple questions'. However, he found it 'quite hard' to 'find the detail' for some questions he did not know the answers to: 'It would have taken me too long to find them, so I just ignored them to be honest'. This lack of robustness left these participants feeling disappointed – disheartened, almost – that there was no 'gold standard' to demonstrate. However, this was not to say that these participants did not feel pressure or nerves in participating in this mechanism, as Joe explained:

> There'll be more pressure with everyone being more educated on the subject now, than they were before - I'm sure having five or six other people there knowing what they're talking about, compared to that first weekend, will mean I'll fluff up […] That first assessment, I felt more nervous than I would normally do, coaching in the Club […] I don't expect it to be comfortable.

Clearly, the practical, in-situ coaching mechanism was perceived to help build their coaching confidence. Interestingly, participants' coping strategies for navigating the assessment mechanism included the social support from their peers and extra content they had planned for their sessions. However, like the participants aligned to the performance narrative, these participants also felt a disparity between the

coaching in their club and their observed sessions. Oliver discussed how sessions in his club were two hours long, so he struggled to know how much content he would need for fifteen minutes. Consequently, he delivered a session he had previously delivered and simply 'progressed it' a little, to make it 'more challenging'.

In summary, these participants felt that the coach developer was largely influential in this mechanism. Passing their assessment played a large part in these participants receiving their coveted, and eagerly anticipated, "Coach" title. Understandably, Joe was frustrated at the delay in receiving his certificate, after he was told that it could be a six month wait. These participants questioned the robustness of this mechanism and questioned if 'gold standard' coaching existed because everyone passed. Lastly, similar to the participants aligned to the performance narrative, these participants found disparity between "real-life" coaching and the observed sessions that made up their assessment.

The relational narrative: "It's not real-life"

These participants felt a disconnect between the sessions they delivered in their club and the sessions they delivered for this mechanism. Similar to those participants aligned to the discovery narrative, Peter, Chris and Beth felt that learners worked together, 'to make it work for each other'. Chris found this mechanism to be a 'valuable task' and enjoyed the opportunity to 'create something new'. Peter saw the assessment as an opportunity to demonstrate his progression through the qualification and did not find it a 'pressured situation', feeling that you 'often get the most out of people when that's the case'. However, similar to the coaches aligned to the performance narrative, these participants criticised the fact that 'everyone passed', even though 'some probably shouldn't'. Peter felt it was wrong that there was no

possibility to fail and hoped the mechanism of the practical coaching and assessment would 'flag problem coaches who need more support'.

Chris described, very broadly, how he needed to demonstrate that he considered health and safety and the 'whole aspect of teaching'. Peter described, rather vaguely, how he needed to show he 'understood what was going on':

> You just needed to show the core coaching techniques - questioning, objectives, demonstrations. That was the same expectation as before, but you needed to show that the process was ingrained and more natural - you needed to show that you can coach.

Peter felt he practised his coaching process during the practical coaching mechanism. He explained having a range of ideas to 'help [him] think on [his] feet' would help his nerves. However, Beth felt the assessment mechanism was very repetitive and over-assessed learners. The Level 2 assessment goals were 'to show you could coach', which she had 'already done that for the Level 1'. Although, as Chris explained, this mechanism assessed the minimum standard of coaching:

> The Level 2 showed the minimum standard of coaching through the delivery of sessions to the other guys that were on the course. It was presented as what we should aim for, but in practice, or as time's gone on, it's become the minimum standard… the kids need to have fun and it's a matter of pushing the boundaries until they can't not have fun - trying to do it faster and quicker and better with everyone else.

Peter agreed, that the assessment should be seen as a 'base level' because it's not 'real-life':

> Coaching your peers is very different to having six- and seven-year olds. You have to assume that that is the base level, not the gold star standard… it's not real life. You don't coach people like us because we're the coaches… I'm sure the way they do it is the best way it can be done, but it's not real life - it is the starting point really.

Following their formal education, Peter and Chris discussed how they felt as though they had no template to follow and were 'flying by the seat of [their] pants'. Peter's teaching background meant that he was concerned for the lack of 'checks on abilities post-course':

> It's strange, coming from a teaching background. There should be unannounced drop-ins from BC, like OFSTED. [The tutor] said it's down to coaches to report bad practice, but that's very subjective. Plus, the guy I report could be one of the guys I'm riding with on Sunday [on a social ride]… I'm not sure that process works.

This was crucial for Peter as he felt that BC had a responsibility to monitor coaching post-qualification, because 'the course is only as good as the coaches are one year after qualifying'. On the topic of the assessments being removed from real-life, Beth disagreed with the amount of 'paperwork involved'. She understood, from her teacher training experiences, that 'you have to show you understand'. She also discussed how she 'tried to tailor [the session] to mountain biking, so it was useful' for her, but guessed 'everyone did the same'. Similar to the coaches aligned to the performance narrative, Beth, rooted in a discipline, questioned the value of the generic nature of the qualification. She tried 'to be creative' so that she 'didn't get bored', but her practical sessions were focused on her discipline, largely because she has been delivering sessions with a discipline-specific focus, coaching in a mountain bike club. To transition from the needs of her club – mountain-bike specific sessions – to the generic context of some of BC's formal qualifications highlights, again, the disparity between coaching in context and the coaching for the formal assessment. Some of these differences were quite simple. For example, these participants had been coaching children in their clubs, which was different from coaching their peers. Chris commented how the 'adults have a sense of humour, which the kids don't have'. Peter

felt he 'didn't spend as long explaining the finer points' like he would have done with children, which led to the assessments feeling 'a little bit staged', 'forced, almost' and 'just about ticking boxes'. Beth also commented how she 'had to keep remembering to make sure [she'd] done everything [she] needed to'. However, other differences were more challenging. For example, Beth recalled how she was 'nervous' about dealing with her peers.

In summary, these participants felt that the assessment mechanism were not real-life, feeling there was a disconnect between the assessment, especially the amount of paperwork and coaching children compared to adults. They felt that they simply needed to demonstrate an understanding of the core coaching techniques. Although this was only the minimum standard, they felt prepared for the assessment following the practical coaching mechanism. They worked together, with their peers, to make it work for each other, and did not find the assessment tasks pressured. However, they felt the assessment was repetitive and criticised how everyone passed.

In summary

Before discussing these participants' perceived outcomes, this section summarises the ways in which each narrative 'type' experienced the identified mechanisms.

Louise and Adam – aligned to the performance narrative – saw the coach developers as a 'coach' and a role model for their own coaching. These two had strong cycling knowledge, so did not want to be shown how to coach but appreciated the opportunity to practise their coaching – to become better coaches. As such, this group positively received the practical coaching mechanism, and used this as a chance to compare themselves against their peers. They were confident leading sessions but struggled to see the relevance in sessions from other disciplines. They found the assessment enjoyable and prepared similarly to how they would for a race. Seeing

their peers deliver sessions was negatively received by this group, and hints that they had fixed views on what 'good' looks like. They felt it was frustrating planning around the content of the Gears books but were naturally reflective, which helped them think things through. They did not see qualified coaches plan, which suggested they did not value the importance of planning, moving forward.

Joe, James and Oliver – those aligned to the discovery narrative – felt that BC's formal education was quite repetitive. They wanted to be shown 'gold standard' coaching. They felt the Gears books did that, and consequently struggled, at least initially, with the concept of creativity. They trusted and respected the coach developers, finding them knowledgeable and proficient; they wanted feedback from them, but were frustrated at their lack of rapport, wanting more than email communication. This group also felt that the course lacked peer support and felt the course content could have included more guidance on the administration of coaching. These three felt that the practical mechanism offered a 'nice atmosphere', where they picked things up from others' sessions, which they rated as enjoyable, finding the peer-feedback particularly useful. However, this, combined with the fact everybody passed the assessment mechanism, led to their perception that 'gold standard' coaching did not exist.

Peter, Chris and Beth – aligned with the relational narrative – wanted their formal education to give them access to knowledge and demonstrate 'good' coaching. They felt that the handbooks and Gears books were instructive and built their technical knowledge but wanted the coach developers to bring these materials to life. They felt that the coach developers boosted their confidence and liked the practical activities on the course. They learned the importance of simple sessions but felt the sessions with the tutors were more about setting cones out, rather than learning how to coach. They liked sharing ideas but felt peer-feedback echoed personal reflections. This group

criticised how everyone passed the assessments and felt there was a disconnect between real-life coaching and the assessment, particularly with regards to the age and ability of riders. This left the assessment feeling staged, forced and about ticking boxes to show that they could coach.

5.4.4.2 Outcomes

The findings presented in section 5.2 suggested that BC's formal qualifications aim to produce a qualified workforce of coaches who plan for, and reflect on, the delivery of safe, group sessions in generic, traffic-free environments. The current section explored the mesosystem, where interviews focused on participants' perceived outcomes of BC's qualifications. In line with the findings presented in section 5.3, these findings are presented under the three identified narratives: performance, discovery and relational.

The performance narrative: Able to improve riders' abilities

Adam felt that he had 'the knowledge' to coach and that the course 'just reopened it', validating that he 'was doing it right'. Unlike the other narratives, where the course was perceived as showing participants how to coach, or giving them access to knowledge, Adam talked, quite frankly, of his 'plan' of trying to 'help somebody win a medal' and was frustrated by the perceived divide between the information Team GB coaches were receiving and the knowledge he received on the course. For him, he wanted to be coaching the same techniques that elite coaches were delivering. He acknowledged that he was not 'someone who's going to the Olympics', but was frustrated that when you 'get to find something out, it's something they've already done away with', which made him feel like 'you're always playing catch up'. Critically, Louise and Adam felt that their remit as qualified coaches was hindered by

their insurance, which impacted their influence on riders' abilities. Adam explained how, as a qualified coach, his insurance restricted him to 'advise' somebody out for a ride, rather than actually coach them. He was frustrated how, 'once you're a GB coach, you have to go by the rules of a GB coach', and discussed how everything 'boils down to, "You can't do that because that's not GB format"'. Louise, having spoken to her work colleague felt that there were different guidelines for different coaches:

> Riders in the Club are riding at 30 kilometres an hour around a 2 kilometre circuit, or around the roads at the Olympic Park. I'm not meant to ride a bike while coaching, but I can't stand at the side and see them once every five minutes. I want to stick to what's expected in terms of standards of coaching, but it doesn't make sense for coaching those kids' needs. It's not in keeping with what I'm meant to be doing, but how am I meant to coach these kids? Maybe BC should say, 'You can't coach unless you find *the* perfect environment'? ... But then I was talking to a guy at work about not being allowed to ride a bike while coaching, and he told me he'd spent time with the para coaches and they were cycling with their riders!

Louise is clearly torn between coaching within the remit her insurance allows and meeting the needs of the riders she is trying to develop. Quite simply, as a coach, Louise was motivated to improve people's performance on the bike. There is a clear disconnect, however, between her beliefs as a coach, to 'respond to the needs of the people being coached', and the reality of coaching – the remit BC have established for her to operate within. With regards to insurance, she continued:

> I have lots and lots and lots of knowledge and experience at this stage in my cycling that I take for granted - stuff the average person doesn't know… a friend of mine has asked me to help her, she's signed up, with work, to ride Amsterdam to Brussels in two days and doesn't ride a bike… she's asked me for some coaching, because it's who I am, and what I do in my work… we constantly talk about having a coaching culture… although I don't have official endorsement from BC to do one to ones, I'm not being reckless or irresponsible. It's not someone saying, "I'm training for an ironman", it's someone saying, "I need to ride my bike in confidence, can you help?"… In some ways I feel more restricted helping her in that situation, because of the qualification - if I hadn't got the qualification, I'm just a friend helping a friend, and that would have been ok.

However, during her formal education, Louise talked of the dawning realisation about the responsibility – and pressure – she felt, as a coach, in developing riders:

> It's like, "Wow, these kids really look up to me!" I'm quite key in their development… the responsibility you have as a coach is just crazy… They're trusting you with their time and, to a certain extent, their safety.

On this point, Louise stressed how the course content should include more 'soft skills' to 'help people understand the gravity of their responsibility'. This reinforces Louise's perceptions of coaches as role models. Here, unlike BC's focus on safe sessions, Louise's primary focus is on her role in developing riders. This was echoed by Louise's comment on the lack of drive to develop coaches:

> I just don't think there's that much thought put into it from a British Cycling perspective. I don't think they're like, "We really need to think about this whole education journey for our Level 2 coaches", it's a piece of paper, so I'm insured to coach people. I guess they're not trying to set us up as amazing coaches, they're just trying to set us up to be able to coach.

Based on her personal experiences, and being passionate about female riders, Louise wanted to run female-only sessions. This created a challenge for Louise's differentiation because, by specifying attendance to sessions by gender, Louise felt unable to further limit attendance by ability. As a result, she was left coaching groups with a large spread of technical abilities, always catering for the 'lowest common denominator of the group'. This impacted her ability to challenge more able riders and improve riders' technical abilities, which was particularly frustrating for Louise considering her motivations for pushing competitive skills. Louise explained how coaches 'lower down the pathway need more flex to meet the huge range of needs

they're going to come across'. Here, she used different language from the coaches aligned to the other narratives, embedded within the world of performance sport.

Louise felt that she became 'more able as a coach' and learned to have 'faith' in her abilities because of her 'experience of delivering coached sessions in the Club'. Moreover, she felt 'happy' and 'less sensitive' to riders' negative comments. Importantly, Louise felt she would become even 'better' as she 'did more coaching', highlighting that 'practise makes perfect', linking to the theme previously discussed. Louise felt that her formal education 'reinforced' the 'benefits' of planning, feeling that the 'more effort you put in, the more you're going to have a valuable session'. Here, the focus was on more productive sessions to address rider development. Through the practical coaching mechanism, Louise discussed how she had learned that it is 'important to consider' how long the content of a session will take:

> In theory, a drill can sound like it makes sense, but trying it out might feel like learning from the activity is quite limited once it plays out in real-life, so you might not want to spend long on it - then, extra content in the back pocket to pull on definitely helps, especially if the drill falls flat and isn't interesting… You can sometimes feel the energy levels drop, because it's boring and repetitive… it's a tough call, because I feel I could spend all day doing group riding, and there's still room to grow and improve, but I don't want kids getting bored - because that's the nature of their skill level. Sessions need to be enjoyable, but equally, riders want to feel challenged and tested in positive ways. If you can incorporate that into a game scenario, the kids get imaginative and really get into it, and love it.

Here, the planning was not seen as 'super challenging', but Louise found it difficult 'actually delivering [sessions] and how they pan out'. She continued to explain how this linked to the challenge of riders' unpredictable attendance. For example, in one session, she only had three riders attend, causing her to 'change it' or panic she was going to deliver 'way more'; in another:

> I had one challenging session where one rider had a minor disability in that she

had shorter fingers on her left hand… I'd planned to do one handed riding… it was ok, but I had to be sensitive to her needs.

Louise felt that the course reinforced that 'coaches need to feedback, but also need to praise' riders. This linked to her awareness of keeping herself 'in check', balancing 'talking too much' with 'getting riders going':

The coach needs to clearly communicate what's happening so that riders aren't left unsure of what's happening… But telling someone how to do something isn't a good way to have a conversation and engage… telling is a way less effective way to communicate something substantially - they need to feel they came up with it themselves, or need to visualise it, and understand it their own way.

Louise wanted the formal education to improve her coaching so she could coach 'more experienced riders', rather than just 'for the sake of getting badges'. Conversely, Adam felt the qualification gave him the title of 'GB coach', and therefore wanted a coaching position where he was employed by BC.

In summary, these participants felt that they already had the knowledge to coach, and that their formal education validated this knowledge. They felt that the information on the course was outdated and different from the techniques that elite coaches were delivering to Team GB. They learned the important role and the responsibility of the coach in riders' development. However, the insurance implications of BC's formal qualifications were a hinderance to these coaches' practice – delivering sessions in the BC way. They learned the importance of differentiation, planning – which was difficult because of inconsistent rider numbers – and the importance of feedback to develop riders' abilities.

The discovery narrative: Able to have 'Coach' title

These participants completing their formal qualifications resulted in them receiving their 'Coach' title. Although they felt this increased their confidence, they understood that passing their formal qualifications was not the end of their learning and development. James compared it to passing his driving test, where he was 'nowhere near an expert', and described his certificate as a 'ticket to learn', sharing how his coach developer had told him to 'get involved with some coaching' straight away so that he could use what he had learned. However, he was mindful how limited his knowledge was:

> I've learned an awful lot. I need to go back and study my notes… I don't know everything. If I had to coach someone experienced, I wouldn't have a clue what I was doing. But I could coach them from scratch if they were new to it […] but it would take me a while to get proficient in doing it […] they should say, 'Right, we're putting you through as a coach. This is your ticket to go out and coach, and learn'.

In this way, BC's formal education 'taught the minimum standard of coaching' and 'the basic tools needed to coach'. These participants were hoping BC's formal education would demonstrate 'gold standard' coaching, which means their technical knowledge had 'increased as a result of attending the course', as Joe discussed:

> Before, I just used to do the skill, but now, I'm thinking about what I'm actually doing while I do the skill. The course reinforced the techniques that I need to coach and polished the technical aspects, especially the bits I already thought I knew, because I wasn't doing things right myself.

Based on Joe's previous cycling experience, he felt 'fairly competent with the techniques anyway', but explained how the formal qualifications gave him 'the confidence' of knowing that what he was saying 'was correct' because he 'had a piece of paper saying that what [he] was saying was correct':

The certificate adds authority about what you're saying - people listen a bit more to what you're saying. The biggest person I noticed it with was with my son, but then I didn't coach anyone before the qualification. Before, he'd be like, 'Ahh, Dad's telling me what to do', whereas now, he's like, 'Well, my Dad's a coach, he does know what he's talking about. I'll listen to him'.

Similarly, James explained how having the certificate in his back pocket' gave him confidence because it 'validates your knowledge', and 'rubber stamps that you know your stuff'. Likewise, Joe felt he no longer sought 'validation' from other coaches in his club because he now 'believed' in what he was saying and felt that riders now 'trust' him. However, rather critically, Joe reflected how he should feel more confident because the formal qualifications offered him experience of delivering sessions:

The technical information and the delivery is at the same level it needs to be at, but the way it's delivered is completely different - I'm a lot more confident now, and that's purely from doing it.

Here, Joe suggests that his increased confidence was a result of practising to coach, hinting that the practical coaching mechanism was valuable to this group. Nonetheless, these participants felt their formal education experiences resulted in improved coaching practice, particularly when taking control of groups of riders. They discussed how this started with effective differentiation of the learning tasks – the 'need to stretch and challenge riders' – as Oliver summarised:

It's about managing the riders' expectations and trying to get the best out of them, and making the session meet their needs… you need to realise that individuals have different learning styles and you need to change with the individual you're coaching - it's about whatever's best for them… the riders need to be challenged - differentiation is key. […] You might plan a 45-minute session and everyone can do it in the first 15 minutes. You need 2-3 things to make it harder - that's the main thing I've learned. At the same time, if people aren't getting it, because it's too hard, you need space to move, so that you can bring it down a level or two.

Joe explained that this developed over time:

> Developing challenging sessions, that push and stretch the riders is making the coaching interesting… I'm growing as they're growing. The sessions should be progressive though - start off gentle, then build towards stretching the abilities of the group once they start to get what it is they're doing. So it might be that you're doing cornering, and you'd make the corner tighter, or if you're doing braking, you'd make the braking zone smaller, or stop with the front or back wheel on a line?… I think that's the whole point of the Level 2, but it's hard to develop that thought process, of how to challenge them… but you develop a process, and that is the same, regardless of who is stood in front of you.

Secondly, these participants discussed how this was complimented by clear communication, especially when explaining to riders the task being covered, as Oliver highlighted:

> It's more about how you verbalise session content… You've got to be specific about the coaching points - very clear about what you want - and ask open questions… if the group just aren't getting what you're telling them, you have to take a step back and bring them in, and re-explain the task to them, walk them through a demonstration of the skill - you just need to change things slightly and get them engaged with what it is the group should be doing.

Oliver also shared that it is important to be 'clear about what you see' and communicate that back, explaining that if you 'rack off too many things, you get nowhere'. He also learned the importance of effective questioning and was conscious of limiting 'the number of closed questions' he asked because it was important 'that riders tell you the answer, rather than telling them the answer' and how it is important to 'draw out of riders what they've learned at the end of the session', rather than simply asking whether they have enjoyed themselves. This linked to these participants' delivery of feedback. For James, 'it's about taking a step back and observing the group, and then giving one-to-one coaching points':

It's important to set them off, once you've told them what to do, and then just stand back and watch their abilities… sometimes, you've just got to let them do it, and then speak to a few and give some one-to-one feedback, then some group feedback.

These participants explained how, due to their parenting experiences, they approached communicating with riders similarly to how they would talk their children through a task. Joe also discussed how he was now more aware of how he communicated, paying attention to how he phrased praise. He explained how he had learned feedback starts 'with nice praise', followed by the 'correction', followed by a comment that 'builds them up again', so that 'they leave happy'. In addition, Oliver shared how he had learned 'it's important to position yourself… close to the coaching points you're trying to deliver':

For example, last week, we did cornering, so I stood at the start of the corner to see them coming, and see if they applied their brakes before, and checked they were looking around the corner… once you've observed you can then give succinct points.

Next, linked to the notion of managing the group, these participants discussed the importance of planning, and how it can ensure 'getting riders involved in the process', as Joe discussed:

It's important for riders to be as active as they can be and limit the amount of time they're stood around doing nothing, getting bored, or cold if it's bad weather… everyone needs to be involved and engaged with the session, not just half, or a third of the group.

The other aspect of managing groups that Joe, James and Oliver discussed was the discipline of riders. However, all three discussed how they felt this content was missing from the course, leaving them to 'figure it out' as they coached. Consequently, these participants appeared to source their discipline strategies from their parenting

experiences – the only experience they had to pull on. With regards of the Club's support, Oliver drew specific attention to their Code of Conduct:

> You've got to be clear on behaviour, and consistent, week to week - and fair - you've got to tell them, "What you're doing isn't acceptable, and you're putting yourself and others in danger… if you continue like that you will stop riding today"… I miss the parent support because they often stay in the club house, especially in the cold weather… the club code of conduct, which is signed by the parents, is a good back up though… it means everyone knows where they stand… but if you do get chance to speak to parents, it's a good opportunity to give feedback about a child's behaviour.

Following his formal education, Oliver discussed how there would be no change of role for him within his club as he would 'still be coaching the same age group, the same skills' – the 'same session content' – as he did as a Level 1 coach. Here, Oliver questioned the purpose of the Level 2 qualification, because he felt that his role did not change as a result of progressing through the pathway, other than taking groups on his own. This meant that Oliver felt he finished the course with gaps in his knowledge, because of the lack of coaching experience he had in delivering all the technical skills that the Level 2 qualification covers:

> I'm wary of moving to the Gears 3 and 4 content because I've not delivered that stuff during my coaching in the Club, because riders weren't at that level of ability… I think a lot of the skills in there would be irrelevant to the riders in my Club too - like the inclines and declines, defending going into a corner, stopping and gear changes.

Yet these participants learned the importance of being adaptable when delivering sessions. For James, 'there's no hard and fast rule', but he learned the importance of having 'clear objectives about what it is you're trying to achieve'. However, Joe explained you 'can't be set in your ways':

It's important you're not afraid to knock something on the head if it's not working and change to accommodate who you have in your group… something can work really well one week and then in four weeks' time, it can crash and burn for no reason.

Joe shared how he 'started by lifting sessions out of the Gears books', which created 'very robotic and scripted' sessions. However, he reflected how he 'progressed' as a result of his formal education experience and learned to make up his own activities and plan his own sessions and became more creative. However, 'some stuff' he tried 'worked', but 'some stuff [had] been a disaster'.

Finally, these participants highlighted their newfound appreciation of how professional the coaching role is. Joe recalled how he used to attend coaching sessions with his children and assumed that coaches 'rock up and kids ride bikes'. He explained how he had misjudged the amount of paperwork involved with coaching, and had not 'grasped that there're risk assessments, session plans and evaluations', let alone 'dealing with the authorities'. This point was especially close to Joe's story, who was disappointed that the course did not include more information on the administration side of coaching.

In summary, these participants acknowledged they still had lots to achieve, because 'in twelve weeks, you're not going to be the perfect coach' as 'there's always something to learn'. Participants aligned to the discovery narrative completed their formal education feeling confident in their abilities as a 'Coach'. They saw the certificate as a 'rubber stamp' of their abilities, which validated their knowledge. These participants saw value in the practical coaching mechanism, crediting the hours clocked up over the duration of the programme as a source of confidence. They felt their formal education increased their technical knowledge of cycling and showed them how to deliver sessions, including 'walk through demonstrations' and the importance of 'involving riders' in active sessions. These participants learned the

importance of differentiating between riders to enable effective management of their groups. This was linked to the skills of disciplining – sourced from their parenting experiences – clear communication, planning of sessions, and the need to be adaptable with their plan. Lastly, these participants left with a newfound respect for the professionalism of the coaching role.

The relational narrative: Able to "ride with no hands"

These participants wanted to attend BC's formal education to gain access to knowledge, which the course did, as Peter explained:

> The course was fine, in the sense that it provided us with the materials and resources needed, and some ideas about how to do stuff and that sort of thing.

Peter, Chris and Beth were embedded in their cycling disciplines based on the friendships they had. These participants' formal education experiences offered them exposure to different disciplines – and different bikes – beyond their personal experiences. This allowed them an opportunity to learn about themselves and their own riding. For example, Chris explained he had 'learned to ride no hands' and had nearly mastered a track stand as a result of taking part in other participants' sessions. He discussed how you 'don't need that to coach', however, he felt that his improved riding ability meant that he felt more able to demonstrate skills during sessions: 'I've always taken the approach that if I can't do it, I can't ask somebody else to do it'. Consequently, he felt that his coaching was 'better because of the things [he] picked up'. Likewise, Peter commented:

> The course taught me that I can do things on a bike that I didn't think I could do… In fifty-odd years of riding a bike, I had never ridden with no hands. Why would I do that? You've got handlebars. They are there for a reason. But somebody got me to ride with no hands […] It's not the coaching that I've learned, it's the cycling skills that I've learned - the technical side of cycling…

> I get on my bike, I ride. I've never done a scoot mount, ridden through cones or slow control… it was that side of things that really going on the courses particularly, and then perhaps a way to demonstrate to children, that's been, for me, the learning experience because the coaching and teaching is now a second nature thing.

The way in which the formal education showed Peter that he could do these skills that he had never attempted before translated to him being able to push the children to do these skills too. Moreover, learning new skills helped Peter re-remember the coaching process:

> You just break it down into small chunks and you do them a bit at a time. […] It's fairly straightforward: You show, teach, give examples, then they go and give a try.

Beth discussed how, having not received any formal cycling coaching herself, she felt she tended to over-explain skills and techniques with 'too much detail'. She explained how the course taught her the need to 'break information down into manageable chunks'. In this way, she described her formal education as a refresher:

> It was a reminder of how to teach, how to break it down, how to ask questions, how to compare, to differentiate… it was a reminder of what I do, but just in a different situation.

On the theme of communication, Peter felt he 'could coach before the course' but explained how it was important to be 'clear' in your instructions and offer follow up instructions during the group's riding to encourage riders and gain their trust. Chris, however, simply learned to talk 'loud enough to be heard' when delivering sessions and felt 'better able to persuade riders' to do what he was asking, 'rather than asking if they think they're able'. In addition, when it came to communicating feedback, Chris discussed he had learned to constantly feedback to riders because they 'want to know

what they're doing right', not just left to 'get on with it'. This links to the next theme for this group: active sessions. Peter had learned to consciously limit his 'talk time' during sessions and learned the importance of keeping riders moving. Beth shared how she had learned to 'take a back seat and let riders develop from asking and showing, more than talking at them'. Peter agreed that 'getting children to experience it first hand is more effective than talking to them'. This linked to managing groups of riders. Peter explained how he felt a lack of rider engagement resulted in boredom, which consequently led to riders not listening, and that this was the root cause of misbehaviour and safety issues. Chris was critical of how the formal education approached this aspect of coaching:

> [The formal qualifications] assume that you've got some sort of innate ability to take control… but I did learn how to organise the kids and get them cycling, basically, rather than standing in front of them, talking at them and telling them. I found it taught me to get them moving as quickly as possible and encourage better practice or style as they were going along.

The participants aligned to this narrative demonstrated impressive creativity when it came to managing their groups of riders. For example, Peter had established a routine where riders combined a "snack break" with a discussion of the session plan. Coming from a teaching background, Peter stressed the importance of stating the session aims and objectives at the start of the session. He explained, with compassion, how this gave all riders a chance to hear the session outline and limited any disruption from the group during the session because they were 'fed and watered'. However, he was also aware how this gave the group chance to exit the school classroom, and transition into the coaching environment. Similarly, Chris discussed how he had created a 'bike garage' with his riders, where bikes were laid, neatly on the floor, to control the group when doing activities off the bike. When it came to discipline, these coaches talked about the importance of setting boundaries for riders to 'stick to' and

being fair. Here, these participants demonstrated discipline strategies that were not sourced from their parenting experience, but rather, developed, and taught, through their teaching experience and teacher training.

On the theme of planning. Chris, not coming from a teaching background, felt he had learned the importance of planning to 'organise your sessions':

> The course gives you a blueprint - BC's blueprint - to work from, and it works. It makes coaching easy, and makes it look easy… Sessions need to have pace to them, and I think planning by the minute is a brilliant idea.

Here, Chris discussed a newfound appreciation for the professionalism that planning brought to his coaching. However, this group discussed the importance of being adaptable, with Peter admitting: 'you can't stick to the plan – probably, like, 60% is realistic'. Chris explained how the course taught him 'to be adaptable, through giving it a go', and meant that he had learned to think 'off the cuff now':

> It's important to think about why riders aren't getting it in the timeframes you've given them. If they're not getting it, you need to find another way of getting it across, otherwise they get bored - you can't just keep repeating the same thing, you need to think on your feet and come up with an alternative.

In addition, this group discussed how planning linked to differentiating sessions, and riders' 'progress in sessions'. Beth felt that BC's formal education reinforced her beliefs that 'sessions have to meet the needs of the group, and be at their level of riding':

> The session needs to be going well for each rider, and the coach needs to be aware of whether it is, or if it isn't, and then react accordingly - good coaches track what's going on.

She felt the Gears books gave 'tips' but suggested that differentiation should be a 'whole standalone module', commenting that she wanted a 'bank of easier and harder options for riders'. In this sense, she felt let down by the course, feeling that this was something the course should have addressed.

In summary, these participants appreciated the opportunity the course offered to experience different disciplines beyond their personal experience. These participants felt their riding ability improved as a result of the experiential learning mechanism – taking part in others' sessions and practising demonstrations in their coaching sessions. Peter, Chris and Beth valued the relationship they had with their tutors and mentors, and the role this mechanism played in their coach development. They discussed, positively, how they learned to give clear instructions and not over-explain in too much detail, the importance of active sessions, where riders 'go give it a try', and the importance of adaptability and effective ways of managing and disciplining riders in their group. Some of this was learned through the practical coaching mechanism, some was from their previous experience in teaching and the training they had received in that role, and some was from sharing practice ideas. Lastly, these participants discussed how they were keen to coach as instructed because it was a 'good way to coach'. As such, these participants felt that the course developed their coaching skillset, and that they grew 'as part of the process'. Unfortunately, however, these participants felt that there was little difference between the Level 1 and 2 qualifications on the pathway.

<u>In summary</u>

The participants aligned to the performance narrative – Louise and Adam – felt they already had the knowledge to coach, and therefore, felt the formal qualifications simply validated their knowledge. Importantly, these participants wanted to develop

riders' technical ability, which left them frustrated that content within the formal education was dated and left them unable to coach the same techniques as Team GB coaches. Moreover, these participants saw the qualification – and the insurance implications it brought – as a hinderance on the coaching practice, more than a beneficial addition because they were now forced to deliver sessions the BC way, rather than deliver sessions that met the needs of the riders in their groups or clubs.

The participants aligned to the discovery narrative – Joe, James and Oliver – felt the certificate provided their "coach" title, which was a 'rubber stamp' that validated their knowledge. These participants explained how their technical knowledge increased because of the course and identified that they had learned the importance of: engaging riders in sessions; differentiation across riders to manage the groups they were coaching; clear communication; planning and the need to be adaptable. They also discussed a newfound respect for the professionalism of the coaching role. They felt they were shown 'gold standard' coaching but questioned if 'gold standard' existed.

The participants aligned to the relational narrative – Peter, Chris and Beth – felt that their personal riding abilities improved. They shared that they had learned: to give clear instructions, and not to over-explain in too much detail; the importance of active sessions; being adaptable; and effective ways to manage and discipline groups. These three were keen to coach as instructed, because they saw it as a good way to coach, particularly highlighting the Gears books and planning templates as resources they would continue to use in their coaching role. Lastly, they were excited for the independent coaching that their Level 2 qualification would bring. Beth needed the mountain-bike-specific unit so she could 'properly coach in the forest'. Peter and Chris, motivated by growing cycling in the community, wanted to coach riders to be

safe on the road when commuting and, consequently, attended BC's Rider Leadership course to be insured in including social rides around their coaching.

5.4.5 Discussion

The overriding importance for coaches attending formal education is the want for the programme to improve their coaching ability (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2012). Moreover, the literature already highlights the importance of relevant content that coaches can easily apply to their context, because, as adult learners, they are likely to be problem-centred, rather than subject-centred (Knowles, 1980). The relative success of coach education starts with the individual's past experience and existing knowledge, beliefs and values (Cushion et al, 2003; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). This means that the same coach education opportunity has a different impact on different individuals, depending on each individual's unique starting point (Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Stodter & Cushion, 2016). Moreover, we each experience things differently, because we each operate within different 'worlds' (Blumer, 1969). Aligning participants to a narrative made it possible to find commonalities in how each narrative's social 'world' impacted their experiences of BC's formal education. Therefore, this section of the PhD extends the findings of the study presented in section 5.3, exploring how the different narrative 'types' experienced BC's formal education. Here, I critically discuss the findings presented in section 5.4.4 in relation to existing literature using the theoretical framework of the different narratives. First, I outline how these findings relate to both Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD and Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism.
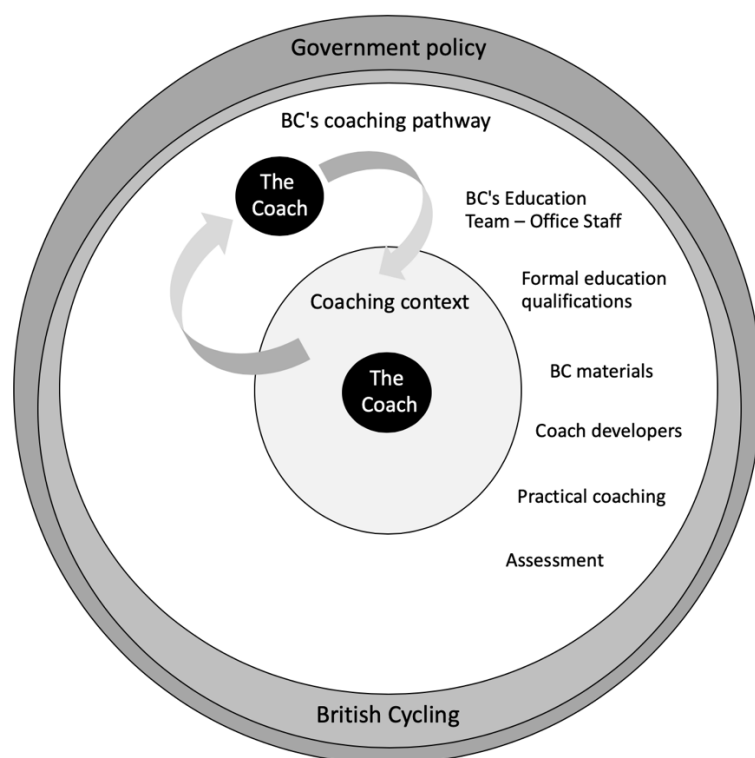
Figure 5.5 – Formal coach education as the 'mesosystem'

Section 5.3 explored the individual, and section 5.2 discussed the development of BC's formal education. The aim of this study within the PhD was to research where these two settings meet and become interrelated: the mesosytem of Bronfenbrenner's (1974) EMHD. The mesosystem involves people who have an interest in promoting and supporting learning, which, within BC, includes the education team within the Office and the coach developers. It is also within this 'level' where coaches receive the guidance and tools – including the BC handbooks – to help them fulfil the requirements of the education programme. In summary, this 'level' of Bronfenbrenner's model captures the organised activity that enables individuals to learn more effectively within their microsystem. In exploring participants' experiences of formal education, this study captured coaches' transition from their microsystem to the mesosystem (Figure 5.5). The organised activity within the

mesosystem sees trainee coaches socialised into 'BC's way' of coaching through the implemented mechanisms, which help trainees achieve BC's identified outcomes of their education programme. It is here that trainees' beliefs regarding coaching are either reinforced or challenged (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). This part of the PhD, therefore, examined 'professional socialisation' (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012).

Revisiting Blumer's (1969) 'root images'

Here, I present a general discussion of Blumer's (1969) work in relation to the findings presented in section 5.4.4. As a broad outline, Blumer argued that: we act towards 'things' based on the meaning these 'things' have for us; that meaning is derived from, and arises out of, social interaction with others; and that meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process to deal with 'things' we encounter. Specific reference to his 'root images' is made in the following discussion.

Blumer's third image – that our social world comprises of physical, social and abstract objects, as a result of symbolic interactions – explains how we each experience things differently. For Blumer, this is because we each operate within different 'worlds', where meaning is constructed and arises out of the ways in which the people we interact with define them. This means that the meaning of everything is formed, learned and transmitted through a social process of indication and that objects are continually created, affirmed, transformed and cast aside. Therefore, to understand actions of people, it is necessary to identify their worlds of objects.

Blumer's fourth image suggests we have the ability to engage in social interaction – that we are each the object of our own action and each possess a 'self'. Of importance here is the way the 'self' allows us to engage in social, internal dialogue. This self-interaction is where we indicate an object and identify 'it' as a given kind of object before considering its relevance or importance. In this way, Blumer's symbolic

interactionism emphasises the social nature of our relationship with our environment, where we note something, make an object of it, give it meaning and then use meaning to direct action. This shifts away from a stimulus-response view of interaction, proposing that we interact with our environment where we choose how we act and engage with our 'world'. Consequently, Blumer argues that we exert autonomy when actively constructing and deciding our actions. We identify and interpret what we are confronted with and this guides our actions.

Now that I have outlined how Bronfenbrenner's EMHD and Blumer's symbolic interactionism apply to this discussion, what follows is a more extensive discussion integrating the broader literature to the different narratives' experiences of BC's formal education.

The performance narrative

Participants aligned to this narrative were least impacted by their formal education in terms of changing their biographies, and they were the most resistant to coaching 'the BC way', compared to other narratives. This is because their thoughts, beliefs and values – their biographies – which had developed through previous experiences, were so strongly ingrained that this limited the scope of potential change (Dowling, 2011). For these participants, the formal education programme did not effectively challenge their knowledge or beliefs regarding coaching as a profession. In addition, similar to Capel et al's (2011) work, it would appear that BC's programme presented a lack of opportunity for the trainee coaches to share, discuss or debate their beliefs, let alone change them. We know that the 'success' of learning is partially determined by an individual's prior thoughts, beliefs and knowledge (Cooper, 1999). However, here, we can see that these participants' biographies were not transformed, where coaches took the path of least resistance and maintained harmony in their biography (Jarvis, 2009).

This impacted socialisation into 'BC's way' and limited the new knowledge gained (Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). This highlights how BC's education programme disengages with the basic assumptions of andragogy, by neglecting the wealth of experiences that learners have, and the rich resource for learning that this creates. Consequently, for the participants aligned to this narrative, the formal education had little impact on their coaching practice.

Considering Blumer's (1969) root images, the Gears resources are multi-layered. In essence, they are a physical object. However, in some ways, their contents make this resource an abstract object which BC place a high value on and only make accessible to those attending a BC qualification. These participants found it frustrating planning sessions using the Gears books and, based on their previous experiences of not seeing qualified coaches with session plans, did not value the planning process. Moreover, these participants felt that having the qualification negatively impacted their coaching by forcing them to coach the BC way, rather than deliver sessions which they felt would better meet the needs of the riders in their clubs. Here, the qualification, also an abstract object, was not valued by these participants.

In addition, these participants were frustrated that the course content was dated, leaving them unable to coach the same techniques as the Team GB coaches. Here, Team GB coaches were social objects (Blumer, 1969): coaches who are held in high esteem by this group – role models who they want to emulate. They felt that they had the knowledge to coach before attending the course, and that the formal qualification simply validated their knowledge. By engaging in role-taking through their social interaction with their peers on the course, these participants formed objects of their 'self', and the view of themselves – i.e. high level of knowledge – guided their actions towards others, who they perceived as inferior. Moreover, this point also links to

Ludec et al's (2012) findings, where coaches' existing biographies impacted how they validated or changed their practice.

These participants saw the coach developer – a social object (Blumer, 1969) – as a "coach" and a role model. It is arguable, then, that these coaches saw the coach developer as an 'expert', with a depth of knowledge which closed the theory-practice divide (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2012). However, they did not want to be shown how to coach, which relates to the theory of teaching employed by the coach developers. Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction, and the notion of didactic and authoritarian tutoring, is relevant here. As this approach was negatively received by these coaches, it appears they would be more receptive to a coach developer who took Dewey's (1938) approach – a tutor who embraces trainee's experience and acts as a facilitator, providing the right type of experiences through which learners can acquire knowledge and understanding. These coaches positively received the practical experience; they felt confident delivering sessions and enjoyed the chance to practise coaching. Importantly, these coaches cited this as the most effective mechanism on the course. Although they discussed that it was because this mechanism allowed them the opportunity to compare themselves to others, practical activities have been found to be important in coach education (Cushion, 2006).

Participants aligned to the performance narrative disengaged with the generic aspect of the core Level 2 qualification. They discussed not seeing the relevance in the content of others' sessions who were from a different discipline. This links to both Rogers' (1969) claims that significant learning occurs when the topic is perceived relevant, and Knowles' (1980) assumptions that trainees see relevance in course material that is easily applied to their context. It has already been highlighted that dialogue mediates the fundamentally social activity that is coach learning (Vygotsky, 1962,1978; Lave & Wenger, 2001; Jacobs, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2016). However,

this is not always a positive experience, especially if coaches are from different sports as this can negatively impact the relation between coaches and their constructive dialogue (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019). Extending this point, it appears that the same is true for cycling coaches from different disciplines when aligned to the performance narrative.

Figure 5.6 illustrates the mesosystem of the performance narrative. In summary, participants aligned to the performance narrative appear to be least impacted by their formal education in terms of changing their biographies because they were so deeply ingrained that there was little room for change. They were the most resistant to coaching 'the BC way' compared to other narratives. Little new knowledge was gained, which meant participants' biographies were not transformed. They disregarded the Gears resources as useful and did not value the planning process. In addition, they felt that having the formal qualification negatively impacted their coaching by forcing them to coach the BC way. As such, the formal education had little impact on the coaching practice of those aligned to the performance narrative. These participants felt that they had the knowledge to coach and that the formal qualification validated their knowledge. These participants respected the coach developers' knowledge; however, they did not want to be shown how to coach. Consequently, it would appear that coaches who align to the performance narrative connect better with tutor's who employ Dewey's approach – tutors who embrace trainee's experience and act as a facilitator, providing the right type of experiences through which learners can acquire knowledge and understanding. Lastly, these participants disengaged with the from formal education that lacked relevance to their coaching.
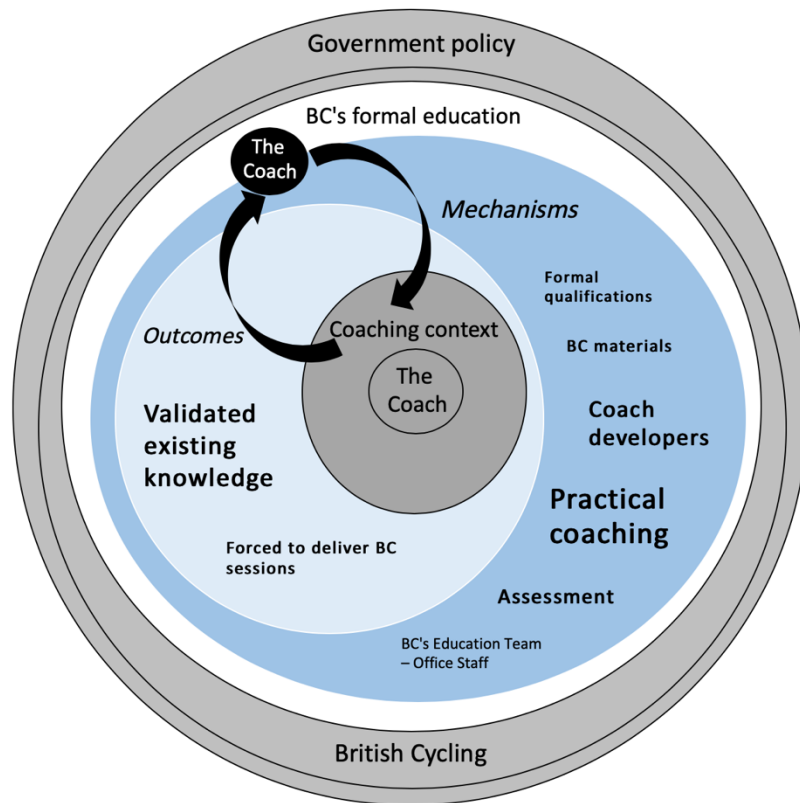
Figure 5.6 – The mesosystem of the performance narrative

The discovery narrative

The participants aligned to this narrative found their formal education experiences rather repetitive. In this sense, they negatively perceived the linking of the qualification on the pathway. Although attaining the formal qualifications is compulsory, contrary to the negative themes in the literature (for example, Cushion et al, 2013; Chesterfield et al, 2010), these participants were motivated to attend BC's formal education to see 'gold standard' coaching and did not describe this approach as receiving too much information in a short period of time (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Cushion et al, 2010; Lyle & Cushion, 2017c). Here, participants aligned to the discovery narrative wanted to learn.

In Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, 'gold standard' knowledge is an abstract object, but one that these participants placed a high value on. As discussed

previously, the BC resources are multi-layered in terms of Blumer's 'objects'. However, because of the high value that BC places on the Gears books – and the somewhat social object that they have consequently become – these participants perceived the Gears books as their main tool for seeing 'gold standard' coaching. Unfortunately, participants became dependent on this resource, leaving them struggling to be creative in their planning. Nonetheless, the participants aligned to this narrative were strongly socialised through their education experience into coaching 'BC's way' – the 'gold standard' way.

With regard to the coach developers – a social object (Blumer, 1969) – these participants trusted and respected the tutors and found them knowledgeable and proficient. This finding is similar to the way in which those aligned to the performance narrative viewed the coach developers and is supported by Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2012). However, unlike the performance narrative, coaches aligned to the discovery narrative discussed wanting feedback from their tutors. Combined with their search for 'gold standard' coaching, this means that, rather than viewing the coach developer as a facilitator, participants aligned to the discovery narrative preferred coach developers who oriented towards Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction. Within this theory of teaching, adult learners are thought to expect teachers to instruct them and be didactic and authoritarian (Jarvis, 2010b). Here, the coach developer is viewed as controlling the knowledge shared with trainees.

By perceiving that they were receiving the 'gold standard' from their tutors, these participants felt that they left their formal education experiences with increased technical knowledge of cycling and the confidence to deliver sessions. Moreover, these participants wanted the 'coach' title – another social object (Blumer, 1969) of high importance to this group, which would change their social position (Strauss, 1997) – but only as a result of attending BC's formal qualification – a somewhat abstract object

(Blumer, 1969). Ultimately, these participants felt that receiving their certificate gave them a stamp of approval. Again, this highlights how the certificate, which could be perceived as a physical object to some, is transformed into a social object for this group (Blumer, 1969). In some ways, their cycling biographies were less ingrained than those participants aligned to the performance narrative. In line with Ludec et al (2012), these participants saw a gap between their existing knowledge and the new information presented to them on course. Consequently, these participants transformed their biography – cognitively, emotionally and practically – which allowed them to link new learning to previous cognitive structures and re-establish accordance with the situation.

These participants learned from their peers during the practical sessions. The participants aligned to the discovery narrative felt closer in ability to their peers and felt this aspect of the course had a 'nice atmosphere'. Secondly, participants aligned to the discovery narrative coached in clubs oriented towards their children's cycling disciplines and, therefore, were not deeply embedded in a specific discipline. This meant that they connected better with the generic aspect of some formal education qualifications. As such, these participants had positive constructive dialogue with their peers (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019) and therefore, were more able to engage with peer-feedback. This also explains why these participants discussed missing the peer-support they had previously experienced through forums or WhatsApp groups.

Figure 5.7 illustrates the mesosystem of the discovery narrative. In summary, participants aligned to the discovery narrative negatively perceived the linking of the qualifications on the pathway and found their formal education experiences rather repetitive. These participants were motivated to see 'gold standard' coaching and were strongly socialised into 'BC's way'. They wanted to learn, and because their biographies were less ingrained than participants aligned to the performance

narrative, their biographies were transformed, allowing them to link new learning to previous cognitive structures. They wanted feedback from their coach developers and connected with a didactic, authoritarian approach, oriented towards Bruner's (1969) theory of instruction. They left their formal education with increased technical knowledge and confidence to deliver sessions. These participants wanted the 'coach' title and felt their certificate gave them a stamp of approval. Lastly, these participants had constructive dialogue with their peers and were more engaged in peer-feedback, but they missed the peer-support they experienced on previous formal education courses, such as trainee forums.
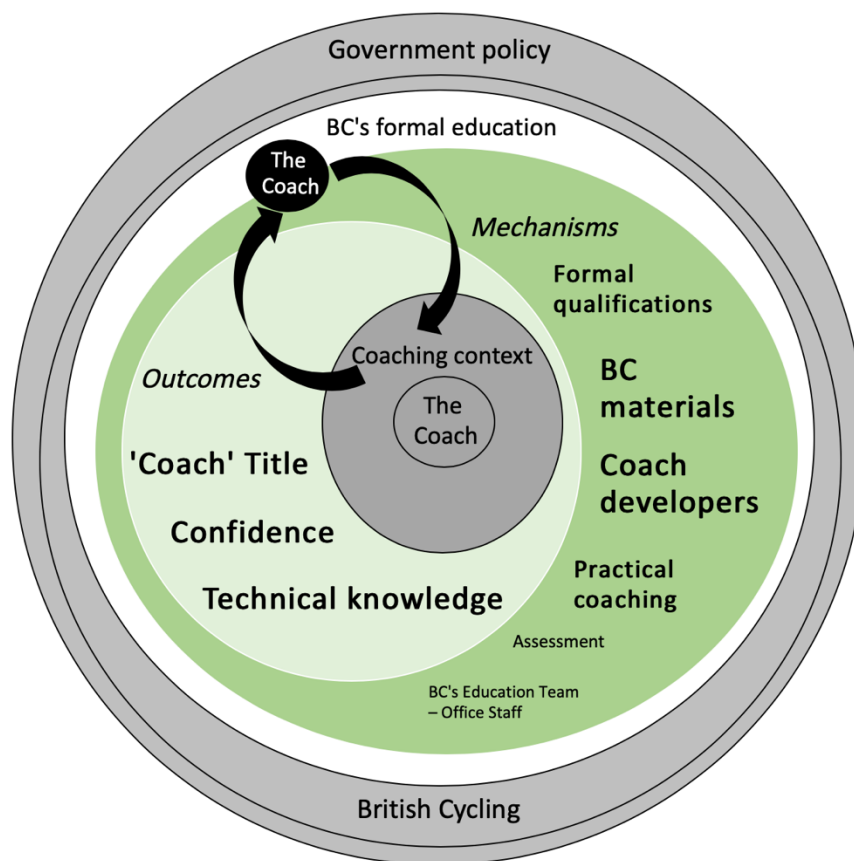
Figure 5.7 – The mesosystem of the discovery narrative

The relational narrative

Participants aligned to the relational narrative attended BC's formal education to gain access to BC's printed materials. This group deemed the handbooks to be instructive and built their technical knowledge, emphasising the habits of mind (Shulman, 2005) of formal education. Again, here, BC's resources became a social object (Blumer, 1969) of high importance which contained knowledge locked away, only accessible to those who attend BC's formal qualification. In addition, these participants discussed how completing their formal training increased their coaching responsibility and independence, promoting their role as coach (Strauss, 1997).

These participants felt the coach developer – again, a social object (Blumer, 1969) – developed the individual. They valued their relationship with their educators and the role they played in their educational experience. In particular, they felt the coach developers brought the BC resources to life. Moreover, findings from section 5.3 highlighted how these participants believed coaches should develop the person first, and then cycling second. These points relate to Freire's (1970/1993) views on teaching, where educators should meet the learners' needs and listen to them. This approach encourages learners to question what they had previously taken for granted and become aware that they have been socialised into an ingrained culture. Freire argued that the teacher, being a facilitator, encourages learners to explore and learn from their experiences. Participants aligned to this narrative valued the practical activities and the sharing of ideas during sessions with their peers. Consequently, participants aligned to the relational narrative learned from peer-feedback and felt this was framed around personal reflections on sessions – linked to Mezirow's (2009) transformational learning, where he proposed we learn by making meaning from our experiences.

Participants aligned to the relational narrative discussed a disconnect between real-life coaching and their formal assessments, especially in relation to the difference

in the age and ability of the riders. This perhaps links with these participants' teaching approach, orienting towards Freire's (1970/1993) theoretical perspective, emphasising their awareness of meeting the riders' abilities and ages. Nonetheless, these participants discussed the assessment in terms of being 'staged', 'forced' and 'ticking boxes', which echoes Cushion at al's (2003) and Chesterfield et al's (2010) work on coaching in the expected way for assessments, with no intention of continuing to coach in that way.

These participants appreciated the exposure to different disciplines and felt that this increased their own riding abilities. The practical, in-situ coaching offered these participants the opportunity to develop their habits of hand (Shulman, 2005) but also to understand the multiple roles of a coach, helping them become more concerned with riders' learning than the activity of coaching (Laker et al, 2003). For example, these coaches discussed the importance of giving clear instruction, not over-explaining tasks in detail, the importance of active sessions to engage riders, and effective ways to manage, or discipline, groups. However, they also learned to be adaptive when delivering their sessions, which reflects the conclusion from Laker et al's (2003) research on teachers' experiences of professional socialisation. This suggests that participants aligned to the relational narrative strongly experienced professional socialisation, because they saw it as a 'good' way to coach and cited the Gears books and planning templates as resources they would use in their coaching role.

Figure 5.8 illustrates the mesosystem of the relational narrative. In summary, participants aligned to the relational narrative attended BC's formal education to gain access to BC's materials. They found these to be instructive and felt they built their technical knowledge. These participants connected with Freire's (1970/1993) theory of teaching and Mezirow's (2009) transformational learning. They saw the coach developer as a facilitator who encouraged them to learn from their experiences. These

participants found the assessments were staged and a box ticking exercise, where they coached in the ways expected for the assessment with no intention of continuing to coach in such unrealistic contexts. Lastly, these participants found the practical, in-situ coaching offered them the opportunity to understand the multiple roles of a coach, helping them become more concerned with riders' learning than the activity of coaching. These participants experienced strong professional socialisation, learning to coach 'BC's way', which they saw as a 'good' way to coach.
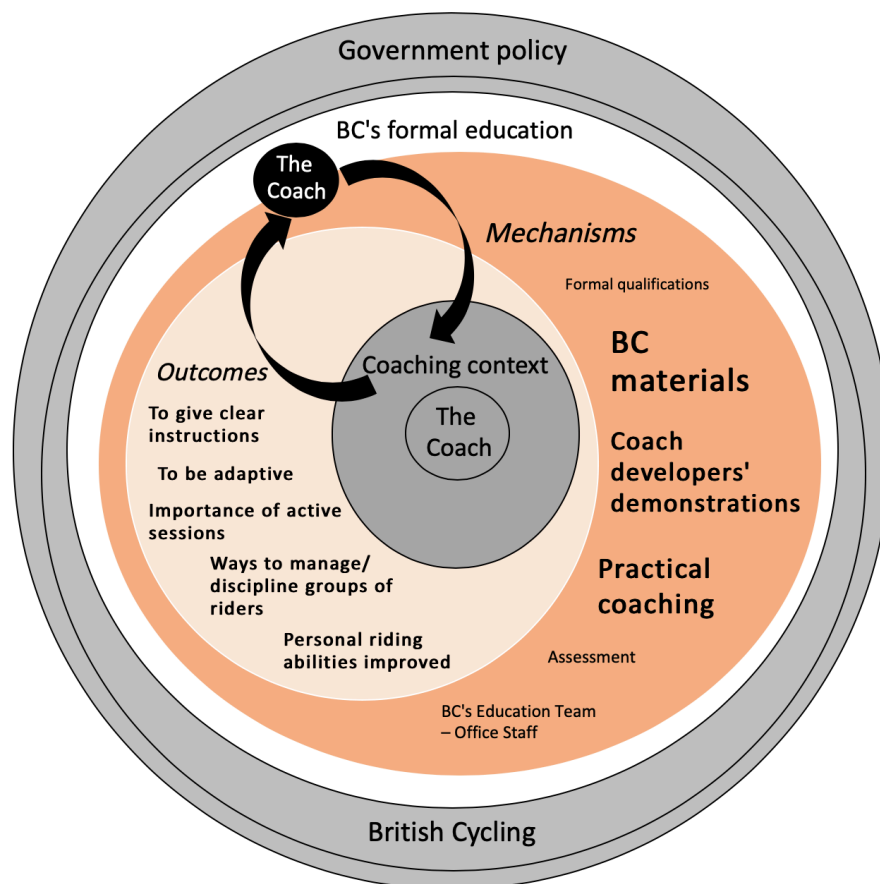
Figure 5.8 – The mesosystem of the relational narrative

5.4.6 Conclusion

Taking Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD as a framework, this study researched coaches' mesosystems. This is where the individual and BC's formal education become interrelated and involves people who promote and support learning, offering coaches the guidance and tools to help them fulfil the requirements of the education programme and learn more effectively within their microsystem. In relation to socialisation, this study captured coaches' 'professional socialisation' (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) as they fluxed from their microsystem and back again. The organised activity within the mesosystem sees trainee coaches socialised into 'BC's way' through the implemented mechanisms which help BC achieve their intended outcomes. It is here that trainees' beliefs are either reinforced or challenged (Pike & Fletcher, 2014).

The findings presented here suggest that the participants aligned to the performance narrative were not effectively socialised through either the recruitment or professional socialisation phases (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). These participants were least impacted by their formal education in terms of changing their biographies, because their thoughts, beliefs and knowledge were so deeply ingrained. They were the least resistant to being socialised into coaching in 'BC's way'. They disregarded BC's resources and did not appreciate being shown how to coach. They felt the formal qualification negatively impacted their coaching by forcing them to coach the BC way, but felt that the certificate validated their knowledge. It appeared that these participants would engage more with tutors who took Dewey's approach.

Conversely, the discovery and relational narratives, although 'bypassing' recruitment socialisation, were effectively socialised into BC's way through their formal education experiences (professional socialisation; Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). Participants aligned to the discovery narrative were motivated to see 'gold

standard' coaching and connected with a didactic, authoritarian approach by the tutors, connecting with Bruner's theory of teaching. They valued peer-support and feedback. They gained technical knowledge and confidence to deliver sessions, wanted the 'coach' title and felt their certificate gave them a stamp of approval. The participants aligned to the relational narrative wanted access to BC's materials to be instructed and build their technical knowledge. They connected with Freire's theory of teaching where the coach developers developed trainees as individuals and facilitated learning from experiences. These participants left their formal education strongly socialised into coaching BC's way because they saw it as a 'good' way to coach.

These findings build on the notion of different narrative types of coaches. In accordance with Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, our social 'worlds' comprise of physical, social and abstract objects, meaning different people experience things in different ways. Aligning coaches to different narratives and finding commonalities in the social 'world' of each narrative begins to answer how each narrative's social 'world' impacted their experiences of BC's formal coach education. Extending the conclusions drawn from the study presented in section 5.3, the findings of the present study builds on the proposals to develop different coaching pathways for different narratives. This further develops Lyle's (2007) calls for personal models of coaching. Different pathways could embrace the general background of the individuals aligned to that narrative and emphasise the skill areas deemed important to that group. However, this study also answers how the content of each pathway could be shaped to align with different narratives. As argued previously, this approach could positively impact coaches' willingness and capacity to learn, reducing their disengagement and potential drop-out (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019).

5.5 Exploring the coaching environment

5.5.1 Introduction

Within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, two levels are of particular interest to learners and those supporting learning: the mesosystem – BC's formal coach education pathway – which was explored in section 5.4; and the microsystem, which is explored here.

5.5.2 Aims and rationale

This study was concerned with researching participants' coaching environment – their microsystem (Bronfenbrenner's, 1979) – the day-to-day situations they encountered, their relationships and their communication with the people they interacted with on a regular basis. It was within this 'level' of their ecology that learners made decisions, planned what to do and how to do it, acted and used everything they brought to any given situation, and reflected on experiences and the effects of their actions. It was within the microsystem where participants drew upon the contexts, tools, technologies and resources available to do what was necessary to create new ecologies for learning and achieving.

BC's formal education aims to offer trainees the skills required to prepare for the demands of their diverse occupational settings (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). However, the workplace has been identified as the main socialising agent, where individuals 'learn the ropes' as they become inducted and accepted into the workplace and its culture (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). The social conventions of the cultural setting impact novice coaches' development (Cassidy, 2010). As such, coaches' 'workplace conditions' (Lawson, 1989) within their microsystem may present challenges to

practice as instructed on BC's formal education and these difficulties might be because their formal education programme did not help them think about the curriculum in terms of the larger picture (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). Here, occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) captures an inherent part of coach learning: the process of personal views of coaching emerging from interactions with other coaches of 'how things should be done' as they are socialised into a subculture.

The current study researched occupational socialisation – and its four phases: marginalisation; role conflict reality shock; and 'wash-out' (Lawson, 1989) – in sport coaching. This study highlights the complexity of learning, moving away from an analysis of the arguably simple process of transfer or understanding of knowledge captured in section 5.4. By studying these participants in their microsystem, post-course, this section of the PhD captured how coaches learning is a result of becoming fully involved in new activities to perform new tasks, functions, and master new understandings (Lave & Wenger, 2001). As such, this study highlights learning as a result of the people within the microsystem, the tools at hand – for example, objects, the language and symbols – and coaching, as an activity, itself (Merriam, 2018). These findings show that learning is linked to the social structure of practice and the power relations that defined the possibilities for participants' learning (Lave & Wenger, 2001).

In essence, this study explored the under-researched area of coaches' transition from 'expert learner' to 'novice coach' and how learning *for* coaching occurs (Shulman, 1986). Of interest, then, is these participants' PCK as this appears to be the most important in teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). PCK builds on, and with, content knowledge and highlights the different ways topics can be taught, the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches or which topics learners find

difficult or easy to learn (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). PCK builds over time and, as such, novice teachers start small and progress to larger possibilities in terms of curriculum organisation and pedagogic flexibility (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

In summary, this study had two aims:

1. Explore the workplace conditions that either facilitate or inhibit wash-out
2. Investigate learning within the microsystem, post-qualification

5.5.3 Methods and data analysis

This study used the same data collected through the semi-structured and unstructured interviews, over a fifteen-month period. These interviews produced 2,328 minutes (38.81 hours) of audio material (interviews ranged between 13.42 minutes and 101.62 minutes; M=56.04, SD=20.37). These interviews focused on exploring participants' workplace conditions and their continued learning within their microsystem. Interviews were transcribed, verbatim, producing 348,891 words across 842 pages of single-spaced text. Deductive TNA developed themes surrounding workplace conditions that facilitated and inhibited wash-out effects and participants' learning, post-qualification.

This data was complimented by 36.5 hours of participant observations of coaching: 12 hours with the relational narrative coaches; 16.5 hours with the discovery narrative coaches; and 8 hours with the performance narrative coaches. In line with the longitudinal nature of this study, data was captured from the same eight participants recruited for the studies presented in sections 5.3 and 5.4 over twelve months following their initial Level 2 qualification. Participant observations presented the opportunity to record coaching as and when it happened, in the participant's setting,

rather than solely relying on individual's recall of events at another time (Gibson et al, 2013; Gratton & Jones, 2004). Importantly, observing coaches in the setting in which they operated saw coaching occur in the natural surroundings of real coaches, including the typical participants they coached, rather than the artificial settings used in coaches' assessment on the formal education programme. In addition, observations captured behaviours not apparent to participants, or behaviours participants were unwilling to disclose in interviews. The data collected from these observations was supported by data captured through photos taken within participants' coaching environments and informal conversations which occurred during observations.

5.5.4 Findings

Extending the findings presented in sections 5.3 and 5.4, I present the current findings in relation to the three identified narrative types. Framing these participants' interactions within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD highlights how they explored their social and physical environments: their clubs; their spaces – physical, reflective, creative and dialogic; their relationships with coaches, organisations and objects; and the resources they used for their continued learning. As such, I present the findings of the current study under these identified areas of participants' microsystem, discussing each in relation to the different narrative types.

5.5.4.1 The individual as 'coach' (continued)

According to Jackson (2016), learning ecologies are self-motivated, self-directed and self-regulated. We have to trust that the ecology which we build will enable us to achieve our goals. Our will, agency and integrative thinking enable us to pursue our goals, recognising the affordances in our lives. In addition, our capability involves

everything we bring to a situation to deal with it and our self-belief enables us to work with whatever emerges. Our self-awareness and reflection enable us to monitor the effects we have, change our performance to achieve better results, and make better sense of what we have learnt. Moreover, our past learning ecologies provide experiences through which we have previously learned, developed and become aware of the affordances of our lives, which we draw upon in current and future learning ecologies.

The performance narrative

These two participants had strong cycling backgrounds and felt they were more able as coaches. Louise was 'genuinely quite confident' in her abilities as a coach. Adam had 'picked up a lot' while riding, and therefore had 'more knowledge' and felt 'a bit better' than other coaches. He felt his gym knowledge helped his coaching, suggesting that everyone should have that training. He felt coaching complimented his role as a freelance Personal Trainer, especially in his spin classes: 'You know, how they ride, or where the saddle is'. Louise received positive feedback on her coaching and enjoyed it, which helped it come 'easily', and wanted to make it her job. Consequently, these participants' 'love of cycling' transitioned into a love of coaching.

These participants were motivated to coach riders to 'perform, as opposed to just generically participate'. Louise loved 'working with' and 'understanding' people:

> I guess I get a buzz out of helping other people feel like they've achieved something […] It's so much fun working with people and also, kind of, like, being a counsellor. There is something about your role that really quickly people really open up […] it's a privilege. You have this genuine ability to help people […] As a coach, people really just feel comfortable opening up to you, and they tell you things that they're really worried about - I find it interesting how quickly a relative stranger bears their soul to you, especially in the individual coaching - so you have to be really understanding.

For Louise it was 'getting the detail right' that she found interesting and found that coaching 'generic participation' had 'no detail' to it. She was interested in coaching people how to 'race bikes', not just 'how to ride [them]'. Moreover, her motivation to coach racing skills focused on creating 'more female learning environments' that helped female riders to 'grow and flourish':

> I get really offended when I tell people I'm a cycling coach and they're like, "Oh, like cycling proficiency?" And I'm like, "Hell no! Thanks, very much." I don't teach people how to ride bikes, I teach them how to race bikes.

> I saw a news article on the BC website where the headline was 'British Cycling has made fantastic strides in female coaching numbers'. It said something like 23% of their coaches are women, compared to the national average of 17% in traditional sports… but how many are actually doing race stuff? That's where we need more women, and that's where British Cycling really doesn't have women - so, yes, they might have more women, but they don't have any women with influence.

Louise was passionate about being a 'role model' and having a 'massive influence' over female participation. Feeling powerless to implement change in her club, Louise felt the girl-only sessions offered her some 'control'. Yet she felt those sessions were successful because of the consistency of 'six sessions in a row', which she felt 'too tired and stressed' to repeat. However, she was inspired coaching a 'really talented group of just girls' with the pathway riders. This shaped her views on the coach role, learning that people 'don't want a nice coach', but a coach 'that makes them better'. This increased Louise's focus on offering feedback.

Yet, balancing work with coaching was 'challenging' and 'overwhelming' for Louise. She was giving 'quite a lot of [her] free time to coaching' and had thrown her social life 'out the window':

> I did create a spreadsheet of all the things I'm doing for my [unofficial] mentor, and he was like, 'Holy Christ. I mean you could take a year to try and do the stuff you're trying to do in May!' and I'm like, 'Yes, but you've got to be ambitious'.

Louise's job was advantageous, however, and facilitated her coaching opportunities:

> I feel like me working at UK Sport gives me an incredible amount of credibility, even though it's nothing to do with my coaching […] It works both ways because I was in a meeting with Sport England, talking about facilities and I was able to quote my experiences with Lee Valley and the Olympic Park […] I'm developing, I guess, between work and my own volunteering, an incredibly comprehensive understanding of what's going on in cycling […] At the six-day volunteering I did in October, I connected with [a coach] who is helping me on a mentor basis and he was the one who put me in touch with the coach at [the racing team]. So I'm actually incredibly well connected. So there's a big part of me that's like, 'Don't leave UK Sport unless it's for something that is definitely better', because, right now, it seems to be massively helping me open doors and gain credibility with people.

Another opportunity was volunteering at the 2019 World Road Championships, where she realised the depth of her knowledge:

> I couldn't believe how many people are in really senior roles who just didn't have enough understanding of cycling, and it was really weird. It made me realise just how much sometimes you need those years of experience and you need to have the thing to work in the thing […] it made me realise that I know more about cycling than I realise, and that I shouldn't underestimate how much I know - because I know a hell of a lot more than these guys who are bloody leading this thing.

However, coaching 'distracted' Louise from 'being able to ride', making coaching and riding 'tough to navigate'. Adam also wanted free time to ride. In contrast to Louise, however, Adam's income came from his coaching and, consequently, coaching played a larger role in his life.

The discovery narrative

These three were Dads with the 'urge' to coach while their children cycled. Coaching was a journey of discovery, offering new experiences that boosted their confidence – as Oliver summarised, 'since doing this, I'm more open to doing other things'. Equally, James was driven to offer riders the opportunity to discover more to cycling, discussing how he had seen people start knowing nothing about cycling and work towards 100-mile sportives. For Joe, this included offering riders the chance to discover racing. His sessions were 'based around racing – trying to implement race scenarios' and included skills like technical climbing as well as downhill stuff' because 'it's in the Gears books, but something that's not often explored'. This highlighted the possible journeys that this group saw cycling could offer.

James was motivated by riders enjoying sessions. Joe was equally motivated by the positive comments from parents, primarily on social media. Here, it was 'recognition of your efforts' as a coach, and 'seeing [riders] improve' which was 'so great to see'. In line with the discovery narrative, these participants were not motivated by results, but by riders' progression, as Oliver explained:

> I personally get a bit of a kick out of seeing someone who is either younger, or less skilled, making the step up. I don't feel like I've got the knowledge yet to see someone who is pretty good and then get some kind of marginal gain to make them better… I don't have that eye yet, to see that, and I'm not sure I ever will […] I just enjoy doing it. I like the definable goal of getting kids passing the assessment and moving on up to other groups. I enjoy seeing kids who have

passed and move up, whizzing past on the [road circuit]… it's nice to know you've played a part in them getting those skills so that they can go and do that.

Here, Oliver uses language analogous with BC's Olympic success – 'marginal gain' – and juxtaposes this against his motivation to simply play a part in riders' development. This highlights how embedded this performance language is within the cycling community. Yet these participants understood that coaching was a volunteer role. It was a 'hobby' – as Joe described it – which fitted around their jobs and family, offering a shared interest with their children. However, balancing 'larking about on bikes' alongside their family and full-time jobs was challenging. Breaks in coaching were a welcomed chance to catch up on 'jobs around the house'. On a few occasions in the summer, 'after a hard day at work', Joe 'couldn't be bothered' to go to the coaching site, but saw coaching as 'almost therapeutic':

> It clears your head a little bit. You're out, enjoying something - you're concentrating, but it's different, it's not like you're at work - it's enjoyable, because I want to do it, I'm just at work because I have a mortgage to pay. It makes a big difference.

Oliver also struggled to balance coaching with other commitments because it was 'one of a whole number of things' that he does, meaning that his coaching was 'limited'. Conversely, James was 'trying to do less work' to find 'more time to coach' and discussed plans of semi-retirement. In line with this group's narrative, coaching offered him an opportunity to pursue new experiences. However, James had a serious road riding accident and had a period of ill health, which understandably impacted his coaching:

I crashed in July when riding in France with my daughter when I had a crash. […] I ended up with a plate and half a dozen screws in [my foot] to hold it together while it healed. I just had those removed. But while I had the plate in, I started getting pains in my leg, which they thought was DVT [deep vein thrombosis], but I got pulmonary embolisms in both lungs, which turned to pleurisy. It totally wiped me out for two weeks. […] I've got a bit of a back issue too, which is causing a bit of grief, but I think that's just old age. […] It's been an interesting time, but I'm on the mend now. I just get more and more out of breath, so I need to get some of my fitness levels back. […] Not sure until I get back on the bike next year what cycling looks like for me.

The relational narrative

Coaching offered these participants an outlet to share their knowledge and love of cycling. They wanted to instil into riders a lifelong love of cycling but felt that coaching should develop the whole person. They enjoyed seeing riders achieve and leave sessions 'feeling good about themselves'. Beth explained how she felt 'quite a buzz […] when the girls are all buzzing and happy' after trying things they would not have previously dared:

> I absolutely love it when they get how to do something. They start off with frustration on their faces, but there is determination. Then they're ecstatic. I'm whooping and it's not even me doing it. […] They must laugh at me, but it's just so exciting… When they're enjoying it, that's brilliant… If they're not getting it, your head is trying to work out why they're not. That's what I do it for, when it clicks.

Equally, Chris explained:

> I quite like the idea of getting the kids cycling and when we get quite a few who come along who don't ride at all, and within two sessions, they're cycling, pedalling away like mad… I find it quite satisfying, as well, when one of the kids will suddenly find he can do something that I've been trying to coach them into doing… I like the fact that they make progress.

Peter agreed, highlighting how coaching is the vehicle that brings children 'out of their shell' and increases their confidence:

> There's nothing quite like seeing the smile on the face of a child when they have achieved something that they didn't think they could do… it's not always about winning the race, it's just about achieving that one thing that somebody has asked you to do that you didn't think you *could* do, and how you've practiced it and you can *do* it… I just *love* that - they make you feel warm inside. They just radiate. And you know that you are helping them to build confidence and their abilities so that, hopefully, they will be safer when they ride […] I'm really pleased, particularly for the ones who aren't confident, that they're able to do it… it brings about relationships between the children of helping the ones that are weaker and looking after each other, and being responsible… There are so many things that come out of [coaching] that you're not aiming for, but they just happen anyway.

These participants saw coaching as a way of empowering people. They were invested in the growth and broader development of individuals. They valued their friendships formed through cycling and were motivated to extend the friendships that cycling offered.

With regards to balancing coaching with other commitments, these participants had varied work commitments: Peter was a retired teacher; Chris was self-employed; and Beth worked full-time. Consequently, these participants were all different in the challenges they faced. Peter felt that coaching gave him 'another focus' – an 'objective and something to aim for and achieve'. Being self-employed, Chris assigned one day a week to coaching and made up for any missed time 'in the evenings'. Moreover, these two coached between Easter and October, minus the summer break. As such, balancing coaching with life and/or work commitments was only for six months each year. Conversely, Beth was a Primary School teacher, but she was made redundant and started supply teaching, which she hoped would create 'a bit of coaching' during weekdays:

Not many people ride in the week, or if they do, I don't know them yet… but there must be people - nurses, or shift workers, who can, or want to, ride on weekdays […] I know the other coaches are getting the work, so there's the potential there […] I'm already starting to get some clients. One is starting to be quite a big name in the little girl world of downhill biking and looks to be quite promising. She's only nine, but she's already jumping.

In addition, this group had families to balance with coaching, as Chris summarised: 'We both have wives who like us to spend time with them as well'. However, the biggest challenge they faced was managing their coaching alongside their own riding. Remember, this group were involved with cycling because of the friendships that the sport offered them. Riding with their friends was a big part of keeping these friendships going: Peter discussed trying to 'temper' coaching alongside his riding; Chris declined the offer of more coaching because it would impact his 'own session midweek'; and Beth felt coaching on weekends prevented her from riding with friends:

A lot of coaches are booked up on the weekends, which is the only downside, because when do I ride my bike. My friends are like "What are you doing at the weekend? We're going to such and such a place", and I'm, like, "I can't come, I'm coaching"… I'll try and keep it so that I've got at least one day at the weekends, maybe, where I can ride.

5.5.4.2 The Club

Coaching context refers to the club – the physical and social environment coaches inhabited, and the situations presented to them. Here, specific attention is drawn to the distinctive culture and procedures of the club, how this aligned with participants' beliefs and values, and ultimately, how this impacted coaches' practice.

The performance narrative

Following his Track-specific qualification, Adam coached part-time at his local velodrome. The facility delivered their own skills programme developed using BC's resources. Adam was despondent with the further training he needed in order to learn 'how they teach their accreditations':

> One of the Saturdays will be Level 1 and Level 3, for an hour each; then the next Saturday, it would be Level 2 and 4, for two hours each. So the things you have learnt, or one of the things, you're not going to do the same again next time you are going in… if they do 1 and 3 one day, then they go to 2 and 4 the next time, there's still a lot of gaps… and because my job is part-time, I'm there as and when required, you know. That's why it's taking so long. […] Then one of the coaches from the Track will come and watch you teach, and then, if they're happy, they actually sign you off […] You just have to be able to teach how they teach their accreditations. Level 1 and Level 2 I am quite happy with, but the Level 3 - I'm ok, but I wouldn't say it flows fantastic.

Adam lived a '50-mile round trip' from the velodrome, voluntarily observing and delivering sessions. 'Over a year' passed as a qualified 'Track coach' and Adam was still unable to 'coach independently': 'The manager told me at the time, "Pass your Level 2 and I'll give you some work," but it hasn't work like that'. Adam completed the accreditations as a rider and questioned the coaches' practice, suggesting he would place more emphasis on safety and the importance of 'good skills, good observation and communication':

> You're teaching the pointers - it's a bit like when you're driving a car, you have to know when to indicate and when to pull out, and things like that? That's the Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 [of the velodrome programme …] I'm hoping if I do get the job I can actually put a little bit more coaching and understanding into why we're doing these things. I'm not saying all coaches don't do it, but they don't do it often enough for me.

Louise really struggled to establish herself within the club she coached at:

> In the beginning, it was, like, "Who's this person? This girl telling us what to do?" Kids don't like being told what to do […] But it's just taken time. Kids have got to know me and they're happy to listen to me. So much of it is about relationships as well, isn't it? […] There was a moment, about a month ago, where one of the boys - 11 or 12 years old - turned up and was like, "Oh [Louise], I forgot my money!" and I was like, "Wow!" He came to me and knew my name, and I felt really, like, "Oh yeah, I'm one of the coaches here now." I've transitioned from being this random girl who is turning up and used to stand and watch, to one of the coaches, who is at the club - who looks after it.

Her challenge was managing herself. The other coaches were 'set in their routine' and she felt she turned up doing things 'better than how they do them', risking not 'making friends' and making 'other people look like shit'. The club was under-resourced for coaches, so she felt a responsibility to stay coaching for them. However, one issue was the coaches' lack of planning.

> [The coaches in the club] are really awesome, and I've got loads to learn from them […] I guess it's up to me to say, "Oh, maybe I should take these kids," but then it's challenging because during the session, [the main coach] will be like, "No, you can run it," and that's really shit because I'm not prepared to run it then, because I'm in assistant mode. You're like, "Aww mate, could you have given me a minute to mentally prepare?!" … You end up doing a very rubbish job, so you're almost reinforcing that you should just observe, in a way, if that makes sense? […] I have to be mindful of what I create. For example, going to the rider development centres, and then [the lead coach] is like, "I went to all those last year," or something like that. Something that gives you the slight impression that these guys have been doing this for ages.

On one occasion, Louise turned up to deliver a session, not knowing beforehand that the focus was sprinting. Consequently, riders asked her questions about

technique which she could not answer because she had not had chance to 'brush up on the technique':

> I definitely agree that you have to be adaptable to the needs of the person in front of you, but this very laid-back approach, where we don't plan what we're doing or who we're coaching or where we're taking them until we get there is frustrating… I'm not at a stage where I have the knowledge to comfortably just go, "Yes, let's do sprinting and this is exactly the thing we need to do" […] One day I turned up and it turned out [the head coach] had told the kids that he was doing a Mountain bike session, so all the kids were getting these old shitty mountain bikes and cycle-cross bikes from the container […] I had my road bike, but I have a mountain bike that I could have brought if he had told me […] if you're not going to communicate to me that I need to bring a different bike, how do you expect me to continue to turn up to this? […] Just the way the club is run, and the most basic thing of him deciding what a coaching session is going to look like without even letting me know. How am I meant to contribute to that, or plan for the coaching session?

Louise respected the coaches within the club, but felt that 'unfortunately', sport needs bad coaches to 'fill a gap in a resource-poor sector':

> I nominated [the head coach] for a volunteer award scheme. Not because I think he's a good coach, but, actually, because he's put a lot of his time into trying to help and stuff – and it's going to sound a bit stupid – but there's a bit of me that's, like, half of the time, he's so bitter because he feels undervalued, and if he gets a nomination, maybe he'll be a bit more positive.

Nevertheless, she felt the coaches were incorrect in some of the techniques they coached but did not feel they 'cared enough' to be corrected. This links to the broader issue of the club's poor practices, policies and procedures. She shared the story of a rider falling off his bike during a session and the club not having his guardian's contact details:

My head exploded, because that's such a basic thing. I've taken this kid out cycling, and he's fallen off his bike. Actually, I don't even have any contact details for anyone responsible for him […] I know I'm probably catastrophising things, but most cases of negligence arise from someone saying, "Oh, I didn't realise". Like, most people don't set out to hurt someone, but because they've got crap policies and procedures in place, someone gets hurt.

Louise felt 'part of the team […] in lots of ways', but not 'supported'. She wanted people 'to be happy and on-board' with her ideas, but realised a 'need to give direction', 'without rocking the boat too much'. Louise did not want to 'undermine' the coaches' efforts but wanted to create a 'more fruitful learning experience' and not focus on 'bums on seats'. She wanted to coach riders who were 'genuinely motivated and engaged':

> I don't think there's anything wrong with me saying that. I advocate cycling for all, and I think everyone should be able to rider their bike. But I'm not interested in coaching kids who just want to participate, that's not what motivates me… I don't think I need to apologise for that.

Louise felt riders in the club disengaged with the coaching process. Having coached riders on the BC pathway, she was well placed to compare the two sets of riders:

> You don't have to convince [the pathway riders] - they're already convinced, they're fine, they're into it, they're willing to do it. You give them minimal instruction and all of a sudden, they're riding round the track, and they're doing the drills […] it's definitely inspiring… they want to be there and they're really awesome to work with […] It's like, "Holy fucking shit, this is insane!" Some of these kids are already racing internationally and some are going to the World Championships in September and competing for GB […] I'm being entrusted with these pretty awesome kids who would probably beat me if I had to race them.

This reinforced her views on the club coaching on offer:

> I turned up at those Tuesday evening development centres and thought, 'Crikey, this is a whole other level compared to Saturday mornings, which now feels like some sort of OAP pedestrian activity' […] The kids in the club are never going to win races with our current approach to training, that's a fact and then they're going to leave.

Clearly Louise's personal goals misaligned with the club's goals. Observing this contrast convinced Louise that the club were 'doing the riders a real disservice', not offering much beyond 'cycling proficiency'. There were 'too many things that [she] didn't agree with […] to improve' the club's policies and procedures. She perceived she did not have the 'power' or 'time' to address these issues and decided to remove herself from the club. This limited her coaching to the BC pathway riders. Even here, however, Louise struggled to establish her role, 'slipping between passive, being very much led and guided' to 'being handed something of high responsibility'. She was left questioning her abilities to actively contribute to the sessions:

> You know when you make a contribution in a group setting, and you're like, 'Have I just taken over from the guy who's leading this?' So I wasn't sure how it had gone, but I had enjoyed it.

Nonetheless, Louise felt that her ideas were more positively received. She offered to run a fortnightly ride – a 'cycling community' for female riders to 'go on group rides together' – to increase their lack of social support. Yet, moving away from her club affected her 'legitimacy' as a coach because she had difficulty claiming riders' improvements were because of her coaching:

> The [BC sessions] are my main outlet and there's more than enough for me to do as a coach with the British Cycling stuff […] I just need to make sure I

continue to get experience of leading a block or leading the session otherwise I'll lose the habit because it's very different helping to actually leading a session. And then there's the bit where I feel a bit funny because I'm a coach, but I'm not attached to anything specific. […] I got nominated for UK Coaching's talent development coach of the year by British Cycling, which is all very exciting. But I feel a bit of a fraud because I don't individually look after any riders. I couldn't really say, "I coach this kid all the time and they have progressed to this." I'm always assisting the staff so I didn't get shortlisted, but I kind of can understand why, because I even felt uncomfortable with filling the form in […] I really undersold myself, but I guess I played it out in my head, and the idea of getting nominated and winning it, and then someone saying, "You don't even coach that often?" I'd go, "Yes, I know. I shouldn't be here." That's the thing I hate about stepping away from [the club] … I kind of feel like I don't have a legitimate basis for my coaching because I'm always just helping as opposed to actually leading.

The discovery narrative

These participants coached in clubs that brought 'the appeal of cycling' to recreational cyclists across a range of disciplines, allowing riders to focus on their 'naturally affiliated' discipline. Oliver's club 'tried to be as inclusive as possible'. They loaned bikes to increase opportunities for riders in the local community, creating unity amongst, and a sense of belonging for, members. A summer and winter race series offered a 'user friendly' route into racing. Yet, sessions had a drive to develop strong basic skills and techniques. Operating as a members' club, 'most people come [to sessions] quite routinely', offering predictability in terms of who was going to attend, riders' abilities and the coaching points covered. Based on BC's Gears resources, the club developed an assessed grading system, which created pre-planned sessions that were recycled every six weeks. Oliver's role – to coach 'the first group' within the club structure – stayed unchanged throughout his participation in the PhD. He was 'happy' with his role helping riders 'go from not being able to ride to being able to do it':

It's the basic elements of being able to control their bike and be more aware of their surroundings, I suppose - to adapt to the terrain and the people around them. It's about giving them the baseline and skillset to move onwards - just learning new, fundamentals of different types of cycling.

Oliver's club were 'good at pushing young volunteers', meaning he regularly delivered sessions alongside 'three Level 2 coaches and a Level 1 coach' who 'could chuck their two pence worth in' and prevent things getting 'stale'. This meant Oliver coached within a 'comfort zone' that allowed him to 'try new things'. Oliver shared similar motivations with the other coaches in the club: 'majority of the coaches have kids who enjoy cycling and wanted to get involved, rather than just hang around on the side-lines':

I have a safe environment with other coaches […] I might be a more rounded coach if I was doing stuff by myself, or if there was just one other person… but that safe environment is good because you can push it as far as you want and be as leading as you want, or sit back as much as you want - I could quite happily stay as I am for the next ten years at the club… it's down to how much you want to push it.

None of us have any real expectations of trying to coach to a higher standard. It's just about that ethos of trying to get a bunch of kids who come from widely different backgrounds and trying to get them all to move up at their own pace, but move to similar levels, that's what we're all trying to do.

We had 18 riders on Saturday. We did riding around cones, chicanes, in pairs, getting close together… then we took one hand off [the handlebars] and some were high-fiving, some were picking up a baton from one coach and passing it to the other coach. But that's easy to do when there's more of you. When you're by yourself, you can't have batons and try and do high fives at the same time.

However, Oliver described the process as 'quite circular'. He delivered 'tightly defined' sessions across a 'narrow-window' of skills leaving him knowledgeable in a 'very niched' area. One challenge for Oliver was navigating how long some riders were 'stuck' in his group and sessions were 'a bit dull'. The difficulty was not 'recycling

the same stuff' and having 'more exciting' ways of repeating session content. Critically, Oliver questioned the lack of context within some sessions:

> 90-95% of the kids have gears, and we spend 2 hours moving between gears, from high to low, and talk about the difference, and when you'd use high gears compared to when you'd use low gears, but they don't carry any of it forward. So they'll do the end of session race, and you'll see them all struggling, in the wrong gears on the small hill section of the track. It shows that they need to practise gears in real-world situations. I've suggested that we split the space we've got and commandeer a bit of the track they struggle on.

The club had a 'tried and tested method', but nobody 'steps back and says, "Well, actually, do we need to tweak this? Is this ok?"'. Oliver felt 'empowered' to make suggestions on 'certain things', seeing things differently 'coming to it with fresh eyes'. Yet the club's 'way' impacted his coaching. For example, sessions finished with a race around the circuit concluding with a medal presentation – podium and all. This reinforced the race focus of the club but prevented Oliver's sessions from finishing with a cool-down – the 'BC way' of coaching. Oliver felt he coached in a 'false environment'. Although he appreciated the commitment of a more active role, he felt he needed 'pushing' to coach 'different groups' in order to add 'extra validation' to his coaching. Aligned to the discovery narrative, Oliver was seeking opportunities to grow and develop as a coach – to discover new roles and new experiences. In addition, he planned to coach with a local mountain bike club, where he and his children were members, to gain exposure to different settings and groups – to do something 'a bit more exciting […] because going round and round cones isn't enough'. Longer-term, Oliver wanted to pursue opportunities to offer coaching within his local village, where he was sure there would be 'a huge uptake'. Conveniently, his work was aligned to offices in continental Europe, one hour ahead of the UK time zone, allowing him to

coach at his daughter's school on Friday afternoons. This gave him the opportunity to 'hone a few skills', like session planning, a redundant skill when delivering pre-planned sessions within the club. Here, Oliver delivered the sessions he wanted, applying skills 'with a real-life focus' with a fun and competitive element. The reality was quite a contrast to the comfort of the club:

> I spent the first ten minutes sorting out saddle heights and tyre pressures, and while I was doing that, the kids just got mucking about… I couldn't see what they were doing because I had my head buried, trying to pump up tyres… the luxury of having the number of coaches we have in the club is that you don't have that.

Joe coached two 'drop-in sessions' each week to the same core group of riders in a mountain bike-specific club. The club was heavily supported by parents, 'always keen to help' and his sessions were delivered alongside Alex, the head coach. However, Joe developed an over-reliance on Alex's support:

> [Alex] left the Club as a coach. He's still planning to run sessions, just under a different banner. He's asked me to go along with it, but I'm a bit unsure where I'm going and where that leads… I'd happily join [Alex], but I want to introduce racing, and we need to register as a Go Ride club and put some races on to encourage racing. […] The Club messaged me asking me if I'm still coaching with them, but I'm not sure. [Alex] wants to use the same space, so I'm not sure how the set up would work, because there's only one group to work with […Alex] coaches the kids' side of things - he set it up and organises everything, basically. At the moment, the Club have kept the name, but without [Alex], they haven't got anything. […] I'm happy to write a plan that me and [Alex] can follow, rock up, run my session, have a cup of tea and chat, and go back the next week. I'm not interested in any of the other stuff - I don't have time for Committee meetings and things like that - and without [Alex], they don't have anything in place… When I finish work, my brain is fried. Coaching is a hobby for me, and something I enjoy… if it starts becoming stressful, or unenjoyable, I'm out. I have enough stress at work, I don't need my Wednesday evenings to be anything other than nice and relaxed, and enjoyable.

Over time, Joe gained confidence and became 'more equal' to Alex and 'more able' to challenge the misalignment of their goals. Joe felt sessions needed to be exciting because, like Oliver's club, sessions were repeated every three to four weeks. A key part of this was to plan 'active sessions':

> I'm trying to talk less, and keep them moving more, changing the activity or feeding back as they're moving, even though it might mean I'm saying the same thing eight times… but stopping the group to explain it once is when you get people talking, or messing with water bottles, or looking at speedboats out on the water, or waving to mum and dad. Keeping the group moving seems to work a lot better, because every time the session is stopped to give instructions, I kept losing their attention.

Joe found the BC planning document 'invaluable', offering 'structure' and 'a system' to include all relevant sections – 'a place to bullet point the coaching points of the skills you're covering'. Importantly, it was a skill that improved with practice:

> That first plan I did, for the generic course, took me five hours. But the last one I did only took me twenty minutes […] it definitely helps knowing the group, because I know what I can put in and what will challenge them.

Joe attempted to halve the planning with Alex by alternating every other week. However, Alex would attend sessions with plans 'scribbled on the back of a fag packet or something' with little detail, and often just a list of half a dozen techniques. Joe felt that this left him making up activities 'on the fly' just to 'get through it'. He was annoyed at this 'slap dash' approach but felt all the 'kids enjoyed it' and 'had a great time'. He was also frustrated by how Alex told him 'on the day the technique that [he was] planning on working on', whereas Joe shared his plan 'a couple of days beforehand'.

Another challenge for Joe was delivering specific skills across a large age range and 'progressing' the 'more able riders' in order to 'keep them engaged'. The club's mid-week session was 'more generic', whereas the weekend session was 'very much mountain bike focused, up on the trails, with different features, like drops and rocks'. These sessions aligned to the mountain bike focus of the club, but Joe felt they did not meet the riders' wants:

> The current flavour of the month is enduro-racing - like, racing with time stages? It's not a UCI thing, so British Cycling don't have anything like that - it's to do with the insurance not covering the transitions between stages, because they might be two miles apart and you ride them at your own leisure […] so as a club, we came up with the idea of running a 'dirt omnium', we ran it last year for the adults and looking to run it again this year for the kids […] the British Cycling route is very much cross country and downhill, but kids aren't really interested in those, because cross country needs a lot of fitness […] Plus the parents are into the enduro racing, which pushes the kids into it, but there's no scope for that sort of racing.

Joe felt his 'fresh ideas' were positively received, and this highlights his progressive thinking and creativity to react to the riders' demands. Moreover, he was interested in registering the club as a Go Ride club, to receive BC support and make races 'a bit more viable'.

James coached with two clubs. One club was 'well-resourced for coaches' and had mainly youth riders with sessions focused on 'race craft'. However, sessions were pre-planned, leaving James with an assistant role, 'working for someone else' – something he has 'never liked'. Following his accident, James felt 'older people are easier to coach [because] you can shout at them without any problem'. Consequently, James primarily coached in the second club, which had adult riders and sessions focused on 'group riding skills' and safe road riding. Being the only coach, James lacked the

support of more experienced coaches. Nonetheless, he identified gaps in his coaching and implemented ideas to address those, making the club 'more formal'. However, he was against the extra people-power – for example, safeguarding and welfare officers – to be an affiliated club with BC. He was frustrated how the facility 'passed' on and 'filed away' his risk assessments without 'even reading it' after this was a large focus of BC's assessment. He brought together a 'new group', which included new riders and some who were a 'bit rusty'. He was keen to improve their riding ability with 'some stuff on the car park', and then out 'in a group on the road'. James created one 'inclusive', but 'hardcore' group, with 'a fast group, a medium-paced group and a slow group'. He also started a heart rate session in the spin studio once a week over the winter months, purely to work on heart rate and cycle fitness.

The relational narrative

As part of the Chairman's plans to offer formal coaching, Peter and Chris attended BC's formal education with another club member. They risked qualifying with no 'outlet' for coaching, which, as Peter explained, would have been 'a complete waste of time' and 'very frustrating'. However, their coaching resulted in a 'little medal' at the club's Awards Dinner 'for services rendered'. Chris described the club as a 'social club', but explained their new aim was to 'get kids into cycling and get them to enjoy it, and do well':

> [The Chairman] is going for the next level of British Cycling club membership, so we can move up into the next echelon, as it were. […] The long-term plan is to get the junior membership up. A lot of the bigger clubs have bigger junior sections with club kit for the junior members […] If the foundations aren't there, then the whole thing will just wobble at some point. And we don't want that. […] But if we get a new Chairman who doesn't focus on that, then it may just

carry on, as it were, you know? Whereas if we get a Chairman who is in to it, then it may increase.

Chris suggested that junior riders completed the club's application for Club Mark status, unlocking 'more funding'. The club offered junior riders free membership and if the club had 'children riding bikes', Peter felt they needed coaching to ride a bike 'confidently'. However, junior members change 'the dynamics tremendously':

> It's sort of saying, "Well, if we do these things, your child can come." I'm not quite sure how much effect that will have, but if we can link that with using the new track at Doncaster as well, it means there are new things emerging, and that starts putting a different slant on it, as it were, because you're not just coming to the coaching sessions, but you're moving away from that, or alongside that, to being a member of [the club] *and* you're going to the new track […] so the timing of that couldn't be better for us, really.

However, the club recruited another school for after-school sessions and Peter was mindful they could 'spread themselves too thinly':

> I don't want [Chris] to feel that he has to volunteer, or he has to help out when I'm not there, or if I need help. I think we need to look into if we have a helper, how qualified do they need to be, because perhaps we could have other people helping us who aren't coaches, but just a helper, because that, again, will help tremendously if you've got a backup, as it were, to help.

For Chris, the session aims, and club goals aligned:

> We're not trying to push them into racing. The slow, sort of, commute cycling is every bit as good as racing for a lot of the kids. From our point of view, it's what the club is about. We always say that we're a social cycling club, not a racing club.

Similarly, Peter felt they were all 'going in the same direction', but felt they had 'different ways of doing it'. He suggested sessions should offer riders 'avenues' to pursue different disciplines. Moreover, Peter explained that the sessions' focus of riding to commute needed supplementing with road riding. Therefore, Peter attended the Ride Leadership course, to have that 'tucked under [his] belt' to broaden his remit and knowledge:

> We had the parents [at one school] fill out questionnaires […] and one thing that they said they wanted [the sessions] to give their children was confidence when it came to riding on the road. I knew coaching alone wouldn't do that, really. We needed to get them on the road to get confidence on the road and gain road awareness. […] Having attended the ride leadership means we can take out supervised children and that was the idea. That's the next progression really, that we wanted the coaching to take, so that we're coaching skills, then they could be of some use. […] It fulfils their parents' wishes, as much as anything else, and it throws the obligation back to them, because they need to come with them. I've had probably 4-5 parents come out with their children, which is really quite exciting.

Peter felt the Ride Leadership Qualification had a 'broader spectrum than bikeability', because it gave riders the opportunity to 'get some experience in road riding'. He felt that advertising a 'qualified ride leader-led ride' would encourage more people to engage with cycling. Moreover, Peter and Chris wanted to include riders' parents from the school sessions to emphasise how cycling brings families together. However, Peter knew that BC would not 'like it' as they kept coaching and road riding as 'two totally different things':

> I really try and differentiate them as two different things. You can't coach riding on the road, and on the road, you're not allowed to coach. So they're two distinct entities, and I try and keep them as such. It's all too easy to ride alongside somebody while you are on a road ride and give them some helpful advice and coaching. They were quite clear and specific that you shouldn't

coach while you are riding, and I get that, because often people are concentrating in their own bubbles, almost.

This highlights the autonomy that Peter and Chris had in leading sessions and they decided to run a sport-day-style event. Chris felt this offered riders a new and 'exciting' 'dimension' and Peter felt it was a 'chance to use the skills that they [had] acquired':

> It's not necessarily about getting them to race against other people, it's a race to show them how they have improved as well and where they are capable of competing with others, it will be a traditional, sort of, short race and then some individual races, and timing them, so that they can see how they're getting along.

Beth's coaching was based at a cycling centre in a National Park. The centre offered bike hire, mountain bike-specific coaching and guided sessions on the trails. Beth described their focus as 'money first', and then riders 'safely enjoying being on a bike in different situations'. It 'wasn't like a club, where you have a weekly meet', but the same riders regularly biked together. The Centre had a 'nice social side to it' – a 'fantastic community' where riders bonded over, and through, cycling. It was a 'solid organisation' with a 'good reputation' that Beth felt 'fortunate' to coach with. She had an 'established relationship with a lot of women already cycling […] within the mountain bike world'. It was a 'good starting block' and she felt 'part of a team' who had been 'very supportive and very positive'. The managers of the Centre were confident in her abilities and 'considered' her ideas, but she did not feel 'highly thought of'. There was another female coach at the Centre, and Beth did not want to

'start eating her way into' her work, so offered a series of female-only progressive sessions as her 'in-road':

> The progressive course idea was mine. [The Centre] just put it together and advertised it. They basically take a cut of the money because we're using their name, really.

Beth ran 'one day' sessions during the Spring/Summer of 2019 for 'different girls every week'. The coaching, on trails in the forest, encouraged riders to tackle the specific 'features' and become 'race ready'. Essentially, Beth coached the same session six times over, which created a lack of continuity and familiarity with riders, leaving her nervous and 'tongue-tied' for 'the first 20-30 minutes' of each session. Beth found coaching adults challenging because they 'judge more than children', and struggled with differentiation:

> We were getting a lot of beginner girls coming on the course, so we really need to have two levels. […] When there's a big difference in ability, those weaker riders really need a one to one to learn the basics, they can't really be a part of a group. It's quite sad, but we all want to be as good as each other - nobody wants to be the bottom of the group, do they? It's just human nature. […] I have to sit down and think "how I'm going to make [this session] best work?"

Beth found it 'hard to have a plan' because of a lack of rider information:

> I've asked for their names beforehand, and I've kind of stalked them a little on Facebook, and one or two of them I've added, and said, "Just so I can give you the best day for you, on Sunday, can you let me know what you're hoping to work on and what kind of trails you can ride?" […] I might get three out of five of them reply, so that'll be our plan […] I've got a lot of notebooks from teaching, so I just take a page, write down what I did in the last one and just jot down what I'm going to work on. Then come Sunday morning, [one] will turn up and she's never done it before, or she's really skilled and she'll totally throw whatever sort of plan I have in the air.

The Centre mangers did not 'expect' a plan and she had 'never seen any of the other coaches with plans'. She used the same 'basis' each time, which she tweaked 'depending on how good' the riders were. In contrast, Peter and Chris planned every session, to prevent 'the kids having the opportunity to get bored'. Planning helped to 'string together the things that you need' in a way that moved riders through the sessions 'confidently and safely'. Chris described the BC planning documents as 'the most valuable document' that BC produced, whereas it was the familiarity of BC's document that appealed to Peter:

> I'd use the British Cycling planning sheet, because if something happens to me, and somebody else wants to take over, it's something that's familiar, rather than trying to understand what someone else is doing before you start reading it. So I think it's good to have that familiarity, where everyone is rowing the same boat.

Although 'there [was] nobody in charge, as it were' or 'looking down [their] neck and checking [their] notes', Peter felt that not planning was a 'huge disadvantage'.

5.5.4.3 Spaces – physical, reflective, creative and dialogic

Here, I present a discussion of the spaces that participants inhabited, or created, for exploration, inquiry and learning. This included the physical spaces that participants coached in, creative spaces for imagining, reflective spaces for making meaning, and their dialogic spaces for conversation and discussion.

Following the 2012 Olympics, Louise secured a position working for a National sporting organisation and was motivated to promote female participation in sport. Within the reflective space of her microsystem, her club's female-only sessions complicated differentiation by age and ability, leaving riders nothing 'in terms of coaching or experience'. This left her disheartened:

> There's a bit of me that's super-impatient when I decide I want to do something, I'm like, 'I want it now' but I've made an incredible amount of progress, which is cool […] I should reflect back on where I've come from in six months.

Consequently, her drive to promote female cycling combined with her motivation to be – and work with – the best created a 'risk of disconnecting from people':

> My biggest fear for me not fulfilling my potential is my drive and determination… sometimes, my drive and determination means I move faster, and with greater assertiveness than those that are championing me, or want to follow me, and in doing so, I risk disconnecting from them.

Alongside coaching the talent pathway riders, this changed Louise's physical coaching space as she moved faster and in a different direction from those coaches who had supported her through her formal education. Louise reflected that she needed to develop a 'directive approach' and offer 'critical feedback' to develop riders. This proved 'challenging' because she was a 'people pleaser' who lacked 'confidence' in her ability. She felt her confidence would increase as she learned to trust what she said – that she had planned the 'right thing to do' – and learned to 'just go with it'. She understood the need to become more aware during her sessions. The 'key bit' for her

was 'recognising when [something] isn't working and being able to change it, in real time':

> It's about being able to take immediate feedback and then iterate what it is you're doing so that you're giving athletes the right amount of challenge, because if you spend ages planning something and then you get to it and then you realise, 'This is too easy' or it's too hard, but you just try and stick [with] it, you're wasting everyone's time.

Louise felt that she talked too much when coaching, striving to communicate with more 'clarity' and 'in less words'. She questioned her progression when working with the pathway riders and felt 'it's easy to stand out from the crowd' and 'be good' as a female coach, which the BC coaches heavily disputed. Witnessing the BC pathway coaches only emphasised Louise's doubts about her weaknesses as a coach. However, in line with the performance narrative, she viewed these challenges as a chance to learn.

Louise's club was based in a courtyard surrounded by concrete high-risers in East London (Figure 5.9). In an attempt to increase the club's outreach in the local community they lent bikes to riders, free of charge (Figure 5.9). It was not viable for Louise's club to rent coaching space, so coaches led riders to surrounding public spaces. On one visit, I observed a session being coached on the pedestrianised zones and closed roads of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (Figure 5.10). However, Louise negotiated access to the closed-road circuit at the VeloPark during their disability cluster sessions through the BC coaches (Figure 5.11). The track-specific pathway sessions Louise delivered were at the London 2012 Olympic Velodrome. Although the Olympic legacy was visible outside, there was no Olympic or BC reference on the Track (Figure 5.11).
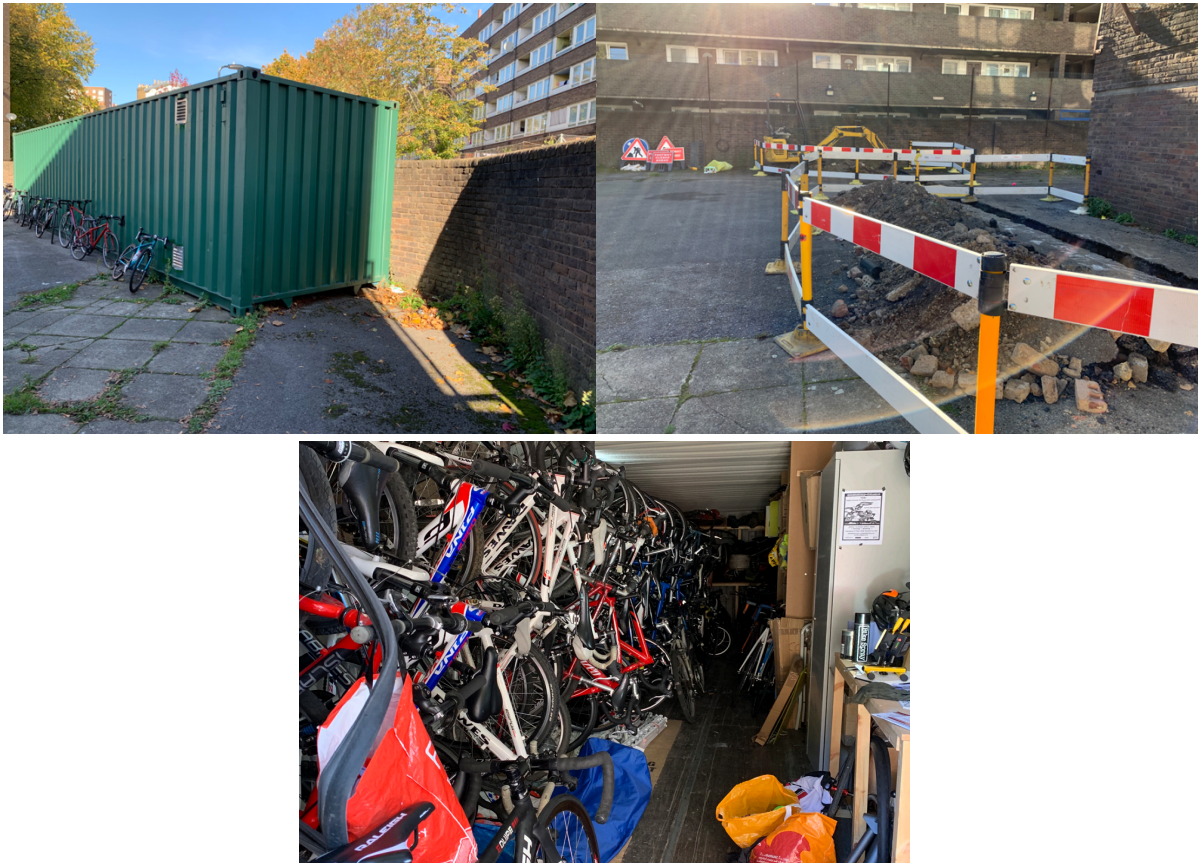
Figure 5.9 – Louise's club's courtyard and the bikes lent to riders (© Samuel Wood)

Figure 5.10 – Pedestrianised areas and closed roads of the Olympic Park, used by Louise's club for coaching sessions (© Samuel Wood)

Figure 5.11 – Coaching at the closed-road circuit and the Velodrome at the VeloPark in Lee Valley's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (© Samuel Wood)

The discovery narrative

These participants attended BC's formal education to receive the 'Coach' title. However, this was only the starting point. As they discovered their roles, explored their reflective and creative spaces, and became immersed in their physical spaces, they grew into their 'Coach' titles.

Oliver felt he was 'progressing, slowly and steadily in a positive direction'. He had 'loads to learn' because he tended to 'see what the coach said, and then just reiterated the key coaching points'. His club used an outdoor road circuit at a council owned facility. Oliver coached on a coned section of tarmac to the side of the circuit, about 20m by 8m, 'small enough to follow the group', watch 'very closely' and offer 'one to one feedback', rather than 'just shouting from a distance' (Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12 - Oliver's coaching space (© Samuel Wood)

James did not create a large reflective space within his microsystem:

> I probably don't reflect as thoroughly as I should. Most of the time it's done in my head, to be honest with you […] I'm normally running from one job to the next.

He wished coaching was 'more challenging' sometimes but felt that he could coach with more ease. He developed his own style with a 'bit of humour' and 'a bit of a cheer' to 'pass on [his] enthusiasm'. He coached his adult sessions at a golf course, using the clubhouse for some classroom-based activities and a coned area of the car park (see Figure 5.13) which limited his group to 12 riders. He explained that they 'try and be out on the Road as much as possible' using his coaching qualification to deliver

technical skills in the car park, complimented by his Ride Leadership qualification for the guided ride on the Road. One session I attended included a ride to Great Windsor Park, where James conducted more coaching in a traffic-free environment. This approach offered a blend of structured, coached time focused on technique, followed by the practical application of riding on the road. To offer some variety, and to make use of his Track qualification, James looked at hiring the Olympic Velodrome in Lee Valley, but described the cost as 'nearly prohibitive':

> It was in excess of £900 for two hours. We've only got 10 kids, so I can't go to each kid and ask for £90… then you've got to get to the East side of London, too - that's a two hour drive, or an hour and forty on the train, if you can get your bike on the train, which is a definite no-go in rush hour […] If I lived on the East side of London, I'd be there all day, every day. It means using the velodrome is a no-no, so I'll be taking [the riders] to Herne Hill, because that's relatively cheap and I'll only have to charge each one £5 or £10 and I'll cover the shortfall […] they have bikes we can hire, too. Only downside is that they want their own coaches there, but that's an insurance thing.

Figure 5.13 – The space used for James's classroom-based activities in the golf clubhouse and the car park used for the practical sessions (© Samuel Wood)

Joe reflected how he was more confident in both his knowledge and role, and understood that he would 'continue to grow and develop', because he was 'by no means a super coach':

I finished the generic qualification feeling confident. But looking back, I was probably a three or four out of ten. I was in a cold sweat delivering that first session after qualifying. I knew what I was doing, but it was overwhelming having fifteen kids and fifteen pairs of parents looking at you. It felt like I had to say something that sounded like I knew what I was talking about… it took a while for the confidence to build from there. […] But now I'm happy that what I'm saying is right and I'm confident in how I'm delivering it […] The tutor put on my assessment that the content was fine, but that the physical delivery would come with time, and it has. […] You just get more confident, don't you, the more you do something. Now I feel more relaxed and confident doing it… Before, I'd arrive and spend time reading my session plan, making sure I knew everything. Now I'll arrive and sit chatting to parents from the previous session. I'm finding my style. […] At the end of the session now, I feel like a coach. In the beginning, I felt like a child-minder, watching them all, trying to keep them all entertained, as such. Now I don't really focus on that. Now I do feel more like a coach.

In his reflective space, Joe learned 'something new […] every session'. I observed his differentiation of using three wooden ramps of different heights to keep everyone 'involved in the same session'. He understood the importance of sessions accommodating different abilities, and he discovered numerous ways of achieving the same outcome:

Sometimes, the better kids do something, and you watch, and the outcome seems to be different than the outcome I was aiming for. It's a case of saying, "Right, let's look at that and adapt that". I learned that on the specific course, really. The book would say to do it one way, but then the tutors would show us another way that works better. But every book in the World has 2 versions, doesn't it - they're revised. The only one that doesn't is the Bible, and this isn't the Bible. If there's a better way, or a more efficient way of doing things, the books should be updated… I've learned there are multiple ways of doing things.

Within his creative space, Joe considered 'using games' and explored keeping riders moving:

> The idea of riding around a circuit of cones was taught on the generic course - it keeps everyone involved, even if they're just doing laps of the cones, practising on their own, without any specific input, constantly […] Having them going around a circuit like that is better than being in a line, waiting to have a go […] Initially, I was concerned that they were going to crash into each other, and that someone might fall off, but after a few weeks with them, I got more confident that they're ok, and now I'm confident to let them go off and practise stuff while I do the coaching.

By positioning himself at a 'feature', he could deliver individual feedback, while the whole group kept moving. Riders practised old skills while learning new ones and received individual coaching without being 'stood around'. Consequently, Joe was more able to manage riders' behaviour, because if 'you leave kids doing nothing, they're bashing wheels with each other'.

The Country Park Joe coached at was owned by the Local Authority Council. Some sections of the Park, like those in Figure 5.14, were open grass fields. Other areas were trails, built and financed by the club and integrated into the Park's network of trails. The club agreed to maintain these 'purpose-built trails' if the Local Authority would cover the expense of the insurance. Building their own trails allowed autonomy over the features included, ensuring they were built around relevant coaching points, rather than features that 'border on being useless for anyone':

> Those specific sessions are impacted by the age of the riders who attend the sessions - if they're small kids, then the sessions have to be delivered on a small bank, or a little bit of the woods. If they were all adult riders, I would have used more technical terrain. But the space I used had all the features and was a safer environment for the kids.

However, coaching on the trails was a challenge because riders were not always in 'sight or earshot'. The bigger challenge was the Council restricting access to the Park because of bad weather. This was a recurring issue, so Joe started coaching on outdoor

courts at a senior school (Figure 5.14). These all-weather courts were floodlit, which allowed sessions to run all year round. The tarmac surface also meant that sessions were less likely to be hindered by bad weather.

Figure 5.14 – The contrasting environments of Joe's coaching (© Samuel Wood)

The relational narrative

Peter coached 'cycling skills', with a focus on enjoyment. Within his reflective space he realised that at 61 years old he still enjoyed cycling and so should not be 'surprised' that riders he coached 'enjoy riding their bikes' too. However, Peter wanted riders to have 'assurance and confidence' in him 'as a person' and had 'grown into' his role because of his 'technical knowledge':

> It's as much about being able to talk about something, understand it and know it, as it is about spotting something and correcting it. I've always maintained that teaching is actually quite easy. A lot of people could stand in front of a class and teach something, particularly if they know something about it. […] I'd say [my cycling knowledge] was a two before, and now I feel about a five-ish, because of the other disciplines around that I don't know a lot about. For the coaching I'm doing at the moment, it's probably an eight or nine. But overall, I'm midway, really, because I don't know enough about track or cycle-cross or mountain biking, downhilling and all this sort of stuff. It scared the heebie-jeebies out of me.

Similar to the coaches aligned to the discovery narrative, however, Peter was 'aware that [he had] a long, long way to go' in improving his coaching:

> We've not made it yet. We're a lot better than we used to be a year ago, but we don't want to become complacent and just feel we've done it, or that we can just look back through our notes and that's good enough. We need to make sure that it's more tailor made now.

Although the sessions he had been delivering were only 'really basic skills', 'at a really basic level', Peter felt he had improved with experience. For Chris, increased technical knowledge improved his abilities to coach and cycle. He felt more 'capable' because of the sessions he had delivered:

> I'm much more comfortable with [coaching], much more comfortable with giving kids instruction, telling them where they've done something right or wrong. I tend to tell the ones who have done something wrong either quietly or by telling one of the kids who got it right, how they got it right, so the ones who didn't do it can pick up on it […] Kids don't like criticism. I think as you get older you can accept criticism, but you still like it to be quiet and not in public. There's no opportunities really to do things quietly, sometimes everybody needs to hear because sometimes you learn better from somebody else's mistake, don't you?

As an adult road club, Peter and Chris's club offered no coaching, just the social aspect of riding on the road in groups. As such, the club did not have their own facility, or access to other facilities for formal coaching. Reaching out to the local schools in the area offered a coachable, traffic-free space to deliver sessions as an after-school activity. Peter and Chris coached across two different schools (see Figure 5.15):

> [One school] has a super big grassy area that's got some little risers in it, so if we're having a race, that's where we'd have it [the other school] has facilities for incorporating the grass and the playground stuff better, but the grass is flat, so I'm struggling to do hilly bits at that school - plus the playground is a lot

smaller, so it's more limiting in that sense. But that school does have a superb canopy, so if it starts raining, we can sit under the canopy.

Figure 5.15 – The different school settings where Peter and Chris coached (©
Samuel Wood)

Each site influenced sessions differently. Chris hoped, as numbers picked up there would be demand for the cones and discs that they use in sessions 'to be represented a little more permanently' – that sessions could shape their physical environment. Unfortunately, the school sites offered no artificial lighting, which hindered sessions in the winter. Peter and Chris coached until the October half-term, but the light was failing quickly at the end of sessions (Figure 5.16). Consequently, coaching was not a year-round activity, dictated by the facilities these participants coached in.

Figure 5.16 - Peter and Chris's coaching site at the end of their coaching session, with the fading light (© Samuel Wood)

While participating in the research, their local town built a closed-road circuit. The opening of this facility coincided with the Union Cycliste Internationale's (UCI) World Road Championships in Yorkshire, following the successes of the Tour of Yorkshire and National Road Races in the area. Peter was hopeful that the club would be able to 'ask for time on [the circuit]' and was 'quite looking forward to [the opportunity to] take children on a sort of road before you actually take them on the road':

I'm not quite sure where I am going… I was talking about the cyclo-cross, but that was before the track came to Doncaster. I'd much prefer to teach children how to road race around the track, rather than cyclo-cross - while I would happily do cycle-cross, it's not something I'm really interested in, whereas the road racing, that excites me. So, if [my coaching's] going anywhere, it's probably the road racing element of the Level 2 coaching, rather than the cyco-cross… I don't know how they go about the road racing thing, but I think that's where I'd go. I held back this year from going and doing any searching because I just wanted to see how [coaching] would evolve.

Within Beth's reflective space, she had reached a good standard of cycling in quite a short period of time and was 'worried' it questioned her abilities:

I thought people might think, "She's only been doing it for a little bit", but actually, I'm showing that I can coach, and I can do it well. I just maybe was a quick learner? I only started doing downhill when I was 35 or 36, but I worked hard at it. Every time I'm out biking I'm working at improving […] I was worried that people would just think that I was a bit of a joke, but people don't seem to think that and it seems to be going well.

Beth's sessions aimed to progress riders' technical skills within the session, rather than across a series of sessions. However, on reflection, she realised that the skills she covered had little connection. Consequently, during her Autumn sessions, Beth built progression throughout the day, using the same trail and covering basic features through to the more advanced. Here, riders' skills progressed towards successfully riding the whole trail. Although Beth noticed improvements in her delivery, she had simply delivered the same session numerous times. This made it difficult to distinguish whether the improvement was Beth becoming a 'better coach' or because 'the [riders] were getting better'. Yet, through experience, Beth felt she became more than a 'stupid person that's saying they can do all this' and became 'more natural' and 'more able' following sessions that went 'well'. Successful sessions were those that met

all the riders' 'needs' while keeping a 'wide variety of people on the go'. However, in hindsight, she shared how sessions were ambitious for the spread of abilities in her session:

> The idea was that they'd come on the course and they'd be able to then have a go at racing that trail. We had complete beginners just turning up for it, and maybe one racer, so I'd then kind of have to throw everything in the air that I'd planned, and somewhat go back to the beginning, but still be trying to push the other girl. So that was quite a hard session, so it's just trying to think on my feet, really.

As for Beth's creative space, she coached friends before she qualified by giving 'advice' – suggesting things and leaving them to take it on board or leave it. This developed an effective way of questioning riders and probing for the answers from them. Here Beth honed her skills, and, because of her previous teaching experience and knowledge, she appreciated how effective this approach was:

> It meant I would suggest things and question things more, like, if we were doing cornering, I'd say "What do you think you've got to do at this point?" It's a good way of coaching, and of teaching, to say to them, "Well, why do you think that?" A good teacher will do that, because once they understand that themselves and they've worked it out themselves, you learn quicker.

Coaching in the forest, on trails and gravel fire roads, Beth perhaps coached in the most diverse physical space of all the participants (Figure 5.17). Like Peter, Chris and Joe, this space did not have artificial lighting, limiting Beth's coaching to day time, primarily weekends, or summer evenings. Her physical space also forced her to progress through BC's formal education pathway to the mountain bike-specific qualification.

Figure 5.17 - Beth's coaching space(s) in the forest (© Samuel Wood)

5.5.4.4 Relationships

This included participants' existing or newly developed relationships with themselves and other people, the relationships they had with things – objects and tools – and their associated affordances in their physical and social environment, and their relationship with BC and the role they played in their coaching.

The performance narrative

Louise managed fragile relationships with the coaches within her club. She felt her ideas would be negatively received because she felt she would be saying 'this thing you've been doing for ages, I've just turned up and I'm trying to change stuff because

you haven't been doing a very good job'. Asking for a session plan was perceived negatively, as though she was 'chasing' them. She did not feel involved with the club and did not identify as a club coach. During one observation, everyone was wearing a club jersey except her. She described club sessions as 'the sleepy country town' compared to 'the city' of the BC sessions. However, she had not walked into any of those sessions 'assuming' anything:

> I've walked into all of those situations to learn, and be like, "I'm new. You're clearly more experienced than me, what can I learn?" […] But I've never had such consistent positive feedback in my life. [The talent development coach for my region] was like, "How do you know all this?" And I was like, "What do you mean?" He was like, "You just seem to know loads about coaching", or something like that. I was like, "I don't know. I just like it. I do it, and I read about it".

I joined Louise's club one cold Saturday morning in October to see their meeting point – the courtyard (Figure 5.9) – bustling with cyclists. Louise came alive and considering she struggled to embed herself in the club, she more than belonged in this space. She knew riders and their families – and had strong relationships and rapport with them – and continued discussions from previous weeks. One session I observed, she used basic ice-breaker exercises to build relationships amongst the group. For example, she asked riders to line up in age order, and then in alphabetical order. Louise joined in, including and engaging the whole group. She discussed a generation gap between the other coaches and riders, questioning if they understood how to deal with riders.

During another session I observed, Louise demonstrated good specific feedback and open questioning, placing riders at the centre of their reflections and evaluations. For example, she asked riders, "How was that? What did we learn?" Three Dads

accompanied the group, who served as chaperones when cycling to the coaching site from the meeting point. However, their presence on the side-lines, and the way in which they shouted feedback to riders, hindered Louise's ability to engage with the session.

When I observed Louise deliver a talent pathway session, the riders tested her limits. The coach she was delivering the session with likened it to school students with a supply teacher, stressing the importance of having 'buy-in' from the riders and 'not being too hard straight on'. Louise struggled to build relationships with these riders, as the following field notes capture:

> [Louise] talks with the other coach during the warm up exercise about the need to look for space on the track. She describes how she recently raced a road race and how it's about looking for space amongst the road furniture, especially at corners, as much as it is about looking at the furniture itself. The coach agrees and tells her it's a valid point and a way of looking at it that he hadn't thought about. After the feedback to riders, which he led, [Louise] explained the same concept to the riders, but didn't get much buy-in from the riders. It clearly unnerves her a little. She begins to take the lead on explaining the next task and begins to stumble her way through it. One rider asks for clarification, which stumps her. She deflects it back to the rest of the group to answer. Then she makes a move for the track and breaks away from the riders. She tells me that she wishes she had read the session plan in more detail so she was more clued up.

Louise lacked technical knowledge in the track-discipline. This affected her confidence, which impacted her ability to build relationships with the riders. This was the tenth camp of the year and riders were very confident with each other. She struggled to gain respect and seemed less inclined to accept misbehaviour, which the other coaches perceived as 'banter'.

Moving away from her club, Louise felt like a BC coach when coaching the BC talent pathway riders. This provided a unique relationship with BC. 'Getting closer to the talent' motivated her to progress through the education pathway, which shaped

her relationship with BC, although she did not engage with their formal education. She described the BC coaches as 'good', but felt BC was a 'pretty badly-run organisation'. Conversely, Adam did not consider himself 'a British Cycle coach' because he 'can't work for British Cycling', even though he had BC coaching qualifications. He identified himself as a 'Velodrome coach' and 'nothing to do with British Cycling':

> The Velodrome might as well teach me the [rider programme] that I'm learning now, without me paying British Cycling […] I'm never going to work on a BC race, and that's the only thing you need a British Cycling qualification for, so you might as well be taught by the Track and pay the Track and then you've done what they want straight away, and it would be a lot less process […] I've got nothing - just a bit of paper. I'm not associated with them in any way […] I haven't got one of those GB jobs I want… I can't understand why you would have to do a GB qualification when you're actually going to do something else for someone else.

The discovery narrative

Joe primarily coached with Alex, the club's head coach. However, Alex struggled to be 'mobile with his current health conditions', which left Joe delivering sessions on his own while Alex 'floats around […] talking to parents or sat doing nothing' (Figure 5.18). Joe and Alex differed in their philosophies; Alex was 'happy getting people on bikes' to 'develop people, just so they ride', and while Joe agreed this was 'important' he felt it needs 'some moderation'. Joe wanted to 'get [riders] participating in races' because he had 'always done races' so '[encouraged] those who want to race, to race'. He was 'frustrated' that 'locally, there're no races, at all, for kids' and wanted to change that.

I attended one of Joe's sessions on a warm summer's evening. He described coaching younger riders as 'herding ants'. Riders seemed frustrated at Joe's bike and helmet check – they wanted to ride their bikes. The club had a strong relationship with parents, many of whom biked with the club, and often observed sessions (see Figure 5.18). During the observation, Joe asked Alex to man a section of his course. Alex told him 'to pull his parents in' and use them, reflecting Joe's introduction to coaching and emphasising their relationship with parents. However, moving to the school changed this relationship. The move reduced the cost for parents, but the other facilities on site – for example, gym classes and a swimming pool – enticed parents away from the side-lines of sessions.

Figure 5.18 - The parents at Joe's sessions, the slalom poles and handmade ramps for coaching mountain-bike-specific skills in a generic environment (© Samuel Wood)

Moving to the new site also changed Joe's relationship with the physical space, the resources available, and his relationship with mountain biking. One session I attended at the school focused on riding in groups, riding laps around a circle of blob cones. This was a Road-discipline focus, rather than a mountain bike-discipline skill. Joe and Alex invested in slalom poles (also in Figure 5.18), which simulated riding around a tree more than a blob cone, 'which they tend to just ride over' without any

consequence. Joe sourced these online but was shocked how many coaches on the Facebook group enquired about them. Joe struggled to coach young riders on the trails. As such, the club hand-built some ramps from crates, which Joe used on flat grassy areas of the Park (Figure 5.18). Joe's relationship with these objects changed the physical space within which he coached, allowing him to coach mountain bike-specific skills to younger riders in a controlled, generic area.

These resources offered numerous differentiation opportunities and facilitated Joe's creative space. During one observation Joe coached a braking exercise. He split riders into two groups with a slalom pole marking half-way between the two groups. He had them race, two at a time, towards the slalom pole. The winner was first rider to the pole. Joe discussed how this game had been inspired by a jousting scene in Disney's Robin Hood, which he had recently watched with his sons. Moving to the new coaching site restricted Joe's use of the slalom poles. Instead, he had court lines painted on the tarmac surface to use (see Figure 5.14). He had attended his sons' athletics session where the coaches used similar court lines in their warm up. Joe was inspired to try and work out a creative way to use the lines for a similar game in cycling.

Oliver's facility had a clubhouse (Figure 5.19). This marked the start and finish point of sessions, where riders signed-in for sessions and gathered for the post-race awards ceremony following sessions. This space served as a communication platform with notice boards displaying information regarding sessions and local events. Crucially, however, this space was where parents set-up camp, removing them from the side-lines of sessions, limiting Oliver's interactions with them.

Figure 5.19 – The club house at Oliver's coaching site and his resources (© Samuel Wood)

During one observation, Oliver started the session with a clothing and bike check. He had a relaxed nature with the group and crouched to be on riders' level. He engaged riders with open questions, such as "I've forgotten how to do a bike check. Who can help?"; "I've forgotten how to brake. How might I do it?"; "What did we learn today? What was good?" He knew riders' names and made sure he involved all riders in answering questions. Importantly, he linked the current session to previous sessions and required riders to recall information already learned. However, when the group moved to the coaching area, the four support coaches involved with the session began to overpower Oliver and hinder his delivery. Perhaps the other coaches felt they were mentoring Oliver, but it would be more effective to offer feedback at the end of sessions, or when riders were executing a task, rather than take over the session. When paired for tasks, it was one coach per pair. The resources Oliver used during sessions, primarily cones, were provided by the Club (Figure 5.19). Oliver found this somewhat restrictive. He hoped that the school he was coaching at would purchase slalom poles to add variety to those sessions.

Figure 5.20 - James's coaching box with no reference to his club or BC (© Samuel Wood)

James coached adults, so, unlike the other two coaches aligned to this narrative, did not have a relationship with parents. As for physical resources, James used blob cones to mark out circuits and exercises for riders. He had no BC or club presence in his sessions (see Figures 5.13 and 5.20). Remember, these coaches were motivated to have the "Coach" title, and as such, James was frustrated that he did not receive any 'coaching kit' with the BC logo on, 'not even a beanie hat' which the commissars receive for their volunteer role with BC.

These participants did not have 'a huge amount to do with British Cycling', but they valued the 'Coach' title. James attended a safeguarding course, and 'felt proud' introducing himself as a 'British Cycling Level 2 Coach'. Oliver highlighted how good BC's resources are, although he felt that 'some elements of the book could be clearer'. He was not 'reaching out to find people' outside the 'little sphere' of his kids' cycling, but he knew there was a 'load of stuff out there' to be 'accessed' because of the club's notice board (Figure 5.21). He found the BC website difficult to navigate but understood that help was only a phone call away and complimented the BC staff for

coordinating everything. These coaches knew that to receive their 'Coach' title they needed to be part of BC. James used his BC 'Coach' title as his 'back-up':

> Sometimes, when you're saying something that needs to be done, you can say, "Look. British Cycling suggest doing it this way. This is not my technique, or your technique, this is *the* technique, and we need to do it the British Cycling way" […] Some of the older people are just too long in the tooth for change.

Joe criticised how BC focused on getting riders from the club level to 'being able to race' and did not cater for the riders in his club. Although this matched his personal philosophy of coaching, he thought this worked better with teenagers than with 6-8 year-olds. Similarly, James argued that BC need to focus on general cycling:

> We aren't ever going to have another Cavendish or Wiggins or Team Sky set up ever again. They've milked and miked that […] The era of Chris Hoy and Jason Kenny has gone - they were in a different class, and I think it's going to skip a generation or two. […] British Cycling needs to get grassroots level up a bit and encourage more people to cycle.

Figure 5.21 – BC noticeboard in Oliver's clubhouse (© Samuel Wood)

The relational narrative

During observations at the schools, Peter and Chris had no physical reference to their coach title, their club or BC. However, at the sports-day event, they wore club jerseys and distributed water bottles with the club logo as prizes (Figure 5.22). Seeing the club 'brand' highlights the ways in which they were trying to strengthen the club's presence in sessions. It also emphasised their aim to entice junior riders into their club and their dissociation with BC.

Peter and Chris had no contact with parents, except when they collected riders at the end of the session. They were keen to increase parent involvement and hoped to build relationships through the guided rides Peter would deliver following the Ride Leadership qualification. However, the parent support for these cycling sessions was clear to see at the sports-day-style event (Figure 5.22).

Figure 5.22 – Parents at Peter and Chris's sports day-style event and the water bottles distributed at prizes during the sports day event (© Samuel Wood)

As the Chairman broadened the schools that Peter and Chris coached at, they became assigned to their individual sites. Peter had a good relationship with the Headteacher of his school, quickly becoming embedded within the social environment. He started sessions under a canopy (Figure 5.23). Seating riders away from their bikes gave Peter an opportunity to take a register and share the session

aims. This ritual transitioned riders from their school day and into their cycling session. This space became invaluable to Peter's sessions. It is where Peter and Chris built relationships and delivered show-and-tell style presentations. One observation finished with riders being educated on equipment for riding in the dark. Peter also used this space to manage the group – to remove riders from their bikes and take time to refocus on the session aims sat at the table. Peter also used a whistle to control the group. For example, during one observation, he had the group changing activity every minute, and marked this with a blow of the whistle. Conversely, during another observation, Chris struggled to build relationships with riders. When disciplining a rider, he said, 'You're not here to get told off, you're here to have fun', highlighting a possible lack of confidence in controlling the group.

Figure 5.23 – The areas in which Peter and Chris started their sessions (© Samuel Wood)

Beth started her sessions in the 'Clubhouse' (Figure 5.24) – a hub of activity where riders met before riding in the forest. Beth coached stand-alone sessions, which meant this was her space to introduce herself; ask about riders' previous experience and what they wanted to take away from the session, highlighting that this was *their* session; take a register; hand out disclaimers; and have riders introduce themselves to each

other. This became an important ritual in Beth's sessions and allowed the group to form strong peer-relationships. For example, during one observation, one rider's bike needed returning to the hire facility, and another rider in the group offered her the chance to use her bike. There was a real team spirit amongst the groups Beth coached and riders were good at feeding back to, and encouraging, each other. The 'clubhouse' was also where lunch happened during sessions. As such, this became Beth's space to gather her thoughts, reflect on the session and refine her plan for the afternoon.

Figure 5.24 – The areas in which Beth started her sessions, including her 'Clubhouse' (© Samuel Wood)

At one observation, Beth was explaining ways to make a skill easier and referred to her own learning: "I learned this on a flat but doing it uphill is easier". In explaining the skill, she talked about track stands. It was great to hear Beth mention other discipline-specific skills, considering she was embedded in a mountain bike club. This highlighted her engagement with the content of the generic Level 2 qualification. However, in reality, riders were clueless about a track stand. Beth embedded it in mountain biking, applying it to surveying the landscape at the 'top of a lip' – the section of trail before a steep section – explaining the track stand in terms of 'getting control of the bike' and emphasising that 'it's a good skill to have'. This

questioned the value of the generic Level 2 qualification, and Beth's relationship with BC's formal education. Beth felt BC was a certificate provider who gave her 'the certificate to do what [she does]'. Consequently, any 'continued relationship with them would just be for more qualifications'. Peter agreed:

> British Cycling run a course that gives you a certificate that says, 'You can do this', and that's it, really. […] You get the materials you need. So they set you up to be a coach, and I think that's how I see it. But the fact that they don't have any post-course checks, to me, means that they have no involvement anymore. In essence, you could do the course and then just do *exactly* what you want, which I think is a bit risky, a little bit, on their part. But I realise that, you know, to check up on every coach that they've had through their sessions would be quite a mammoth task.

These participants viewed BC as a 'facilitator' who offered a course that enabled them to coach. Peter had 'no more interest in British Cycling than that' and felt that 'there is no British Cycling involvement in [his] coaching'; he was, simply, '[Peter] the coach'. Peter did not need support from BC, citing Chris as his 'go-to friend'.

Chris described BC as a 'key motivator' and support. Although he would not 'benefit from having somebody from British Cycling standing on the touchline every session', it was 'nice to know that they're in the background'. BC gave him the 'tools' to make coaching possible, and he used 'their resources and the coaching books nearly all of the time'.

For Peter, BC advertise "We want everybody to ride", but are 'very much geared towards gold medals and Olympics'. He had positive experiences with individuals within BC and felt everyone shared the same vision of 'promoting cycling'. However, BC appeared disorganised, where 'the left hand is not too sure what the right hand is

doing'. These participants felt it was their role to help riders fall in love with riding, as Peter summarised:

> [BC's] adverts, the quotes and what appears to be the ethos, is towards the racing end of things. That's fine. I have no problem with that, because every racer has got to start somewhere. They've got to start with a love of cycling, and get on with it. So if I can do that with the children that I have in my groups, then I'm more than happy […] British Cycling needs people like us, because you don't want any coaches higher than us doing what we're doing because that's just a waste of their time. They need to be focused on the next stages […] I'm a great believer that everybody has a role and a place. I believe I've found mine… that's my role within British Cycling, to introduce people to cycling in a safe way.

5.5.4.5 Resources

Resources refers to the things that had value to participants in a particular situation, or more generally, in lots of situations, that helped them learn and achieve their goals. What was perceived as a resource was individual to each participant and their ability to utilise it. Resources included information, knowledge, expertise, and mediating artefacts – for example, signs, tools and technologies.

The performance narrative

These participants used peer learning in their development. Adam 'watched the other coaches' at the velodrome and 'liked what they do' and 'copied':

> If I am being honest, I have learnt more at [the] Velodrome than I have on the course… I don't know if I'm dyslexic or whatever, but it's hard for me to take things in. […] Watching the coaches at [the Velodrome] really helps - not that I don't know what they do, it's just the way they make it flow […] Every time I've been, I feel like I have learnt something else, especially when you are doing it with one of the other coaches. I scribble it all down in a notebook.

However, he was not impressed by some of the coaching he observed:

> I started to watch the coaches a little bit more to see what they were doing and some of them haven't got a clue. I emailed [the tutor] and said, "What you've told me to do on the course, I'm going to be crossing wires here and ruffling some feathers". He emailed back saying, "What do you mean?", and I said, "They've got no idea of the concept of a warm up, it's just full on, straight away"… they came out of the session, and they were done in, they were just flat out, but they only did 30 laps.

There was a difference between the coaching he had been expected to deliver through his formal education and the coaching he witnessed at the facility. These observations socialised Adam into the facility's way of coaching. But it was a slow process. He wanted to observe as much as he could, but 'being there once a month', with sessions constantly cancelled, prevented Adam 'getting a lot of time to watch'. He was 'between a rock and hard place' because if 'you don't stay, you don't learn', but it was voluntary. Moreover, when working alongside the facility coaches, he had a defined role for that session, limiting his exposure to the full coaching process.

Louise observed other coaches during her early coaching, and this continued to be a useful learning method for her:

> I [observed] loads when I first started coaching, so the whole of 2016 when I would have done coaching, I very rarely led a coaching session, I was just there to help. But even now, as a coach, it's really useful to get other ideas from other coaches. […] I'm getting to do a lot of observing [at the Regional Schools of Racing] of very experienced coaches who are pretty good at what they're doing… one of the coaches is the coach who actually inspired me to do a coaching qualification. He has a very good style, which I feel is similar to mine, where he's always asking riders for feedback.

However, she was mindful that this would become impractical as she became more responsible for coaching groups. Similarly, it was difficult for her to be observed

by other coaches as they were more valuable coaching, restricting opportunities for them to 'give you pointers'. Louise had 'never got a compliment on [her] coaching from [her] fellow coaches in [the club]'. This was a contributing factor to her move away from the club:

> I was getting all this incredibly positive feedback, and all these opportunities to really learn, because one of the things that I felt like - I love my local coaches, but I don't feel like I learn a lot from them […] I don't come away from a session with them, feeling that same level of, "Yes, I have applied a structured approach."

Louise cited her work colleagues as her 'biggest source of knowledge', because she '[gets] on with people who coach'. She discussed coaching, and the associated challenges, with people she worked with – her 'ready-made community of practice' – more than people within BC. However, she was supported through her coaching of the talent pathway sessions. During one observation, Louise was provided with a session plan and appreciated the guidance that this provided. She reflected that she gave riders too many choices, with the other coach highlighting the importance of scaffolding options. He emphasised that she was 'doing amazing' considering her inexperience coaching Track – a source of confidence for her. At this session, Louise also used video analysis to frame her feedback to riders, led by the second coach. This highlighted a useful coaching resource and learning resource for Louise herself.

Unlike other participants, Louise sourced coaching knowledge from reading. Louise discussed reading Nancy Kline, a 'life coach' whose 'whole concept of coaching' centred on creating a 'thinking environment':

> I'm reading it at the same time as I'm reading Carole Dweck. [Kline] talks about the thinking environment and having ten components to enable great thinking. Her whole thing is you don't need to contribute any content as a coach or a

mentor, all you need to do is listen, and ask the right questions - most people have the answer […] A lot of people feel that they need to be the expert, and it totally takes that away because you're not the expert, they are.

Consequently, Louise placed an importance on questioning riders, empowering them to find answers to the issues they faced. Her role as a coach was helping riders reach their end goal. She did not positively reinforce her worth by proving her technical knowledge through oversharing technical knowledge to riders. Louise also read 'The Chimp Paradox' by Dr Steve Peters, synonymous with BC's sports psychology, and Covey's 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People', which discussed 'powerful lessons in personal change'. This extra-curricular reading highlights how Louise was driven to be the best person she could, to become the best coach possible:

> My boss said to me a month ago, he was like, "Honestly, I can't believe you haven't finished [Seven Habits of Highly Effective People]. Could you just do whatever you need to read that book. Maybe you need to buy the audiobook?" That was actually a lightbulb moment for me because now I can listen to audiobooks when I'm on my rollers. So I whizzed through the Seven Habits last month, and then I'm listening to the Chimp Paradox […] There're always books I want to read, and this new approach by listening to them, I think is going to get me really far. I read Brene Brown, or listened to Brene Brown before Christmas, 'The Gift of Imperfection', and at the minute, I'm reading 'Racing Weight' by Matt Fitzgerald, but that's almost a guide on racing weight and training and eating. […] We've also got a subscription to the Harvard Business Review at work, so I'll read stuff on that, and I really like Adam Grant, who's the organisational psychologist, and I follow him on LinkedIn, and quite often he'll post articles on there, so I'll just click through and read those.

The discovery narrative

On taking up their 'Coach' role, these participants felt that they had 'gaps' in their knowledge following their formal educational experiences. They sought information

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from other coaches within their clubs as well as their wives, other coaches they met through their formal education, and digital platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook.

James used the Gears books as an 'aide memoire', which allowed him to 'combine lots of things from lots of sessions. In addition, he felt they made his differentiation of skills during sessions 'fairly easy' because he could adapt the exercises to 'make them easier or harder'. Equally, Oliver suggested that the Gears books are 'easy to take with you' to sessions and have a 'more practical element' to them than the handbooks, which are 'difficult to navigate'. However, Oliver suggested he should look at the Gears books more for 'best practice':

> I should look at the [BC] resources more because they are very, very good […] Gears 1 and 2 are more relevant because, they're sort of, more basic - they're lower-end skills and the basic elements, and coaching that means just reaffirming the basics […] Maybe coaches in the club should challenge themselves a bit to say, "We're going to do braking, let's maybe just make sure we all know the current coaching points", and turn to the Gears book. We all fall into the habit of saying, "It's only braking", or, "It's only gears - it's pretty straightforward", but actually, taking the time to go back and just checking a few simple things makes a world of difference.

Joe also had become less reliant on the Gears books as he settled into his coaching role and became more familiar with his coaching space: 'I flick back to [them] now and then, but I'm aware of the terrain that I'm coaching on and what obstacles I've got, and what's coachable on the space I work in'. Moreover, Joe was critical of how the Gears books for the discipline specific skills just 'leaves you to figure out the best way to teach' the skills being covered. Here, Joe found the handbooks more helpful, because they covered the techniques in more detail.

Oliver learned how to communicate more effectively by watching others on the formal education, when participating in their sessions – he 'saw how you'd want to

be coached and how you're going through stuff'. Having more qualified coaches within the club offered 'someone [to] ask for help on various aspects of coaching' and a chance 'to get some feedback'. Oliver would have 'a chat at the start [of the session] about what [they were] doing and working out where people's level [was]'. This support continued throughout his sessions, where they would 'chat during the session about how it's going', and then have a 'debrief in terms of how things have gone and how [they] could look to change things'. Oliver had learned to be flexible – to 'wait and watch, and see where people are', and ensure a 'constant challenge' for riders, rather than 'feeling like [he had] to rush through things'. This meant reflections were embedded throughout the sessions and were 'verbal, not written'.

Joe also used coaches within his club – primarily Alex – when reflecting on sessions:

> Me and [Alex] go and have a cup of tea and have a chat about [the session]. If the weather isn't nice, we head straight off home and have a chat on the phone the next day, or the day after […] so we have verbal evaluations, or a debrief, rather than fill in a form. On the generic course, I sometimes wasn't doing the evaluation sheets until the next day, and you're left racking your brain a bit. The verbal evaluations work better and it's more instant and immediate. […] Plus, it gives you the opportunity for feedback from someone else, otherwise, it's just in your own head, and the other person might have seen something that you haven't. For the Level 2 I was just paraphrasing those conversations anyways I didn't gain anything extra from writing it down. I just felt that I was taking minutes from a meeting we'd had.

These reflective conversations were more 'valuable' to Joe than the evaluation sheets provided on the formal education courses. This offers an interesting insight into the collaborative, reflective process of neophyte coaches and the social support they seek from coaches within the club. Joe highlighted, however, the importance of this

happening with the right coach. Alex had a positive impact on Joe's coaching. When coaching on the trails, Joe only sees a 'snapshot of the woods', and explained how a reflective conversation was useful because he and Alex had 'both seen different things', positioned at different parts of the trail:

> I'll have a conversion with [Alex] and I'll walk away thinking, 'He didn't really get what I was saying'. The other coach in the club, I can say one sentence and he knows what I mean - we're just both similar sorts of people like that. […] Having their experiences has really helped, it's good having people to bounce ideas off and they've stopped me making silly mistakes… the other two coaches means that sessions have three people's input, and that seems to work well. If I was on my own, I'd get stuck for ideas.

Joe used YouTube to review different techniques. However, 'a lot are wrong', so he aligned them with 'what it says in the Gears books' but found them 'quite handy'. He also posted YouTube videos to the club's Facebook page to share with parents what their children had been doing in sessions. This extended his support for the riders' development and included parents in their child's participation in cycling. Joe also created a Facebook page for coaches 'out of frustration':

> I can't believe that nobody's done it already. I figured there must be a website or forum for coaches to have a chat, or share ideas, but there wasn't anything… I wanted to share ideas with people and get some ideas from others… I just set it up with coaches in the club, but then sent it out to other coaches, and they joined, and thought it was a good idea… then I sent it to other coaches, and they joined. […] I assumed that someone else had already set something like that up, but there wasn't a group for that… there's been people all over the country responding things like, "That's a great idea", and, "I've never thought about that" […] Ideas aren't patented, are they, so they should be shared. Others will be doing amazing things that I haven't thought about. I didn't think slalom poles were a unique idea. But I posted a picture in there of one of our coaching sessions and half a dozen people commented asking what they were. It's easy to assume what's run of the mill to you is common to everyone, but that's not the case. […] The page now has 85 members. It would be great to have every

coach across the country involved. […] It's a space to share ideas, but a source of information for people, too.

Joe was critical of the discussion board that BC provided on their formal education, because it is 'dated': 'people don't communicate through websites like that anymore', instead choosing to communicate through 'Facebook and WhatsApp'. Here, he argued that a Facebook page was a better option, and stressed shared ownership of this page: 'It's "our" thing. We're all coaches, and all responsible for it and it needs to work for all of us. […] There's no secret handshake or anything like that'.

Interestingly, this group also highlighted their wives as a source of informal learning:

> My wife adopted a puppy and told me that I use too many words when I tell it off for misbehaving… it got me thinking about my coaching, and how we usually use too many words to explain things. That's really apparent on the Track because people are travelling past you so fast that you don't have time to give them too much information. […] Then it made me wonder if there's been too much verbal communication during the sessions in the car park? Now I'm thinking, "How can I break that down?"

Joe's wife, a primary school teacher, helped him learn discipline techniques and strategies for managing groups of learners. Aside from this, Joe was perhaps the most resourceful participant in this group when it came to searching for ideas. To start, he was inspired from the coaches at his children's athletics club in the way in which they included creative and engaging games in their sessions:

> I go to those sessions and see games they play and see if I can incorporate that into cycling - not necessarily copy them, but take an idea and apply it to the cycling environment. One idea I've taken from there is, like, a cycling golf-style game, where [riders] would move from one location to the next in "pars" [a limited number of attempts]. The athletic coaches did it one session using the course lines in one of the sport halls, and they had kids jumping from one place

to the next, and each different coloured line was worth a different number of points, and obviously they had to move from point A to point B, using the lines, but on, or under, par. […] Figuring that out over the winter is my next challenge… I talked it though with the other coach in the club, and he was interested… we'll just have to see if it can translate to two wheels.

The relational narrative

These participants found BC's Gears resources useful. Peter liked how they 'identified which disciplines that particular skill is suitable and appropriate for, so you know why you're doing it', offering guidance on session content and a framework to plan:

> The schools that we go to are quite happy for us to turn up and do what we feel is best for the children. What they don't realise, perhaps, is every week we go to the coaching manual and take it directly from there - from the Gears books. For me, that's all I use. I just go to the Gears book every time […] One of the best things about the course was getting the Gears books. I love them.

> The British Cycling stuff - it doesn't say, 'Do this, do this, do this'. They are just different sections. And you use them as you feel… if you have children that can't do certain aspects, you are not going to dwell on it. You are going to do the next things, or something different.

Beth agreed:

> I recently taught a bunny hop [a two-part manoeuvre, where the front wheel is lifted off the ground, by around 12-15 centimetres, followed by the back wheel being lifted off the ground], and I'd forgotten some of the ways to do bits and bobs that I hadn't taught before, so I went and had a re-look at [the Gears books]. Then I went out and practised them to make sure that I was confident, just to remind myself, that's helpful.

Chris described them as 'very clear and well laid out' with 'photographs and instructions', offering ideas and activities for 'very basic' sessions without 'reinventing the wheel':

> With the current coaching set up, you get 8-10 sessions. 10 sessions covers every aspect of the Gears 1 and 2 [books]. So, there is your base programme. […] It took me a while to get my head around, but I've realised there's a sort of generic series of sessions in the Gears books, and once you've got the hang of that, the organising of the individual sessions, it's fairly easy. […] If you read through them and look at the number of chapters and compare it with the number of days in the term - sessions in the term - it just works out right… And once you're aware of what it is you should be doing, the improvisation is easier to build in… But I'm only just recognising that.

Conversely, BC's coaching handbook was seen as 'more of a reference', 'on a shelf somewhere', 'rather than a hands on' resource that was 'used regularly'. Likewise, Peter found BC's evaluation sheet a 'complete waste of time'. His teaching experience had taught him to note reflections on his session plan, rather than have 'another sheet of paper with notes on' (See Figure 5.25). This meant that when returning to a similar session, Peter was able to review his previous plan and reflections simultaneously. As such, he would 'reflect' by 'looking back' at his previous plans and Chris emphasised the power of written reflections:

> I don't feel as committed as I do if I write down on a piece of paper. Even if I throw things away afterwards. Using the templates [from BC] helps feel as though I've committed […] I often knew where I'd gone wrong, or where I could improve, as I was doing it. Thinking about it afterwards, it just helps you refine that. […] I still get embarrassed every time I fill it in. I'm always harsh on myself, but I wouldn't show any improvement otherwise, from session to session… I know where I've not done things properly, or fast enough, or right… but I can see that once I've done the review.
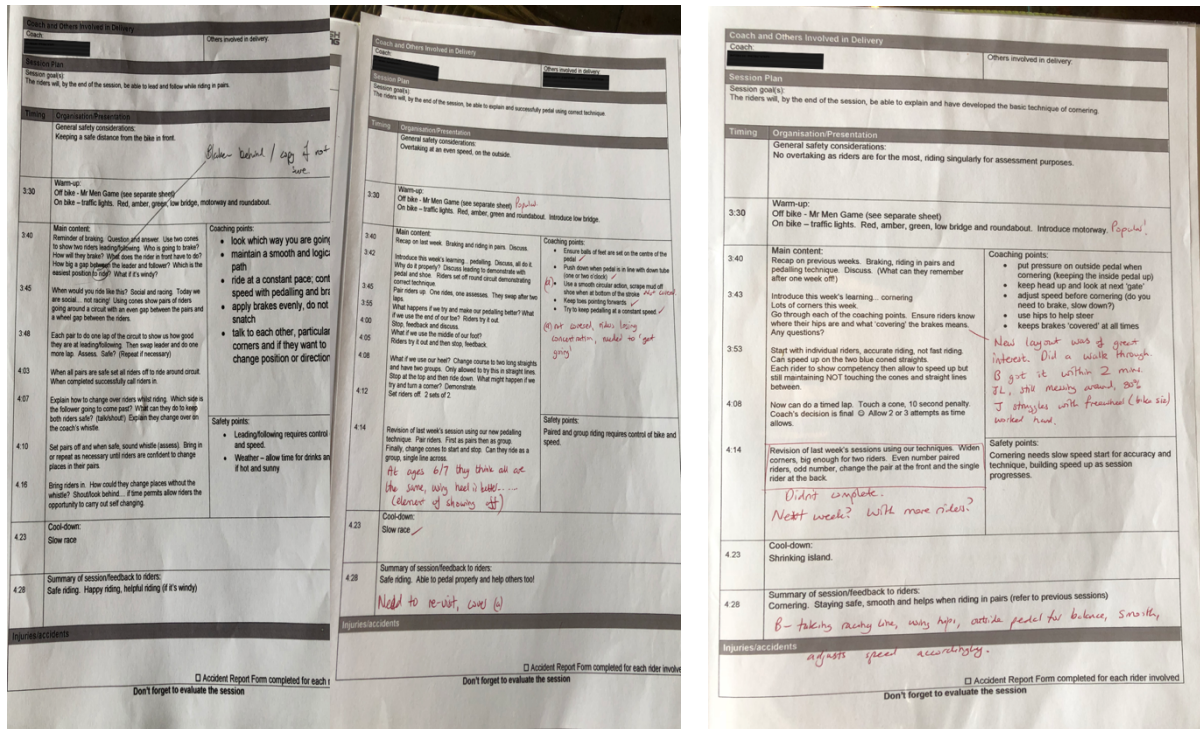
Figure 5.25 – Examples of Peter's self-evaluations annotated onto his session plans
(© Samuel Wood)

Beth grew as a coach as she became more established and strengthened her relationships with coaches and riders within her community. There were gaps in her knowledge following her formal education. She watched YouTube videos of 'some established riders' to get 'tips on how to do stuff', highlighting this as an effective way of seeing others coach. For Beth, 'looking at a book sometimes is good, but actually, just seeing how someone says it, that's helpful'. She was supported by other coaches until the manager felt she was comfortable by herself. This allowed Beth to 'build up a good reputation' and offered the opportunity to observe other coaches. For example, at one observation, she had not previously taught the technical skill, so observed the other coach deliver it. Observing other coaches, she had learned how to move around the forest, and identified the best 'features' and trails to teach certain skills:

I've worked with some good coaches, who have both said similar things, that you'll learn quicker on the job. It's probably similar with all jobs, isn't it? You do all the education, you do all the learning, volunteer, you do some experience, and then you're doing the job.

Unfortunately, having this support meant Beth was likely to offload difficult situations, hindering her development of differentiation strategies. Regardless, these 'good coaches' told her she 'would learn quicker on the job'. She used other riders – those on the trails who executed the features she was coaching – as demonstrators, emphasising her coaching points. Beth used video analysis to frame her feedback to riders, which impacted her own learning. This trial and error approach was evident when she asked a group if they were 'happy' for her 'to have a go' at her coaching jumping because she had no previous experience. Nonetheless, she was 'happy to go and work with someone' on areas she was unsure, and used other coaches for reflections:

> After every session I would go and talk to whoever was on duty because they always wanted to know how it had gone… if things needed changing, I was doing it there and then on the spot a little bit. But those thoughts would just stay in my head, and therefore, when I did it again, I suppose you just build on it all.

Peter and Chris also used the peer support of each other, as Peter explained:

> It's normally just a blind opener, isn't it, "Oh, that went well, didn't it?" Then you go into more depth… "Yes, but when he was doing such and such, next time I'd do this", or whatever… Doing it in twos, other people see things you've not seen, don't they. Like, when it's non-threatening then it works really well.

These participants found, however, that the best source of evaluation were the riders themselves. They were 'very good at the feedback' and 'if you've done something wrong, they will tell you'. Chris identified this as a resource:

> I've got one child that doesn't like [one of the cool down games] – he wanted variety - an easier game to play. But that made me realise that you need, even if it's something that they all enjoy, you need to vary it because they don't want to be looking back and thinking that they did that every week, and that they didn't learn something new.

Equally, Peter embraced riders' input:

> Children have their own ideas. They are very canny, and very often you will do something and they will give you a suggestion, and that degree of flexibility allows you to move it a bit, or change it a bit, and yeah, it really does make it more interesting for them… the last session I did, I finished off with a relay race, and I'd never done a relay race before, but they absolutely loved it. They really went for it […] We need to do a lot more of this - fun stuff. Not just the coaching stuff. We need to keep the coaching to what it needs to be, but we do then need to incorporate making the coaching bit practically fun.

When it came to session plans, Peter had learned that the pace of sessions was important in maintaining riders' interest. For him, it was not about delivering a 'starchy, "Now, sit and listen"' style session where riders learned 'the forces that are pushing on [their] bike', and more about getting on their bikes and giving it a go. He appreciated that 'some learning is quite hard', and sometimes, 'you need to sit down and talk about it and work your way through it': 'If children are worried about it, make it so they can do it. Change it'. For Peter, 'wherever you can' and 'wherever possible' sessions should be 'fun' and 'enjoyable'. Chris agreed, and felt he should have been 'introducing the race element earlier'. For him, children do not want to feel as though they are learning but want to demonstrate their achievements.

Peter and Chris had riders grouped by age. However, there was still a 'big gap in terms of ability from one end of the age group to the other', producing a 'really broad spectrum', which was 'quite challenging'. Here, Chris really relied on Peter for guidance:

> [Peter's] control of the kids is much better than mine, that's where I'd like to improve firstly - you need to get them on board without upsetting everybody. I always feel as though I'm in danger of upsetting everybody when I'm just trying to get everyone sorted… If there's somebody there who's doing better, then you can see how you can improve.

One idea that Peter suggested was a 'snack break':

> We have a few that think they need a snack, and a drink, so there's a point, roughly halfway through, where we stop and have a chat. We tell them that's the time to have a drink and a snack if [they] want one, which makes the whole thing run better.

Peter used this 'break' as a chance to review the session plan – a chance to 'refocus'. This linked to the importance of gauging rider engagement. Beth thought 'a lot of people [were] good at reading other people', because, 'you're watching that person on the bike, [but] you've got to read the person as well'. Consequently, she did not recognise this skill in her coaching. However, Peter acknowledged the challenge of 'hooking into where [a rider] did get it and where they lost it':

> It is a challenge, when someone can't do it, for whatever reason, and you've got to find a different approach to try and get them to do it and work out what they're happy with and what they're comfortable with. You need to know that person, too […] It's making sure that everybody gets to where you want them to be and not everybody goes by the same route. So, I think I've probably learnt more strategies with the cycling, [than teaching].

Lastly, Chris stumbled upon Joe's Facebook page: 'I keep an eye on that a lot because there are some quite positive suggestions on there, and innovative ideas as well'. Peter sympathised with Chris and was happy to support his development wherever possible, because dealing with children is a 'different set of rules'. He felt BC's formal education let Chris down in this regard, by not equipping him with the skills necessary to effectively coach young children.:

> The misbehaviour that we've seen in sessions is because we've not had the right approach, because we've taken the teaching and the technical side of it, if you will, from the books, but we've not known the best way to give it and deliver it to children of that age.

5.5.5 Discussion

By aligning participants to a narrative, it has proved possible to find commonalities in how each narrative's social 'world' impacted their experiences of BC's formal education. Therefore, this section of the PhD extends the findings presented in section 5.4, exploring how the different narrative 'types' operated within their coaching environment – their microsystem. In line with sections 5.3 and 5.4, I present this discussion in relation to each narrative type. First, I outline how these findings relate to both Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD and Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism. Second, I will combine all the areas of the microsystem – the individual, the club, spaces, relationships and resources – and critically discuss them in relation to the broader literature on theories of learning, theories of teaching and occupational socialisation, taking each narrative in turn. To further structure this discussion, I will organise the discussion of each narrative under the two aims of this

study: the workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out; and participants' learning within their microsystem, post-course.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model: The microsystem

The individual – the 'self' and participants' associated biographies – was explored in the study presented in section 5.3. Yet Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD captures how the individual is embedded within the centre of their ecology, surrounded by a nested system of four environmental 'levels'. The aim of this study was to explore the first 'level' of Bronfenbrenner's model: the microsystem, which captures the immediate environment within which an individual interacts.

It is within the microsystem that we enact the processes that allow us to explore possibilities within our environments and enable us to learn, achieve and develop. It is here where we connect activities and experiences to create a more meaningful life through exploring our contexts – our physical and social environment. This includes the physical coaching space. However, more subtlety, this also includes the spaces created and inhabited by the individual where they explore, inquire and learn: the dialogic space they have for discussions; the creative space for imagining their practice; and a reflective space for meaning-making. In addition, coaches' practice is likely to be impacted by the club's goals, motivations, and distinct cultural and procedural rituals. Within this 'level' is also the relationships that are made and maintained with the club, other coaches, and 'objects' within their social environment. Of course, this also links to the resources they have available to them and might include the coaching manuals provided by the NGB, the support they receive from the NGB, YouTube videos, blogs, books, peers, mentors and other 'things' that have value, which might help the coach achieve their goals and learning. It is here that

participants make decisions, plan what to do and how to do it. It is here that they reflect on their experiences and the effect of their actions (Jackson, 2016). Consequently, this is the most relevant 'level' to understanding learners' experiences in their learning communities because it includes the learner within the context of the individual's learning community (Jessup-Anger, 2015). Moreover, Bronfenbrenner's EMHD emphasises that learning cannot be separated from the physical, social and cultural environment within which learning occurs (Jackson, 2016).

Revisiting Blumer's (1969) 'root images'

Here, I present a general discussion of Blumer's (1969) work. To recap, Blumer's theory broadly argues that: we act towards 'things' based on the meaning these 'things' have for us; that meaning is derived from, and arises out of, social interaction with others; and that meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process to deal with 'things' we encounter. Below, I make specific reference to all six of his 'root images', because, in relation to the microsystem, all six of his root images are relevant.

Blumer emphasised that society, and group life generally, consists of people engaging in action. Our actions belong to each of us individually, but symbolic interactionism sees society as an ongoing process of fitting together the activities of others, which portrays structure and organisation. This first point, then, is a lead principle in Blumer's theory, and links to the idea that social interaction is the process that forms human conduct, more than a means to express or release it. Here, interaction with each other rests on accounting and predicting what each other is doing, or about to do. Importantly, effective communication requires gestures to be

perceived how it was intended. Consequently, we have to see events from another's perspective and this role-taking is the cornerstones of effective symbolic interaction.

As previously outlined, our social world is comprised of various objects, either physical, social or abstract. Symbolic interactionism suggests that the meaning of anything and everything is formed, learned and transmitted through a social process of indication. This means that different objects have different meanings for different individuals and explains why we each experience the same things differently, as explored in the discussion presented in section 5.4. However, of significance to the current study is the way in which human group life involves objects being continually created, affirmed, transformed and cast aside. As such, symbolic interactionism suggests that objects have no fixed status, unless their meaning is sustained through the indications and definitions that people make of that object. Consequently, our lives and actions change to reflect changes taking place with objects on our 'worlds', and therefore, Blumer argues that, to understand the action of people, it is necessary to identify their 'world' of objects.

Aligning with Bronfenbrenner's EMHD, and the notion of possessing a 'self', symbolic interactionism recognises that we are each the object of our own actions and, therefore, each have the ability to engage in social interaction. Our 'self' allows us to engage in a social, internal dialogue with ourselves, where we address ourselves and respond accordingly. We note something, give it meaning – make it an object – and then use this to direct our action. As such, symbolic interactionism emphasises our social relationship with our environment, suggesting that we choose how we act and engage with our 'world'.

Our ability to make these indications gives a distinctive character to how we act. By deciding the meaning of others' actions and mapping out our own line of action in light of the interpretations we make, we are able to cope with the various situations

we encounter. This forms the basis of Blumer's fifth image: that we exert autonomy when constructing and deciding our action. Identifying and interpreting what we are confronted with in this way forms and guides our conduct. As such, symbolic interactionism places an importance on this interpretive process in the formation of our actions. Importantly, in relation to this study, symbolic interactionism argues that human activity consists of meeting a flow of situations in which we have to act – where action is based on what we note, how we assess and interpret what we note, and what kind of projected lines of action we map out. Here, individuals fit their lines of action to one another and joint action is constructed through interpretation as individuals make indications to one another, not just to themselves.

This links to Blumer's sixth root image: that societies consist of each individual fitting, and interlinking, their line of action to other members of the group. So, although this study referred to participants' clubs, or BC – and discussed the organisations without identifying the individual members – Blumer argued it is important to acknowledge that the joint action of a group is the interlinkage of individual's separate acts. Therefore, group action is formed through the designation and interpretation process discussed above, even when group action is an established and repetitive social action. Blumer suggested that we have an idea of how to act in given situations, creating stability. However, these meanings might be challenged or affirmed, allowed to slip, or enforced in new ways. As such, the social process of group life creates and upholds the rules, rather than the rules that create and uphold group life. In addition, symbolic interactionism argues that individuals occupy different points of a network, with a given set of meanings, which shape their engagement from this position. As a result, organisations function because of people's actions at different points of the network, meaning that the functioning, and fate, of an organisation is the product of the interpretations of the individuals within the

network. In summary, symbolic interactionism argues that group life is made up of the extended connections of individuals' actions. Lastly, for Blumer, we bring our world of objects, meanings and interpretations to any interaction. As such, joint action emerges from and is connected and contextualised within previous action. Joint action is, therefore, born out of what has come before. When confronted with radically different situations, we may develop new forms of joint action to those with which we have previously engaged. However, there is always a connection, and some continuity, with what has been before. Consequently, joint action represents both horizontal and vertical linkage of individuals' activities with previous joint action.

Now that I have outlined Bronfenbrenner's model and Blumer's symbolic interactionism in relation to the present findings, what follows is a more detailed discussion integrating the broader literature to the workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out and participants' learning within their microsystem, post-course.

The performance narrative

The participants aligned to this narrative had strong cycling backgrounds. Their biographies – their prior thoughts, beliefs and knowledge, which impacted their learning (Cooper, 1999; Cushion et al, 2003; Trudel et al, 2013) – were superior to their peers. However, when coaching, they did not overshare their knowledge to seek approval or use the riders they coach to enforce their value as coaches. They loved cycling, which transformed into a love of coaching. They understood the importance of feedback to improve riders' abilities – highlighting how their perceptions of the coach's role guided their learning and practice (Mezirow, 2009). Importantly, these participants discussed how coaches help riders achieve their end goal. This is

insightful because they discussed progress towards a final destination, reflected in how they discussed their own coaching journeys and the journeys of the riders they coach. Emphasising the performance narrative (Douglass & Carless, 2006, 2009, 2015) they were motivated to coach performers to race bikes and were immersed in elite sport, for example, volunteering at major events. Figure 5.26 illustrates the distinct microsystem of the participants aligned to the performance narrative. The workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out effects for these participants, as well as sources of learning within the microsystem of this participants are discussed more fully below.
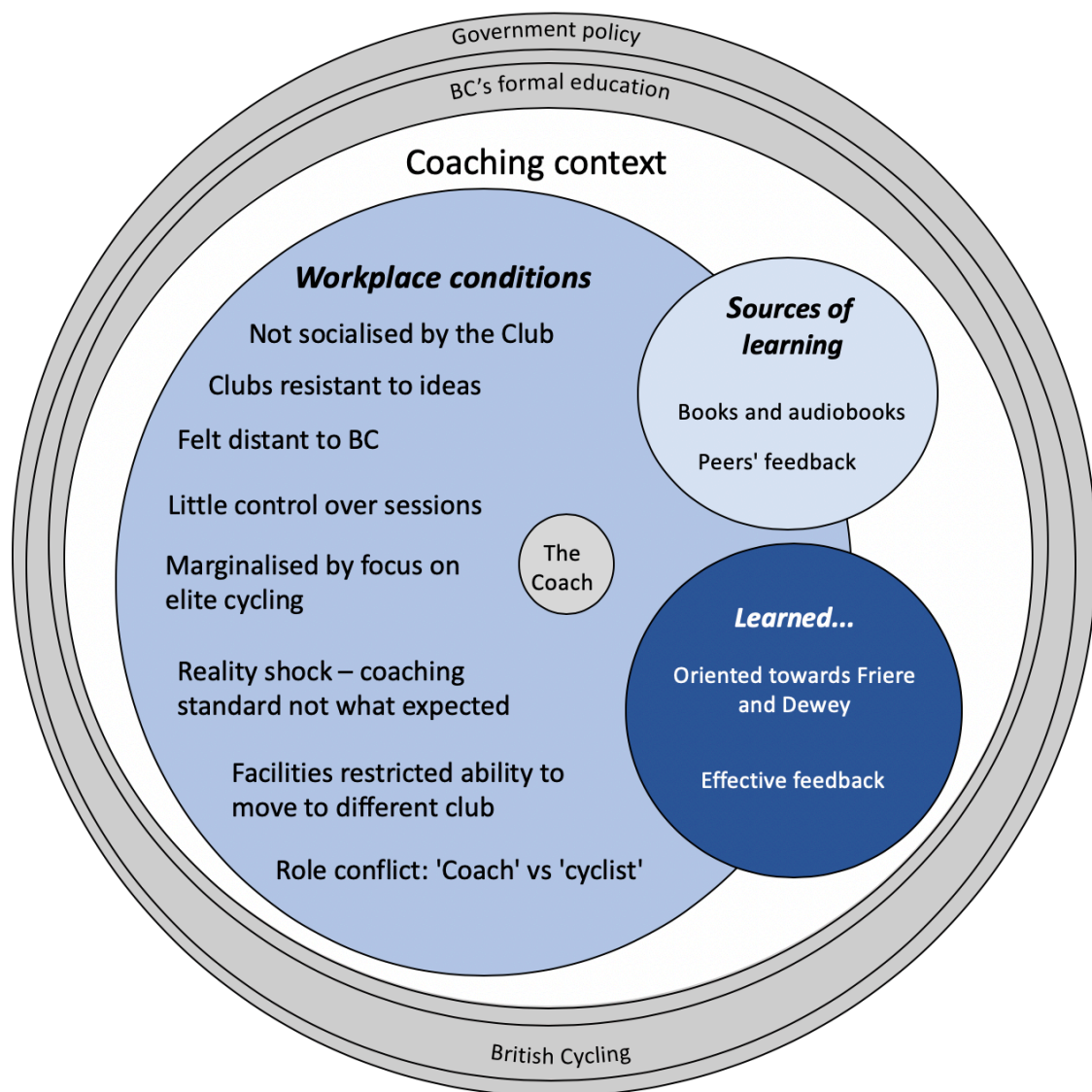

Figure 5.26 – The microsystem of the performance narrative coaches

The teaching literature, focused on PE teachers, discusses the role conflict of wash-out in terms of the dual-role of teachers and the danger of teachers letting coaching skills slide in favour of other work commitments (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Findings from the study presented in section 5.3 indicated that these participants did not experience role conflict, discussing how their jobs complimented their coaching. However, findings from the present study indicate role conflict between two social objects, coach vs cyclist, and how they perceived themselves (Blumer, 1969).

Following their formal education experiences, they re-entered the microsystem on the peripheries of their community and this study captured their journey towards full participation within their socio-cultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 2001). Moreover, participants engaged in group life as they fitted their activities to others' actions to establish structure within their clubs (Blumer, 1969). Lave and Wenger (2001) suggest that moving towards full participation includes learning the manner of the individuals who fully participate within the CoP – including when to be silent and how or when to talk. Here, Louise needed to learn to talk as a legitimate participant, rather than learning from talking (Lave & Wenger, 2001). This was highlighted by Louise's difficulties in voicing her opinion and offering new ideas. This further impacted Louise's perceived lack of support in her club, especially in relation to Louise feeling as though the coaches in her club were resistant to her innovative pedagogic views, increasing her negative workplace factors (Curter-Smith et al, 2008).

These participants began their coaching roles post-qualification with small and simple tasks, with little responsibility for the activity as a whole, where their part carried little cost of errors (Lave & Wenger, 2001). However, this is something that Louise struggled with as she felt the tasks that she was assigned by the coaches in her club were not pre-planned, placing her on the spot. This made her yo-yo between

active participant in the delivery of the session and passive by-stander. She found this stressful and tiring because it inhibited repetitive and stable joint action (Blumer, 1969). Moreover, her lack of accountability made Louise regress in her development and limited her ability to implement what she learned on her formal training, similar to Capel et al's (2011) findings with teachers. Nonetheless, this demonstrates Louise's role-taking to change the intent of her actions to fit with others' actions (Blumer, 1969).

Louise and Adam worked with coaches who were set in their ways. They questioned the practice they observed, feeling these coaches used incorrect techniques and operated poor policies and procedures. They identified these coaches as social objects and considered them of low relevance and importance (Blumer, 1969). Here, they chose how they acted and engaged with their 'world' more than simply responded to it (Blumer, 1969). Louise and Adam felt they could coach better than their peers and connected better with riders and more effectively engaged them in sessions. As such, their actions were guided by the view that they had of themselves, combined with their view of themselves from others' positions and their exercised autonomy to construct and decide their actions (Blumer, 1969). However, they understood that this left them at risk of isolating themselves from those who they coached alongside (Stroot et al, 1992). Moreover, participants discussed a 'reality shock' (Lawson, 1989) as they witnessed a difference between the coaching expected in their formal education and the coaching delivered in their club or facility. This is similar to Veenam's (1984) findings with school teachers and highlights how different individuals, using their set of meanings at different points of the network, are engaged in actions at those points (Blumer, 1969).

Further, Adam and Louise had little control over the content they delivered in their club sessions, which, in addition to their perceived lack of support, influenced their wash-out (Lawson, 1989). As such, these coaches' clubs and facilities were not a CoP

because the coaches within them did not share a common sense of purpose, or pre-established meanings of what was expected in interactions with others (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a; Blumer, 1969). The friction of moving towards full participation within their coaching activity created fragile relationships between these participants and the coaches they worked with, meaning they did not identify as 'club' coaches. Moreover, the national and local standards of cycling do not promote or support elite level cycling and the economic constraints within which these clubs and facilities operated negatively impacted the ways in which these participants' ideas were supported. Specifically, Adam was prevented from moving away from his 'club' because of a lack of Track facilities in his area. Consequently, these participants' political and economic landscape resulted in wash-out (Lawson, 1989).

In addition, these participants experienced misalignment between their individual goals and the goals of the club and facilities they coached, which facilitated wash-out (Lawson, 1989). Adam and Louise wanted to create more fruitful learning experiences focused on improving the performance of the riders they coached, whereas the coaches within the clubs and facilities they coached simply aimed to have riders on saddles. This difference on learning emphasis – a focus on race craft contrasted against mass participation – facilitated wash-out (Lawson, 1989). Further, Louise received compliments and positive reinforcement from the BC coaches, which was a source of confidence for her and encouraged her transition to working with the BC pathway riders.

To prevent wash-out of well-learned skills, Louise moved away from her club, demonstrating features of being a 'rebel', expressing an interest in pursuing challenges and independence. Rather than become socialised into 'their way' and aligning with the coaches in her club, Louise's disposition placed her in the position to pursue more

opportunities with her coaching of the BC pathway riders (Stroot et al, 1993). Here, Louise demonstrated autonomy over constructing and deciding her actions (Blumer, 1969). However, this was not an easy decision for Louise to make. Regardless of her differences, she felt a responsibility to stay coaching within her club because they were under-resourced for coaches. Indeed, when coaching the BC riders, Louise shared how she sought their approval, acceptance and enthusiasm for session content – where her 'self' guided her actions towards others (Blumer, 1969). She learned the importance of rider 'buy-in' and felt that her lack of Track-specific knowledge negatively impacted her relationship with these riders. Consequently, her involvement with these riders shaped her progression through BC's formal education, taking a Track-specific qualification and commencing her Level 3 Road qualification. This highlights the socialising force that learners can play in coaches' learning (Curter-Smith et al, 2008).

Learning within the microsystem, post-qualification

This study explored the learning resources of coaches post-course when immersed within their coaching context – their microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Through a process of self-indication (Blumer, 1969), Louise and Adam identified the following 'objects' within their microsystems and considered them as relevant sources for learning, post-course: other coaches, books and audiobooks. Participants aligned to the performance narrative were driven to be the best person, and coach, they could be. These participants spoke highly of the BC coaches and coach developers they met, however they thought that BC was a 'badly run' organisation. Although the joint action of a group is the interlinkage of individual's separate acts (Blumer, 1969), this appears to be lost here.

These participants learned through peer-learning and observing the other coaches in their club (Gutskey, 2002), and Louise described her work colleagues as a reliable source of knowledge. This links with Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) ZPD. However, linked to the point of task responsibility, this was not a long-term learning strategy, because as their responsibility increased, meaning they were more actively involved with coaching, and had less opportunity to observe.

Aligned with Blumer's (1969) root images, within the spaces 'category' of the microsystem is the coaches' reflective space, where participants engaged in social, internal dialogue. This captured how participants' understanding was transformed so that they *became* coaches. In line with Shulman (1986) these participants had strong expertise in the content they delivered. Of interest, then, is these participants' PCK as this appears to be the most important in teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). PCK encourages teachers to think about their subject knowledge in terms of pedagogic content.

Within her reflective space, we see how the development of Louise's PCK was impacted by the large range of age and ability of her female only sessions within her club. Unfortunately, by offering her female only sessions – addressing a gap in cycling that was important to her, another example of her biography shaping her practice (Mezirow, 2009) – Louise could not further differentiate groups by age and ability. Moreover, we see how Louise's joint action arises out of her world of objects, sets of meanings and schemes of interpretation – linked to preceding events and within the context of her interpretation (Blumer, 1969).

As previously mentioned, participants aligned to the performance narrative understood the important role feedback played in improving riders' abilities. Louise struggled to develop her directive approach and offer critical feedback to her riders,

describing herself as a people-pleaser. She grew to become more aware during her sessions, better able to flex her session plan to meet riders' individual needs – a Freireian (1970/1993) approach to teaching – but felt she needed to improve her clarity when given instructions to riders. She developed her open questioning, placing riders at the centre of their reflections and evaluations and learned to offer riders scaffolded choices to maintain control of sessions (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). She empowered riders by asking them to find their own answers and solutions – a Deweyan (1938) approach to teaching.

The discovery narrative

For these participants, coaching was a journey of discovery; a chance to pursue new experiences (Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009, 2015). Cycling had offered these participants numerous opportunities and they felt cycling had the power to offer similar experiences to those who they coached. These participants were motivated by the recognition of their efforts and riders' progression. This focus oriented towards their narrative in rather profound ways. Rather than being focused on the end destination, like the performance narrative coaches, these participants were interested in the journey. Here, we see how their beliefs around cycling, and their perceptions of the coaches' role, guided their practice (Mezirow, 2009). Moreover, Blumer (1969) suggests that joint action emerges from, and is connected to, previous action. Figure 5.27 illustrates the distinct microsystem of the participants aligned to the discovery narrative. The workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out effects for these participants, as well as sources of learning within the microsystem of this participants are discussed more fully below.
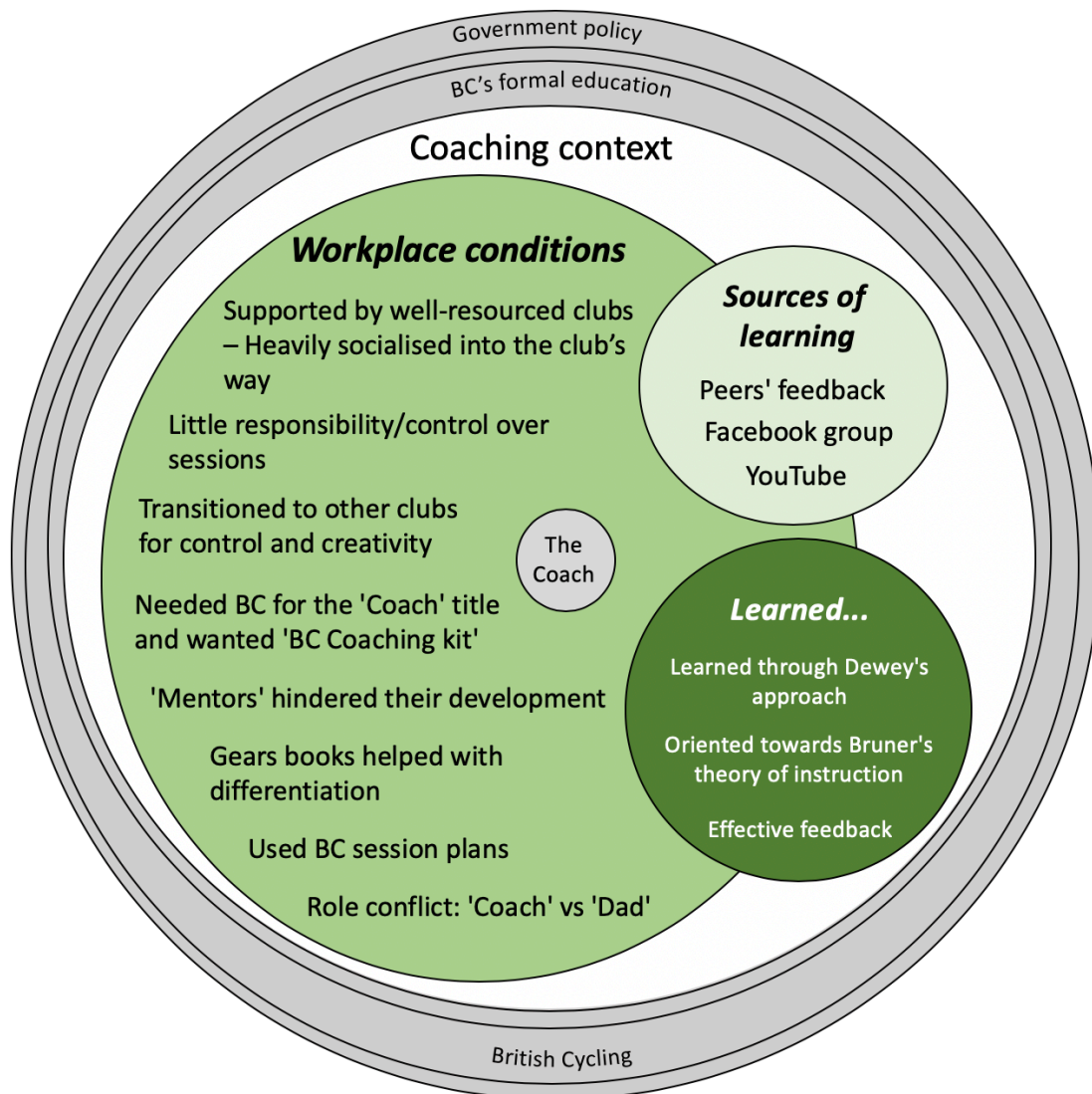
Figure 5.27 - The microsystem of the discovery narrative coaches

Workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out

Participants aligned to this narrative were well supported in their clubs by coaches, assistants and parents; they were immersed within a society of people engaging in action and this social interaction formed their conduct (Bulmer, 1969). However, the extent of this support restricted their freedom, making them more of an assistant coach, which they felt stunted their development. Similar to the performance narrative coaches, Joe, Oliver and James were given coaching roles that had limited remits of small, simple tasks. They had little responsibility for the task as a whole and the parts

they played had little cost of errors (Lave & Wenger, 2001). Equally, this lack of accountability, in line with Capel et al's (2011) findings, made these novice coaches regress in their development, limiting their ability to implement their formal training. This was similar to the performance narrative coaches.

Joe, James and Oliver coached in clubs that focused on all disciplines, inclusively accommodating all riders, with a focus on developing strong basic skills and techniques – aims more closely aligned with the national and local standards. However, these participants were impacted by the local economic constraints within which their clubs' operated. Joe, James and Oliver coached in sections of Council owned facilities or car parks. Access to these areas was restricted by cost, and at the same time, they were confined to these spaces because of the cost of coaching in other locations.

Although Oliver and James aligned with their clubs' standards, Joe's biography conflicted with the club's head coach. Joe wanted to embed some race focus in sessions, whereas the head coach, Alex, was happy focusing on general participation. Here, Alex did not value the race skills that Joe was interested in coaching, making things difficult for Joe, risking the wash-out of well-learned skills (Lawson, 1989). However, within the creative space of Joe's microsystem, he was able to create engaging activities to meet the needs of the riders he coached. This highlights the powerful socialisation force that learners play (Curter-Smith et al, 2008) and demonstrates Joe's progression from novice coach to becoming more equal to the coach he worked with. Here, Joe fitted his line of action to the others in the group, demonstrating how joint action is the interlinkage of individuals' separate acts (Blumer, 1969). Moreover, this captured his move from the peripheries of his community towards more full participation (Lave & Wenger, 2001).

Of particular interest in the discussion of these participants' microsystem is the issue of control within their clubs (Lawson, 1989). These participants were heavily supervised in their coaching and had little control over the content of their sessions, particularly Oliver and James who coached pre-planned sessions. Here, the more experienced coaches in the club controlled these participants' experiences, orienting towards Dewey's (1938) theory of teaching. This contrasts against Bruner's (1968) theory of teaching, with which these participants engaged with during their formal education experiences (discussed in section 5.4.4). However, these participants aligned to Bruner's theory of instruction in their coaching because they held the knowledge during sessions and controlled riders' learning in a didactic manner. Here, individuals occupied different points of the network of the group as they were engaged in actions at those points on the basis of using a given set of meanings (Blumer, 1969). As nobody questioned the routines or practices of the established coaches within their clubs, these participants were heavily socialised into their clubs' way of coaching, hindering their ability to coach 'BC's way'. Consequently, these participants experienced a 'reality shock' (Veenman, 1984).

Although Joe, James and Oliver were not isolated or marginalised from the other coaches, or the club more generally (O'Sullivan, 1989; Stroot et al, 1993) they did find themselves transitioning away from the club over time. This study captured how, over time, these participants' 'selves' guided their actions (Blumer, 1969), resulting in them transitioning from positively perceiving the support of their club to seeing it as a hinderance. Consequently, this study observed these participants moving away from their clubs to discover other coaching opportunities and gain more control over the sessions they delivered. Linked to these participants' dispositions (Stroot et al, 1993), and aligned with their narrative type (Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009, 2015), this

demonstrates how social interaction forms human conduct, and how participants exercised their autonomy when constructing and deciding their actions (Blumer, 1969).

These participants discussed having limited reflective space, meaning reflections were verbal, not written. Their 'selves' created social, internal dialogues (Blumer, 1969), allowing them to reflect, over time, that their support hindered their development leaving them with lots to learn. They 'made sense' of an accumulation of previous events, bridging the gap between experience and learning (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). Their move away from their clubs echoed Bruner's (1968) work, where their socio-cultural environment no longer provided them with relevant knowledge to cope with their present experiences, and their curiosity encouraged them to discover new experiences. For example, participants identified pre-planned sessions as 'objects' and formed meanings through a process of social indication and considered them to have little relevance and importance (Blumer, 1969). Although delivering pre-planned sessions worked well with the limited time these participants could commit to their coaching, it meant that something as simple as planning became a redundant skill. As participants moved away from their clubs, although these participants lost the associated support, they were able to gain more control over their sessions and implement their own ideas. Here, their lives and actions changed to reflect changes in the objects of their 'world' (Blumer, 1969).

For these participants, coaching was a hobby – an activity that allowed them to have a shared interest with their children – that fitted around their jobs and family commitments. For the participants aligned to the discovery narrative, balancing their coaching alongside their family and full-time employment limited their coaching, making it an irregular activity and creating role conflict (Stroot et al, 1993). This highlights the volunteer nature of these participants' coaching. Moreover, because

coaching was not a main priority in these participants' lives, they were initially happy coaching in clubs that left them with such limited responsibility; they knew the role they played, and their place within their network (Blumer, 1969).

These participants demonstrated some great examples of creativity within their coaching, unique to this narrative. They explored using games to engage riders – to maintain riders' movement during sessions and to explain skills to riders. When it came to coaching in their physical spaces, Joe demonstrated the use of slalom poles as 'trees', blob cones as 'roots' and ramps built from crates to provide inclines and declines. Interestingly, this creativity was still instruction-based, orienting towards Bruner's (1968) theory of teaching, requiring learnings to engage in very little problem solving. Nonetheless, these physical objects (Blumer, 1969) changed his relationship with the physical space, allowing him to coach mountain bike-specific skills in a generic area. However, his move from the Country Park to the senior school again changed his relationship with his discipline, coaching on all-weather courts, rather than grassy fields. This new facility also impacted his relationship with riders' parents. Whereas they assisted before, the new facility offered them the opportunity to use other facilities on site, removing them from the session. Oliver's club also created distance from parents with them in the clubhouse during sessions. However, the notice boards inside provided a communication space to engage parents in the club's news and events.

Participants aligned to the discovery narrative had a fragile relationship with BC. They were motivated to attend BC's formal coach education to receive the social 'object' (Blumer, 1969) of 'coach' title. However, the 'coach' title is inextricably linked to BC. They felt the qualification validated their knowledge, they praised BC for their resources and complimented the BC staff for coordinating everything. All of this

strengthened their relationship with BC. As such, they wanted a BC 'coaching kit' – a physical object – linked to the high value these participants placed on the social object of the 'coach' title (Blumer, 1969). They found the BC website difficult to navigate, but were happy that support was only a phone call away. In addition, they were frustrated by how health and safety played a big role on the formal education courses, yet played little importance to the facilities in which these coaches operated.

Learning within the microsystem, post-qualification

BC's formal education intended to prepare these participants for the demands of their coaching roles post-qualification (Hushman & Napper Owens, 2012). Through a process of self-indication (Blumer, 1969), Joe, Oliver and James identified 'objects' within their microsystems, which they considered relevant sources for learning, post-course. Participants discussed their wives as a source of learning. For example, Joe's wife was a school teacher who helped him with 'class management' techniques. With regards to technology, YouTube appeared a useful tool to review techniques, and the creation of a Facebook group offered an updated version of online forums, which offered a shared leaning experience with other coaches.

These participants coached on a limited basis, meaning that their progress as coaches was slow and steady. They felt that they developed their own style and felt more confident in their knowledge and their role as a coach. They felt that they learned to offer riders a constant challenge by adapting exercises, stretching and challenging them, demonstrating their ability to differentiate sessions. Importantly, they felt the Gears resources helped with this differentiation, affirming the importance of this physical object to these participants (Blunmer, 1969).

The physical object (Blumer, 1969) of pre-planned session plans were indicated and considered a hinderance to these participants' practice. Importantly, however, these participants' development of curriculum knowledge (Shulman, 1986) was hindered because the order of skills was decided by other coaches within the club, restricting their ability to be flexible in picking and choosing the best teaching method for the topic being delivered (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). Further, in Oliver's situation, even though coaching the beginner group proved useful for him, considering his role conflict, this limited his knowledge of the curriculum in terms of the bigger picture (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). This structure, combined with the assumption that the pre-planned sessions deliver skills in the most effective sequence, also orients towards Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction.

They also felt they learned how to better deliver feedback and developed their questioning. However, they shared how they would continue to grow and develop because they were, by no means, a 'super coach' (an abstract object; Blumer, 1969). This highlights how BC's formal education left 'gaps' in these participants' practice and their need to still learn *how* to coach as they transitioned from their mesosystem to their microsystem (Shulman, 1986). These participants had limited cycling knowledge before entering the mesosytem, compared to the performance narrative coaches, meaning they largely learned their subject knowledge (Shulman, 1986) from their formal education experiences.

In addition, the control of these participants' club, especially in relation to the delivery of pre-planned sessions, hindered their development of PCK (Shulman, 1986). This was crucial in their development as coaches as this knowledge relates to how they transition from the social 'object' of 'subject experts' to 'novice educators' (Blumer, 1969). Although these participants could reflect and learn from their coaching experiences (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a), understanding what makes learning of

certain topics easy or hard, the plans and the available resources were so structured, their ability to adapt and change the delivery of certain skills was hindered. When Oliver moved away from the confines of his club, he agreed with Joe, that the BC planning document added structure to sessions and perceived it as a valuable tool (Blumer, 1969). In addition, these participants continued to use the Gears books, placing a high importance on these physical objects (Blumer, 1969): they offered a practical element to their coaching; were easy to take to sessions; and highlighted 'best practice'. Initially, these participants felt they became reliant on the Gears books, which hindered their creativity. This was captured in the findings presented in section 5.4. However, when coaching within their microsystem these participants discussed how their familiarity with their physical space meant they became less reliant on the Gears books because they learned what was coachable in the space within which they operated. Here, their actions changed to reflect changes with their objects in their 'world', highlighting the autonomy they exerted in deciding and constructing their actions (Blumer, 1969).

The participants aligned to this narrative found the other coaches in their clubs as a useful learning resource. Due to the imbalance in knowledge and experience, and the fact that this learning occurred in participants' occupational and professional context, this relates to the concept of mentoring (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). This aligns with Cushion's (2006) call that most coaches want to be mentored and demonstrates how coaches learn from the more experienced coaches within their club (Cassidy, 2010). Compared to the structured mentoring offered within the mesosytem, these findings highlight the value of informal mentoring that occurs within coach development (Nash & McQuade, 2015). This illustrates the importance of novice coaches' social support as they move towards more full participation within their clubs and take on more responsibility within their role (Lave & Wenger, 2001).

However, in line with Colley (2003), these participants found this relationship to be one-dimensional. Participants shared how they found the more experienced coaches within their microsystem to be overpowering with their immediate feedback. Whereas this was intended to support learner's seamless transition towards new knowledge and understanding (Cooper, 1999), it negatively impacted these participants' development. As such, mentors were considered to be of little importance (Blumer, 1969)

The relational narrative

The participants aligned to this narrative were lifelong cyclists who valued the friendships they had formed through cycling (Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009, 2015). They saw coaching as an opportunity to share their knowledge and love of cycling. They believed coaching should develop the whole person, increase people's confidence and empower them. Here, coaching was about enjoyment and personal achievement. They wanted riders to have assurance and confidence in them as a person as well as their coach. Taken together, this highlights how their biographies guided their coaching (Mezirow, 2009). Figure 5.28 illustrates the distinct microsystem of the participants aligned to the relational narrative. The workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out effects for these participants, as well as sources of learning within the microsystem of this participants are discussed more fully below.
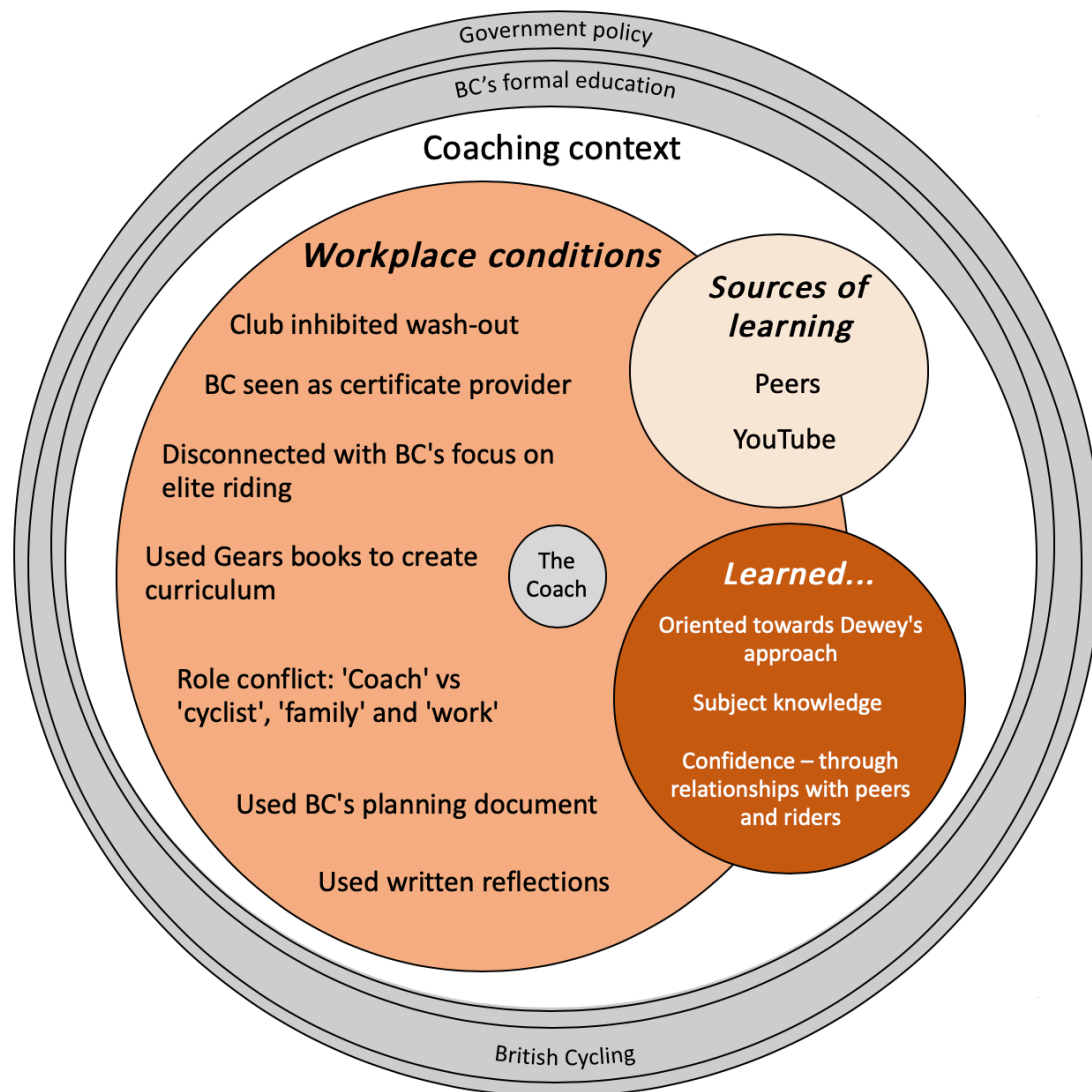
Government policy

BC's formal education

Coaching context

Workplace conditions

Club inhibited wash-out

BC seen as certificate provider

Disconnected with BC's focus on elite riding

Used Gears books to create curriculum

The Coach

Role conflict: 'Coach' vs 'cyclist', 'family' and 'work'

Used BC's planning document

Used written reflections

Sources of learning

Peers

YouTube

Learned...

Oriented towards Dewey's approach

Subject knowledge

Confidence – through relationships with peers and riders

British Cycling

Figure 5.28 - The microsystem of the relational narrative coaches

Workplace conditions that facilitated or inhibited wash-out

These participants balanced their coaching alongside their family, work commitments and their own riding. Peter, Chris and Beth all still enjoyed cycling – fighting their view of themselves as 'coach' vs 'cyclist' (Blumer, 1969) – and found themselves coaching at prime riding times, trading coaching against riding, adding to their role conflict (Stroot et al, 1993). In addition their coaching was impacted by physical spaces that had no artificial lighting, meaning their coaching was seasonal, rather than year-round. Whereas Peter and Chris coached at School sites, which were

rather generic environments, Beth's physical spaces on the trails in the forest forced her to progress through BC's coaching pathway, with her attending mountain bike-specific qualifications. We can see how physical objects in their environment forced changes and their relationship with the coaching pathway – an abstract object (Blumer, 1969).

Peter and Chris's independence from the club meant that they coached, from the outset, with very few controls imposed by the club and had a large amount of control over what and how to coach, which inhibited wash-out (Lawson, 1989). These participants engaged in joint action with larger roles within their communities than would be expected (Blumer, 1969; Lave & Wenger, 2001). Unlike the participants aligned to the other two narratives, when Peter and Chris started coaching they undertook large, complicated tasks with a large cost of errors as they carried the whole responsibility for the coaching activity at hand. Here, their social interaction formed their conduct but they did not undergo any apprenticeship style learning and were full participants in their practice (Blumer, 1969; Lave & Wenger, 2001).

Peter, Chris and Beth brought communities together through their coaching, emphasising the social aspect of cycling. Moreover, these participants coached areas which were respected and supported by authority figures within their organisations: Peter and Chris's club wanted to increase their youth membership; and Beth's centre wanted to increase female participation. This meant these participants' goals largely aligned with the goals of their club, further inhibiting wash-out (Lawson, 1989). Consequently, these participants identified more as 'club' coaches than BC coaches. For these participants, BC was a certificate provider that enabled them – and gave them the tools – to coach. They felt BC were disorganised and disconnected with their core message because they were geared more towards gold medals than mass

participation. These participants disagreed with this approach and felt that BC's role was to introduce people to cycling in safe ways, rather than promote elite level cycling. In this way, they felt that this was their position – their role – within BC's society, highlighting how the organisation is the result of an individual's separate acts interlinking with others' lines of action (Blumer, 1969).

This freedom meant that they had the autonomy to address identified gaps in their coaching. For example, the only misalignment between Peter's goals and the club was his desire to offer a stronger road focus to sessions. Consequently, he attended BC's Ride Leadership qualification to compliment the basic skills he was coaching during sessions. Linked to these two participants' beliefs that cycling can bring the wider community together, Peter and Chris hoped that this qualification would allow them to organise social rides that would help build relationships with the families of those who they coached.

Within their physical spaces, Peter and Chris used a canopy at the school site to start and finish sessions. This object is where these participants built their relationships with riders. They also used this object to implement their discipline strategies, especially when refocusing if riders were misbehaving or to provide their creative 'snack breaks' for riders. Peter and Chris, perhaps linked to Peter's teaching experience, also found the whistle a useful tool in controlling riders, highlighting the vertical linkage of previous events (Blumer, 1969). Likewise, Beth used the 'clubhouse' at her cycling centre as a space to start sessions. Over time this became an established ritual where she connected with riders and built strong coach-rider relationships as well as peer relationships amongst the group. In addition, this became a space for Beth to reflect and refine her session plans, both at the start of her day, and during lunch. Here, the social process of indication formed these participants' meanings of these

objects (Blumer, 1969). In summary, Peter, Chris and Beth show how their coaching activity was the result of meeting a flow of situations to which they had to react (Blumer, 1969).

Peter and Chris still became isolated from the club and the other coaches within it (O'sullivan, 1989; Stroot et al, 1993). Here, these participants occupied different points within their network and engaged with action from these points (Blumer, 1969): Peter sourced his own school to start delivering sessions as the coaching provision the club offered increased; while Chris also began coaching at his own site. In response, Peter and Chris sought support from each other. This PhD captured these two participants' stories simultaneously – two friends who cycled together learning to coach together. This view of their 'selves' guided their actions towards each other as they fitted their lines of action to one another (Blumer, 1969). In line with the relational narrative, these findings highlight their journeys through these experiences together. Chris experienced a 'reality shock' (Stroot et al, 1993) because the riders in his microsystem were children, compared to the adults who he coached in his mesosystem and the social support from Peter – who Chris indicated as a social object and transformed into a 'mentor' (Blumer, 1969) – proved invaluable.

In contrast, when Beth transitioned back to her microsystem from her mesosystem, she was more on the peripheries of her coaching community. Although Beth did not coach within a club, per se, she worked within a community of coaches. Her goals centred on increasing women's riding and this aligned with the organisation's goals, although this felt more like a matter of convenience than a key focus of their strategy. However, Beth saw this as her 'road-in' to the centre, and this alignment, combined with the fact the coaches within her centre equally valued the importance of women sessions – perhaps because of the political landscape around increasing female

participation in cycling – inhibited wash-out during her induction (Lawson, 1989). This meant that she was more supported than Peter and Chris, coaching alongside experienced coaches who supported her sessions in the beginning. This allowed her to gradually take on more responsibility of the coaching within her sessions as she became more adept (Lave & Wenger, 2001). Moreover, these coaches showed Beth certain areas of the forest best suited for the coaching of certain skills and this familiarity with her environment allowed her to become less reliant on the Gears resources. However, she became reliant on the assistants, asking these coaches to both coach skills she was unsure of and to help those riders struggling to maintain the same pace as the whole group, which consequently stunted her development. Here, both physical and social objects were learned and transmitted through social indication (Blumer, 1969).

Unique to these participants, Beth felt that she had reached a high standard of cycling in a short amount of time. She discussed feelings of self-doubt in her abilities when faced with the reality of coaching and being accountable. Here, she placed her 'self' in the position of others, where she saw herself acting towards ourself from others' positions (Blumer, 1969). Associated with the notion of occupational socialisation, this self-doubt is captured by Clance and Imes (1978) concept of imposter phenomenon, where Beth feared that her true abilities would be exposed (Jarrett, 2010). To overcome this challenge, Beth presented a 'front' – a 'performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define a social situation for those who observe [her] performance' (Goffman, 1959, p.22). This 'front' was formed through her mannerisms and language – her 'face work' (Goffman, 1959) – to provide riders with a convincing impression that she was acting in an appropriate way.

Peter, Chris and Beth felt that they exited their mesosystems with room to improve as coaches. These participants found YouTube helpful because it offered the chance to see 'established riders' executing skills – especially skills they were both inexperienced in executing themselves or instructing to others. Here, it was the opportunity to hear others talk through the technique that proved so valuable and, in some ways, more effective than the BC printed materials. This links to this group's lack of technical knowledge compared to other groups and highlights both their desire to learn by watching others and the need for learning to be practically applicable (Gutskey, 2002). However, this meant that these participants were less keen to demonstrate. For example, Beth would often use other riders riding the features she was coaching as demonstrators, rather than her own demonstrations.

They felt that as their content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) increased they felt more able to coach. Two physical objects (Blumer, 1969) that these participants took into their microsystem from their mesosystem were the BC Gears books and BC planning document. Through social indication and self-interaction these objects were considered valuable (Blumer, 1969). The Gears books were deemed useful because they were clear and well laid-out. They offered guidance on session content and a framework for their coaching. In this way, similar to the pre-planned sessions in the discovery narrative, Peter and Chris used the Gears books to create blocks of sessions – formed into curriculum knowledge (Shulman, 1986) – which they repeatedly delivered without 'reinventing the wheel'. These participants believed not planning presented a real disadvantage to running sessions, yet Beth struggled because of a lack of rider information, meaning she had a broad session outline that she tweaked. Delivering the same session numerous times meant that Peter, Chris and Beth became more practised at delivering the same skills. However, like the participants aligned to

the discovery narrative, they risked not seeing these skills as part of the larger picture of rider development (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

In relation to teaching theories, Beth had coached her friends for a period of time before attending BC's formal education. Here, she had learned to adopt Dewey's (1938) approach, where she advised and facilitated learning, probing riders to explore and establish the best way for them. This experience placed her in a good position to coach in similar ways within her formal coaching role. Peter demonstrated the same approach to coaching, questioning riders in a way that encouraged them to find the solutions to the problems. Equally, Chris demonstrated the same questioning through his continued working relationship with Peter.

These participants discussed growing into their coaching role. Their 'self' not only influenced how they saw themselves, but also their internal dialogue (Blumer, 1969). This captures how learning and sense of identity are inseparable aspects of the same phenomenon (Lave & Wenger, 2001). Compared to the participants aligned to the discovery narrative, these participants preferred written reflections, but used other coaches and found the riders themselves were the best source of evaluation for their coaching. Here, they developed their expertise by making sense of an accumulation of events (Lyle & Cushion, 2017a). Moreover, these participants became more confident as they strengthened their relationships with the coaches and riders within their microsystem, moving towards full participation in their CoP (Lave & Wenger, 2001).

5.5.6 Conclusion

Extending the findings presented in section 5.3 and 5.4, the current study built on the notion of different narrative types of coaches and their experiences of formal coach education. The workplace has been identified as the main socialising agent, where

individuals 'learn the ropes' as they become inducted and accepted into the workplace and its culture (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). By following coaches for twelve months following their attendance on BC's Level 2 course, this study explored the workplace conditions that inhibited or facilitated occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012) and 'wash-out', as well as identifying their sources of learning when coaching within their microsystem. Consequently, this section of the PhD offers a novel contribution by highlighting the 'real' coaching practices of BC's qualified coaches – something that BC have had little-to-no empirical insight of.

Taking Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD as a framework, this study researched the microsystem of cycling coaches – the individual's immediate environment where they had daily encounters, communications and interactions. It is within the microsystem where participants made decisions, planned what to do and how to do it, reflected on their experiences and the effects of their actions (Jackson, 2016). As such, this is the most relevant level of Bronfenbrenner's EMHD when understanding the learner within the context of their learning community (Jessup-Anger, 2015). Bronfenbrenner argued that it is within the microsystem that individuals enact the processes that enable them to explore the possibilities within their environment that enable them to learn, achieve and develop. Here, both the physical and social environment create the context within which activities and experiences are explored to create a more meaningful life. Combining Bronfenbrenner's EMHD with Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, this study researched the workplace conditions (Lawson, 1989) within participants' coaching contexts. In addition, this study explored how individual's physical space within which they coached, as well as the dialogic spaces, creative spaces and reflective spaces, influenced learning and impacted wash-out. Linked to this was participants' relationships – which they formed, learned and transmitted

through indication (Blumer, 1969) – with objects in their environment, including other coaches, resources and 'things' that have value and might help them achieve their goals and learning.

Building on the conclusions drawn from the study presented in section 5.4, the findings of the present study further our understanding of coaches' learning within the microsystem following their formal education. This study investigated to what extent BC's formal education prepared participants for the diverse demands of their coaching environments (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). In addition, this study captured participants' transition from 'expert learner' to 'novice coach' (Shulman, 1986) as they developed PCK and learned possibilities in terms of curriculum organisation and pedagogic flexibility (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

- CHAPTER VI -
General Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is three-fold: firstly, to synthesise the key findings of the thesis; secondly, to discuss the implications for future practice and research; and lastly, to reflect on my practice and conclude the thesis.

6.2 Summary of findings

There has been limited research with a focus on pedagogy in novice coach education (Walsh & Carson, 2019). This PhD aimed to address that criticism and was supported by four aims and their associated research questions. This PhD developed, iteratively, as the most appropriate means of achieving and presenting the findings were guided by both my fieldwork and the reflective discussions I had with my Director of Studies. Chapter 2 proposed applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD in the exploration of sport coaches' learning ecologies in a rather experimental manner. This marks the first noteworthy finding and the originality of this PhD. This theoretical framework has structured this thesis, acting as golden thread, from the literature review to the presentation of the findings. This captured a holistic view of coach learning, from the macro to the micro. Each study researched a different 'level' of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD, and these are summarised here, in relation to the research aims and research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

6.2.1 From the macro to the meso: The development of BC's coach education pathway

This part of the project researched: why and how the BC's coaching pathway was created; the mechanisms used to deliver BC's formal education; the intended outcomes for participants attending BC's formal education.

This work captured the wider socio-economic, cultural and political contexts within which coaching operates – the government policies and strategies for coaching, and where coaching 'sits' in the government agenda. As such, this PhD captured the ways in which the national policies and procedures relating to the professionalisation of coaching formed BC's formal coach education pathway, and how these policies and procedures impacted the development of their formal education qualifications. The novelty of this research rests in the way stakeholders from across BC were interviewed. This captured the views of those who implemented the UKCC policy, the course architects and those who developed the programme, those who deliver and support the delivery of the programmes, and those who attend the formal qualifications on the pathway. These findings uncover, for the first time, the untold story of developing formal coach education in sport, appreciating the task placed upon those responsible for delivering the demands of UKCC. Importantly, this research breaks the mould and offers a different narrative to the dominant discourse in the literature. By telling the other side of the story, this research offered BC, as an NGB, a platform to share their story, paving the way for other NGBs to follow. Quite simply, NGBs deliver sport, and not necessarily education. Consequently, the piece of creative nonfiction presented in section 5.2 tells the story of how an untrained, unqualified and inexperienced workforce were left developing the formal education courses that UKCC demanded. BC's education team did not come from an education background and therefore did not understand assessment or course design. Worryingly, every NGB was in the same

position, with no examples – no blueprint – to follow, leaving, as Steven explains, "the blind leading the blind… trying to figure it out". From this perspective, it is unjust to be critical of the programmes that were developed.

This work offers some counter-arguments to some of the criticisms that formal coach education has received. These findings illustrate how formal coach education is not standardised like UKCC intended, because each NGB had freedom in deciding the indicative content of each qualification however they deemed suitable. A UKCC framework was never delivered, meaning qualifications were built using the NQF and NOS, resulting in formal coach education that is unfit for purpose. Crucially, BC's formal education is not well-funded. UKCC promised increased funding for coach education, but these findings illustrate that this was not realised resulting in coach education that is delivered using a one-size-fits all approach. BC govern six disciplines of cycling and, shockingly, have still not developed all courses originally funded in 2004. This means that UKCC failed to fully professionalise the sport of cycling, let alone offer standardisation across different sports. The current research argues that coaching is not as well-funded as it is commonly perceived to be, because the DCMS's distribution of funding neglected the coaching workforce.

The explosion of Britain's success through the Athens and Beijing Games meant cycling's popularity increased exponentially. This resulted in a shift in focus towards growing the coaching workforce. This means BC's formal education operates in a compromised state. BC were reactive to growing their coaching workforce, more than proactive, which resulted in quick, knowledge giving courses, with quick assessments, based on the minimum competence. As such, the current research highlights an emphasis on qualifying coaches, more than developing coaching practice. This compromised state of coach education results in partial linkage between Levels of the pathway, creating a series of standalone qualifications. Furthermore, the

UKCC mandated BC to educate coaches in new, redefined ways and introduced 'levels' of coaching, leaving BC to align new roles, responsibilities and coaching environments (Williams & Bush, 2017; Taylor & Garratt, 2010) to insurance. We hear how these insurance restrictions: impact practice; creates little difference between qualifications; creates a pathway that is too long; and has produced a Level 1 qualification that does not increase the Clubs' capacity for more riders, pressuring coaches to bypass this qualification, resulting in a broken pathway and varied abilities on courses.

Formal education is criticised for being technically focused. Yet these findings suggest teaching coaches the necessary skills to coach riders is important for two reasons. Firstly, BC's formal education put coaching knowledge on paper for the first time. Secondly, BC's focus on coaching technical skills was thought to improve rider development and result in more medals, which aligned with the national drive for GB to maintain world-class performances. Importantly, this highlights how formal education focuses on increasing trainees' understanding of knowledge that characterises the coaching profession – habits of hand (Shulman, 2005). These qualifications are delivered through mechanisms that include: BC coach developers; BC's materials, including the Gears books and coaching handbooks; practical, in-situ coaching; and assessments strategies. However, there appeared to be confusion on the intended outcomes of BC's formal education. The initial aim for the coach education programme was to result in better rider development, which Steven hoped would result in consistently improved performances at the elite level. However, for the coach education team the focus was on producing coaches who delivered safe sessions, with quality input. The importance of the tutor workforce was highlighted, but inconsistencies in the standard of delivery were common as tutors were encouraged to be more creative.

I hope that the presentation of this story, using the chosen literary format, raises some sympathy for those responsible for developing UKCC-endorsed, formal coach education pathways. These findings highlight the task placed on those responsible for delivering the demands of the UKCC. It is clear that NGBs deliver sport, and not necessarily education. This piece of creative nonfiction tells the story of how an untrained and inexperienced workforce were left developing the formal education courses that UKCC demanded. BC's education team – a transient workforce – did not come from a background in education and, understandably, did not understand assessment or course design. They were left 'trying to figure it out' and, as such, we should be mindful when being critical of the programmes that BC developed.

6.2.2 From the individual to the meso: Coaches' experiences of formal education and coaching environments

Firstly, these findings, similar to Walsh and Carson (2019), suggest that performance related content knowledge, reflective practice, experiential and situational learning continue to surface as pivotal components in coach development. Moreover, participants in this PhD found value in habits of hand more than habits of mind (Shulman, 2005). However, by reviewing participants' biographies, it seemed possible to group trainees into one of three narrative 'types' based on similarities in relation to previous cycling experience, coaching experience, their values and beliefs. These narratives acted as a theoretical frame that made it easier to present the findings presented in this thesis. Although there have been calls to move away from UKCC-endorsed programmes, that could be perceived as a backward step, meaning formal education remains necessary in coach learning, even if coaches prefer other learning opportunities. As such, the focus needs to shift towards finding ways to increase the effectiveness of delivering formal coach education programmes. Identifying different

narratives of coaching is an original contribution that this research offers. The concept of aligning trainees to different narratives might be a solution. Here, I will collate the findings presented in sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5, producing an overall picture of each narrative 'type's' learning.

Performance narrative – "Mediocre to magnificent"

The participants aligned to this narrative were distinctively characterised by beliefs and values that coaching aimed to develop riders' technical skills to help them reached their potential. Here, they were motivated to improve the standard of cycling in the UK. They were oriented towards the specific goal of being the best and wanting to coach the best. They had strong cycling backgrounds, including experiences of competitive racing, and had received formal coaching themselves. However, they were frustrated that BC's attention was focused on mass-coverage of qualified coaches, not developing coaches to be better or elite coach education. These participants wanted coaching to be a full-time career and wanted to progress through the qualification on the formal education pathway. During their participation in this research, these participants attended discipline specific units and Louise progressed to BC's Level 3 Road qualification. Coaching complemented their jobs and they saw coaching as an activity that could generate income for them. However, their involvement in competitive cycling created a role conflict between being a 'cyclist' and 'coach'.

Although these participants disconnected with BC because elite coaching was a low priority on their agenda and were despondent that sport needs bad coaches. Yet they coached with the NGB on their horizon: Louise coached BC sessions and Adam wanted to coach their techniques. They were not socialised by their formal education experiences as their biographies were too ingrained, which limited the scope of potential change. They disconnected from the technical focus – habits of mind

(Shulman, 2005) – feeling that they knew more than their peers. As such, these participants were resistant to coach 'BC's way' and effectively 'bypassed' recruitment and professional socialisation phases, illustrated in Figure 6.1. Moreover, their formal education did not impact their sense of value or commitment to service – their habit of heart (Shulman, 2005). These participants felt that BC's formal qualifications hindered their coaching practice by forcing them to coach in a certain, prescribed way, which was tied to insurance restrictions. These participants wanted to develop riders' technical ability, which left them frustrated that content within the formal education was dated, leaving them unable to coach the same techniques as the coaches of the Team GB riders. Moreover, they felt that they already had the knowledge to coach and that the qualification simply validated their ability to coach. Consequently, these participants did not value their formal qualification.
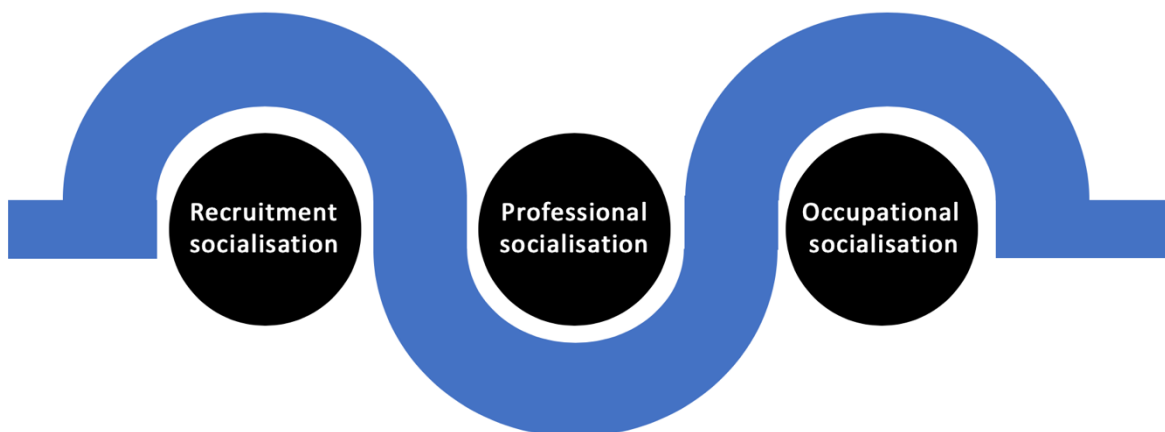
Figure 6.1 – Socialisation processes experienced by the 'performance coaches'

During their formal education, they felt that the practical, in-situ coaching was the most valuable mechanism because it allowed them to practise – to focus on their habits of hand (Shulman, 2005). They were confident leading sessions but struggled to see the relevance in other disciplines. They highlighted the coach developers as a valuable mechanism who helped develop them and acted as a coaching role model; however, they did not want to be shown how to coach. These participants would connect better

with coach developers who adopted Dewey's approach to teaching, where they embraced trainees' experiences and facilitated learning through managing their experiences. They felt it was frustrating planning around the content of the Gears books but were naturally reflective, which helped them think things through. They did not see qualified coaches plan, so did not value the importance of planning, moving forward. They found the assessment enjoyable and prepared in a similar way to how they would approach a race

Within their coaching context, these participants did not experience occupational socialisation (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). They felt unsupported in their club environments and that their clubs were resistant to their ideas because their goals misaligned with the goals of the club and other coaches. This left them with little control over their sessions. They experienced a reality shock observing the coaching being delivered in their clubs and were marginalised because of their focus on elite cycling. This created fragile relationships between these participants and the other coaches within their microsystem. Their 'rebel' approach meant they moved away from their coaching environments to distance themselves from negative workplace conditions that would normally facilitate wash-out (Lawson, 1989). As such, these participants essentially 'by-passed' occupational socialisation (Figure 6.1). However, these participants coached Road and Track disciplines that meant they lacked the freedom to move to different clubs because of limited access to facilities – especially Track. During their first-year coaching, they continued to learn through books/audiobooks and peer feedback, and felt they learned to feedback to riders more effectively and delivered sessions in line with Freire's (1970/1993) and Dewey's (1938) approaches to teaching.

These findings, taken from across this PhD, suggest that the learning ecology of the 'performance coach' is unique to this narrative. As illustrated in Figure 6.2,

although these participants operated within their immediate coaching environment –
their microsystem – they did not engage with those individuals within their coaching
environment. As such, the individual within their learning ecology was the most
powerful 'level' to their coaching practice. There was distance between this level and
their microsystem, and their education, BC as an organisation and government policy
– their meso-, exo- and macrosystems – were invisible to them in their everyday
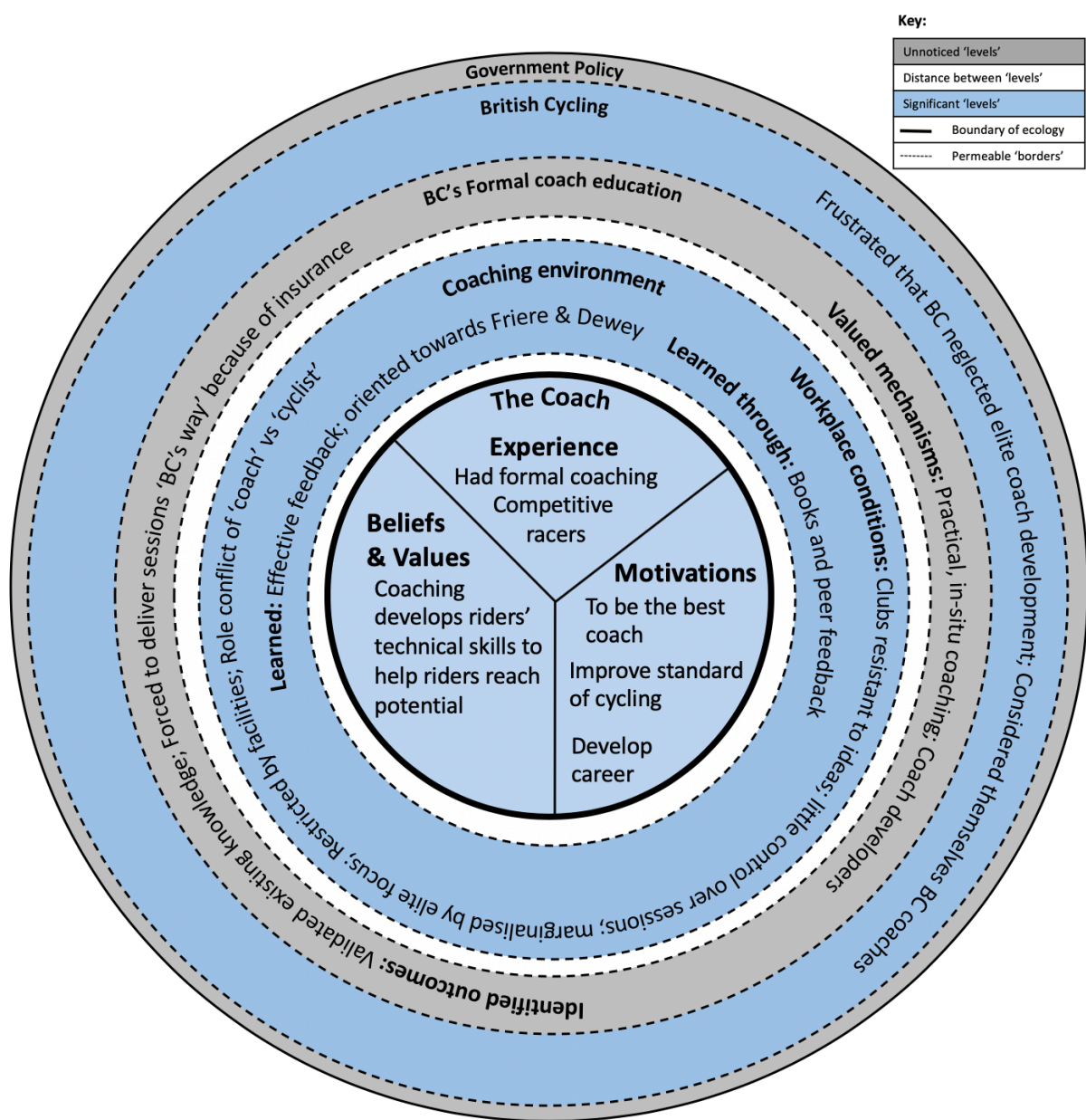coaching practice.

Figure 6.2 – The learning ecology of 'performance coaches'

<u>Discovery narrative – "I'm just a dad learning to coach"</u>

These participants were dads of cyclists, and therefore, experienced role conflict between 'coach' and 'dad'. They were characterised by beliefs and values that coaching was a journey with no end destination, but an activity that offered a new role and new possibilities. They were self-taught cyclists, so had limited knowledge, but had experience of volunteering as assistant coaches in their clubs, which is where they sourced their beliefs of coaching practice: that good coaching relied on rapport, effective communication and an encouraging environment for riders.

Joe, James and Oliver wanted to learn and attended BC's formal education to receive the 'Coach' title and its associated identity, changing their social position and enabling them to increase their clubs' capacity for riders. As a result, they valued the formal qualification and felt the certificate gave their knowledge the 'stamp of approval'. They felt that this increased riders' trust in them and meant they stopped searching for validation from other coaches. Here, they needed BC but had a distant relationship with them following their formal qualification. However, they valued the BC resources: they continued to use the Gears books for differentiation, used the BC session plans and wanted a 'BC coaching kit' to visibly display their qualification and new social status. They found their formal education was repetitive, negatively perceiving the linking of qualifications on the pathway.

These participants' biographies were less ingrained than those participants aligned to the performance narrative. Although their formal education experiences did not transform their biographies, these participants were more open to new information and, as a result, did experience professional socialisation (see Figure 6.3). They felt their education experiences increased their technical knowledge of cycling, which increased their confidence and left them motivated to share their knowledge with riders. They valued the BC materials and the practical, in-situ coaching, which

offered a 'nice atmosphere', where they picked things up from others' sessions, seeing others' interpretations of the course content. They trusted and respected their coach developers who they wanted to demonstrate 'gold standard' coaching in a didactic and authoritarian way. They trusted and respected the coach developers, finding them knowledgeable and proficient; they wanted feedback from them, but were frustrated at the lack of rapport with them, wanting more than email communication. They felt the coach developer controlled the information that was shared with them, and, as such, would connect best to tutors who adopted Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction. They missed the social support that they had experienced on other learning experiences – for example, forums and WhatsApp groups, however. It is unsurprising then that this PhD saw one participant aligned to this narrative, Joe, establish a Facebook group for coaches. Lastly, they felt that the course content could have included more guidance on the administration of coaching.

Figure 6.3 – Socialisation processes experienced by the 'discovery coaches'

Participants aligned to the discovery narrative felt that their formal education experiences demonstrated snippets of 'gold standard' coaching, which left them feeling confident to deliver sessions. These participants appreciated the focus on habits of mind (Shulman, 2005) and learned the importance of: engaging riders in sessions; differentiation across riders to manage the groups they were coaching; clear

communication; planning and the need to be adaptable. They also discussed a newfound respect for the professionalism of the coaching role. However, they felt that the assessment process highlighted that the 'gold standard' they were hoping to achieve does not exist, because they felt every trainee passed the assessment process.

These participants had an unexpected relationship with BC. They needed BC for the 'Coach' title, praised them for their coaching resources and wanted a 'BC coaching kit' to display their coaching role. Yet they identified as 'Club coaches'. This is because, within their microsystems, these participants coached in well-supported clubs, which gave them little responsibility or control over their sessions. The club support suited their lifestyles, further highlighting the practical impact of their role conflict between 'Coach' and 'Dad'. They felt the session plans added structure to their delivery and that the Gears books helped with differentiation, but their increased familiarity with their physical spaces meant they became less reliant on these. The other coaches in their clubs – their 'mentors' – negatively impacted their development. This meant that they experienced high levels of 'wash-out' as they were strongly socialised into the 'club's way'. This weakened their professional socialisation (see Figure 6.3). However, the club's approach aligned with Dewey's (1938), where they controlled participants' learning through the experiences which they allowed them to have. This limited their freedom and stunted their development as coaches.

As a result, this PhD captured these participants' search for other coaching opportunities: James transitioned to solely coach within his adult club; Joe negotiated a bigger role for himself when the club moved to the new facility; and Oliver started coaching at his daughter's school. These moves offered these participants more control over their sessions, allowing them to be more creative. However, their access to sites was impacted by local economics, resulting in a reality shock. During their first-year coaching, these participants continued to learn through peer feedback, YouTube and

a Facebook group of BC cycling coaches. They developed a teaching style which aligned to Bruner's (1968) theory of instruction, which was similar to how they learned on their formal education course. They learned how to effectively feedback to riders and delivered sessions oriented towards Bruner's theory of instruction.
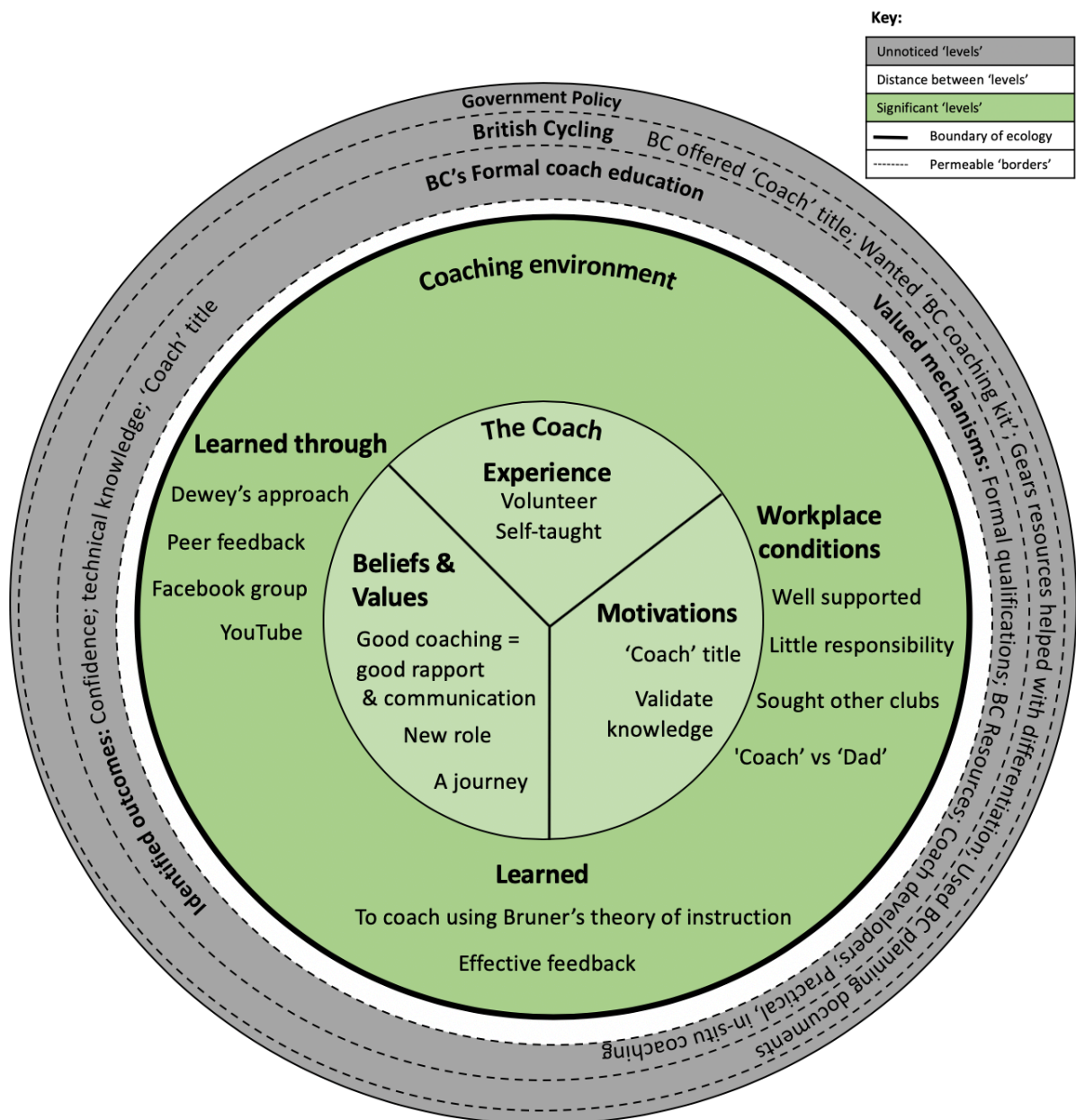

Figure 6.4 – The learning ecology of 'discovery coaches'

These findings, taken from across this PhD, suggest that the learning ecology of the 'discovery coach' is unique to this narrative. As illustrated in Figure 6.4, these participants operated within the confides of their immediate coaching environment –

their microsystem. Their formal education – indeed, their only connection with BC as an organisation – served its purpose in granting them the opportunity to coach. As such, in their everyday practice, their meso-, exo- and macrosystems were invisible.

Relational narrative – "Riding by the seat of our lycra"

The participants aligned to the relational narrative were social, self-taught cyclists. They were characterised by beliefs that cycling has the ability to create and sustain relationships with others. As such, they valued the social aspect of cycling and the people they connected with through their engagement in cycling. As a result, they worried coaching might distract from their personal riding. They believed that good coaches invest in people first and cycling second, and that good coaching rests on rapport and clear communication. They were motivated to coach so that they could spread the enjoyment of cycling, create lifelong cyclists and grow cycling in their community.

These participants wanted to attend BC's formal education to gain access to knowledge. They felt that the handbooks and Gears books were instructive and built their technical knowledge (habits of mind; Shulman, 2005). However, they wanted the coach developers to bring these materials to life and demonstrate 'good' coaching. Yet they were critical that these demonstrations were more about setting cones out, rather than learning how to coach. Nonetheless, they valued their relationship with the coach developers and felt that they developed as individuals. As such, these participants would connect best with coach developers who adopt Freire's (1970/1993) approach to teaching, where they are developed as person first, and coaches second.

Through their formal education experiences, these participants learned: to give clear instructions, not to over-explain in too much detail, and deliver simple sessions; the importance of active sessions; being adaptable; and effective ways to manage and

discipline groups. They liked sharing ideas during those sessions but felt that the peer-feedback was framed around their personal reflections on sessions. However, this group criticised how everyone passed the assessments and felt there were a disconnect between real-life coaching and the assessment, particularly with regards to the age and ability of riders. This left the assessments feeling staged, forced and about ticking boxes, which echoes criticism in the literature (e.g. Cushion et al, 2003; Chesterfield et al, 2010). Nonetheless, they found the assessment mechanism a valuable task, explaining how they simply had to show they could coach. These participants appreciated the exposure to different disciplines that their formal education offered and felt that their personal riding abilities improved because of the practical, in-situ coaching mechanism (habits of hand; Shulman, 2005). This mechanism offered these participants insight into the multiple roles of the coach and increased their personal riding abilities. Participants also valued peer-learning and aligned with Mezirow's (2009) transformational learning, making sense of learning from experiences.

These participants were excited for the independent coaching that their Level 2 qualification would bring because of the change in social role (Strauss, 1997). Beth was the only participant aligned to this narrative who progressed through the pathway because she was embedded in a mountain biking club, and, true to the relational narrative, that is the discipline where her social network was nestled. In order to combine her coaching with her desire to stay connected to that group – to those relationships – she needed a mountain bike-specific qualification. For Beth, her coaching was 'limited with the Level 2 core in a mountain bike club', and the discipline-specific unit meant she could 'properly coach in the forest'. Peter and Chris, motivated by growing cycling in the community, wanted to coach riders to be safe on the road when commuting. Their initial thoughts were to attend a bike ability course, to be able to deliver coaching in traffic environments. However, the expense and

commitment of the programme made them 'mute the idea', and instead look at 'other ways' of delivering sessions focused on 'riding safely and building skills to commute safely'. For them, this meant completing BC's Ride Leadership course. Here, their progression towards more formal education and training was driven by their motivation to meet the needs of the riders they coached.

Figure 6.5 – Socialisation processes experienced by the 'relational coaches'

These three were heavily socialised through their formal education (see Figure 6.5) and keen to coach as instructed, because they saw it as a good way to coach. Within their coaching contexts, these participants coached in clubs that inhibited wash-out, meaning they 'bypassed' occupational socialisation (Figure 6.5). This was primarily because their clubs supported them yet allowed them the freedom and control over the delivery of their sessions, which aligned with the goals of authority figures in their clubs and other coaches within their microsystem. Within their microsystem they used BC's Gears resources to create a 'coaching curriculum' (Shulman, 1986) and the BC planning document. They continued to reflect, mainly in written forms, but also verbally, both with coaches and the riders they coached. They balanced coaching alongside their families and work commitments but became more confident as they strengthened their relationships with other coaches and riders.

In their first year of coaching, they learned from other coaches, especially Beth who was shown different areas of the forest to coach certain skills. In addition, these participants had weaker content knowledge compared to the other participants, and therefore found YouTube helpful to see established riders doing skills, bringing the Gears books to life. They gained confidence from their peers and the riders that they coached, as well as from their increased subject knowledge (Shulman, 1986). They oriented towards delivering sessions in line with Dewey's approach to teaching. However, they experienced role conflict balancing coaching alongside their commitments to their families and job roles.

These findings, taken from across this PhD, suggest that the learning ecology of the 'relational coach' is unique to this narrative. As illustrated in Figure 6.6, these participants' coaching operated within BC's formal education – within their mesosytem. These participants essentially 'bypassed' occupational socialisation and 'wash-out'. This means these participants' microsystem and mesosystem were separated by a soft, synthetic border. Although these participants valued their formal education, because it offered them the tools to coach, they did not have a lasting relationship with BC within their learning ecology, seeing them as a certificate provider and disconnected with their focus on elite riding. As such, there was a hard border surrounding their mesosystem 'level', with a BC and their macrosystem invisible in their everyday coaching practice.

Figure 6.6 – The learning ecology of 'relational coaches'

6.3 Implications and recommendations for future practice

This section discusses the how these findings can potentially inform next steps in relation to policy, practice and supporting the NGB workforce. This relates to both the planning and delivery of BC's formal coach education.

First, it appears that participants in this research questioned the credibility of BC's formal education because they perceived that everyone passed the qualification. The UKCC intended to professionalise the sport coaching sector by training and qualifying the coaching workforce. However, in reality, the 'compromised' delivery of the current education programme is driven by economics and the need to have a qualified workforce. To regain credibility, BC should do more to create entry-standards that produce more equal-ability groups, relieving some pressure from coach developers. In addition, BC should better communicate the qualification outcomes across the coach developer workforce and coach developers should do more to support weaker trainees, rather than simply pass them. However, this still requires BC to see coach education as a high priority on their agenda, which given the government focus on increased physical activity, is unlikely.

However, in relation to planning, these findings offer a 'soft start' to informing changes to the course material. Formal coach education is often criticised for not recognising the adult learner and has called for practice-oriented coach education that takes into account the specific context and backgrounds of coaches' practice (Jacobs, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2016). Moreover, Lyle (2007) called for personal models of coaching to be developed. Focused on an appreciation of the previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs and values that participants bring to their coaching and educational experiences, this PhD proposes that trainee coaches could be aligned to one of three narrative 'types'. Based on participants' biographies, it seems possible to group trainees by similarities in relation to previous cycling experience, coaching experience, and their values and beliefs. As such, the findings presented in section 5.3 concluded that three streams, or pathways, could be developed, which embrace the general background of the individuals aligned to that narrative and emphasising the

skill areas deemed important to that group. This would move away from the current one-size-fits-all approach and highlights the variety of trainees' backgrounds.

Lastly, in relation to informing changes to the delivery of BC's formal education programme, it would be possible for coach developers to use pen-portraits or infographics to help trainees align themselves to one of the three different coach narratives outlined in this PhD. In addition, the findings from this PhD suggest that different narratives engaged with different teaching theories, which again could shape trainees' experiences at the point of delivery. This would save BC overhauling the whole pathway of qualifications, but still gives the course content purpose. This would help make content relevant to the trainees aligned to that narrative and create stronger alignment between the expectations of the coaches and their educational experiences, which would positively impact coaches' willingness and capacity to learn, reducing their disengagement and potential drop-out (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019). Moreover, this would allow trainees and coach developers to consider the different reasons for taking part in the formal education, beyond the superficial introduction tasks normally seen on training courses. This recommendation would reshape the validation of BC's formal qualifications and illustrate credibility that they were not preaching a one-size-fits-all award.

6.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This section discusses the limitations of this PhD and recommendations for future research.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this PhD coincided with bullying claims and the associated internal reviews and external scrutiny. This was badly timed for an in-situ ethnographic PhD and presented a barrier to accessing the BC offices. This presented

a limitation to this project and resulted in certain aspects of the PhD being restructured.

This PhD was ontologically and epistemologically positioned within the interpretivist paradigm. This means that these findings are the result of subjective, multiple realities and do not illustrate an absolute truth. As such, there is caution in translating these findings across other sports and NGBs. Therefore, the implications discussed above are not intended to generalise these findings, but rather suggest a workable framework for the planning and delivery of formal coach education, moving forward. However, this PhD tentatively proposed applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EMHD to sport coaching. As the data collection, analysis and the subsequent presentation of findings was considered, this application appeared increasingly appropriate. It is recommended that future research takes the current findings and experiment with the application of Bronfenbrenner's EMHD to explore more sport coaches' learning ecologies, across different sports. A larger sample of coaches across multiple sports will strengthen the findings from this research.

The sample of participants recruited was modest, which is a common criticism of qualitative research. However, the small number offered a deeper insight into the experiences of these individuals, offering rich, rather than superficial, data. Likewise, it could be argued that this PhD could have followed participants for a longer time period, but this was outside the scope of the time limits placed on this project. Moreover, this research was concerned with participants' experiences of formal education and the coaching experiences of novice coaches for one year after qualifying. However, a recommendation for future research would be to explore the socialisation of coaches' knowledges for longer than twelve months. Participants discussed improvements in their abilities and their confidence – or coaching efficacy. Socialisation research in education has used quantitative measures to capture this in

research within teacher education. However, a measure to capture novice sport coaches' efficacy in the delivery of sessions is not something that currently exists. This warrants further investigation and is a recommendation for future research.

A natural progression from this research would be to consider the end-user to BC's formal coach education: the riders. This focus was considered in the planning phases of this research; however, this was challenging to implement. During the data collection it became apparent that participants either operated drop-in sessions, to maximise attendance, or coached in structured clubs where riders progressed to other coaches' groups. As such, factoring this into the research questions of this PhD was challenging, based on the constraints and scale of the project and the participants recruited. Nonetheless, this point addresses another complexity to the learning and delivery of coaching. Therefore, this focus is both a limitation of this PhD and a recommendation for future research.

Within the scope of this research – which recruited numerous participants across different geographical locations, combined with the seasonal aspect of cycling coaching – observations were as regular as practically possible. In line with the micro-ethnographic approach of this PhD, I was embedded within the research process and lived parts of participants' lives. As such, observation data was only one method complemented with other methods employed. Moreover, observations were not focused on coaching practice, but the physical spaces that coaches operated within and how these spaces inhibited or facilitated wash-out effects. Consequently, the data collected was not dependant on participants' actions.

I planned to compliment observation data with a review of participants' session plans. However, this was not possible because not all participants completed session plans as a part of their coaching practice. In addition, the eight participants recruited for the study presented in sections 5.4 and 5.5 were asked to photograph any aspects

of their formal education experience that they found significant, and to take one photo every coaching session once qualified that demonstrated something significant to them. I asked that they share this data with me to inform discussion during interviews (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). I hoped that this co-construction of visual data would provide an opportunity to increase participants' involvement in the research process – that actively contributing data would empower them, rather than feel data was being passively pulled out of them (Phoenix & Rich, 2016). I also hoped this would allow participants to show the spaces around them, more than tell me about their lives (Riessman, 2008). Unfortunately, however, participants did not engage with this VRM. One participant sent some videos of a session, and another sent two photos from two separate occasions. This primarily meant that the visual data captured was the data that I collected as the researcher. In addition to the visual data I resourced, however, I also analysed found visual data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014), which included pre-existing representation embedded in the field, for example: Club logos, whether on hoodies, jerseys or plaques; posters and banners; front covers to log books and handbooks; pamphlets; and group websites.

Lastly, this research identified three narratives 'types' of coaches. It is possible there are more identifiable narratives, which a larger sample might identify. Likewise, it might be possible for coaches to transition from one narrative to another. For example, during her participation, Beth was made redundant, which resulted in coaching taking a different role in her life, and she considered the prospect of coaching full-time and generating an income from her coaching business. This was not something that she pursued during the course of this research, but it highlights the potential for her to transition from the relational narrative and align more to a performance narrative. It is worth noting, however, that this was the only instance this conversation occurred across all participants in this research and was the result of a

somewhat dramatic, potentially life changing event. Although the likelihood of transitioning between narratives over time is worthy of further exploration, the current findings are not meant to suggest that coaches are 'boxed' into a narrative 'for life'. Rather, the practical implications of this research relate to coaches' narrative types at the point of the delivery of their formal education in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the delivery of formal coach education and move away from a one-size-fits all approach to their delivery.

6.5 Summary

The end of this Chapter marks the end of this thesis. As Wolcott (2009) suggests, there comes a time when the research process draws to a close and writing about it simply needs to finish. This Chapter summarised the research findings of this PhD in line with the research questions I posed, outlining some wider conclusions, implications for practice and research, and some limitations of this project. Next, I present an Epilogue, which captures my reflections on my experiences as a neophyte researcher, early-career academic and an outsider to the cycling community, who became more comfortable during the research process.

Epilogue

'You will be found'

Pasek & Paul, 2017

Throughout this PhD I have been an outsider to cycling, although I feel I am in a different place now with the sport and its associated organisations than I was when this PhD started in 2017. Generally, my outsider status has not proved an issue. I feel I have been able to successfully engage with participants and collect detailed data to explore the research questions originally set out for this project. I have reflected on some of the challenges that my outsider status has caused and how, in many ways, I feel that I have been in a stronger, rather than weaker, position for having the distance and a lack of contextual understanding. However, in those first few days of my PhD I felt as though I was constantly playing catch up. I felt I was gate crashing a party I had no invite too. I felt *everyone* knew the aims and purpose of the project and that I was on the outside, not privy to any of the details. I felt excluded. A *real* outsider. I was given the impression that Arvy had shared her data and that even that – however selfish – wasn't mine to share. Following discussions with my fellow PhD researchers, I put part of it down to imposter syndrome, and the rest down to unfortunate circumstances. My coping strategy was simply to throw myself into Arvy's data, quickly getting to work to try and carve out my own path for this project; to find my story. To find me and my voice.

Fast forward to August 2019. I attended British Ice Skating's (BIS) coaching convention at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. This was a long way from the world of cycling, but this was *my* world. For context, my Mum coaches figure skating and, aged eighteen-months, I was on the ice for the first time. Following a competitive career in the sport, I turned to coaching and officiating. As a licensed coach with the NGB, BIS, this convention was an event I had to attend every three years. At registration I scanned the agenda and saw the ex-Coaching Director for BC was presenting. I attended Steven's session and introduced myself. We had a quick ten-minute conversation, exchanged email addresses and arranged to be in touch.

Following numerous emails, we met in November 2019 and had a three-hour conversation over coffee. At the start, Steven disclosed, in a very understated manner, that he had no involvement with Arvy's PhD during his time at BC, other than the interviews he had participated in. For the last three years I had thought that Steven had played a crucial part in this project, when in fact, that was apparently not the case; he had only been on the peripheries. It was during this conversation that I reflected how, during the three years of this PhD, one of Arvy's original supervisors, a lead figure in the initial inception of this project, left the University, and a key figure within BC and this project, the Head of Education, left BC. This meant that although I felt as though I had arrived late to the party in 2017, by 2019, I was one of the only one left engaged with the project. More than that, however, I had become embedded in the centre of the story. I had grown into the lead role that felt so alien before. All this time I felt that I had been waving through a window, trying desperately to have someone wave back at me. Now it felt as though there was nobody the other side to wave back. In a short few seconds, I came to realise that I was on that side of the glass – the side I had been so desperate to be… There was nobody to wave back because I was now the only one.

In Arvy's data, Steven discussed how he had launched BC's first version of their formal education provision in 2000. Now, twenty years on and removed from the organisation, I wanted his reflections on formal coach education. How had the coaching landscape changed? And, out of curiosity, did he have any regrets from his time leading BC's formal education? I entered this conversation seeking closure. This was my last interview of the PhD, and it was with the person where all this had begun. It felt as though this interview brought me full circle.

Steven did not share any regrets regarding his time in charge of education at BC. He still felt the UKCC had good intentions and applauded its efforts to standardise the sector. He felt he had done everything possible to create a formal education pathway in cycling that was UKCC endorsed and was proud of his achievements to have implemented a pathway that was still in place. As he discussed in his first interview, the pathway, and qualifications within it, had faults. However, there was currently nothing to replace the UKCC with and, as such, Steven felt it was worth sticking with, as a framework.

Steven shared how the coaching landscape had shifted as the Government policy changed. For him, the focus was now on increasing physical activity and creating an active nation. Although relevant, this had moved the focus from the medal focus of the 1990s following the Atlanta Games towards general participation. As such, the core focus of Steven's coach education pathway – a strong technical focus to help improve GB's world-class performance – was out of touch. Moreover, however, coaching was further down the Government's agenda than before, because, for Steven, you do not need coaches to increase people's activity. Social rides – and in particular, the Breeze programme specifically aimed at female riders and the 'Ready Set Ride' programme aimed at increasing children's physical activity – were now paramount in BC's agenda. In turn, BC do not need qualified coaches for these

programmes: social rides need Ride Leaders and the 'Ready Set Ride' programme is parent-focused. This meant that it was not only the focus that was out of touch, but with the current policy, the whole pathway was somewhat redundant.

Figure 7.1 – Artwork in the BC office displaying their 'new purpose' (© Samuel Wood)

BC has changed as an organisation during the course of this PhD (see Figure 7.1). Partly because of the Governance restructure, partly because of the negative press surrounding their practice in the elite 'arm' of the organisation and partly because of a change of focus in Government policy. Either way, BC now boasted the number of recreational cyclists they had, more than the number of Olympic medals they had. Perhaps this transformation is well-timed for a post-COVID-19 world, where the role of the bike – and the nation's relationship with cycling – could change as people seek different forms of exercise and methods of commuting. This PhD, then, captured BC through a defining period and witnessed their fall from grace. Where was BC headed in the next 20 years? Would we ever see Olympic success on the scale we had come to expect from this organisation? Moreover, Steven's comments question the future of sport coaching and the role of coach education more generally.

I started this PhD blind. Drowning in data with no clear path; no plan of how to claim ownership. I hope this thesis has captured my journey towards finding myself and sharing *my* story. I hope I have illustrated the messiness of the research process as I have strived to honestly discuss some of the challenges I have faced. I hope that I have demonstrated, with clarity, that I have finished this PhD with a clearer view than I could have ever pictured three years ago, on my first day, sat in my Director of Studies' office. Yet I also hope that I have done justice to Arvy's story.

Appendix 1 – Summary of the eight participants outlined in section 4.6

Narrative type	Coach	Age (in years)	Gender	Job role	Coaching experience before formal education	Cycling experience	Motivations for attending Level 2 course	Discipline
Performance	Louise	32	Female	Senior Officer at UK Sport	Supported club sessions as Level 1 coach	Raced competitively and received formal coaching	Improve standards of cycling in the UK	Road and Track
	Adam	58	Male	Gym instructor	No coaching experience other than gym instructor role	Raced competitively and received formal coaching	Coaching qualification would compliment his gym instructor knowledge	Road and Track
Discovery	Joe	34	Male	General Manager at a plastics company	Volunteered as assistant coach at child's cycling club	No formal coaching. Experienced in a variety of disciplines	Formalise volunteer role	Mountain bike
	James	54	Male	Owner of signage company	No coaching experience	'Weekend warrior' – no formal coaching	New role post-retirement	Road
	Oliver	42	Male	Marketing Director for pharmaceutical company	Volunteered as assistant coach in child's club	Cycled most of his life, mainly as form of transport	Formalise volunteer role	Road
Relational	Peter	63	Male	Retired teacher	Assistant coach at sessions as a Level 1	Social cyclist. No formal coaching	Help increase the club's capacity	Road
	Chris	73	Male	Architect	Assistant coach at sessions as Level 1	Social cyclist. No formal coaching	Help increase the club's capacity	Road
	Beth	38	Female	Teacher	Assistant coach at sessions as Level 1	Social cyclist. Some racing experience	To be able to coach sessions on the Forest trails	Mountain Bike

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