'TALENT' MENTALITIES:

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF

BEING IN A SPORTS TALENT DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMME

GRAHAM JULIAN TURNER

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Abstract

'Talent' Mentalities: Young People's Experience of Being in a Sports Talent Development Programme

Article 12 of The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child grants each young person the right to express their view, have their opinion considered and have their say in decisions that affect them. Previous research on talent development in sport has however failed to recognise the voice of the young person or regard the participant as an autonomous agent. This study employed phenomenological enquiry to focus on the conditions of lived reality to afford the young person the opportunity to convey their unique experience. The aim of the research was to employ a participatory approach to explore the essence of young people's conscious experience of Talent Development Programmes in sport. My co-collaborators were eight young people aged between 13 and 17, (two females: netball and gymnastics, and six males: rugby 3, discus, angling, and badminton), who all attended the same school and were all members of a Sports National Governing Body Talent Development Programme. Over twelve months each participant utilised their individual preference to communicate depictions of self, drawing upon interview, conversation, Twitter, video, photo and observation of training and performance. Results were presented in the form of individual vignettes generated from researcher and participant interaction and constructed according to hermeneutical interpretation. Young people's stories reveal the essence of talent development through the experience of uncertainty and endeavour; talent development experience teaches young people to self-present in response to perceived injustice; and individual progress is characterised by self-regulation and the pursuit of personal empowerment. The research demonstrates that when young people are involved in active decision making about their learning and their lives they feel better respected and understood. Academics and practitioners must now accept a responsibility to engage with the unique lived experience of the young person's reality to find better ways to listen to the young person's voice to support their talent development experience in sport.

Acknowledgements

In the four years that it has taken me to complete this PhD I have lived in five houses, undergone five surgeries, had three jobs, studied at two universities and lived on both sides of the world. I would like to place on record my thanks to my wife Fiona, my children Ria, Elliot and Romy and my Director of Studies Professor Dave Morley, for each of these has been instrumental in helping me to create the conditions to self regulate and achieve personal empowerment. I am also extremely grateful for the co-collaboration of the eight young people who participated in this study and the critical advice of Dr Barbara Walsh, Dr Sarah Nixon and Dr Amy Whitehead.

The idea for this research project came to me in a football field in England. Then my son was thirteen and participating in a Football Talent Development Programme for Bradford City FC. On the day I finished this study we stood together in a different field, now Elliot was 17 and participating in a Rugby Union Talent Development Programme for Melbourne Rebels in Australia.

PhD: A lived experience. Thanks son I have learnt a lot x

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Academic Rationale:

Talent Development in Sport

In 2011 Baker et al. stated that sport science enquiry has demonstrated the inability of talent development programmes to cater for and recognise individual characteristics and attributes and confirmed that there was a clear need for research to improve understanding of talent identification and development in sport. Conceptions of talent development have predominately evolved from retrospective analysis of the developmental journeys of participants with exceptionally high level of demonstrated ability, achievement or skill, to consideration of talent trajectories (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 2007). Research has focused upon skill acquisition and motor learning (Renshaw et al., 2010) and the interplay of genes and the environment (Simonton, 1999) to support the aim of better explaining how to recognise and support the accelerated development of the individual. These types of study stem from a research paradigm where the principles for understanding the world are based upon a belief in an objective reality and so typically use a factor analytic approach to identify similarities and differences to explain behaviour (Perkins et al., 2000). Factor analysis employs quantitative procedures to identify clusters or groups of related items that appear significant to the phenomenon and talent development practice has developed in response to domain specific enquiry drawn from physiological, (Balyi, 2004), psychological, (Abbott et al., 2004) and social (Côté, 1999) foundations.

More recently researchers and theorists have asserted the importance of interdisciplinary research to provide the necessary empirical and theoretical balance relative to each knowledge domain (Allen & Shaw, 2013; Bailey et al., 2013). Yet despite significant advances in knowledge and understanding of the concept of sporting expertise (Ericsson

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et al., 1993) researchers searching for universally applicable truths continue to be frustrated by the complexity of interaction between participant, task and situational constraint (Newell, 1986).

In the UK talent development programmes rely upon coaching practice that is informed by the UK Coaching Framework (Sportscoach UK, 2008). This framework is underpinned by a participant development model that utilises a broad knowledge base to identify common characteristics to support participant's sporting needs. Participant development is 'the process of designing and delivering sports programmes that create learning experiences (Indiana University, 2015, p. 2) and the UK framework advocates a holistic approach to participant development, recommending a participant-focused, needs-led, approach to create sport experiences that are matched to the unique requirements of the young person (Sportscoach UK, 2008). The stated intention is that regardless of orientation towards either participation or performance, application of this model should be underpinned by a principled approach where the coach is encouraged to 'think of the individual first' (Sportscoach UK, 2015, p. 1).

Phenomenology is a philosophy of knowledge that challenges analytic and deductive philosophies through assertion of the primacy of the individual's experience (Gallagher & Francesconi, 2012) and so offers an opportunity to reconceptualise knowledge generation (Park Lala & Kinsella, 2011) through explication of the true complexity of the process of talent identification and development. From the phenomenological perspective the concept that universal truths can be gained from unique individual experience to explain complex and controversial questions appears deeply flawed (Craig, 1984). Viewed from this perspective the concept of talent development in sport is premised upon the ontological doctrine of a social reality, where context and practice

is believed to be dependent upon the thoughts and judgements of the individual rather than the result of the collective actions of a community (Marcus & Le, 2013).

New conceptions of young people require the adult to view the young person as an autonomous individual with the ability to act, change and be changed by their world (McLaughlin, 2005). Critical exploration of young peoples' engagement in social practice now reflects a discourse that attends to power, agency and the participatory agenda (Holland et al., 2010; Nutbrown & Clough, 2009) and researchers and practitioners alike have been called upon to find new ways to consider how young people experience being young people; to empower young people by making their voice equal to the voice of the adult; and to find ways to share social forms of communication (Randall, 2012). Medicine has led the way and in healthcare participative enquiry has evolved to encourage young people to talk about what they believe is and continues to be important to their experience (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011; Gardner & Randall, 2012; Lambert et al., 201; Warham, 2012). This thesis represents the first time that a study on talent development in sport has committed to a research approach that prioritises the experience of young people to bring their voice to the fore.

Personal Rationale:

I qualified as a Physical Education Teacher in 1992 and then supported 'talented' young athletes within the contexts of both Physical Education and professional sport. I worked as a Manager, Leader and Researcher in the field of Physical Education, Sport Science, and Talent Development and spent 20 years educating participants in sport but suddenly my career came to a halt. Serious injury left me immobile and unable to work, it took two years but eventually I was able to walk again. It was an experience that to know you had to live.

This experience gave me a new perspective, a different way of looking at the world and when I returned to work as a Senior Lecturer in Sports Coaching I decided to apply my new perspective to the study of talent development in sport. I had found myself questioning what it might be like to be a young person participating in a talent development programme in sport and realised that if as an adult I didn't know, then the power to enact the process and practice of talent development in sport actually lay with the young person. I embarked upon doctoral research seeking to learn how to apply this perspective to the study of talent development in sport and through this process I was introduced to the concept of constitutive contradiction (Sallis, 1987). The word constitutive is defined as, 'making a thing what it is; essential. Having power to institute, establish or enact' (Harcourt, 2011). I wanted to learn about the lived experience of participation in a talent development programme in sport and, supported by my new perspective began to embrace the assumption that for each individual first-hand experience of the phenomena would form a unique vision of the nature of their reality (McConnell & Henry et al., 2009). I decided that it was time for the adult to learn from the experience of the young person.

A Lived Experience

Connections between the self and the study are inherent facets of the qualitative process and product (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) and for me there was one experience that I shared with my son that was pivotal to the genesis of this study. It is a lived experience that has resonated in my mind and whilst for him the memory of that experience may have faded his response to me that day has become crystalised in my mind.

It was 2009, my son was 13 and he had been signed to a professional football club since he was 8. At the end of the previous season his coach told him that he had 'done ok' but

he needed to keep improving and he had to stay fit. Now it was the summer holidays and the new season was only six weeks away. 'Lucky' for him his dad had worked in professional football for ten years, he had a Masters Degree in Sport and Exercise Science and he knew exactly what he had to do:

'That's one done mate, well done. Stick to that pace, make sure you alternate legs when you turn,……….don't bend over now, stand up straight, regulate your breathing,   in   through   your   nose   out   through   your   mouth, ……………………………….you are going again in eighty seconds, ……one down seven to go.'

His breathing was jagged, rasping and intrusive. He couldn't speak, all he could do was breathe. He wasn't in charge of his breathing it was in charge of him, all he could do was fight to keep up with it.   Sixty seconds passed.

'I'm not doing eight'
'Twenty seconds to go, don't worry mate you'll be fine, take long slow breaths, get your mind right, are you ready? 10 seconds…………………………...5, 4, 3, 2, 1 go'

and he went again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again,

and then he collapsed on the ground his ribs writhing as he fought for air.

'That's brilliant mate, well done'

He couldn't hear me. The only thing that mattered to him was air.

Eventually he got up, he walked past me to the car and as he passed he said,

'I'm never doing that again'

Interval training finished I started to drive. It was time for the car conversation. The car conversation is a time the child with 'talent' knows well, for this is when the adult imparts their knowledge and the young person is required to listen. However this car conversation was different. I analysed his performance and I gave him feedback. He let me speak, and once I had finished giving my best advice he said to me,

'Dad, you just don't understand the mentality of a thirteen year old'

Being in the World

This was a unique moment within a unique experience and the timing was perfect for now I was ready to explore a new paradigmatic frame of reference. On that day we had lived the same time and inhabited the same space but whilst we may have shared moments we had not shared the same experience. As I had watched I had seen how my son's consciousness had been filled by a new intensity of bodily experience. In my mind I recognised that for me access to this experience was lost but as I reflected upon this experience I became aware of a new kind of consciousness, a profound consciousness that suggested that there could be a different way to help. I began to view my surroundings and interactions with my son differently and this allowed me to question previously held values. It is suggested that this process of 'active self-reflection' offers a way to help family members understand themselves and their family better (Deacon & Piercy, 2001). For me this represented both a personal and a professional opportunity (Kearns, 2012) and so I set out to learn how to study the young person's experience.

Philosophical deconstruction is a concept that encourages the individual to revisit the way that he or she thinks about the social world to achieve a re-interpretation that can

reveal a deeper understanding of the nature of being (Holland, 2013). I was able to return to the text of the conversation with my son to recognise that the way to reach a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of the young person's experience was through phenomenological research. Phenomenological research is the study of lived experience and lived experience is viewed through four existential themes: lived body (corporeal), lived space, lived time and lived relation (van Manen, 1990). For me this experience happened at a time when my sensitivity to these fundamental structures had connected to a new kind of consciousness. My corporal reality had changed, I had been injured, it was a serious injury and I no longer had the same physical ability (Fisette, 2015). I was the same person but I had a new sense of being, and so I had moved to a different space. In the two years I had been unable to work time had travelled differently and I had time to think. I thought about my son and what he had said to me. We had a special bond, we spent a lot of time together but though we shared time I now recognised that our sense of being in this time was very different.

Deconstruction requires 'an openness to the other' (Gormley, 2012, p. 375) and now I found that I was able to challenge my own self-perceived status and re-orientate to take account of the significance of feelings to the experience of the child (Richards, 2012a). I began to reflect upon how types of interaction between children and adults demonstrated habits and patterns of thought that were derived from specific epistemological and ontological positions (Currie, 2013). I recognised that my habitual lens of positionality typified the position of the 'knower' within the field of sport and exercise and realised that my perspective was fashioned by my identification with this position (Maher & Tetreault, 1993).

The process of talent development requires each individual to interpret and respond to augmented experience and progression within a talent development system is determined by the ability to comprehend and profit from such experience. When a young person is inducted into a talent development programme they enter with their own set of ideas, beliefs and skills and this mentality forms the foundation for their identity, behaviour, activity and interaction (Solev'ev, 2005). I determined that research on talent development in sport had yet to demonstrate how to support the agency of young people to connect with their individual view and recognised that to do so it was necessary to elevate the status of the young person's voice and give priority to their interpretation of this 'real world' experience. In this research project I set out to empower the young person to reveal the true nature of being for the participant in a sports talent development programme and to investigate the essence of this lived experience (Halák et al., 2014).

Aim of the Research

To achieve an interpretative representation of a young person's lived experience, using hermeneutic phenomenology, in order to express the essence of participation in a sport talent development programme.

Objectives

To employ a participatory approach to enable young people to enact the agency of self within research collaboration

To explore the sense of 'being' for young people in the field of talent development, to be able to promote adult understanding of the subjective nature of this experience.

Chapter 2: Social Justice: Interpreted Experience and Social Reality

Introduction

Phenomenological enquiry differs from almost every other science in that it sets out to secure insightful description of the way that an individual directly experiences the world without offering to link with effective theory to explain that world (van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological scientist would not ask how young people learn to become talented athletes but rather what is the nature or essence of this experience, so that we might better understand what it is like for young people?

My goal was to discover how young people make sense of life experience in the context of specific social practice (Smith et al., 2009), not to explain how young people become talented in sport. In this chapter I began by critiquing literature that could provide insight into the young person's social reality. My intention was to locate the study around the concept of social interaction between the adult and the young person through exploration of the concept of social justice (Earnshaw, 2014). Research on social behaviour has demonstrated that within a social relation each individual weighs the benefit and cost of entering into and sustaining a relationship and then behaves accordingly (Poonamallee & Goltz, 2014). This chapter examines the theory of societal relations (Turner, 2007), social identity (Kang et al., 2015) and perceived organisational support (Gelens et al., 2014) to consider how interaction with the adult may influence how the young person interprets and responds to talent development experience.

The study begins by focusing upon the concept of equity between young person and adult, deliberately invoking consideration of The Rights of the Child (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2013), prior to exploration of the nature of being for the young person in the world of talent development in sport.

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Social Justice

'Social justice' is a term that can be traced back to the philosophers Plato and Aristotle who asserted that a society must be fair and just and proposed that the pursuit of a such a society should comprise of not only a goal but also a process (Griffiths, 1998). Today when consideration is given to the fair treatment of young people in society four principles are applied:

> **'Access** (greater equality of access to goods and services)
>
> **Equity** (overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power)
>
> **Rights** (equal effective legal, industrial and political rights)
>
> **Participation** (expanded opportunities for real participation in the decisions which govern their lives).'
>
> (Australian Government Department of Health, 2015)

Consideration of these principles has previously been informed by Bourdieu's theory of social capital, a theory that is based upon the belief that the structures of the social world are an interpreted experience and that social reality is adult determined (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu wanted to better understand how the elite in society achieved and maintained superior social standing and so developed the theory of social capital to explain how benefit was accrued from membership of a distinct social group (Holland, 2009; Springer, 2011). Bourdieu defined social capital as 'the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119) and linked the possession of social capital to the position of power in the adult world. This theory did little to advance recognition of the young person's contribution to society and related inequality to the actions of adults who sought to perpetuate power through exclusionary practice (Bourdieu, 1986).

The potential for social relationships to generate positive outcomes is predicated on the propensity of members of social groups to develop positive relationships (Adios et al., 2014) however the theory of social capital was premised upon the assumption that the child accrues benefit from their relationship with the adult. New conceptions have since challenged this view and theories of societal relations now consider connection according to interaction within community, network and institution and refer to synergy to explain the implications and consequences of relationships between groups (Turner, 2007). Within this framework society has recognised that young people have distinct interactions, register specific interests and take an active role in their lived experience (Fleming, 2013). Critics of social capital theory therefore assert that this conception does not accurately recognise the agency of the child and over emphasises the influence of the parent (Semi, 2011). Semi (2011) goes further to state that whilst social capital theory emphasises the importance of the parent's social standing to proclaim inherited benefits for the child ironically this perspective might perpetuate perception of dependency and presents a view of interaction that does not adequately acknowledge the autonomy of the young person. This assertion demonstrates the influence of the perception of the adult to the enactment of social convention and invites consideration of how the young person's social identity may be critical to the process of social interaction.

Social Identity

This study set out to explore the experience of the young person in relation to the social context of an exclusive sporting environment. Previous research has demonstrated the importance of sporting context and signified level of perceived ability in relation to positive physical self-concept and positive self-esteem (Scarp, 2011). Self-concept is the perception that the individual has of her or himself, this perception develops in

accordance with domain specific environmental interaction and positive developmental outcomes have been attributed to engagement with both sport and social settings (Marsh & Yeung, 1998). Social identity theorists confirm that each individual is motivated to develop and sustain a positive self-concept and that formation of self-concept forms the basis of an individual's self-esteem (Huang et al., 2015). Research on young people's sporting participation in the context of leisure reports that adolescents consider sport to be part of their identity and that sports participation provides a sense of social belonging and allows them to be themselves (Hixon, 2013). Adolescence involves the pursuit of an identity through a process that relies upon social-relatedness and individuation (Kang et al., 2015). Social relatedness refers to the development of relationships with others and the process of becoming part of a particular social world; by contrast the process of individuation relates to the development of autonomy that is achieved by separation from others (Lloyd et al., 2008).

Erikson's (1950) epigenetic theory of the stages of human life explains how the complex interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors shape experience during adolescence (Erikson & Erikson, 1981). For the young person induction into a sports talent development programme represents entry into a new social world where separation requires the individual to develop a new set of relationships. Previous studies have underlined the temporal significance of physical self-concept to confirm the developing connection between experience, knowledge, feelings and memories during adolescence (Scarp, 2011; Balsalobre et al., 2014) and Erikson asserts that 'the growing child must derive a vitalizing sense of reality from the awareness that his individual way of mastering experience is a successful variant of the way other people around him master experience and recognize such mastery' (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 95). In this study I wanted to explore the nature and reality of the young person's

experience in this exclusive context. My objective was to explore the conditions that shape perception of identity for the young person in relation to social, emotional and corporeal connection to talent development experience in sport. I also sought to consider interpretations of self according to time lived in this specific space (the talent development environment) to consider how social relation, social acknowledgement and personal association with talented status might shape the young person's emergent sense of self (Lloyd et al., 2008).

Social Exchange

This research project constituted an undertaking that would depend entirely upon the agency of the young people with whom I sought to engage (Raby, 2012). The principle of collaboration was a central tenet (Gibson, 2012) and I took on a responsibility to uphold the value of each young person's individual perspective (Sanders, 1982). This outcome was reliant upon principled consideration of the process of engagement between adult and young person as I sought to invest in a process of social exchange (Guillet et al., 2002).

Social exchange theory posits that if a member of a community feels that their treatment is fair and believes that what they receive for their investment is an appropriate return then they will be more inclined to commit and excel (Avanzi et al., 2014). My intention as a researcher working to learn from young people engaged within the context of talent development in sport was to both explore and apply the principles of social justice within my work. Whereas involvement in this research project would require each young person to reveal their view of experience within an adult conceived model of talent development in sport, the philosophical premise upon which my project relied

was that my methodological approach should not constitute an imposition (Hill, 2013; Hutchfield & Coren, 2011).

The original conception of social justice relies upon a principal of mutual obligation and requires that each individual adopts a dual responsibility to include both a responsibility for each other and also a responsibility to each other (Kamtekar, 2001). A just society is therefore challenged to operate for both a common good and also for the good of each individual within it, requiring that both individual and collective needs are met simultaneously (Kretchmar, 2008). This is however anything but a straight forward notion for social equity is characterised by multidimensional nature and determined by allocation of resource, recognition of way of life and democratic right (Young, 2011). Such conception also demands recognition of dependency upon a complex process of contextual interplay where the principle of equality and operation of power may be judged according to a particular context of enactment (Gewirtz, 2006). Research has demonstrated that voluntary associations can generate social connection where positive interaction has the potential to generate legitimate relations and foster reciprocal networks (Rodima-Taylor, 2013). The principle of mutual obligation is likened to the nature of reciprocity where in social practice if a benefit or service is received the recipient will then give something back (McCausland & Levy, 2006). This arrangement relies upon expectation and obligation where two parties are brought together in a relationship that serves as a kind of contract.

Exploration of the concept of interactional justice has focused upon the experience of social engagement within the context of business to demonstrate how the perception of fairness is significant to individual commitment, co-operation and task performance (Williams, 1999). Nikbin et al. (2014) liken the interactional relationship between

manager and employee to the relationship that might exist between a coach and athlete in sport but state that whilst both sets of relationships employ a hierarchical structure and rely upon a process of co-operation to work towards a shared goal, few studies have considered perceptions of justice within the context of organisation in sport. In this context it seems fair to state that if an adult engages a young person in a talent development programme that they also accept that if progress falters and engagement ends then it should not just be the young person who is accountable and that they must also share some responsibility.

Perceived Organisational Support

In sport research that has examined the links between social structure and agency and organisation and lived experience has attributed young people's perceptions and beliefs about participation and engagement to their relationship with parents, teachers and coaches (Gould, 2008; Lubans et al., 2011). This research project set out to contribute new knowledge through exploration of participant development in the context of 'talent' where the nature of engagement between young person and adult might be considered as an interaction that represented, 'the effortful accomplishment of collective tasks' (Okhuysen et al., 2015, p. 6). This concept is otherwise defined as work.

In the workplace the concept of perceived organisational support has been routinely applied to the relationship between employer and employee (Moideenkutty et al., 2001; Purang, 2011), and social exchange theorists contend that employee perceptions of positive organisational support are determined by employee experience where treatment is interpreted as favourable (Lasalvia, 2009). Analysis has demonstrated that when an employee perceives that he or she is the recipient of positive discretionary activity this action will also be regarded as evidence of organisational care for individual wellbeing

(Wickramasinghe & Wickramasinghe, 2011). The recipient of discretionary treatment will tend not to attribute their experience to the motives of the agent and instead perceive these actions to represent the intentions of the larger organisation (Avanzi et al., 2014). Application of this concept to consideration of workforce satisfaction with training and development continues to demonstrate the relevance of perceived organisational support to workforce engagement (Trinchero et al., 2013): 'The perception of justice is interpreted as the extent to which the employee perceives is his value within the organisation and the employee's sense of belief that he has a sound relationship with the organisation' (Purang, 2011, p. 142).

Theory of perceived organisational justice in business has been applied to the context of talent development to enable consideration of how different employees respond to the process and practice of talent management (Gelens et al., 2014). Gelens et al.'s study (2014) examined employee's reactions to high potential identification, talent management and perceived organisational justice and reported that in this context it was the perception of implemented practice, rather than the practice itself that held the greatest significance for the experience of the employee. What this study did not do was provide information to confirm just what this experience was like or what this experience meant to the recipient.

In this research project it is contended that the relevance of the application of social exchange theory to consideration of participant development in the context of 'talent' is justified by transposition of the evidence that affirms the existence of a connection between the context of 'work' place and the construction and development of an identity (Okhuysen et al., 2015). In the context of work place, whilst different parties may agree to interact an imbalance of power may subsequently cause one party within

the relationship to incur a sense of compulsion which may negatively impact future engagement (McCausland & Levy, 2006). Where treatment is perceived to be favourable perceived organisational support will generate reciprocal engagement where the employee/participant will feel a sense of commitment, share the goals of the organisation and increase commitment and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). For the individual the development of a reciprocal relation promotes an opportunity to create a deeper sense of membership; to develop a sense of status that connects with social identity; and to benefit from the experience of empowerment (Afzali et al., 2014). This research project explored the experience of talent development in sport by inviting young people to share their perceptions of experience in order to secure individual interpretations of the nature and meaning of treatment in this context.

Equity

'The first inequality in life is that of child and adult.'

(Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 106)

The concept of equity is concerned with equal treatment and outcome (Bessant, 2008) and when consideration of the involvement of children in adult culture is examined through the lens of a human rights perspective social scientists confirm the need for recognition that children play an active role in construction, co-construction and reconstruction of not only their own lives but also the lives of the adults with which they interact (Rajabi-Ardeshiri, 2011). This premise demands that the principle of equity must be considered in relation to equality amongst children and in relation to the relationship between children and adults (Shier, 2012). Currently the focus of anti-discriminatory practice in relation to members of this section of society centres upon

equal treatment with regard to children's ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences:

> Convention on the Rights of the Child
>
> States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
>
> (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Article 2, 1990)

Within the Charter for the Rights of the Child discrimination on the basis of age is not explicitly mentioned and so it appears that we are left to assume that provision for protection from harm through discrimination by age is covered by the term 'other status'. Recognition of the concept and consideration of the practice of discrimination by adults over children by age appears to be conspicuous by its absence. This omission suggests that when applied to children, the principle of non-discrimination has been conceived as referring to equality amongst children rather than equality between children and adults (Shier, 2012). This is problematic for representations from organisations working closely with children and young people confirm that whilst they recognise that meaningful application of the Rights of the Child does necessitate that children and young people should be actively involved in the development and running of their own services organisations find it difficult to put this commitment into practice (Pre-School Learning Alliance, 2015). This difficulty results in a tension for policy makers and practitioners as they acknowledge the discomfort of principled limitations in service design and delivery and confirms that greater interrogation of the relationship between children and adults remains to be undertaken (Soni, 2013). Such admissions may perhaps explain why the concept of age discrimination was not specifically identified in Article 2 of the Convention on The Rights of The Child.

In Article 2 equity in relation to the child is considered according to a specific set of individual differences (race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, or birth). Shier (2012) has interrogated this portrayal and points to the fact that normally the concept of equity could be assumed to apply to individuals from both within and outside of each individual group e.g. non-discrimination in relation to gender demands not only that all women are treated as equals but also that women are treated equally to men. In contrast Shier (2012) states that whereas there is common agreement that all children should be subject to equal treatment, the suggestion that this treatment should then be extended to provide children with equal rights to adults does not comply with the norms or expectations of current society.

Equality between child and adult requires that the adult understands what it is to be a child, is open to conversation, and is willing to admit weaknesses or even mistakes in their own perspective (Earnshaw, 2014). Research in healthcare has demonstrated that if young people feel as though they are being listened to, that they are being understood, that they are able to make decisions and take control then they will feel empowered (Spencer, 2013). Young people have confirmed that the way that they are treated by adult's matters to them and that they attach high importance to the experience of personal empowerment (Grealish et al., 2013). This phenomenon signifies a complex dimension within the concept of equality as currently applied to children and young people for legislation demonstrates that in the eyes of government, discrimination by age constitutes a belief that the good of society is best served by implementation of unequal treatment. From the perspective of the adult discrimination by age is legitimised and so for the young person this means that s/he is required to accept

unequal treatment because, according to the adult this is a form of discrimination that acts in their best interests.

In the UK discrimination by age is a common occurrence and this practice has been reinforced by publication of the 2009 Equality Bill which excluded all young people under the age of 18 from protection from unfair treatment in the provision of goods, facilities and services (Learner, 2009). This type of exclusion represents a form of discriminatory practice that, despite anti-age legislation, is common place and routinely breaches the human rights of young people. Across the globe inequity is perpetuated by governments who create legislation that denies the rights of the child, citing the nature and extent of the social problem to be addressed as justification for incompatibility with policy (Bessant, 2009). Governmental determination of the relationship between civil liberty and social practice routinely requires a balance between legal and moral consideration (Rawls, 1999), however the resultant outcome often results in discriminatory practice. Willingness of adults to seek exemption for such practice is condemned by social commentators who assert that if society is to develop respectful social relations and practices it is essential that their laws 'have proper regard for or respect the rights of each section of the community' (Bessant, 2009, p. 21). Actualisation of the concept of social justice when applied to the relationship between adult and child therefore presents a challenge to both the ideology of equality and the celebration of diversity (Young, 2010). In essence the concept of social justice seeks to reflect the heterogeneity of society and so demands a principled approach to the consideration of participation and the distribution of power in a world that does not guarantee equal opportunity (Montesano Montessori & Ponte, 2012).

The Rights of the Child

In 1924 the League of Nations published the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child in recognition of the obligation of mankind to provide the child with 'the best that it has to give' (United Nations, 1924, p. 1). The League of Nations came into being after World War One and although the primary function was to maintain peace through the brokering of agreement to resolve international dispute, it also worked to promote social equity (League of Nations, 2013). The Declaration of Geneva represented an agreement between the 42 original member nations and enshrined five commitments to the child:

1. 'The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually;

2. The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured;

3. The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress;

4. The child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation

5. The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men.'   (United Nations, 1924, p. 1)

Created against the backdrop of war, these commitments served to represent a visionary agreement to provide for the contemporary needs of the world's children. World leaders recognised the need to secure protection and provision for children, but the child's right to participation had yet to be established (United Nations, 2009). The 1924 declaration originated from a patriarchal society where children were subservient and

discrimination by adults against children was the accepted norm (Shier, 2012). In essence this Declaration represented governments' desire and intention to orientate childhood towards preparation for the needs of the labour market (Reynaert et al., 2012).

The emancipation of children began in the 1960's as part of a wider movement aimed at securing equality for sections of society subject to oppressive convention (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007). The children's rights movement challenged suppositions that were inherent within conventional age determined societal hierarchy and supported the agency of children to promote connection with their views and experiences (Reynaert, 2012). Proponents of this movement asserted that the socially constructed image of the child influenced the interaction between adult and child in a way that constrained the rights of the child to participate (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007). In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) reconstituted the rights of the child with the aim of reshaping interrelationships between the child, the family and the state (Wilcox & Naimark, 1991). The UNCRC proposed to reconfigure the way society viewed childhood to advance the child's role in the decision making process (Masschelein & Quaghebeur, 2005). The UNCRC stated that children had interests that were distinct from the interests of adults, that they were capable of forming their own views, and that these views should be afforded greater respect (Reynaert, 2012). For children to become empowered society needed to recognise the autonomy of the child and to also include the child's view as an essential perspective (Osler & Starkey, 1998; Masschelein & Quaghebeur, 2005; Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007). Article 12 articulated the obligation of world leaders to establish the child's right to participation:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

(United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund-UNICEF, 2013, Article 12)

Despite the advent of the child's right to participation, at the 2009 Convention on the Rights of the Child it was asserted that throughout the world long standing practices and attitudes continue to constrain the child's right to be heard (United Nations, 2009). The past decade has seen the publication of a substantial body of literature arguing for greater involvement of children and young people in decisions that affect them (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Mayall, 2002; Powell & Smith, 2009; Rodd, 2011). Reynaert et al. (2012) have proposed that the rights of the child should be used as a frame of reference for critical reflection to inform a change in the way that adults deal with children by enabling a shift in the dynamic of interaction. It is argued that children should be recognised as competent social agents with the cognitive capacity to make sense of experience and the skills to reflect upon and adapt behaviour (Mayall, 2002). Studies on co-operation within social activities demonstrate that children as young as five years old are cognitively capable and that they deliberately manage self-presentation to safeguard social evaluation (Engelman et al., 2012). Here the implication is that it is the behaviour of the adult in relation to the child that will actually teach the child what it is to be a child and what is expected from the young person (Earnshaw, 2014). This premise has specific relevance for this research project because it signifies the influence of a contextualised relation between adult and child and highlights the potential for situated experience to shape experience in childhood. In the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child the fifth commitment was constructed precisely to fulfil this purpose; it was designed to enforce a distinct relationship for application within a specific context, the very context that this research study has chosen to explore,

the context of talent development: 'The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men' (United Nations - The Rights of the Child, Commitment 5, 1924, p. 1).

Although the Rights of the Child were proposed as a means to promote social equity this declaration represents an attitude that actually reinforces the self-interest of hierarchical society and so serves to deny young people the right to self-determination (Grugel, 2013). The declaration depicts a patriarchal society where children are conceived as subservient and talent is treated as a commodity (Taekhil, 2001).

The evidence within this chapter demonstrates how for the young person the nature of their reality is determined by their relations with adults. From the young person's perspective identity and concept of self are central to existence and being is determined by social reality. The world of the young person is enacted according to interaction with the adult and perception of identity is shaped by physical, emotional, and social connection (Arens & Hasselhorn, 2014). In a just society relations are premised upon equitable relations to ensure that individual and collective needs are met simultaneously (Kretchmar, 2008). For young people the development of reciprocal relations promotes the opportunity to create a deeper sense of membership; to develop a sense of status that connects with social identity; and to benefit from the experience of empowerment (Afzali et al., 2014). This evidence suggests that the young person's perception of social interaction may provide a new frame of reference for exploration of the experience of participation in talent development in sport.

Chapter 3: Children, Young People and Sport

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature that discusses the role of sport in society to demonstrate how participation in sport has been advocated as a means to foster mutually beneficial relations and introduce young people to shared values and norms of behaviour (Giffiths & Armour, 2013). Review of the literature shows how in the UK context, policy and practice is enacted in accordance with systems and models where conceptions of participant development in sport are heavily influenced by the post positivist approach to scientific enquiry (Gray, 2009). In this chapter critical review focuses attention upon the contextualised space where social differentiation is believed to produce distinct ways of knowing and subjective meaning is derived from multiple interpretations (Clarke, 2009). Attention then centres upon consideration of the lived experience of young people participating in talent development programmes in sport to consider and explore the significance of interpretivism. This chapter sets out the case to justify why research into talent development in sport should adopt an alternative approach to what has gone before.

Olympism in Society

In society where life chances are not equal, governments pursue a common responsibility to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of all children and young people (Bhui et al., 2010). In sport this mission is supported across the globe by the International Olympic Movement which promotes sports participation and the Olympic ideal 'to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles' (IOC, 2011, p. 3).
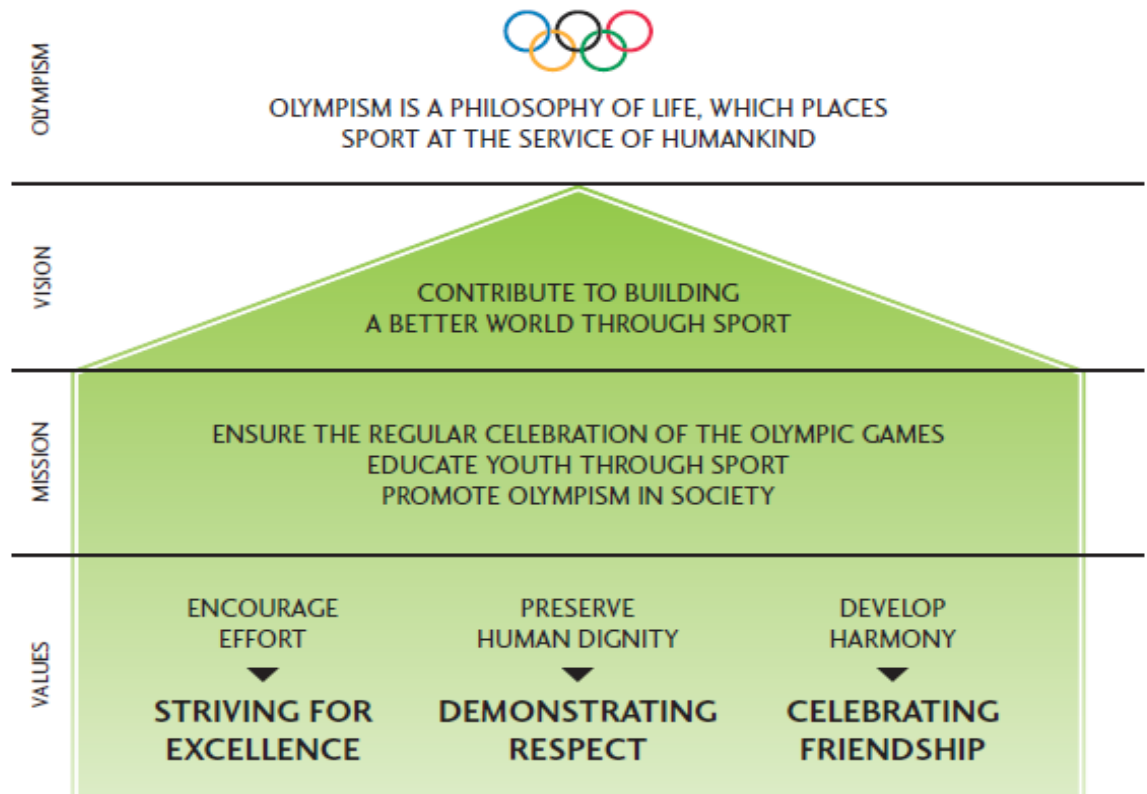
Figure 1. When Sport Can Change the World. (*International Olympic Committee*, 2011)

The modern Olympic movement was founded in France by Pierre de Coubertin. Coubertin was a prominent figure in French society during the second half of the nineteenth century, he had a particular interest in the way that society worked and he was concerned by the social problems of the time (Martínez-Gorroño & Hernández-Álvarez, 2014). During this period industrialisation had changed the structure of society, people were moving to live in newly created large urban centres and there became a need for new ways for people to meet and socialise; this need was termed 'la sociabilite'. Coubertin advocated the use of sports participation to effect social change and promoted Olympism and the Olympic ideal to pursue social reform (Light & Lemonie, 2010). The Olympic movement was designed to support the pursuit of a better and more peaceful world through the education of youth to promote friendship, understanding, solidarity and fair play (Corral et al., 2012). Modern media drew attention to the Olympic Games to focus on the spectacle of elite sporting competition

however the legacy to which Coubertin most aspired was educational reform (Monnin, 2012). Coubertin pursued an ambition to make sport a main feature of the education of children and young people and saw Olympic competition as a way to provide an international perspective to the power of sport to educate the body and the mind (Lucas, 1974). Coubertin's philosophy was based on educational practice that originated in male boarding schools in England where sport was practised to promote moral and social development (Chatziefstathiou, 2002). Coubertin's contribution was to locate the values of humanism and universalism in the context of sport and education to emphasise 'equality, fairness, justice, respect, rationality, international understanding, peace, autonomy and excellence' (Chatziefstathiou, 2002, p. 386). This use of Olympic ideology represents a form of social marketing designed to initiate social reform and effect change at the level of both the individual and society (Chatziefstathiou, 2007). Research on positive youth development in sport has since continued to confirm the potential of the sporting context to promote and develop a number of positive characteristics in the individual which include self-awareness, self-regulation and goal setting (Dworkin et al., 2003).

Articulation of the intention to provide a lasting legacy for society has now become a fundamental component of the Olympic bid and in order to secure the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil made a commitment to create a legacy of sports participation to enhance quality of life for its youth population (Reis, 2014). The Olympic movement demonstrates that within society sport is now regarded as a vehicle to promote a better world and exponents of sport and physical activity advocate sports participation to foster community cohesion (Reis & Teixeira, 2011), enhance personal and social development (Light & Lémonie, 2010), and promote physical wellbeing (Bhui et al., 2010).

Sports Participation as Social Participation

In the UK there is evidence to show that the use of sports-based intervention reflects a belief that sports participation can be used as a form of 'social participation' and has the potential to improve the lives of young people through a process of connection, engagement and empowerment (Kay & Bradbury, 2009). Participation in sport is now advocated as a means to foster mutually beneficial relations and to introduce young people to shared values and norms of behaviour (Giffiths & Armour, 2013). Following the 2012 London Olympic Games the UK Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) introduced a new National Youth Sport Strategy devised with exactly this purpose in mind, the plan being to capitalise on the enthusiasm for, and interest in sport engendered by the London Games (Sport England, 2012). Designed for the national context the 2012 Olympic legacy educational strategy, 'Get Set' was created to build a lasting legacy by making a 'real difference' to the lives of young people in the UK (Get Set - Home, 2014). The strategy set out an ambition to increase participation in sport by utilising sports participation as a vehicle to promote common values for the good of all members of society (Get Set - Home, 2014). The intention was to capitalise on a peak in interest generated by the Games and in doing so build upon the previous sporting initiatives that had been devised to enhance mental and physical wellbeing for adolescents and young people (Bhui at al., 2010).

The 'Get Set' strategy serves as an example of how sport in the community can be regarded as a focus for social action (Griffiths & Armour, 2013) and the promotion of sports participation is regarded as an intervention that has the potential to impact upon social and moral development, lifestyle choice and aspiration (Holroyd & Armour, 2003). This type of intervention draws from the growing evidence base advocating participation in sport to educate children and young people about fairness and to help

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them learn how to build a respectful culture (Ladda, 2014). Such intervention adheres to the principle of social justice for mutual benefit by attending to both the good of society, engaging young people through recognition of youth culture and allocation of resource to utilise sports participation as a means of social intervention; and the needs of the individual, by providing children and young people with the opportunity to strive to achieve their own personal potential (Ladda, 2014). Belief in the far reaching effect and influence of sport and sports participation on and within society is demonstrated by The European Commission White Paper on Sport (2007) which proposes sporting initiative to foster social inclusion, improve health, and enhance education. Publication of this policy underlines a move to support young people to expand their social networks to maximise the potential for social engagement to confer collective benefit (Kay & Bradbury, 2009).

Sport and Participant Development

The UK Context

In the UK sporting context social justice is typically considered in relation to the principle of inclusion and so where differential opportunity to participate has the potential to disadvantage the concept of equity has been brought into focus (Elling & Claringbould, 2005). The concept of equity is now embedded within the National Coaching Framework and the vision of The National Coaching Foundation signifies that inclusion is a key underpinning principle: 'The vision of the UK Coaching Framework is to create a cohesive, ethical, inclusive and valued coaching system where skilled coaches support children, players and athletes at all stages of their development' (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 3). This framework complements and supports earlier government initiatives such as the Physical Education School Sport and Young People strategy that targeted schools and community to create and increase opportunities for 5

to 16-year-olds to participate in sport and sporting activity (Griffiths & Armour, 2012). In reality though, each individual does not receive the same offer and entry to a sports talent development programme provides the young person with access to an exclusive environment and an opportunity to increase participation.

In the UK the government's belief in the value of sports participation to the nation's young people is now reinforced through targeted policy where the aim is to get more people to take on and keep a sporting habit for life. Community sport initiatives have set out to 'raise the proportion of 14 to 25 year olds who play sport' (Sport England, 2012, p. 3) and to keep young people playing sport up to and beyond the age of 25. Empirical research has estimated that levels of physical activity begin to decline during childhood by about 7% and this decline continues through adolescence for both boys and girls (Brooke et al., 2014). Neuroscience explains how during this period a child's brain changes through interaction with the social and physical environment and the adolescent brain is moulded through experience and relationship to enable the individual to develop an understanding of self and become autonomous (Laursen, 2009).

In the UK policy has been developed to target the time at which the young person begins to exert greater control over the nature of their engagement and so focuses on a specific demographic. The strategy articulates 'an increased focus on youth sport, making the transition from school to community sport easier' (Sport England, Strategy Outline, DCMS, 2012). This strategy supports divergent pathways of participation and context of enactment now places emphasis upon the creation of a sporting system that relies upon the provision of quality coaches and the creation of bespoke environments designed to cater for the wants and needs of sporting participants within distinct populations (Sportscoach UK, 2009).
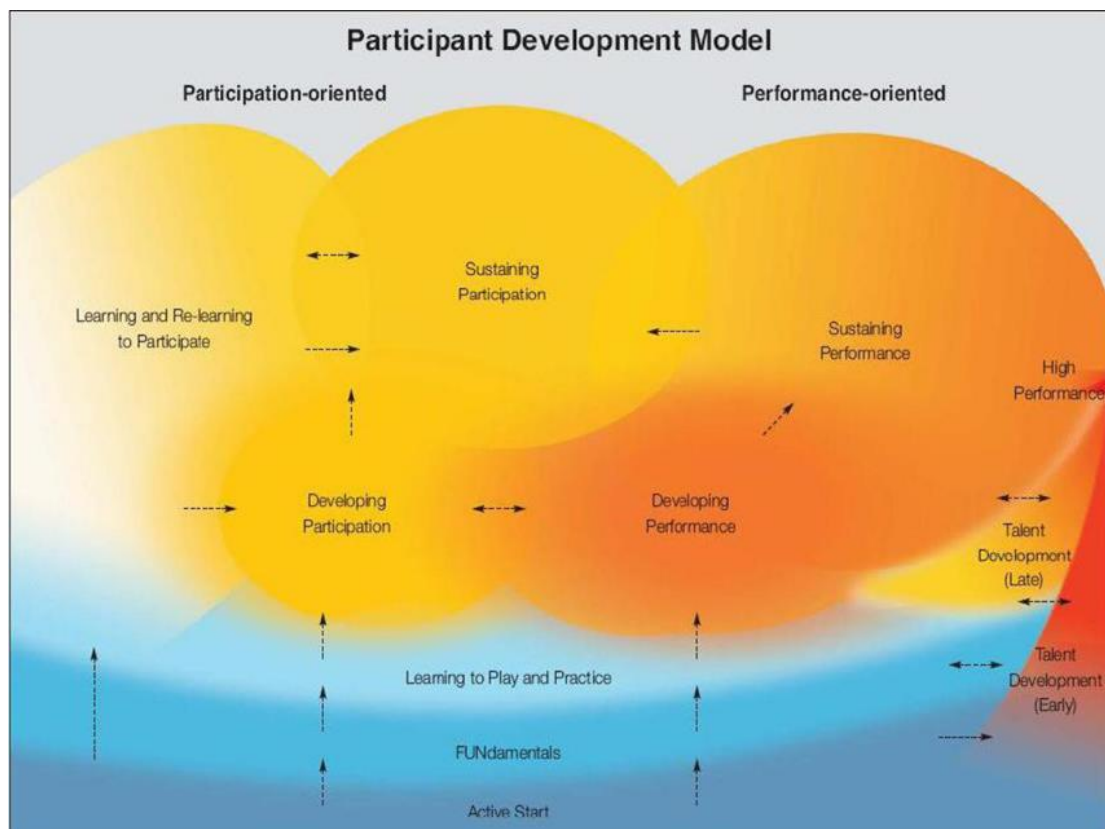
Figure 2. Participant Modelling, (Sportscoach UK, 2015)

Participant Development: Policy and Practice

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has established two individual public bodies to recognise the distinction between participation and performance sport and Sport England oversee community sport (Sport England, 2012) whilst UK Sport provide strategic leadership for high performance sport (UK Sport, 2014). When first introduced, this framework was accompanied by publication of an 'aspirational' Participant Development Model designed to reflect 'how the participant population could be thought about, rather than how it actually is' (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 7). Viewed in relation to the concept of social justice this is a significant statement, for philosophical consideration requires that the question that is of fundamental importance is not how could the participant population be thought about but rather how should it be thought about!

When the UK Coaching Framework was published the authors set out to justify how the participant population 'could get the most out of sport' through advocacy of a number of underlying principles (Sportscoach UK, 2008). Key amongst these principles was the concept of a long term and inclusive system where an individualised needs-led approach was advocated to ensure that the individual was put first. Operationally however the framework proposed to rely upon the principle of segmentation, a principle that builds upon an assumption that participants within a specific segment of the participant population will exhibit a generic set of needs:

> A segment is a subgroup of people sharing one or more characteristics that cause them to have similar needs. A segment meets all of the following criteria: it is distinct from other segments (different needs); it is homogenous within the segment (exhibits common needs and it responds similarly to a particular intervention, i.e. coaching. Segmentation offers an effective and efficient method of transferring knowledge about participant's needs to coaches.

> (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 125)

Paradoxically then it appears that although the UK Coaching Framework proposes to commit coaches to the principle of an individualised needs-led approach, realisation of this outcome depends upon a framework where the principle of segmentation serves to reduce the identity of the individual. The framework identifies 11 segments in a generic model where each segment assumes that each participant within a segment will be at a similar age and stage of development, have similar wants and needs, and have similar knowledge skills and behaviours (Sportscoach UK, 2009). Justification of the UK Coaching Framework asserts that it has been designed to support a Participant Development model that has been informed by 'coaches, coach educationalists, governing body representatives, policy makers and academics' (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 6). This representation omits one significant set of stakeholders from the equation for within the list of informants children and young people remain distinctly conspicuous by their absence. That is not to say though that children and young people were

forgotten completely for it was clearly stated at inception that the vision of the UK Coaching Framework 'could best be achieved by understanding participant's sporting needs' (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 3). The UK Coaching Framework was developed as an evidence based policy and the research method employed to facilitate production of the policy demonstrates that data was collected from 600 children aged between 5 and 8, and 1,200 children aged between 9 and 15. This method was designed to secure quantitative evidence to verify take up of sport and use of guided sport coaching by this population.

Table A3.1 Guided sport hours per week: % of participants receiving different intensities of guided sport by age

	0 Hrs	0–0.99 Hrs	1–1.49 Hrs	1.5–1.99 Hrs	2–2.99 Hrs	3–4.99 Hrs	5–9.99 Hrs	10–14.99 Hrs	15 Hrs +	Total
5 years	51	7	14	3	9	9	7	0	0	100
6-8 years	42	7	16	4	11	12	8	0	0	100
9-11 years	40	6	14	4	12	15	9	1	0	100
12-14 years	54	5	6	4	7	12	9	2	0	100
15-16 years	64	2	5	0	5	13	7	5	0	100
17-21 years	83	0	4	1	3	4	3	1	2	100
22-29 years	89	1	2	1	3	2	2	0	0	100
30-39 years	93	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	100
40-49 years	93	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	100
50-59 years	95	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	100
60-69 years	96	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	100
70 years and over	98	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	100

Figure 3: Guided Sport Hours Per Week. Appendix 3 (Sportscoach UK, 2009)

Evidence to confirm the opinion of children and young people on the quality of their sporting experience was however not sought or secured, the implication being that this was a judgement that could be determined by the adult. Examination of research method reveals that in comparison to the number of adult participants (10,600) engaged in the

project the total number of children and young people involved (1,800) was significantly smaller. Furthermore results show that in comparison to the participation levels of adults (hours per week involved with guided sport provision), children and young people demonstrate far greater engagement in participant development in sport. The UK Coaching Framework is therefore open to the criticism that it is a policy that has not been designed according to the views of the primary recipients of contemporary participant development experience in this context. The quantity of evidence sampled from children and young people represents disproportional consideration of the engagement of this section of society therefore from their perspective the efficacy of the framework remains to be confirmed.

The fact that the Coaching Workforce 2009-2016 (Sportscoach UK, 2009) policy document limits inclusion of the contribution of children and young people to consideration of their use of sport and coaching and does not recognise them as contributors who have helped to inform policy and practice is by no means an incidental feature. This type of systematic approach to knowledge generation is typical and is open to criticism on two levels: the search to identify similarities and differences within and between discrete segments of the participant population orientates towards the discovery of generic solutions rather than attending to individual experience (Tomoaia-Cotisel et al., 2013); and the treatment of children and young people within the research process represents a traditional epistemological method of enquiry through which conceptualisation of the child denies empowered participation (Cheney, 2011). Whilst the National Coaching Foundation may have set out with the intention to create a 'cohesive, ethical, inclusive and valued coaching system' (Sportscoach UK, 2009, p. 3), the methods of enquiry used to support this process did not conform to the same set of principles. When considered in relation to the concept of social justice the UK Coaching

Framework appears to have been borne from a process that has compromised its own aspirations and constitutes a product that typifies the adult and child relationship.

Authors of the UK Coaching Framework justify its creation by reference to the principle of evidence based decision making, consultation with industry experts and models for action to depict an ontological foundation that is orientated towards confirmation of patterns of participation and the provision of optimal solutions for participant development (Sportscoach UK, 2009). Examination of the type and limited number of studies upon which development of the framework has relied e.g. Ericsson et al., 1993; Berliner, 1994; Côté et al., 2007, reveals a research approach that appears to orientate the researcher to focus on motor development and expertise in reliance upon a selection of evidence that does not represent the interests, experience or outcomes of the majority of the participant population. This is despite evidence to show that experience of participation in sport is interpreted differently by individual participants and that engagement in a specific type of context is significant to the meaning of personal experience (Butcher et al., 2002). Butcher et al. (2002) surveyed 1,387 North American fifteen year olds (666 females and 721 males; average age = 15.1) to confirm the changing nature of children and adolescent's participation in different sports over time. In this study each young person was asked to retrospectively list all the competitive sports that they had participated in since they had begun school, (ten years) and for each sport state the duration of their participation, confirm if they still participated or if, when and why they had dropped out. The research used a Sports Participation Profile Questionnaire and linked type of engagement for each participant to explanations for drop out. Participants were classified as sampler, low level participant, high level participant or elite according to type of engagement with each individual sport. The results demonstrated that for these young people participation in sport was a dynamic

process, younger children tended to begin by participating in a range of sports, pattern of participation was influenced by age and gender and eventually teenagers acted to reduce the number of sports in which they participated. The influence of educational and cultural context was revealed by the finding that the highest rate of drop-out per participant per sport occurred at the age of 14 or 15, coinciding with the time that young people transfer from Junior High to High school in North America. Participation was analysed according to age and gender, length of time spent participating in each sport, level of competition and the time spent training and competing. The study reported that whilst 93.3% of respondents had participated and competed in at least one sport up until the age of fifteen, 94.4% had subsequently dropped out of at least one sport during the same period. Butcher et al.'s (2002) work demonstrated that different contexts can confer different experiences and confirmed: that when young children first start to engage in sport, level of enjoyment and perceived competence are the primary influences on continuing participation; at the non-elite level, when participation is sustained over the longer term young people gradually find this more difficult to manage, but when choices need to be made about the balance between sporting and non-sporting commitments enjoyment remains an important determinant; for elite athletes continued participation in the context of talent does not have the same association with enjoyment and athlete experience becomes much more concerned with the ability to cope with pressure and stay injury free.

In common with the research approach upon which the UK Coaching Framework has relied Butcher et al.'s (2009) study also aimed to identify causal relationships and explain patterns in participation. Although in this study participant's views about the nature of experience were sought, retrospective research design limited the participant's ability to convey the temporal significance of past events and the researchers quest to

identify trends and patterns served to cloak the personal nature of individual experience through the process of data reduction. The authors therefore proceeded to focus upon mechanisms of participation to assert the importance of sport programme design without stopping to consider the significance of the meaning-making practice in specific sporting contexts for the young people involved (Papadimitriou, 2008).

Such conceptions of participant development in sport rely upon a post positivist approach to scientific enquiry where patterns of participation are viewed as phenomena that adhere to general patterns of cause and effect (Gray, 2009). This research approach contrasts directly with the intention of this study which was designed to employ longitudinal and prospective enquiry that would give priority to the young person's interpretation of the 'real world' experience of being a 'talented' participant in a specialist sporting context.

Sport and Talent Development

The original Geneva Declaration made five commitments to the child (United Nations, 1924). Whilst the first four sought to establish the rights of the child through confirmation of society's responsibility for and to the child, the fifth commitment articulated the imposition of a demand changing the emphasis from provision to obligation to impress upon the talented child the nature of their individual responsibility. This commitment reflects a conception of social justice where although society may advocate a process of engagement that relies upon the principle of mutual obligation (Kamtekar, 2001) in reality the essence of that obligation is inevitably determined by context of enactment that is constructed according to the wants and needs, and priorities and ambitions of a patriarchal society (Griggs & Biscomb, 2010). Such situations shape the priority given to and status associated with the child or young

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person according to the context of their participation (Pot & van Hilvoorde, 2013). The nature and focus of sporting provision for children and young people therefore represents the transmission of socially constructed convention where participation has become subject to differentiation according to context of enactment.

This notion is reinforced by the names given to the different areas of research and scholarly activity in the published literature in sport known as participant development and talent development. The choice of a particular word or term that is used within a scientific discipline or specialist field is defined as nomenclature (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). For sport nomenclature appears to represent a simple and obvious distinction where the words 'participant' and 'talent' have been chosen to represent different types of population and the construction of each term is the result of a practicable exercise. From an alternative view this difference represents a social perspective, a perspective that reflects the commitments that were made to the child in the Geneva Declaration (United Nations, 1924) where conception is determined according to consideration of what society can offer the child or young person balanced against what the young person might be able to give back. Viewed from this perspective nomenclature reflects a distinction in the way that the interests of society are prioritised in relation to the interests of young people according to the context of participation in sport. From this perspective it is conceivable to contend that the time of talent identification demarcates a point at which societal interests diverge and, for the child with 'talent' a change in the emphasis of engagement becomes legitimised by interaction that changes to concentrate upon what the child can do. Accordingly the individual becomes subject to a reality where treatment has a different emphasis and experience takes on a new meaning.

Nomenclature is significant to treatment of the phenomenon because in practice it informs understanding, supports accurate decision making and determines intervention. In medicine analysis has demonstrated that current nomenclature is often derived from historical understanding and treatment is enacted according to traditional conception (Larson et al., 2005). In the medical field, research enquiry has revealed the potential of scientific endeavour to produce new knowledge, identify limitation and expose gaps in understanding to challenge current nomenclature; when this has happened treatment has been reviewed, intervention modified and outcomes have been improved (Larson et al., 2005). Interrogation of nomenclature is therefore important to consideration of how treatment of the individual in sport may be orchestrated according to the design of a specific context and how particular types of interaction may have distinct implications for the experience of the individual: 'The conditions of the living context result from interaction between an individual and the structures of society' (Jakobsson, 2014, p. 208).

Research in sport recognises that optimal participant development relies upon unique combinations of environmental circumstances (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 2007). Whilst the coach and researcher may aspire to help every participant engage in an optimal learning environment (Renshaw et al., 2010) the focus of that environment is determined according to level of ability and judgement of potential. When judgement of potential relies upon a test based approach it is inevitable that ability to perform at the time of the test will influence the outcome of talent identification practice (Martindale et al., 2010). Depending upon if and when 'talent' is observed intervention may or may not be modified by entry into the talent development environment. If in sport nomenclature reflects a difference in context that is represented by the way that society treats the young person compared to the young person with talent, then transition to the

talent development environment marks the point at which the dynamic of interaction between young person and adult may begin to shape a different type of experience.

Within the context of talent commodity status continues to be conferred to children and young people by talent development programmes that stay loyal to ability but only commit to the young person for as long as their talent trajectory is maintained (UK Sport, 2013). This allegiance to talent has been shared by academics and practitioners alike, who when studying the phenomena of talent development in sport have deferred the interests of the participant to prioritise the pursuit of evidence to improve sports performance (Bishop et al., 2006): 'Identifying talent in athletes and developing that ability to its fullest potential is a central concern of sport scientists, sports coaches and sports policy makers.' (www.routledge.com, 2014). In a reality where talent is coveted it is conceivable that this pursuit is in itself an example of social exchange (Ribarsky, 2013) whereby the adult's desire to associate with the talent phenomenon acts to reinforce process and perpetuate social convention. It is therefore important to consider if orientation towards talent may have led both researcher and practitioner to emphasise an interest in context that has legitimised focus on process and outcome for sport rather than the interests and experience of the participant.

A century on from the original Declaration of the Rights of the Child whilst governments pursue a common responsibility to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of children and young people (Bhui et al., 2010) talent development remains the focus of significant attention, especially within the context of sport (Australian Institute of Sport, 2015; Sport England, 2012). It is necessary to examine intersections of engagement to consider the nature of experience for young people who participate in the context of talent, for current conceptions of talent attest to an uncertain experience

where worth can be plainly stated: 'the promising child may become a mediocre adolescent' (Simonton, 2001, p. 42). Therefore in this research project commitment to young people did not propose to depend upon ability and performance but instead to focus on a life in the mind that whilst specific to the context, would be distinguished by the individual experience (Richards, 2012b).

Talent Development in Sport: Systems

In the UK policy makers and practitioners have committed to support and guide the improvement of children and young people at each and every stage of their development through implementation of the participant development framework (Sportscoach UK, 2008). The culmination of this framework is a system designed to support and enhance England talent pathways to link with UK Sport elite programmes (Sport England, 2012). In the performance domain UK Sport continues to support 'The World Class Performance Programme' by working with sports to develop systems and athletes to achieve high performance targets. In 2010 Sport England and UK Sport announced that they would join as part of a strategy designed to maximise efficiency (UK Sport, 2014). Consequently Sport England's strategy articulates dual aims and states an intention to enhance England talent pathways to link with UK Sport elite programmes (Sport England, 2012).

Traditionally sports development in the UK has determined to attract a large participant base, the logic being that this gives more participants the chance to become an elite athlete at the top of the pyramid (Shilbury et al., 2008). The Participant Development Academic Review (Bailey et al., 2010) uses the metaphor 'Pyramid Thinking' to describe the problems of prediction, participation and potential inherent within the pyramid model and this provides an appropriate analogy, for understanding of the

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influence of architectural design and cultural influence on non-linear development journeys within a pyramid can be obscured by a macro perspective (Shilbury et al., 2008). Debate over systems continues and whilst proponents of a developmental system advocate a twin track approach to participation and performance (Abbot et al., 2002; Shilbury et al., 2008) critics' claim that these systems do not share common needs and that the traditional structure with the huge base is too expensive and rarely necessary for the development of elite performers (Kaerup, 2009; Bailey et al., 2010). Within their critique of the pyramid model Bailey et al., (2010) discuss limitations according to outcome and process and state that most young people identified as talented do not progress to secure the same status in adulthood. They also claim that many adults who do secure elite sporting status do so without being identified and inducted into formal talent pathways, or displaying precocious gifts as young children.

Participant development in the context of talent is a multidimensional, multiplicative and dynamic process (Simonton, 2001; Baker & Horton, 2004); optimal development relies upon unique combinations of environmental circumstances (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 1993; Côté, 1999); entry to the talent development environment requires an assumption of 'readiness' (Ford et al., 2011); and training emphasis makes entry or transfer increasingly less likely as the developmental system progresses (Baker et al., 2012). However even when talent trajectories plateaux and the number of athletes progressing through linear stages of development decrease the potential for entry to the system still remains (Cobley & Cooke, 2009). Evidence demonstrates that such is the potential for the talent phenomenon to impact participation in competition at the highest level that national systems have now been developed to try to identify and support athletes who are capable of making successful transitions at such significant levels (UK Sport, 2014). The 'UK Talent Team' has assessed more than 7,000 athletes, recruited in

excess of 100 new entrants to the World Class system and proven that new athletes can progress to Olympian status within four years (UK Sport, 2012), and this is despite evidence to show that within the sport specific developmental system sequential transition presents a level of challenge that is beyond the reach of most participants (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Stambulova et al., 2012). The complexity of the talent development paradox is confirmed by Baker et al. (2012) who verify both the level of challenge posed by sequential transition through the developmental system, and also the contribution of parallel programmes to effect progress to facilitate transfer to a different programme at a later stage. Nevertheless, whilst the system may focus on the unique individual, experience of the system is unique to all (Camire´ & Trudel, 2010).

Talent Development in Sport: Models

The need for guidance has encouraged publication of various models of participant development (Bloom, 1985; Côté, 1999; Bailey & Morley, 2006) yet despite these publications the challenge to encapsulate the full complexity of multidimensional participant journeys remains. Critique of the evidence base that has informed policy and practice in the UK confirms the limitations of Models of Participant Development and states that academics are still not certain how these models 'can equip participants with the necessary skills to make non-linear transitions at different points during development' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 90). For the 'talented' participant we are now told that the development process represents a complex dynamical system and that the participant environment relationship is characterised by nonlinear development (Passos et al., 2008). As such, the potential for interaction between participant, task and situational constraint signifies that it is not possible to accurately describe a specific point on a developmental trajectory as sustained by a single cause effect relationship. Talent development therefore relies upon context dependent emergent behaviours

which, according to dynamical systems theory means that at points of transition talented performers may be differentiated by the characteristics of their individual developmental journeys, exposure to non-linear pedagogy and context dependent constraints (Renshaw et al., 2010).

Mechanistic approaches continue to confirm the significance of the environment (Côté, 1999; Martindale et al., 2007; Martindale et al., 2010) and academics agree that further research is necessary to understand the process of environmental influence on talent trajectories. Academics continue to look to models of participation to equip participants with the necessary skills to make non-linear transitions at different points during development and pedagogues espouse that new knowledge is critical to the evolution of practice to support talent progression and transfer (MacNamara & Collins, in Baker, 2012). Emphasis on sports specific psychomotor competence continues to determine that talent selection results in the creation of relatively homogenous groups and talent provision is then designed to cater for common abilities (Baker et al., 2012). Once a talented group has been established the original predicting variables no longer differentiate and lose predictive power (Baker et al., 2012). Ironically, whilst the nurture of homogenous groups is constructed according to common abilities the best performers eventually distinguish themselves by synergised development of physical, cognitive, psychological, and technical attributes, (Baker et al., 2012).

There is now a consensus that the complex nature of participant development requires that each participant is considered and catered for individually through a biopsychosocial approach (Bailey et al., 2010). Recommendations assert the importance of interdisciplinary research to provide the necessary empirical and theoretical balance relative to each knowledge domain (Allen & Shaw, 2013) amid recognition that in the

past, too often the participant has been regarded as separate from the coaching process (Sportscoach UK, 2013). As the mission to validate the efficacy of the models based approach continues academics have responded by searching for synergy between different theoretical constructs, attempting to serve both the wants and needs of the individual by developing and advancing holistic conception. Examples include Bailey & Morley's (2006) Model of Talent Development in Physical Education which demonstrates consideration of holistic development through the integration of disciplines, recognising that emergent behaviours are dependent upon the influence of personal and environmental characteristics and reflects the multidimensional nature of ability; and The Holistic Approach to Movement Education (HADME) which demonstrates holistic conception by integrating with dynamic systems theory to optimise movement performance in a model that draws from the developmental perspective of the individual, using a systems based approach to recognise and adapt to provide for non-linear progression (Polsgrove, 2012). These types of approach stem from a research paradigm where the principles for understanding the world are based upon a belief in an objective reality and so use a factor analytic approach to identify similarities and differences to explain behaviour (Perkins et al., 2000). Advocates of this type of systematic approach to knowledge generation continue to search for answers and orientate towards the discovery of solutions (Tomoaia-Cotisel et al., 2013) but despite significant advances in knowledge and understanding of the concept of sporting expertise, nonlinear development remains a perturbing feature of the talent development process (Passos et al., 2008). Cobley & Cooke (2009) have even produced a model that demonstrates the combined limitations (failings!) of the Talent Development Models depicting operation of the typical talent identification and development system to demonstrate how the potential for athletes to make successful transitions between stages within the talent development systems reduces as model based programmes advance:

Key: Selection = (S); Non-Retention = (NR); Transfer-In = (T); Withdrawal/Transfer-Out = (WTO)
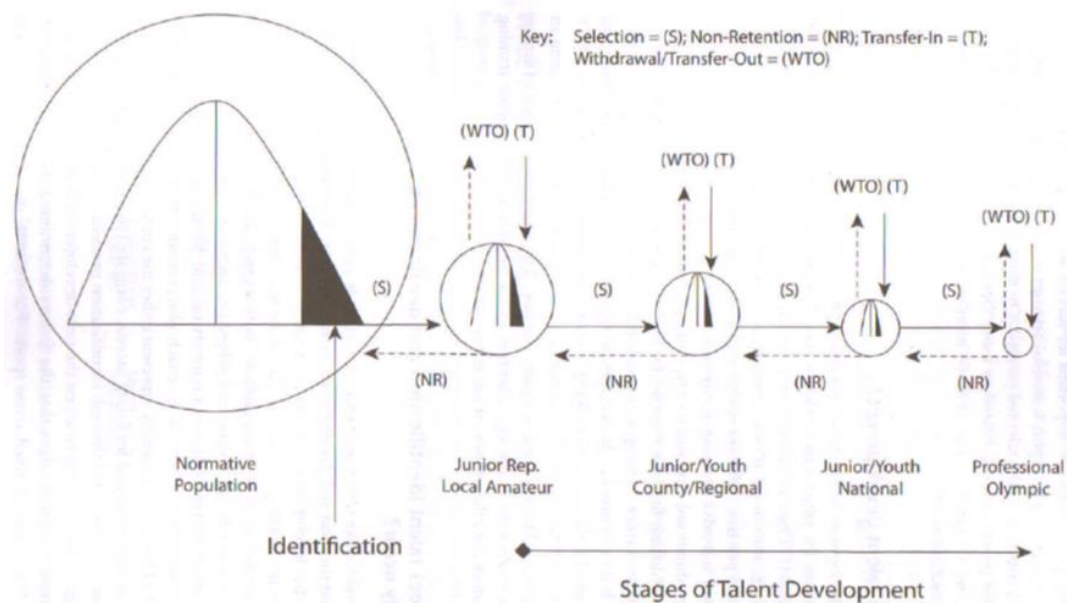
FIGURE 1.3 Cobley and Cooke's (2009) conceptual diagram of common stages in talent identification and development, from normative to elite populations, with particular relevance to field based team sports.

Figure 4. Cobley & Cooke's (2009) Conceptual Diagram of Common Stages in Talent Identification and Development

Conceptual representation serves a significant purpose by underlining the paradox that lies at the heart of the talent development process, for whilst Cobley & Cooke's (2009) pictorial representation does not scale the proportion of athletes who represent the diminishing return at each stage of the talent development programme or the number of athletes who have made transitions from independent programmes the irony of the phenomenon is clear. Whilst most participants who have relied upon a system for talent development do not progress to achieve participation at the level of performance to which they or the system aspires others may defy the model, transfer in late and still attain elite status (Cobley & Cooke, 2009). Such outcomes demonstrate the many limitations of 'positive' verification and demonstrate how researchers that search for observable and quantifiable truths to explain this process appear to be continually frustrated by the complexity of interaction between participant, task and situational constraint (Newell, 1986).

Talent Development and the Individual

Whilst scholars have previously recognised the importance of the individuality of participant context to the process and practice of participant development it would appear that their ability to integrate the context and values of individual perspectives into conceptions of talent development experience may have been precluded by paradigmatic frame of reference (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 1993). Bailey et al.'s (2010) Participant Development Academic Review represents a comprehensive account of the body of knowledge on participant development and demonstrates that creation of this knowledge base has been largely influenced by normative assumptions. Whilst the review both acknowledges and critiques the considerable gains that have been made in knowledge and understanding it draws the conclusion that there does still remain a need to recognise the individuality of different participants' developmental journeys (Bailey et al., 2010). This study responds to that need by setting out to explore the nature of a unique view to depict the individuality of the young person's experience when participating in a sports talent development programme.

The Quest to Understand Precocious Ability

The quest to understand precocious ability has persisted for a considerable time and in 1918 in the Journal of Applied Psychology Coy (1918) published 'The Mentality of a Gifted Child'. This paper presented the mental test scores of a ten year old girl and recommended more testing, analysis and comparison of gifted children to formulate the psychology of precocious children and advance science to allow prognostication. In the century that has followed, despite the wealth of time and resource that has been invested in research on the identification and development of this phenomenon universally applicable rules have continued to elude. From the constructivist perspective it could be

argued that the potential of scientific enquiry to come to know the process and practice of talent development has in fact been limited by the necessity for physical science to focus on common features of objective reality in order to progress (Stirling & Kerr, 2007).

Advice on talent development from outside of the sporting domain now suggests that differences must be considered when planning & structuring intervention and demonstrates that the most able students have intellectual differences that are psychologically very significant (Touran & Touran, 2011). Such accelerated abilities do not concurrently perform to the same level and do not reflect the same potential ability therefore interventions must be individualised to cater for unique profiles & characteristics (Norris & Smith in Kellman, 2002; Touran & Touran, 2011). Research actually shows that in most distributions the top 1% of individuals demonstrate differences in ability that span a range as broad as the spectrum between the lowest 2% to the top 2% (Benbow & Lubinski, 1993). Dynamical social psychologists also advise against personalised representations of a group, warning that this contributes to the perception of group homogeneity and ignores individual variation (Messick & Liebrand, 1997). However, despite recommendations that advocate interventions which are individualised and cater for unique profiles & characteristics (Norris and Smith, in Kellman, 2002; Touran & Touran, 2011) for those who believe in realist ontology and subscribe to post positivist epistemology the compulsion to test against normative criteria continues. In sport the 'talented' athlete continues to be researched by comparison and identification relies on context specific precociousness where accelerated ability is viewed as an indicator of potential (Baker et al., 2012). Prospective analysis views precociousness, the demonstration at times of exceptional advancement compared to what is normal for the young person's age as an indicator of

potential or ability (Touron & Touron, 2011) and development is then effected by transition to a bespoke environment (Abbott & Collins, 2004). In the context of Long Term Athlete Development elite status is conferred by selection of context specific superior performance (Bompa, 1999).

Critics of an abilities-centric view of intellectual performance have demonstrated that the way a person behaves during a test does not represent how they might choose to invest their ability within a natural context over time (Perkins et al., 2000). This has led to research on disposition which has attempted to explore not what abilities a person has but how that person is disposed to use his or her abilities (Elik et al., 2010). Subsequently theories concerned with styles of behaviour have been developed for cognition, learning and thinking (Zhang, 2003) and research on participant development in sport has also explored styles of participation. In this type of research the philosophy of knowledge that underpins research approach orientates towards a natural rather than a social reality where the experience of the individual is not prioritised (Gray, 2009). The implications of philosophy of knowledge and research approach to the process and outcomes of knowledge generation are exemplified by detailed consideration of the following study undertaken by Neels & Curtner-Smith (2012).

Neels & Curtner-Smith (2012) set out to identify the participation styles of children in an under 12 football programme using multiple observations to secure a connected view of a specific situation. Researchers observed 52 children over 16 weeks and used a number of qualitative data collection techniques to classify emerging participation styles stating that their primary technique was note taking of practices and games. In this study the philosophy of knowledge that underpinned research project design was demonstrated by methodology that emphasised a specific method of investigation, a

method of data collection that was rather tellingly termed 'non-participant observation'. Following the classification of initial data sets the researcher's perceptions of different participation styles were then subject to further adult verification from two of the soccer instructors who each participated in a formal 45 minute interviews. The fourth data collection method consisted of 'informal interviews' of a number of other instructors, some parents and (eventually!) included the participants themselves. In this study the emphasis that was placed upon non-participant observation signifies the researcher's belief in an objective reality and demonstrates how the researcher assigns priority to adult analysis of young people's interpretation of participant development experience in sport. In this example the authors confirm that the focus of their interviews was to gain data to support or refute the researchers' emerging perceptions of children's styles of participation. They disclosed that this method of data collection was enacted 'whenever the opportunity arose' and reported that children were engaged in short conversations 'just before or just after practice and game sessions, during rest or water breaks'(Neels & Curtner-Smith, 2012, p. 326).

In this research approach engagement with the participant, compared to the treatment of and status given to the adult serves to diminish the ability of the young person to influence the research process and shape the findings. Whilst the authors stated that engagement utilised convenient opportunities the validity of this process was not confirmed by participants and therefore it is possible to conceive that opportunities that appeared convenient for the researcher may not have been perceived in quite the same way by the participants. The researchers did not pursue information relating to what the children thought about their experience of participation in this particular sport and context and without a participatory research approach, could not disclose participants thoughts about how involvement in the research project might have impacted upon their

experience in relation to participation in the soccer programme and/or participation in the research. Neels & Curtner-Smith (2012) reported that the style of participation for each individual remained stable throughout the programme and was not influenced by instruction, instructors or children. Seven styles of participation were identified and children were classified according to their 'individual' style. Neels & Curtner-Smith (2012) concluded that although the majority of sport pedagogy research tends to infer or assume that children who participate in a specific environment share a similar exposure there is actually evidence to show that each may actually have a quite distinct experience.

This study serves as an example to show how researchers conduct a method of enquiry where data collection and analysis results in classification of participants by group but then proceed to draw conclusions and make statements about individuality. This outcome depicts an epistemologically inconsistent assertion (Halák et al., 2014) and also illustrates how the post positivist necessity to confirm objective facts contrasts with the endeavour of the interpretivist who seeks to enquire about the one to one relationship between self and the world (Lester, 1999).

Coaches now clearly acknowledge that the attitudes and preferences of individual participants can be very different and recognise that in practice too often the participant has been regarded as separate from the coaching process (Sportscoach UK, 2013). In Baker et al.'s (2011) 'plan for future research' in talent identification and development Baker and colleagues articulate the need to engage with 'important stakeholders' and advocate collaboration with sports policy makers, coaches, trainers, parents and significant others. This approach continues to subvert the autonomy of the child to signify the contribution of the adult over the contribution of the participant. Exclusion

of the service user not only denies the child the right to participation but also demonstrates a disregard for the potential of the child to provide unique insight (Hutchfield & Coren, 2010; Coyne & Gallagher, 2011). The consequences of this approach include a self-fulfilling perpetuation of the adult imposed hierarchy of power.

Theoretical Perspectives in Sport Science

In the post positivist paradigm there is a single reality, this reality is viewed as an independent entity that exists outside of the human mind and claims about what might lie beyond scientific observations are avoided (MacKenzie, 2011). The post positivist sees the world as a closed system searching for patterns to explain phenomenon and focusing on the use of scientific method to secure an accurate reflection of reality to add certainty to knowledge (Cruikshank, 2012). For the post positivist understanding of human behaviour is defined by empirical regularity and can be explained by a relationship of cause and effect. Belief in reality informs the assumptions that are made about how reality can be known therefore if a researcher subscribes to the view that physical and social structures are real and exist independently of perception (Volkoff & Strong, 2013) and then applies this view to the study of talent development research enquiry is compelled to pursue and explore a tangible reality. Where this approach has been applied to the study of talent development in sport empirical science has identified a multitude of dependent variables:

Availability of developmental opportunity	(Abbott & Collins, 2004; Baker & Horton, 2004)
Critical incidents	(Côté & Hay, 2002)
Current performance	(Bailey et al., 2010)
Deliberate experience	(Ollis et al., 2006)
Deliberate play	(Côté & Hay, 2002)

Deliberate practice	(Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 1993)
Early selection	(Côté & Hay, 2002)
Early specialisation	(Balyi & Hamilton, 2004)
Movement competence (perceived/actual)	(Jess, Dewar & Fraser, 2004)
Positive early experiences	(Kirk, 2005; Wall & Côté, 2006)
Sampling	(Côté, 1999)
Structured learning	(Bailey & Morley, 2006)
Talent transfer	(Vaeyens et al., 2008)
Transitions/unique pathways	(Côté, 1999; Bloom, 1985)

This list is representative of the post positivist doctrine which applies thought, reasoning and logic to advance understanding of a natural order assuming that everything in life is controlled by this order and that human life can be understood through study of the phenomenon of society (Russell, 2014). This philosophy of knowledge is however criticised for not recognising the role of the human actor in the construction of reality (Scharff, 2013).

By contrast interpretivism attests to a contextualised view of the world where social differentiation is believed to produce distinct ways of knowing, behaviour is not assumed to be determined by common standards and subjective meaning is derived from multiple interpretations (Clarke, 2009). The interpretivist believes in an alternative reality where knowledge may be fluid and elusive and is not necessarily out there waiting to be discovered and so for the interpretivist, post positivism 'fails to understand the multiplicity and complexity of the life world of the individuals' (Elshafie, 2013, p. 7). The significance of philosophy of knowledge is reflected further by the position of the critical realist. The philosopher who orientates to this view of the

world asserts a distinct ontological belief, whilst at the same time acknowledging that his or her view of the world does not constitute a straightforward representation and is inevitably provisional and interpretive (Maxwell, 2012). From this perspective ontological realism, (belief in a real world that does exist independently of perception, theory and construction) is maintained whilst epistemological constructivism, (acceptance that understanding of the world is constructed according to an individual perspective and particular standpoint) causes the researcher to undertake a process of retroduction and work back from the empirical event to gain understanding of generative mechanisms (Volkoff & Strong, 2013). Critics of this way of looking at the world claim that this orientation causes the critical realist to focus on the development of scientific forms of knowledge and pay much less attention to the epistemology of personal life (Evenden, 2012).

Breen & Darlaston-Jones (2010) provide opinion to support this critique stating that almost since inception positivist orientation has dominated the narrative of modern psychology and research enquiry has been hesitant to use alternative epistemological or methodological approaches. In the case of talent development research belief in ontological realism continues to draw the researcher towards the search for definitive answers in the expectation that this knowledge can then be applied to the nature of a specific entity (Tsilipakos, 2012). The construction of scientific knowledge is then biased by the quest to confirm the nature and characteristics of talent in order to demonstrate causal efficacy. Exemplification of this process is exposed by detailed critical analysis of the study on talent development in sport published by Benjamin Bloom (1985).

Bloom (1985) led a team of researchers on a four year project to examine the process of talent development and produced a seminal study on talent development and elite performance. Bloom set out to explore the influence of opportunity and encouragement on participant development as he sought to understand the process of development that resulted in exceptional ability, achievement or skill. Bloom proposed to research four talent fields: 1. Athletic or psychomotor; 2. Aesthetic, musical and artistic; 3. Cognitive or intellectual development; and 4. Interpersonal relations, in a research project designed to rely upon externally referenced competence to confirm domain specific expertise. In the sporting (athletic) domain Bloom focused research enquiry on psychomotor performance and subsequently acknowledged that this emphasis had ultimately precluded understanding of the holistic nature of the developmental process. Hence when it came to consideration of the interaction of different facets within the talent development process Bloom confessed that he was only able to speculate (Bloom, 1985).

Review of the academic literature demonstrates that different academics approach research with children and young people in sport in different ways and we know that this is because of different assumptions and beliefs concerning the theory of knowledge and the nature of being and existence (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Holistic examination of participant journeys requires longitudinal mapping to identify activities experienced, pathways followed and obstacles encountered therefore it is significant to note that in Bloom's evaluation of his own work he recognised that his research design had restricted analysis and constrained conclusions to domain specific psychomotor expertise (Bloom, 1985). Twenty five years later, when Bloom's study was included in Bailey et al.'s (2010) Participant Development Academic Review no attention was drawn or significance attached to Bloom's identification of the limitations of his own

work where he had stated that he had been unable to continue with an original intention to study interpersonal relations because of an inability to secure consensus for externally referenced criteria.

Viewed from a post positivist perspective Blooms explanation of methodological limitation could be construed as a logical reason not to pursue objective verification and for the purpose of critical review validate a decision to dismiss this as an unsupported finding. From the interpretivist perspective however to overlook information from sense data appears to suggest a significant oversight for despite his admission of limitation Bloom had still felt that it was important to state that in addition to his empirical findings his research experience also seemed to suggest that those participants who had become elite performers also appeared to be distinguished by the interpersonal skills they had learned, and the relationships they had formed during the first phase of their development (Bloom, 1985). Despite having been unable to continue with an original intention to study interpersonal relations, (because of an inability to secure consensus for externally referenced criteria) Bloom still concluded that the ability to develop successful interpersonal relationships was a critical determinate of development for all individuals making successful transitions between different stages within the learning process. These observations do therefore appear significant not only because they depict a phenomenon where limitations in understanding have endured but perhaps because, even more importantly they also signify the need for research enquiry that is grounded in a philosophical perspective that does not need to rely upon objective verification and has the potential to emphasise the uniqueness of personal perspective and individual interpretation.

Bailey et al.'s review (2010) of Bloom's findings focused upon psychomotor development and claimed that the adult elite performers in his study did not appear to be precociously gifted as young children. In contrast Bloom's depiction of psychomotor development demonstrated that individuals within his sample had been regarded as talented children, individual developmental journeys were influenced accordingly and transitions through the various stages of talent development were preceded by early success in competitive sport: 'She was immediately a good swimmer (Mother of S-13); they put her on the varsity after one meet…..she broke a lot of national records……She was a winner from the start (Mother of S-17) (Bloom, 1985, p. 150). This example serves to represent the significance of philosophy of knowledge, for the explanation for such discrepancy can be attributed to the pursuit of knowledge where the search for normative assumptions has acted to influence treatment of the detail and thus result in findings that are relevant to the individual being overlooked.

Analysis of qualitative research published in three sport psychology journals between 2000 and 2009 reinforces the importance of research philosophy and confirms that previously the positivist/postpositivist research approach has appeared to predominate (Culver et al., 2012). Culver et al. (2012) undertook content analysis of 183 articles and found that only 25 studies (13.7%) referred to the relationship between epistemology, methodology and method. The authors posit that confirmation of the epistemological premise upon which a research study has been founded is critical to the reader's ability to judge the research (Culver et al., 2012). Whilst there now appears to be common consensus amongst scholars that increased knowledge and understanding of how individual children make sense of stages within the developmental process is critical to the evolution of practice to develop optimal environments to support talent progression and transfer (MacNamara & Collins, in Baker et al., 2012) the relevance of the

epistemological and ontological foundations that underpin the way that researchers make sense of this phenomenon has not received the same attention. Whilst most young people in the talent development environment make transitions that do not lead to expert status, the relevance of guidance derived from the insights of retrospective recall from adult experts (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson et al., 1993) remains open to question.

For young people then the experience of being 'talented' appears to represent a transient space, an exclusive and uncertain context where identity is bestowed but cannot be secured. Phenomenological enquiry prioritises consideration of lived experience over reductive or mechanistic accounts and therefore offers an alternative perspective to search for an understanding of the nature of this human action and interaction that the theory based approach may obscure (Papadimitriou, 2008). The purpose of this study was to learn what it was like to be a 'talented' young person participating in a National Governing Body Talent Development Programme; to seek out the young persons' experience of participation in sport and being in this exclusive context; and to empower each young person to share their view of participation by elevating the status of their voice (Randall, 2012). The evidence in this review suggested that phenomenological human science might provide young people with a means by which to share their experience and help make a difference to what we know about the lived world of young people participating in talent development in sport.

Chapter 4: The Philosophy of Phenomenology

Introduction

This chapter discloses the historical origins of the philosophy of phenomenology and explains how phenomenology represents a particular way of looking at the world in which the individual is situated (Standall, 2014). Critical review of the literature demonstrates how in sport existential phenomenology perceives lived experience in relation to a situated existence that presents the individual with both obligation and opportunity (Dale, 1996). In this chapter real life examples from the literature are explored using a phenomenological view to inform consideration of how the relation between young people and their experience of being in a contextualised space is shaped by external social force and the influence of power (Hughson & Inglis, 2002).

'We explain nature but human life we must understand'

(Dilthey, 1976, p. 4 in Van Manen, 1990)

The Essence of the Experience

Investigation of the essence of a phenomenon (a lived experience) is designed to reveal a particular way of being in the world (van Manen, 1990). For van Manen phenomenological enquiry can be likened to an artistic endeavour and pursuit of essence represents a creative attempt to capture a particular phenomenon of life in a description that is 'both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive' (van Manen, 1990, p. 39). The idea of phenomenology is that the search for explanations lies outside the field of enquiry (Pettersson, 2011), therefore the purpose of this research was to better understand what the experience of participation in a talent development programme in sport is like for young people. This

project was grounded in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and designed to determine the essence of the young person's lived experience in the talent development programme in sport. Epistemologically the work drew upon the phenomenological approach to emphasise the importance of personal view and interpretation (Lester, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 2002). This required a methodological approach that could empower participants, giving them the autonomy to express their own views and perspective. Thus my approach originated from a specific epistemological position that was orientated towards gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of the young person's experience in context (Converse, 2012). I wanted to know just what this experience was like and I set out to conduct a research study that would utilise phenomenological enquiry to make direct contact with the lived experience of young people engaging in the talent development process. My intention was not to confirm empirical facts or make scientific generalisations, and it was not to seek solutions or confirm effective procedures. The challenge inherent within the philosophy of phenomenology is that in order to find out you must already know, but in order to know, you must first find out (Sanders, 1982). Talent development was something that I thought I knew, but now my phenomenological perspective required me to put aside prior suppositions and look again 'in order to allow for a viewing of the phenomenon as it is given to (not as it understood by) the researcher.' (Papadimitriou, 2008, p. 223)

From the philosophy of phenomenology the nature of reality is determined by subjective experience and meaning is created by individual interpretation (Lawrence, 2012). The condition of being human is a compulsion to try and make sense of each and every experience in order to give meaning to the world (Spinelli, 2005) and epistemologically this view is grounded in a paradigm of personal knowledge and

subjectivity to emphasise the importance of individual perspective and interpretation (Lester, 1999). During the twentieth century the interpretivist movement was advanced by Edmund Husserl through investigation of phenomena as experienced by the human consciousness (Paradowski, 2013). Husserl evolved an epistemological focus on experience or narrative (rather than a real knowable world) through affiliation with the belief in subjective reality (Langridge, 2007). Subsequently research methodology was developed to provide naturalistic description or interpretation of phenomena, to represent the meanings experiences had for different people experiencing them (Langridge, 2007). This approach contrasted with scientific epistemology where the researcher attested to be objective, detached, and value free and instead involved collection of naturalistic first person accounts of experience which acknowledged the influence of the researcher on data collection and the analytical process.

Early advocates of this philosophy intentionally pursued descriptive study as an alternative to the empirically based positivist paradigm in a quest to reconceptualise knowledge generation (Bradbury-Jones, 2012). For the originators of phenomenology the intention was not to divorce philosophical enquiry from scientific method, but rather to challenge the very suppositions upon which scientific study had been developed (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009). Qualitative information was sought through descriptive studies precisely to help question previously held theoretical assumptions in order that a more profound understanding of a phenomena could be secured (Converse, 2012).

Phenomenology has since come to be regarded as a philosophical movement that represents a way of looking at the world in which the individual is situated (Standall, 2014). Researchers orientating towards this paradigm identify with a school of thought that is variant and so not codified by one precise set of beliefs (McConnell-Henry et al.,

2009). Phenomenological enquiry pursues nuanced perspective according to locus and whilst some researchers explore self and environment to consider interchange, others orientate more towards interchange itself to focus on an event (Mølbak, 2012). Despite such differences the phenomenological movement is unified by a quest to investigate experience as it is presented to the individual receiving the experience (Standall, 2014). For the researcher this approach demands consciousness of the experience of otherness, in relation to a situated existence and according to a unique experience of the world (Zarowski, 2012). From the perspective of phenomenology the emphasis must therefore be placed upon the importance of describing the 'what it is like' of an experience rather than the explanation of or for the experience (Standall, 2014).

Phenomenology is a term that is derived from the Greek verb 'phenomena' which means to appear or to show one's self (Sanders, 1982) and this philosophical approach relies upon two key principles: 'First person conscious experience is the foundational constituent of our understanding,' which can 'take us back to a pre-theoretical vantage point from which to question our own assumptions' (Gergel, 2012, p. 1103). Phenomenological philosophy therefore offers an opportunity to reconceptualise knowledge generation through explication of the true meaning of the talent development experience (Park Lala & Kinsella, 2011). The phenomenological movement challenges analytic and deductive philosophies through assertion of the primacy of the individual's experience (Gallagher & Francesconi, 2012). This perspective leads the researcher to suspend assumptions that have previously informed understanding of the world and instead enables time consciousness of a particular present to become the foundation for knowledge (Held, 2007). Phenomenological enquiry views existence as embodied consciousness, where bodily activity and consciousness are inter-related meaning that experience is situated according to the world of the individual (Park Lala & Kinsella,

2011). From this philosophical perspective, human consciousness is regarded as intention and actualisation of inter-relationship with the world constitutes being (Gergel, 2012). For each individual first-hand experience of a phenomenon forms the foundation for a unique vision of the nature of their reality (Lawrence, 2012).

In Edmund Husserl's original conception the philosophy of phenomenology proposed to uncover 'the thing itself' through a process of active conceptual construction to focus upon what is neither self -evident or obvious (Husserl, 2001 in Halák et al., 2014). For the researcher, perception of the individual's first-hand experience of phenomena requires the pursuit of a state of 'inter-subjectivity' (Hutcheson, 1981) for 'the thinking person doesn't know anything about her thinking experience but only about the thoughts that are continuously generated by her own thinking' (Husserl, 2011, p. 269). It therefore belongs to the philosopher to look upon the activity of other people to make it speak about itself (Halák et al., 2012). This demands consciousness of the experience of otherness in relation to a situated existence and according to a unique experience of the world (Zarowski, 2012). The philosophy of phenomenology actually requires the individual to question whether they are truly able to step outside of their theoretical situatedness (Thompson et al., 1989). Here the challenge lies in our understanding of the true nature of our existence and as Merleau-Ponty (2002) states, inter-subjectivity is only possible if our own experience of ourselves can involve an experience of otherness (Shores, 2013). The concept of epoche is fundamental to the philosophy of phenomenology and concerns a theoretical moment that enables temporary suspension of previously established bias, belief, preconception or assumption (Sanders, 1982). For me this represented entry into a new state of inter-subjectivity to enable me to take a fresh look at what had been a long established area of interest, talent development in sport.

The utility of this approach has been demonstrated in medicine where findings from research into illness now incorporate knowledge of the individual's first-hand experience into broader understanding (Gergel, 2012). Within medicine attention to philosophy of perception and the lived body exposed limitations in the biomedical model of the study of disease (Park Lala & Kinsella, 2011) and in 1977 George L. Engel, Professor of Psychiatry and Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, New York explicated this philosophical challenge in the seminal paper 'The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine' (Engel, 1977/2012).

Previously in the west, illness had been categorised and treated according to a scientific view of the world that was grounded in a naturalistic approach to the study of disease and reliant upon objective measurement of accessible symptoms (Malina, 2012; Thompson et al., 1989). The philosophy of phenomenology offered medicine a new way to reconceptualise knowledge generation through the use of qualitative information to question previously held theoretical assumptions (Converse, 2012). 'Evidence of me' in evidence based medicine is now an established concept that draws upon the perspective of the individual patient in order to provide an optimal health outcome (Lockwood, 2004). In this alternative approach the need to take full account of the ill individual's experience of illness and viewpoint is emphasised to inform medical practice (Gergel, 2012). Method of enquiry focuses upon the unique meaning of the lived experience for the patient to determine how life has been impacted by his or her experience (Bradbury-Jones, 2012). This endeavour has presented significant challenge to the medical profession and the use of personal experience to improve patient care has required medical research to embrace a paradigm shift (Thompson et al., 1989). Integration of the context and values of individual perspectives into the conception of illness and treatment has now become a fundamental tenant of patient centred care and although

practice still grapples to reconcile objective quantitative evidence and analysis with the qualitative and subjective aspects of individual experience in medicine the contemporary moral debate is now well established (Gergel, 2012).

So my research asked the question could the philosophy of phenomenology have specific or unique relevance to the process and practice of talent development in sport? This philosophical approach presented an opportunity to seek an alternative view point from within the talent development dynamic by empowering the participant to give their unique insight into the talent development process (Burton et al., 2006). Phenomenology offered to help me gain an understanding of talent development experience as experienced by the 'talented' participant. If pre-existing assumptions could be suspended phenomenology might even offer a way to reconstitute conceptions of talent and talent development practice (Gergel, 2012).

Phenomenology and Sport

In the sporting domain when Baker et al., (2010) stated that there was a clear need to improve understanding of talent identification and development in sport they called for a 'plan for future research'. Academics in sport have echoed the call for study into participant development to ensure that each participant is considered and catered for individually through a bio/psycho/social approach (Bailey et al., 2010) however the pursuit of empirical facts is not an outcome that is supported by the philosophy of phenomenology. Within the interpretivist paradigm there is no assumption that universal truths can be gained from the study of unique individual experience (Craig, 1984). Instead phenomenological science orientates to reality to focus upon meaning rather than outcome; to investigate the conditions of experience to gain insight into the essence or structure of lived experience; 'looking for that which is common to all

subjectivities in general' to reveal the transcendental structures of consciousness (Halák et al., 2014).

'Man's relative aloneness in sport' (Harper, 1969, p. 57) offers the opportunity to uncover an awareness of a unique existence and this conception is characterised by an obligation to the self where participation is isolating; and reliance upon personal ability and experience may bring forth the realisation of a unique individuality. In the world of sport the athlete lives out a situated freedom where obligation and opportunity exist within a social framework (Dale, 1996). Here attention to the athlete's embodied perception contrasts with attempts to describe the controlled functions of an object to consider the intentions of action (Hogeveen, 2011). In this way of looking at reality the corporeal and mental elements of experience are indissociable (Hughson & Inglis, 2002; Meier, 1975) and the athlete and the world represent co-constitution where one does not exist apart from the other (Dale, 1996). Philosophical deliberation of the body and movement offers a view that depicts a phenomenon where interaction with the world reveals the inner fire in the soul (Hogan, 2009). Sports participation constitutes a relation to a pursuit (Kretchmar, 1974) where perception and connection is influenced by deliberate consciousness of the past and consideration for the future (Meier, 1975): 'man's actions in sport represent, express, and identify his powers, intentionality and being' (Meier, 1975 p. 71). In sport existential phenomenology recognises a situated freedom where obligation and opportunity exists within the framework that has been presented by the world (Dale, 1996). Sport is characterised by competition and contesting acts promote inter and intra personal comparison (Kretchmar, 2014). The interpersonal world reveals dialogue between the self and other and offers a way to represent the meaning that is given to human interaction (Papadimitriou, 2008). The setting aside of presuppositions and biases offers the researcher a different vantage point

where the pursuit of transcendental consciousness may provide a path to understanding what is relevant to the experience of talent development in sport (Hogan, 2009).

In this research project the philosophy of phenomenology offered the potential to allow young people to convey distinctly different real examples of experience in the context of talent development in sport to allow the essence of the phenomenon to show itself (Bradbury-Jones, 2012). New knowledge was sought through application of a philosophical attitude of mind and point of departure that would not be constrained by theoretical agenda (Husserl, 1964). Phenomenological enquiry sought to say what had not yet been said by uncovering the difference between the structure of experience and the transcendental characteristics of the subjectivity to contribute new insights into the essence of the experience (Halák et al., 2014). In this study phenomenological enquiry focused upon lived experience to 'explicate and understand the meaning-making practices that are taken for granted by actual social agents while engaging in specific social contexts' (Papadimitriou, 2008, p. 218).

Talent Development in Sport: The Structures of Experience

In this section participant experience has been reconstructed conceptually using a sociologically informed phenomenology to demonstrate how external social forces and the account of power exert pressure on the phenomenological relation between the young person and his/her experience of being in a contextualised space (Hughson & Inglis, 2002).

Power

Power is concerned with the ability to act (Fleishman, 2007) and power is realised by the ability to influence or take part in a decision making process (Larsson & Meckbach,

2013). Power is essentially connected to the personal characteristic of an individual or group (Coleman, 1968) and power in society has been conceptualised by Lukes' (2005) in accordance with three dimensions where each dimension is distinguished according to individual, structural, and ideological influence:

Power To — the individual's capacity or agency to act

Power Over — the control that an individual is able to exert over another

Power Through — an ideological form of power that operates according to a dominant knowledge system (Lukes, 2005)

The view that safe and effective introduction to sports participation is a responsibility shared by parent's, coaches and administrators (Bergeron at al., 2010) is a classic representation of the patriarchal conception of the status of the child in the sports participation process. Application of Lukes' (2005) tripartite perspective to the process and practice of participant and talent development in sport illustrates a contextualised power relation and supports consideration of the interplay of this relationship between institution, adult and young person.

Power through is presented as the most fundamental dimension of power because ultimately both the first dimension (*power to*) and the second dimension (*power over*) are influenced by this dimension (Swartz, 2007). *Power through* represents a form of authority that acts to both shape and comply with the wants and needs of society and is therefore determined by and subject to a process of social reproduction that serves to develop and establish valid forms of practice (Spencer, 2014). In the talent development environment ideology has emerged in reliance upon empiricist epistemology, knowledge systems have been predominately influenced by an experimental evidence base, and practice has largely been derived from quantifiable data (Culver et al., 2012).

Within the UK talent development systems continue to demonstrate how sporting structures hold influence over sporting participation and how this influence affects not only participant's lives but also the lives of coaches, administrators, officials and fans. In the Olympic context the future of the participant is dependent upon the status of their sport and a future may only be safeguarded if the sport can evidence a strategy to support medal winning potential (BBC Sport, 2014). For some sports this results in fragile control (Tawney, 1931 in Blau, 2009) and within the hierarchy of power the sport itself may be held to account. In 2014 the influence of ideology and application of dominant knowledge system was exemplified on a national scale when the expression of *power through* was demonstrated by the announcement that four Olympic and three Paralympic sports would have their funding withdrawn (BBC Sport, 2014). At the time this decision was justified by UK Sport chief executive Liz Nicholls who said that it would be "high risk" to continue funding sports that demonstrated little chance of winning a medal by 2020 (BBC Sport, 2014). This example demonstrates how the funding body may use *power through* dominant ideology to penalise and exposes the vulnerability of the sport within the power hierarchy. This is however a necessary relationship for whilst Olympic sports do not have the means to operate independently they must rely upon government funding for support.

Power through is of course also used to support sport and in the 21st century individual sports have accrued benefit from the application of new knowledge and understanding to facilitate talent transfer (English Institute of Sport, 2009). Across the globe talent transfer initiatives have been developed and implemented specifically to support the retention, transfer and development of high performing athletes (Sportscotland, 2015; Australian Institute of Sport, 2015). In Australia for example successful transfer has been evidenced for a significant number of high performance athletes and data from the

national sporting system demonstrates that in the period up to 2004, 256 athletes made the transition to a new sport and of these 72 (28%) went on to represent their country within one Olympiad (Gulabin, 2015).

The success of talent transfer is an example of how ideology can support sport to generate and sustain *power through* sporting structures that offset exposure to more the detrimental applications of *power over* such as withdrawal of funding. Each sport has distinct funding needs therefore the level and targeting of funding is key to *power to* both for the sport and the participant (Morley et al., 2015). For the participant *power to* transfer sports is constrained by funding models that are specific to sport rather than talent (UK Sport, 2013), *power to* progress within their sport may be dependent upon the status of their sport, and all of this may be subject to the power of the sport which in turn will be determined by *power through* previous performance. This has distinct implications for if a talented participant happens to possess talent that manifests in the wrong context, (e.g. the participant's sport is neither mainstream nor popular), the context changes (e.g. the participant's sport is dropped from inclusion in the Olympic Games), or the ability of the participant is brought into question (e.g. the participant's talent trajectory is not maintained) prior status matters not. The interplay between p*ower through* and *power over* represents a strategic interaction that is orientated towards achieving success rather than agreement (Lukes, 2005) and in this scenario the true vulnerability of 'talented' status is revealed.

Within the talent development domain the consequences and implications of the expression of *power through* have recently been exemplified on a national scale by the English Rugby Football Union (RFU). In April 2013 the RFU announced that their national talent development programme, Schools of Rugby (SoR) was deemed no

longer fit for purpose (Dixon, 2013). Heeding the advice of Baker and colleagues (Baker et al., 2011) who had proposed new directions for talent development practice, the RFU invited '15 of the world's top experts' to a talent symposium to discuss how best to develop their talent (RFU, 2013). New ideology was accepted and transmission was effected when the RFU announced that from Sept 2013 players in the U13-U15 age groups would receive a revised programme called the England Rugby Developing Players Programme (Dixon, 2013). For players in this age group *power through* brought benefit and new knowledge now promised to offer an improved method of progression. By contrast players approaching the final year of the programme were now subject to the impersonal nature of institutional power (Lenski, 1984) and would find no such solace. Participants in the U16 age group were informed that the RFU had made a decision to discontinue the programme for their age group, alternative provision was not offered and each individual was left to navigate his own transition. Such a scenario demonstrates how the relationship between *power through* and *power over* can be exercised by those with the ability to set and control a decision making agenda (Spencer, 2013). In this example 'the capacity of an individual or group of individuals to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner which he desires' (Tawney, 1931 in Blau, 2009, p. 115) is demonstrated by the RFU through *power over*.

The RFU talent identification and development Schools of Rugby (SoR) programme was launched in 2006 and was specifically designed to support player development in U13 -U16 age groups. 'Talented' players signed up to a code of conduct requiring them to commit to 'work towards attainment of my full potential in my sport' (RFU.com, 2012, SoR players and parents information booklet, p. 5) and in return for this commitment the RFU pledged that players could expect 'a well organised and progressive development system' and 'clear and supportive two-way communications'

(RFU.com, 2012, SoR players and parents information booklet, 2012, p. 7). When the new England Rugby Developing Players Programme was introduced players in the SoR Under 16 age group had already given three years commitment and were expecting to continue for one more year. Suddenly practice was reformed the programme became obsolete and with this reform entitlement to development for this age group was withdrawn. These players were now excluded from the talent development system and so it appeared that, according to the actions of the RFU, these players represented the product of programme limitation and were no longer regarded as worthy of investment.

In this example *power through* rugby had enabled the sport to attract the participant to commit to the talent development programme. *Power over* had enabled the sport to design the nature of engagement and *power to* had then effected the autonomy to sever that engagement. This scenario demonstrates how if potential is identified but talent trajectory not maintained entitlement to development can be withdrawn and the participant is rendered powerless within the decision making process. *Power over* is bequeathed from *power through* and it is the sport that controls *power to*. Whilst an opportunity for continued participation may be afforded, once p*ower over* effects exclusion from the talent development environment the path of future participation must be self determined.

There are however certain points within the interaction between participant and sport where the temporal nature of power (Lukes, 2005) places the participant in a more favourable position. At the time of invitation to the talent development environment the participant stands at a juncture where *power to* can enable him or her to choose either to opt in or to opt out of this developmental pathway. This point presents the participant with an opportunity to both realise and exercise a right, for in the UK participation in

talent development is not enforced. At this time the right to opt out (Earnshaw, 2014) loads the balance of power in favour of the participant and so the sport must exert a more subtle influence (Lenski, 1984) via transmission of *power through* connection with desires, beliefs and attitudes (Lukes, 2005). It is at this juncture that the true interdependency of power within the talent development context can be illustrated for although the influence of *power through* sport is critical, the future of every sport remains dependent upon the sports *power to* engage the participant in addition to the participant's *power to* choose if and how they will engage. Nowhere is this more evident in the UK than in football where *power through* the sport is reflected in a level of interest and investment in talent that now sees professional clubs working to identify and develop potential players from the age of 5 years old: 'We've got to give every 5 to 11 year old in England the opportunity to play and enjoy the game. And if they want to get better, we need to show them how' (thefa.com, 2015).

An example of this power dynamic and how the interaction of power can play out is provided by the case of the young footballer, Ben Trueman. At 5 years of age Ben was identified as a 'talented' participant by Liverpool FC and by 7 he had also accepted invitations to train with Everton, Manchester United and Manchester City (Liverpool Echo, 2014). At the time local newspapers reported that:

> Ben is hoping to be offered a pre-contract deal when he turns nine and……..if he signs a pre-contract with one of the Premier League clubs' academies, Ben would attend a private school from the age of 12 to ensure his education has the same attention as his football (Liverpool Echo, 2014).

In this example the value of potential is reflected by contractual offer and demonstrates how the possession of 'talent' can serve to empower the talentee within the talent development process. For Ben, whilst his talent continues to be courted he remains free to access developmental opportunity and open to offer, but does not yet become subject

to formal commitment or control. At this point power constitutes a two way relational reality (Coleman, 1968) and in the absence of *power over* the sport must rely upon *power through* for in this scenario it is the participant who holds the *power to.*

Interplay between different dimensions of power is further complicated by contextualised interaction that is subject to influence according to magnitude, distribution and scope of power (Lukes, 2005). In sport magnitude of power may manifest as weight of influence and this ability to influence may vary in distribution between sports and between teams in the same sport. In England football has long been regarded as the national sport and in English society association with a particular team is connected to individual, regional and national identity (Gibbons, 2011). Historical analysis demonstrates that Manchester United's 1904 FA Cup win represented a significant event in English working class subculture and this success has been credited with increasing the popularity of and participation in the game and providing the catalyst to enable the city of Manchester to establish a strong footballing identity (James & Day, 2015). This example shows how certain sports and specific teams can achieve *power through* affiliation that can result in influence of greater magnitude, relative to other clubs. In English football the *power to* act is also impacted by success because success determines the distribution of resource (sporting intelligence, 2014). Premier League status brings increased financial reward and in 2013/14 incomes for the top Premiership clubs approached 100 million pounds (sporting intelligence, 2014). For Manchester United these factors combine to facilitate *power through* status, the operation of which is exemplified by the story of 9 year old participant Zane Marsh reported in the Greater Manchester Evening News:

He had quite a few clubs take an interest in him and he was keen on going to Manchester United, but he's really pleased he's been picked by Liverpool……He knows they're a really good team with a great academy – he's just said that when they play United, he won't celebrate when they score!

(Weir, 2014).

This scenario demonstrates how a clubs possession of *power through* allegiance to their team can engender affinity and commitment. In this example the strength of *power through* allegiance to one club is confirmed by Zane's father who states that despite signing for Liverpool Zane would have preferred to have signed for Manchester United. This depiction of the interplay of different dimensions of power demonstrates that whilst Zane remained drawn to the pursuit of becoming a professional footballer, even when in possession of a lesser ability to influence *power through* the ability to provide an opportunity still gave Liverpool the scope to attract him to their club.

Regulations in football dictate that, depending upon where a participant lives the ability to sign for a preferred club may not be possible and so in this case the *power to* sign or be signed could potentially have been curtailed for both Zane and Manchester United (The Premier League, 2013). Conscious of the lure that some clubs might have for participants the Football Association has acted to regulate talent development practice by introducing travel time and distance rules to safeguard both the interests of the sport and young people (The Premier League, 2013). These regulations were introduced in an attempt to ensure that no participant would become over burdened by their commitment. By preventing the participant from joining the team of his choice this rule also acted to constrain the practice of the football club to ensure that they could not sign a player who did not live close to where they would train or play. Each club has been required to accept a duty to protect their participants however this imposition enacts different consequences for different teams. Whilst some teams would not possess the scope to attract boys from different parts of the country, for teams like Manchester United who

possess higher status and greater resource this regulation threatened to reduce their ability to sign players. By response Manchester United's actions exposed the inequities within the distribution of power in England in the sport of football, maintaining the *power to* sign players by invoking *power through* the weight of financial resource: 'The Londoner was desperate to join the Reds, and his family was keen that he should - so Richardson's dad upped sticks and moved north, with United's help, to live within 90minutes' drive of Carrington' (Manchester Evening News, 2004). This example conforms to Max Weber's classic definition of power, where power is the 'probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (Weber, 1947 in Coleman, 1968, p. 31).

This example also demonstrates the potential for power to become self-serving and reinforces the need in sport for regulation to manage practice. In this scenario Manchester United demonstrated the utility of status and resource to support an alternative method of operation to exercise the *power to* choose who to engage and develop. Staff at Manchester United justified this practice by stating the belief that children and their families should maintain the right to make their own decisions and join the club of their choice (Manchester Evening News, 2004). This does however reflect a biased position where vested interest can motivate an expansion of power (de Jouvenel, 1949) and such power may not necessarily act in the best interests of the participant: 'We have to abide by the rules, but all we want is to do what is best for Manchester United' (Manchester Evening News, 2004).

Although a club of the standing of Manchester United might presume that *power through* status could exert influence that would act in the best interests of the club and

the participant this would only be so if engagement matched both the wants and needs of the participant. Although the FA travelling time and distance rules are designed to prioritise the participant, by imposing such conditions these regulations also act to constrain the young person's right to self determination and typify the way that an adult will assume the right to decide what is best for the young person.

Authority

Authority relates to the probability of a command being obeyed by a specific person or group of people and involves hierarchy, obedience and command (Coleman, 1968). Empirical studies have proven that obedience is subject to situational influence and level of obedience can be determined by contextual factors (Auzolt, 2015). Once inducted into the talent development environment the participant becomes subject to the influence of authority and in return for the opportunity to participate each individual must accept greater accountability and reduced control. Here authority can be distinguished from power because whereas power is tied to the personal characteristics of an individual or group, authority is always connected to social position or role (Coleman, 1968). Authority may subsequently appear to impose a form of subordination, and in this circumstance the subordinator will assume the right to influence the nature of the individual's sporting participation. The nature of this relationship is depicted by the example of Zoe Smith (GB Weightlifting) who at age 16 had her Olympic funding withdrawn after being criticised for being overweight and lacking commitment to training (BBC Sport, 2011). Reflecting upon this a year later Smith commented that, 'while I did think it was tough on me at the time I do think they had their reasons and they were quite good reasons to be fair,…………It's made me change for the better and I think I'm probably going to come out a better athlete and more professional for it' (BBC Sport, 2011). In this example the interaction of power

demonstrates that whilst the individual still desires membership of the talent development programme authority is maintained, conformity is expected and subordination is accepted. Whilst the sport may retain p*ower over* the participant through the right to sever connection it has no authority to compel the participant to comply with requests and must rely upon compliance through authority that is defined by scope and range (Coleman, 1968). In the following year Zoe won a silver medal at the Youth World Championships and then went on to break 15 British records at her first Senior World Championships (BBC Sport, 2011). For the sport of Weightlifting adherence to *power through* dominant ideology had been validated, *power over* was vindicated and authority maintained. Obedience had brought reward and compliance with authority had reinforced belief in the dominant ideology (Coleman, 1968).

Analysis of such interaction has demonstrated how the distribution of power amongst different social units can be viewed as interaction between controller and responder (Dahl, 1957). Within this type of relation the controller can demarcate a clear line to distinguish the position of domination and where the power hierarchy is secure in its status there is no requirement to justify to the subordinate (Lukes, 2005). It is within such a power dynamic that through the experience of *power over* the young person learns that in addition to acceptance of the position of a subordinate (Holland et al., 2010), engagement with the agenda of the adult may also require that s/he must be willing to submit to valuation as a commodity. In the UK commodity status continues to be conferred by sport specific talent development programmes that exist to further the development of the individual only if a talent trajectory is maintained within the sport (Sport England, 2014). This is reinforced by the transmission of ideology that assumes the natural ascendency of some participants over others (Coleman, 1968) and reinforces

the expectation that not every participant will graduate from the talent development system, 'it's about developing individuals not teams' (Bradford City FC, 2012).

Within the talent development hierarchy *power over* the behaviour of the individual is ever present and the *power to* 'release' poses a constant threat. The implications of dependency for participants are epitomised by the practice of the RFU (Dixon, 2013) discussed earlier where orientation towards the world of elite referenced excellence (Abbott & Collins, 2004) focused attention on the phenomenon only and relegated consideration of duty to the child. In this context, because terms of engagement rely upon commitment to 'talent' the decision maker exhibits no sense of renegation of commitment to the child. For the participant p*ower to* is related to the value placed upon their ability and status is subject to distribution of similar ability within the talent development system. Whilst the young person is still dependent upon a system they are unable to assume control and in this circumstance *power to* can be exercised by a controller who demonstrates relative power through the autonomy to make decisions. The withdrawal of provision enacted by the RFU presents a stark example of practice that not only shows a disregard for the young person but also appears to demonstrate disingenuous commitment to long term athlete development. Through the privilege of authority the RFU had been able to impose their will on the nature of participation for their 'talented' participants. Once they decided to withdraw from this commitment no duty to consult the participant was recognised, power was used to restrict debate (Spencer, 2013) and the expert perspective assumed the right to make a judgement call on the development of the young person and his/her ability to progress towards a desired destination (RFU, 2012). This illustrates how in sport, once an individual makes the transition and commits to participate in the talent development environment orientation towards the world of elite referenced excellence changes the nature of their

participation (Abbott & Collins, 2004) and the nature of the control that they have over it. The world of elite referenced excellence (Abbott & Collins, 2004) presents an exclusive environment and no refuge is offered to the extra-terrestrial (McLaughlin, 2005).

This chapter has demonstrated consideration of how the young person and his/her experience of being in a contextualised space (Hughson & Inglis, 2002) is subject to the interplay between different dimensions of power. The young person's reality is further complicated by contextualised interaction that varies according to the magnitude, distribution and scope of power within the sporting context (Lukes, 2005). In this study phenomenological human science offered a new way to investigate the conditions of the young person's lived experience in the context of talent development in sport through the use of qualitative information to question previously held theoretical assumptions (Converse, 2012). The hope was that a phenomenological approach could provide insight into the essence or structure of the young person's lived experience within talent development in sport to reveal the transcendental structures of this experience (Halák et al., 2014).

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I begin by discussing my position within the research and how my ontological view reflects a temporal perspective of the nature of reality. The chapter continues to consider the young person's involvement in the research process to explore the nature of participation in relation to the concept of social justice. Finally the process of participant engagement and collaboration is disclosed to underline the significance of the young person's capacity to act and demonstrate the importance of the involvement of children and young people in decisions and processes that affect them (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Mayall, 2002; Powell & Smith, 2009; Rodd, 2011).

Positionality

Participant development in the context of 'talent' is an area in which I have been interested for some considerable time. In 1992 my undergraduate dissertation attempted to examine the personality characteristics of a group of talented young footballers. The aim was to 'identify factors of personality that may influence playing ability, potential and peer group status.' Upon reflection this now seems to represent a first attempt to explore how talented young performers might interpret and respond to talent development experience. Now though my research approach originated from a different research paradigm, in this study my intention was to explore interpretation of being and I would not rely upon application of a psychological construct.

My original study sampled the England Under 16 schoolboy footballers living at Lilleshall National Sports Centre and reported that 'correlations between personality type and player performance and potential were not confirmed'. I concluded that the

contribution of personality to talent development could not be quantified and termed the process a 'phenomenon' that could not be explained. Now I am better able to understand the epistemological premise that underpinned this philosophy of knowledge and also now I am able to recognise that there was another way to look at it. My original approach represented orientation towards a factor analytic approach where I had attempted to identify similarities and differences to explain behaviour (Perkins et al., 2000). I had not previously articulated my philosophical orientation but looking back it was clear to see that I had developed a positivist view and adopted a constructivist approach (Culver et al., 2012). Critical reflection now seemed to demonstrate that the conclusion I had reached twenty years ago represented a contradiction in philosophy for whilst I appeared to have set out with the presupposition of an objective reality, by the end of my study I had suggested that I now believed that I had explored a natural phenomenon where it was neither possible to predict or control a pattern of cause and effect. Deconstruction revealed a fault line represented by an ambiguity in the written text (Muller, 2012) and this fault line appeared to demonstrate an inconsistent belief system. This depicted a time when I had yet to contemplate the significance of subjective reality and it was a time when through my undergraduate education, I had become immersed in the positivist approach that predominated in sport psychology research (Culver et al., 2012). So whilst the ambiguity of my concluding statement meant little when it was written, twenty five years later recognition of the incongruity between the epistemological foundation connected to my conclusion and the philosophy of knowledge underpinning my methodological approach represented a primordial event.

Now I look at the world from a different perspective and recognise that my experience during those intervening years caused me to question my own previously established

view. Ill health presents a time when the individual has no greater sense of themselves as an individual; I had learnt this travelling the road from able bodied to disabled, and ultimately found myself living in a new self (Swartz, 2013). My lived experience had brought new and first-hand experience of service use where treatment was given according to membership of a category and preconceived assumptions led to failure to attend to unique need (Gergel, 2012). Medical science had not recognised the same reality as I and I had learnt that being could have alternative versions. And so my sense of self, and my preconceived view of the world in which I existed had changed, and with this balance and readjustment had come a new way of seeing.

In this study I set out to complete a naturalistic investigation with a commitment to strive to remain true to the nature of the phenomena under study (Athens, 2010). My intention was to pursue an interpretative approach to reveal the complexity of interaction between young people, society, (Black, 2006) and the context of talent development in sport. I aspired to get close to the young people whom I would study (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) and to explore their conscious constructions as they navigated the world through interpretive activity (Ferguson, 1993). This time I would not seek to make claims about the generality of specific practices (Lin, 1998) but would seek to explore talent development in sport from the perspective of the young person, to reveal the meaning of first-hand experience of the phenomena (McConnell & Henry et al., 2009). The purpose of my approach would be to depict how each child viewed (interpreted and responded to) talent development experience in sport to capture the characteristic nature and meaning of the young person's developmental journey. Critical to this approach was an intention to depict individual structure of thought and way of thinking to enable characterisation of the dependant nature of self, to demonstrate that when a child is inducted into a talent development programme they enter with their own

set of ideas, beliefs and skills and this 'mentality' forms the foundation for their identity, behaviour, activity and interaction (Alexander, 1998).

In the introduction to this research project I explained that my original consciousness of the significance of the word mentality, as used to describe the way that a young person may make sense of an experience to represent connection with a particular outlook (talent development) was contributed by interaction with my son (a 13 yr old member of the talent development environment). I took on the responsibility to try to learn what this meant and so now, able to recognise the irony of choosing to do otherwise it is important to me to state that I also committed to using the word that he had used. Contemplation of 'mentality' facilitated the development of a research approach that offered to prioritise an individual perspective of a distinct experience in order to represent a conceptual view of the essence of a phenomenon. In this study the word mentality has been used to represent a perspective that signifies connection with an experience through both words and feelings, to represent the essence of an experience (Solev'ev, 2005). This view represents the importance of association with feelings and emotion and when applied to the context of talent serves to depict a contextualised nature of being in the world (Van Manen, 1990). In accordance with my epistemological premise the term 'talent mentalities' should not be mistaken for an assumption of homogeneity, rather a shared connection through experience of application of self to the talent development context. 'Talent mentalities' therefore represent a view of the talent development journey, a life in the mind that whilst specific to the context is distinguished by the individual experience (Richards, 2012b).

The philosophy of phenomenology represented to me an opportunity to conceive a process of enquiry to challenge analytic and deductive philosophies through assertion of

the primacy of the individual's experience (Tuohy et al., 2013). The concept of epoche is fundamental to the philosophy of phenomenology and concerns a theoretical moment where the researcher attempts to temporarily suspend previously established bias, belief, preconception or assumption (Sanders, 1982). For me this concept encapsulated a challenge to aspire to a new state of inter-subjectivity, to attempt to take a fresh look at the phenomenon of talent development. I set out to explore talent development in sport from the perspective of the young person (McConnell & Henry, 2009) and to support this approach I designed a process of enquiry to focus on uniqueness of experience in order to ascertain just exactly what this experience was like for each individual (Batchelor, 1985). I deliberately chose to employ a philosophical context through which to question the naturalistic approach to scientific enquiry and adopted a phenomenological approach to see if exploration of an individual perspective could reveal the transcendental nature of the structure and meaning of the talent development experience (Burton et al., 2006). And so I challenged myself to see if I could suspend my pre-existing assumptions to search for a way to reconstitute conceptions of talent and talent development experience (Gergel, 2012), to reveal how for each young person life was impacted by existence within the world of talent development in sport (Dowling & Cooney, 2012).

My intention was to challenge the primacy of the system over the young person, (Christensen & Prout, 2002) encourage recognition of the child as a service user, and to establish the view of the young person as an essential perspective (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011). The hope was that by making an authentic connection with the child's culture, not only could the consequences and implications of dependence upon a particular set of assumptions be avoided but also that the voice of the young person could be heard and contribute to the adult perspective (Randall, 2012). So my research would ask the

question, can phenomenology have specific or unique relevance to the process and practice of talent development? If pre-existing assumptions could be suspended phenomenology might even offer a way to reconstitute conceptions of talent and talent development practice (Gergel, 2012).

Participatory Research

Social justice requires legitimate engagement between young person and adult and this may only be achieved if the adult child relationship can become symmetrical. A symmetrical relationship requires that an adult is willing and able to concede a position of power, for if an adult is prepared to listen and accept the opinion of the young person then the conditions for youth empowerment can be created (Earnshaw, 2014). New conceptions of the way that adults, children and young people interact now signify the principle of participation however participation alone does not constitute an end in itself, rather participation is essential to afford young people the opportunity to raise individual issues and to address personal challenges that are specific to their own lived experience of childhood (Fleming, 2013).

During the 1980's a new sociology had regarded children as too passive (Prout, 2011). Advocates of the new way of thinking claimed that the traditional perspective had neglected consideration of the child as an independent agent and that such conceptions should be challenged (Christensen & Prout, 2002). New conceptions invited the researcher to view each young person as an autonomous individual with the ability to act, change and be changed by their world (McLaughlin, 2005). Critical exploration of young peoples' engagement in society sought to interrogate the boundary between child and adulthood and participative research emerged to reflect a discourse attending to power and agency (Holland et al., 2010; Nutbrown & Clough, 2009). As the conditions

of contemporary childhood changed critics claimed that we should not assume that children and young people are dependent on adults but instead recognise their ability both to influence and give meaning to interaction (Christensen & Prout, 2002; Semi, 2011). Prout (2011) contended that conceptions of the young person should not be determined in accordance with connection to or membership of a social group and posited that childhood should be treated as a phenomenon rather than a category. In this conception childhood and adolescence is recognised as a product of generational rather than structural processes and is regarded as a phenomenon that is subject to multiple 'generational orderings' (Prout, 2011).

The concept of generational ordering depicts an open ended process of influence that accounts for how different versions of child or adult may interact to produce different versions of child or adult. This concept does not assume that the process of generational ordering must persist with a natural order and likewise, does not assume that childhood should proceed at a particular pace. Instead it is premised on the belief that the capacity of the child to act and influence is determined by his or her individual circumstances, experience and knowledge. Therefore in this conception capacity is not correlated with age and instead autonomy is supported by a mix of maturity and experience which develops to allow the young person to form an opinion and then think through the consequences of their actions (Burke, 2010).

Participant Engagement

The past decade has seen the publication of a substantial body of literature arguing for greater involvement of children and young people in decisions and processes that affect them (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Mayall, 2002; Powell & Smith, 2009; Rodd, 2011). From the outset I declared that I intended to adopt a methodological approach that

would reinstate the primacy of the individual with the talent development process and so focus on the account of the individuals' for whom the talent development process has been developed (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Literature search demonstrates that study of the interplay of power and authority in relations between children, young people and adults is a significant feature in research and practice in healthcare (Spencer, 2013) and education (Sharp, 2014). In both of these contexts participative enquiry places a clear emphasis on engagement with children and young people in order to provide them with a voice and take account of their view. Significantly, both of these domains also represent contexts where the welfare and best interests of children and young people are primary reasons for the process of engagement.

In healthcare the conceptual link between participant empowerment in research (Adu-Gyamfi, 2013) and the practice and process of empowering young people receiving medical treatment (Grealish et al., 2011) is well established. In the medical context patient empowerment is treated as a fundamental objective that is critical to both participation and outcome for each young person (Tomoaia-Cotisel, 2013). As such the involvement of young people in choice and decision making about their individual treatment plan constitutes an essential element of service delivery and this practice is supported by an evidence base that demonstrates that patient empowerment can be linked to enhanced health and wellbeing (Spencer, 2014). Research that has specifically engaged with children and young people has recorded a range of positive benefits that have been attributed to the process and product of participant empowerment through patient involvement in choice and decision making. Research demonstrates that when young people become engaged with rather than subject to a process increased self-efficacy and self-esteem can follow, leading the individual to perceive an increased sense of autonomy and develop the ability to make better informed choices (Grealish et

al., 2013). This is however a context specific practice and whilst in principle it is a fundamental right of the young person to be able to influence and to have his or her voice heard (Larsson & Meckbach, 2013) this right is not applied in equal measure.

Within the traditional research approach children have been viewed from the perspective of the adult and so aside from the process of assent/consent, the duty to consult with the child has not been a prerequisite (Christensen & Prout, 2002). This approach has worked to impose a power dynamic where children and young people have come to be regarded as objects of the research, deemed to possess inferior competence and a lack of knowledge (Baird, 2013; Lambert & Glacken, 2011). Ironically affordance of protection has served as a principle that has worked in opposition to the rights of the child as application of this principle has reinforced conception of the child as a vulnerable subject (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Traditionally this conceptualisation has facilitated research and consultation with children where engagement has been determined by an adult imposed hierarchy where the socially constructed image of the child has relegated the young person to the position of a subordinate (Greenfield, 2011; Holland et al., 2010). This perspective has neglected consideration of the child as an independent agent (Christensen & Prout, 2002) and ultimately constrained the child's right to be heard (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011).

This research project set out to add new insight to current conceptions of talent identification and development through employment of a participative research approach that prioritised commitment to the young person and invited the young person to both reveal and demonstrate the agency of self (Klein, 2012). When a young person engages with an adult, adult perception of the ability of the child to contribute is the

foremost barrier to participation and adult self interest will often orientate adult behaviour towards maintaining status in respect to the child (Lambert et al., 2011). In practice, in order for a child to become a member of a democratic society the child must first experience democracy, for if when engaging with the child we automatically require them to learn what it is to defer to the adult then we reinforce the fact that they are not yet equal (Earnshaw, 2014).

This research project sought to create positive relationships with young people by providing a platform for them to share their experience. The aspiration was to go beyond mutual obligation to achieve reciprocal connection where participation was valued and contribution was self-determined. Research by the European Social Research Council has verified that children are able to communicate insight into their own social worlds without the need for adults to represent their views (Gardner & Randall, 2012). Nevertheless the child's right to participate in research without the need for parental consent still presents a scenario where ethical standards dictate that the balance of protection must weigh heavier than the rights of the child (Isaksen & Roper, 2009). This is not the case in every context and medicine provides a contrasting example to demonstrate how the child's right to independently consent to medical treatment is enshrined in a case law (Gillick, 1985). This standard was established in the UK in 1985 by the House of Lords following a ruling that stated:

> Having regard to the reality that a child became increasingly independent as it grew older and that parental authority dwindled correspondingly, the law did not recognise any rule of absolute parental authority until a fixed age. Instead, parental rights were recognised by the law only as long as they were needed for the protection of the child and such rights yielded to the child's right to make his own decisions when he reached a sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his own mind   (Gillick, 1985, p. 1).

In the context of healthcare capacity to consent is determined by the child's capacity to understand, believe and weigh up information (Freeman, 2005) and the Gillick competence test allows a child under 16 to give consent without parental veto (Lambert & Glacken, 2011). The same standard is not applied in other contexts because the young person's right to protection is prioritised over their right to self determination and confidentiality (Perera, 2008).

Guidelines from the National Children's Bureau (NCB) on research with children and young people (CYP) state that 'it may require several layers of permissions from gatekeepers before you are in a position to seek the consent of individual CYP and – if necessary – their parents or carers' (Shaw et al., 2011, p. 15). NCB state that these guidelines are based on the premise that CYP are social actors who have a right to be involved in research about issues of concern to them (Balen et al., 2006). However the NCB do not provide criteria by which to judge the 'necessary' involvement of parents or carers, and in the publication: 'parental consent – possible exceptions and considerations,' (Shaw et al., 2011, p. 29) no exemplar to demonstrate when the child's right to self determination may be used to justify research without parental consent is provided. Placed within the context of an international rights based framework this omission is problematic. The NCB recommend that CYP should be given information about a research project in a way that enables them to weigh their own interests and come to an informed decision (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). However whereas in the medical world the treating physician may act in accordance with a child's capacity to consent, in the world of academia the researcher is afforded no such privilege (Perera, 2008). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) clearly states that children have interests that are distinct from the interests of adults, that they are capable of forming their own views, and that these views should be afforded greater

respect (Reynaert, 2012). Nevertheless guidance from policy makers continues to constrain the young person's right to have their view included (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007; Shaw et al., 2011): 'consent of a parent or responsible adult (acting in loco parentis) must be obtained before interviewing a child under 16' (Market Research Society Standards, 2014, p. 10).

In social research common practice dictates that ethical standards continue to prioritise protection and treat children and young people as vulnerable (Lambert & Glacken, 2011). Despite legislation the right to inclusion of an individual view as an essential perspective (Osler & Starkey, 1998; Masschelein & Quaghebeur, 2005; Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007) remains an adult prerogative and guidance from the NCB perpetuates this power relationship: 'If possible, this (consent of a parent) should be obtained *in advance* of the child's consent (to avoid a situation in which a child has agreed to participate and subsequently finds they are not allowed to do so)' (Shaw et al., 2011, p. 29). Researchers looking for guidance on how to balance consideration of the rights of the child with protection have discovered ethical debate rather than practical recommendation and so continue to refer to parents in advance of an approach to the child (Kumpunen et al., 2012).

In this research project whilst ethical conventions had to be upheld, philosophical ideology invited consideration of how the right to participation might be presented as a shared rather than a divided responsibility (Lambert & Glacken, 2011). This type of methodological approach proposed to help alleviate imposition of the adult agenda on the young people involved and to help them participate on their own terms (Nairn & Clarke, 2012).

Chapter 6: Method

Introduction

In this study my intention was to regard the young person as independent and capable (Christensen & Prout, 2002) and my aim was to learn from their lived experience in order to secure knowledge of the transcendental nature of experience in a sports talent development programme. In this chapter the pilot study illustrates the limitations of a research approach that did not engage with young people's motivations, in contrast to the method that ensued to demonstrate the power of social interaction that connected with the young person's perspective. Emergent design was borne from reciprocal commitment and participative enquiry was enacted through co-operation and collaboration. The study relied upon a method that blended the Mosaic approach, a participatory, reflexive and adaptable approach designed to facilitate understanding of children and young people's lived experiences (Baird, 2013) with the principles of Participatory Action Research, (PAR) a method of enquiry that has been advocated as a means to bring researcher and community members closer together (Glassman & Erdem, 2014). A blended approach was enacted because whereas in the Mosaic approach research collaboration requires researcher and participant to form a social relation, coupling with the principles of PAR facilitated a change in the dynamic of this relation to empower the young people within the study (Gardner & Hammett, 2014). The process of analysis was conducted in accordance with Ricoeur's (2005) theory of interpretation and examples have been provided to demonstrate the relation between the young person's representation and phenomenological interpretation. This process is presented pictorially over the page to demonstrate how at each stage the method was enacted in accordance with a specific focus.

Focus on Researcher

Topic Chosen

Conduct Bias Exploration & Bracketing

Focus on Participants

Select and Engage Participants

Pilot – Electronic Portfolio

Interview Participant's

12 Month Collaboration - Interview & Observation

Transcribe Interviews

Focus on Text

Read for Meaning Units

Read for sense of whole

Data Analysis

Cluster Initial Thematic Structure

Bracketing

Hermeneutic Procedure

Focus on Participant

Present Themes to Research group

Focus on Essence

Develop Thematic Structure

Figure 5. Flow Chart of the Phenomenological Research Project (Adapted from Dale, 1996)

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Research Approach

Research with children tends to be guided by two fundamental imperatives: that children deserve to be studied 'for and in themselves' (rather than as a means of addressing the interests of the adult world); and that researchers should attend to the specific circumstances of individual childhoods (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). The 'new social studies of childhood' draws from an evolved field of enquiry that has attempted to reposition the conception of the child in order to pursue research for and with children and young people (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010; Mackey & Vaealiki, 2011). Critical exploration of young peoples' engagement in participative research reflects a discourse attending to power, agency and the participatory agenda (Holland et al., 2010; Nutbrown & Clough, 2009) in order to orientate the researcher towards a child centred approach (Baxter, 2012; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Research perspectives differentiate between children as objects, children as subjects, children as social actors and children who also participate as co-researcher (Christensen & Prout, 2002) and research engagement with young people is determined according to the researcher's epistemological and ontological orientation (McLaughlin, 2005).

This research project set out to treat children as social actors and adopt a participatory approach (Lambert & Glacken, 2011). This approach was employed to encourage each subject to talk about what they believed was and continued to be important to their experience of talent development in sport (Warham, 2012). Young people were viewed as knowing participants and autonomous individuals with the ability to act, change and be changed by their world (McLaughlin, 2005). Actualisation of the research project relied upon a quality of interaction between adult and young person that recognised the status of the young person as both a primary stakeholder and as the gatekeeper of their interpreted experience (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Throughout the project, the

principles of social justice were considered with regard to both process and product and whilst my aim was to uncover the essence of the young person's experience in order to consider engagement with specific societal practice, due consideration was also given to the operation of power within the research relationship (Baird, 2013; Lambert & Glacken, 2011).

In order to embed the principles of social justice within my scholarship I deliberately sought to recognise the social constraints that might impinge upon my research practice and look for ways to counteract or 'work round' them (Gardner & Hammett, 2014). My priority was to give voice to the young person to secure personal interpretation of just what the experience of talent development in sport was like and what it meant for each individual (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011) and I attempted to elevate the status of the young person within research collaboration to encourage co-contribution to emergent design (Christensen & Prout, 2002). The nature of research collaboration was premised upon the ontological doctrine of a social reality where the context and practice of talent development in sport was believed to have a reality that was dependent upon the thoughts and judgements of the individual rather than the result of the collective actions of a community (Marcus & Le, 2013). The intention was to secure a sense of ownership of knowledge for my co-collaborators (www.teachthought.com, 2012) and to confirm the process of enquiry that allowed each young person to give meaning to their individual talent development experience. Accordingly research approach sought to promote co-operation through individualism rather than collectivism, and to preserve the autonomy of the individual rather than subjugate him or her to membership of a group (Raby, 2014).

Sampling Considerations

Qualitative research design employed purposeful sample selection (Fawcett & Garity, 2009) to target young people who shared a common characteristic: membership of a sport specific talent development programme. Research enquiry prioritised engagement with young people rather than the talent development programme in sport therefore access to members of a 'talented' sample was not pursued via engagement with a Sport's National Governing Body Talent Development Programme. Sampling strategy was conceived to look upon the activity of talent development experience to secure structure and meaning that would transcend sports specific experience to uncover the essence of a relationship with a talent development reality (Halák et al., 2014). Although 'talented' young people constituted a representative sample (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000) in this study phenomenological investigation regarded 'talent' as a superficial level of homogeneity (Merleau – Ponty, 2002). Therefore, unlike 'typical case sampling' (that sets out to work with typical target population characteristics), this study proposed to utilise deliberate and purposive sampling whilst presuming to recognise unique profile & characteristics (Fawcett & Garity, 2009). To facilitate this process engagement was sought with a school specifically because this context was external to the sport specific talent development environment. The advantages of this approach were believed to be:

- In contrast to the typical talent development dynamic, the wants and needs of the 'talented' young person could be prioritised as opposed to the wants and needs of the sport

- Engagement with the young person would not be influenced by the presence of other stakeholders with a sports specific interest

- Young people could continue to be involved in research collaboration even if they were to exit the talent development programme

- Children could be afforded the opportunity to engage with and learn from 'talented' peers from a range of different sporting contexts

For research that engages with children in schools Isaksen & Roper (2010) advocate identification of an appropriate and interested gatekeeper and advise use of an existing connection. I deliberately chose a school where I had a pre-existing connection and already knew the Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships to facilitate both formal and informal ongoing interaction with participants and staff to help build relationships and develop rapport (Randall, 2012).

School Contact

As the Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships was already known to me he presented the obvious gateway to the young people (Isaksen & Roper, 2010). Informal contact was made to broach engagement and determine the viability of the proposed study. Disclosure included the broad aims of the study, sample inclusion criteria, proposed methodology and intended duration.

Sample Characteristics

- Boys and Girls

Inclusion Criteria

- Member of a Sports Talent Development Programme at commencement of the study

- Aged between 11-18 yrs

- Pupil at the selected school

- Willing to participate

Exclusion Criteria

- Achievement of representational honours (e.g. Schools Athletics) where exclusive participation is not supported by a Sports specific Programme of Talent Development

Fawcett & Garity (2009) state that phenomenological research can be conducted with ten or fewer participants but stipulate that detailed description of sample characteristics is required to enable the reader to determine the transferability of the findings.

The School

The school was an independent, co-educational day and boarding public school with a sixth form. It was located in a rural setting close to two city centres one of which was 10 miles (16 kilometres) away and the other 3.9 miles (6.3 kilometres) away. There was an international airport 2.5 miles (4.7 kilometres) from the school. The school provides education for children aged 3 through to 18yrs with approximately 1,000 students on roll, including around 100 boarders. The school was founded in 1812 for the education of the sons of ministers and now welcomes pupils and staff of all denominations. The school offers academic and sixth form scholarships, bursaries for HM Forces families, clergy families and sixth form, music awards, sport awards and financial assistance for siblings. Academic standards remain high and examination results are good. The school reports that sport plays a major part in the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school and is marketed as a sporting centre of excellence. Throughout the year the school runs an extensive programme of fixtures for Rugby Union, Rugby 7s, Netball,

Football, Squash, Basketball, Swimming, Cricket, Rounders, Tennis and Athletics. Most Saturdays during the school year are dedicated to inter school fixtures, and fixtures also take place during the week. Individual pupils participate in a range of sports at county and national level and school teams have travelled to Canada, South Africa, Zimbabwe, West Indies, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji to compete in competition.

The Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships confirmed that the school possessed a sufficient number of eligible students to secure operational adequacy for a viable study.

Researcher skills and qualifications

Application for ethical approval required me to provide confirmation of proof of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (GOV.UK, 2015) and Qualified Teacher Status. Proof of DBS clearance verified that I did not possess any criminal convictions and was not barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. Submission confirmed enhanced level clearance; the highest level disclosure required for positions that can involve caring for, training, supervising or working closely with children or vulnerable adults (dbsmadeeasy.co.uk, 2015).

My application confirmed that I had had a twenty year career as an educator in the field of Participant Development and held Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) having previously qualified as a Primary School Teacher and worked as a PE specialist in Secondary Education. Ethical approval required qualifications to be evidenced and certificates were then verified by Leeds Metropolitan University. I also confirmed my experience in sports coaching, that I had previously worked in a range of talent development environments with talented children and young performers and that currently I was

employed as a University Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Sport. In addition my submission also confirmed that my PhD supervisory team consisted of three senior academics, each of whom had significant experience in relation to research with children, talent development and sport.

Ethical Approval

Application for ethical approval was submitted to Leeds Metropolitan University, Carnegie Faculty of Sport and Education, Ethics Committee. The application stated that in this research project the need to ensure that children felt informed and could participate with autonomy was a central tenet (Gibson, 2012) and that children would be given information about the research to enable them to weigh their own interests and come to an informed decision (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010).

The nature of the research approach in this study deemed that ethics would be regarded as 'an ongoing social practice' (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 491) where researcher reflexivity would be critical (Clark & Moss, 2001). Christensen & Prout (2001) contend that ethical practice and self-reliance must be underpinned by value rather situational orientation and in this study value orientated strategy was exercised to ensure that the rights, feelings and interests of the young people remained the focus for ethical practice. Ethical application confirmed the status of my own children as pupils at the school and also confirmed that neither would be involved in the research as participants. The potential for my dual role (as a researcher and a parent of children at the school) to impact upon interactions between myself and participant's within the study was acknowledged and methodological detail was submitted to confirm that a pilot would be undertaken to evaluate the efficacy of the participatory method (Randall, 2012). Upon completion of the pilot, time for critical reflection was planned into the process to allow

for consideration of the nature of communication with each participant, and to ensure that efficacious relationships had been developed to support ongoing collaboration (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011). Although not directly involved, for my son and daughter there was still the possibility that my presence as a researcher could impact upon their friendships with my research participants. Ethical application confirmed that should I become aware of any negative or potentially negative consequences for my or any other children due to my research in the school then the best interests of the young people would be prioritised, the research would halt and until such time that a safe way forwards could be agreed by all parties the suspension would remain.

Participants and parents were supplied with the name and contact details of an independent adult at the School (the Deputy Head teacher) and the University (a Principal Lecturer) who both remained available for the duration of the project to provide further information if needed and, should the need arise to respond to any cause for concern. Permission was sought for electronic and verbal communication and confirmation was given that all data would remain anonymous and confidential. Furthermore, because the study proposed to engage with social and digital media assurance was given that the risk of digital information becoming accessible to persons not involved in the research process would be managed by Leeds Metropolitan Universities password protected electronic system.

The risk that the nature of a participants' talent development experience could be negative and upsetting was also acknowledged and confirmation was given that the right of the participant to decide not to share personal information would be respected at all times. Participants and parents were informed that if at any time a young person became upset or distressed the research would stop and action would be taken to ensure

that s/he would not be put at risk of further harm. Accordingly the process put in place ensured that any cause for concern could be passed on either to a member of staff at the school or the participant's parents or both. Confirmation was given that detail concerning the approach to relationship management with all participants would be recorded for inclusion within the published method (Greenfield, 2012; Lambert et al., 2012). No cause for concern was identified or reported.

Assent /Consent

Ethical submission confirmed that the young people would be informed that although their school had given consent for the study to take place they would remain under no obligation to participate (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011). Throughout the research process consent was viewed as a continuous process that could be renegotiated at any time (Lambert et al., 2010) and each young person maintained the right to withdraw at any stage without the need to give a reason or suffer consequences (Kumpunen et al., 2011). Project information was forwarded to the school and consent was obtained from the Head teacher. Guidelines for research with children and young people recommend that, following receipt of consent from a Head teacher (acting in loco parentis) the researcher should also seek consent from parents or guardians for in school interviews (Market Research Society Standards, 2014). However Reynaert et al. (2012) have proposed that the rights of the child should be used as a frame of reference for critical reflection to enable a shift in the dynamic of interaction to inform a change in the way that adults deal with children (Baxi, 1997; Stammers, 2009; Ife, 2010). In accordance with this perspective agreement was made with the Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships to begin by first introducing the research project to pupils and then, if and when the young people had decided that they would like to participate parental consent would be sought. Participant privacy was protected but young people engaged in the knowledge that

complete confidentiality could not be guaranteed, acknowledging that if the safety of a participant became a concern I would be duty bound to inform an appropriate professional (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011).

Reflexivity

Participatory research requires a flexible approach and for me, working with a school that I already knew offered the potential for frequent informal interaction to authenticate connection in a way that I could not replicate to the same level at a school where engagement was less frequent (Lambert et al., 2011). Use of an existing connection demanded consideration of the potential of previously established relationships to influence the research (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011) however this approach had previously been authenticated by Cheney (2011) who demonstrated the ability to produce valuable research following an approach to a school where he and his family had a pre-existing connection. Qualitative research also demonstrates that the field is a place that is never detached from social relation and although it is far from common practice, researchers have reported positive experience of researching with their own children in the field (Drozdzewskia & Robinsona, 2015). In the account of Drozdzewskia & Robinsona, (2015) researchers stated that in their experience when participant's had knowledge of shared connection and identity, this actually promoted dialogue and fostered reciprocal interest. In these circumstances they also emphasised how it was essential to confirm 'vigilant reflexivity in storying how our children's presence in the field is influential' (Drozdzewskia & Robinsona, 2015, p. 377).

In this study connection with the selected school was afforded by the attendance of my son and daughter. This was a connection that offered the potential for my son to be involved as a participant but not my daughter, and so ethical deliberation needed to

consider the implications of involvement for my children on a number of different levels. This was a proposition that invoked a process of internal dialogue, the beginning of a process of reflexivity to promote sustained self-evaluation of positionality to support active acknowledgement and recognition of how my position in the research shaped research process and outcome (De Tona, 2006; Greenfield, 2012; Lambert et al., 2012). To aid the process of reflexivity a research journal was kept to serve as a record of thoughts and events to help navigate the complexities of the qualitative research process (Watt, 2007). Qualitative research relies upon empathetic connection between researcher and participant to provide access to deeper understanding of the participant's experience and this process also demands disclosure of subjectivity and interpretation (Fitzpatrick & Olsen, 2015; Roulston & Shelton, 2008). Positionality may impact research on three levels:

Access, if a participant perceives that the researcher can identify with their position and circumstances they may be more willing to share experience;

Relation, if the participant perceives that the researcher is someone that they feel comfortable with they may then be more willing to share information;

Background, if the researcher interacts with the participant in a way that demonstrates knowledge and understanding this may influence how information is gathered and meaning constructed (Berger, 2015).

Reflexivity is a dynamic process that critically examines interaction between researcher and participant and researcher and self to enable the researcher to declare the nature of value laden activity (Kearns, 2012). In this research project reflexivity was used in two ways; through adoption of a self-reflexive attitude to strive for self-awareness in

recognition of my role as an instrument of the research; and to apply an ethical perspective to consideration of the relationship between researcher and participants (Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014).

During the process of literature review conceptions of the young person had been constructed according to a sociologically informed phenomenology to consider how social forces act to shape relationships between young people and society (Hughson & Inglis, 2002). This raised my consciousness of the implications of my actions therefore, in accordance with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,

> States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child
>
> (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund – Article 12 UNICEF, 2013).

it became apparent that it was necessary to independently enact a familial process of ethical approval in advance of formal University procedures. Having committed to enactment of the principles of social justice within my work I recognised that it was essential to ask for permission from my children to create a different presence within their world. I therefore proceeded to explain the nature and scope of the proposed project to my children to seek their consent to pursue research enquiry at their school. My daughter gave consent in the knowledge that she did not fit the inclusion criteria for the study and would not be invited to participate. My son gave his consent in the knowledge that he did fit the inclusion criteria but confirmed that he did not want to participate.

The Mosaic approach

In this research project participative enquiry sought to encourage each subject to talk about what they believed was and continued to be important to their experience of talent development in sport (Warham, 2012). From commencement I was specifically interested in identifying and working with appropriate and effective methodologies to enable young people to share their view of the talent development experience. I therefore proposed to utilise the 'Mosaic approach' (Clark, 2005) a research approach developed to be participatory, reflexive and adaptable, to facilitate understanding of children and young people's lived experiences (Baird, 2013). The original publication of the Mosaic approach presented a framework for listening that embeds six principles:

• Multi-method: recognises the different languages or voices of children

• Participatory: treats children as experts and agents in their own lives

• Reflexive: includes children, practitioners and parents in reflecting on meanings and addresses the question of interpretation

• Adaptable: can be applied to a variety of early child-hood institutions

• Focussed on children's lived experiences: looking at lives rather than knowledge gained or care received

• Embedded into practice: a framework for listening which has the potential to be both used as an evaluative tool and to become embedded into early years practice

(www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/mosaicapp, 2013, p. 1)

In this research project the framework was applied to engage with children and young people within the formal operations stage of cognitive development (11-12yrs through

to adulthood), (Baxter, 2012; Coppock, 2011). According to Piaget children enter this stage of cognitive development having progressed from sensorimotor intelligence (newborn to 1 and a half to 2 yrs) through pre-operational thought (1 and a half to 6-7yrs) and concrete operations (6-7 to 11-12 yrs), (Nairn & Clarke, 2011). Engagement with children at this stage of development therefore facilitates research with child centred forms of communication that go beyond passive participation to enable each individual to also become an active co-researcher (Holland et al., 2010). In the formal operations stage of cognitive development the child's ability to interpret and evaluate overtakes descriptive thinking and therefore affords each child greater participation potential (Shayer & Ginsburg, 2009). This research project not only sought to enable children to express their individual view of the talent development experience, but also actively sought to involve the children in the design of the research (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011; McLaughlin, 2005). Recognising that different children and young people would present a diversity of competency the research initially proposed to draw upon the concept of 'guided participation' (Lambert et al., 2011). This concept begins with a positive assumption of self-determination but at the same time allows the researcher to work collaboratively with the young person to enhance understanding and involvement in the research process (Clark, 2005).

In this context application of the Mosaic approach to young people within the formal operations stage of cognitive development had specific implications for Clark and Moss's (Clark & Moss, 2001) third principle:

- Reflexive: includes children, practitioners and parents in reflecting on meanings and addresses the question of interpretation

For in order to stay true to the principle of treatment of the young person as an autonomous agent, contributions from adults (other than the researcher himself) were not formally sought. I proceeded to adopt the role of Randall's (2012) 'least adult', a role where I attempted to become involved with my participant's and their activities rather than act as a passive observer and to do so I sought to adhere to three principles:

• Minimise the social difference between adult and children

• Value the child's social world as being as important as the adults

• Try to find shared meaning with children through social activities

(Randall, 2012)

This required me to attempt to understand how young people experience being young people; empower young people by making their voice equal to mine and find ways to share social forms of communication (Randall, 2012). This approach is typically applied in healthcare (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011; Gardner & Randall, 2012; Lambert et al., 2011) but it is not commonly used for research with young people in the talent development domain. This approach demanded that, in order to stay true to the principle of the child as an autonomous agent contributions from other adults would only be sought if requested by the participants. Lambert et al. (2010) state that although research will commonly include perspectives from different stakeholders, where the aim is to bring the child's voice to the fore, sole focus on the perspective of the child can be justified. Research by the European Social Research Council also verifies that children are able to communicate insight into their own social worlds without the need for adults to represent their views (Gardner & Randall, 2012). Furthermore Gardner and Randall (2012) believe that the presence of parents can limit a young person's ability to express their feelings and have reported that when parents are absent engagement between

researcher and young people can benefit from greater rapport, children give more detailed views and can also provide greater insight into their experiences.

Participant Engagement

A School Information Sheet and Consent Form (Appendix 1) were submitted to the Headmaster and permission to conduct the research was received. A list of eligible participants was then compiled by the Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships.

Rugby	Netball	Badminton	Swimming /Diving
11 males	3 females	2 females 1 male	1 male 1 female
Gymnastics	Football	Fishing	Karate
1 female	2 males	1 male	1 male
Cricket	Athletics		
1 female 3 males	1 male		

Figure 6. List of Pupils Invited to the Research Project Information Meeting
            (names have been removed to protect anonymity)

The twenty nine young people were then invited to attend a meeting at school in a room where each person had access to an individual computer.

Meeting 1

In this meeting I attempted to demonstrate connection with the young person's culture by demonstrating how the voice of the child could contribute to the adult perspective (Randall, 2012). The meeting was designed to demonstrate an informal, young person

friendly format to provide a full and clear introduction to and explanation of the research project (Nairn & Clarke, 2012). Although the Director of PE and Sporting Partnerships was present to introduce me as Mr Turner at the beginning of the meeting he did not stay and once he left I attempted to create an informal atmosphere, telling the young people that although my research was being conducted at the school it was not a school project, I was not their teacher and I invited them to call me by my first name.

My epistemological approach intended to empower the 'talented' participant to facilitate depiction of the application of self (interpretation and response to the talent development experience) to reveal the essence of the phenomena of talent development in sport   (Neels & Curtner-Smith, 2012). My goal was to convey to each young person the value of their unique and personal perspective of talent development experience in sport to my research project and find a way to work with them to facilitate this process (Cheney, 2011). My objective was to allow each young person to understand the rationale for the research project (to learn from the young person's lived experience of talent development in sport) and to showcase how each young person could begin to contribute, using a range of media to share their view (Greenfield, 2010).

The Mosaic approach requires the researcher to establish and maintain positive relationships with everyone involved in the research setting; demonstrate recognition of the worth of young people's thoughts, ideas and feelings; and employ research design that facilitates flexible data collection methods (Baird, 2013; Kumpunen et al., 2011). This approach recognises that if young people perceive that activities are unsuitable they will choose not to engage (Hitchfield & Coren, 2011). Meeting 1 was used to introduce and model types of media such as conversation, photographs, video and journals to demonstrate to participants how these could be utilised within the study

(Clark, 2011; Greenfield, 2011). The objective was to promote dialogue that would draw upon words, thoughts and actions (Christensen & Prout, 2002) to allow me to better understand the young person's interaction with the world of talent development in sport.

Timelines have the potential to stimulate thought (Deacon & Piercy, 2001) and signify experience (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012) to enable the child to depict their view of the nature of their journey in sport. The meeting introduced the concept of timelines as a means for the young people to explore and recall their engagement with sport. An example of a timeline of a talented young person from a different context was presented to showcase the idea and act as a stimulus whilst refraining from the introduction of sport specific influence:
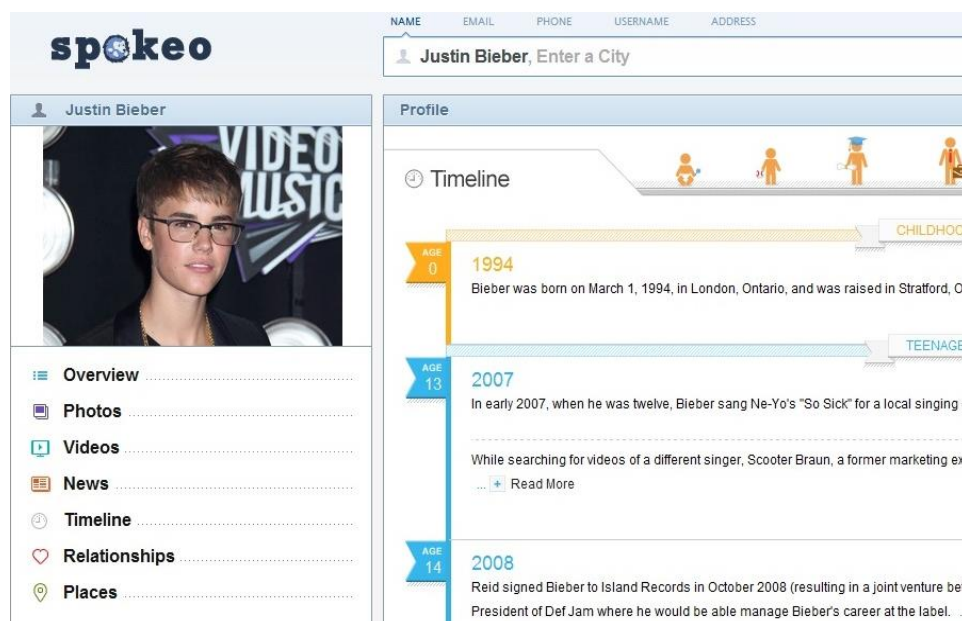
Figure 7. An Example of a Timeline

Password protected access to Leeds Metropolitan University's data storage facility was enabled and potential participants received a demonstration of the software capability and of the different forms of media that they might choose to contribute in accordance

with a mosaic research approach (Clark & Moss, 2013). Participants' were invited to consider their own personal perspective and emphasis was placed upon each individual's ability to contribute individual insight from the unique nature of their individual experience (Coppock, 2011). Attention was drawn to the following questions to enable young people to begin to understand how they could depict feelings and thoughts associated with their talent experience to convey the individuality of their perspective:

- How did your talent development journey begin?
- What has been important to your talent development experience?
- What have you done to develop your talent?
- How do you view your talent development experience?
- How does it feel to do what you do?

The research set out not just to listen to what young people had to say but also to attempt to see what they saw (Armour & Macdonald, 2012). An electronic portfolio was utilised to enable each participant to contribute privately, whilst also providing the option to choose to share information in a group forum. The hope was that participants would take ownership of data generation and collaborate as a research team to determine how new information would be communicated and shared (Blaisdell, 2012) which would then create a more equal relationship within the research between myself and the participants.

The potential benefits of the research that were presented to the young people were the opportunity to:

- Learn to recognise and reflect upon individual progress

- Listen to and learn from talent development experience from different participants in different sports.

- Contribute advice and support to help participants at different stages in their talent development sports experience.

- Work as a co-researcher to provide evidence to help adults better understand how children interpret and respond to talent development experience in sport. (Coppock, 2010)

The new sociology of childhood has given rise to the view that competent minors under the age of 16 can independently give informed consent (Fargas-Malet, 2010) and in this research project my position was that the involvement of parents and guardians should be proportional to the competence of the child (Cheney, 2011). At the same time I recognised that in schools the duty to protect is prioritised therefore consent had to be secured from Head teacher and parents and/or guardians (Isaksen & Roper, 2010). In accordance with school policy those young people who indicated that they would like to participate were given a My Talent Development Journey Participant Information Sheet and Assent Form and also supplied with a Parent Information Sheet and Consent Form (Appendix 2) which provided a detailed account of the proposed research project and a clear explanation of the principles of the participatory research approach that underpinned the research method (Holland et al., 2010). Information was provided in hard copy and uploaded to the electronic site to enable each young person to have copies of all information, weigh their own interests and come to an informed decision (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Prospective participants were given time to reflect and consider the research proposal, decide if they would still like to be involved and return their assent and parental consent forms to the school (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011).

Participants were assured that they would retain the right to remove electronic information from their portfolio and withdraw from the study at any time.

Pilot

17th Dec 2013 – 7th Jan 2014 Pilot data collection (Leeds Metropolitan University electronic portfolio)

Previous research has enabled participants to publish their life stories in books (Cheney, 2011) but this project sought to engage with young people's attraction to digital modes of communication and so utilised a bespoke version of Leeds Metropolitan University's electronic portfolio technology to serve as a participant Story Store.
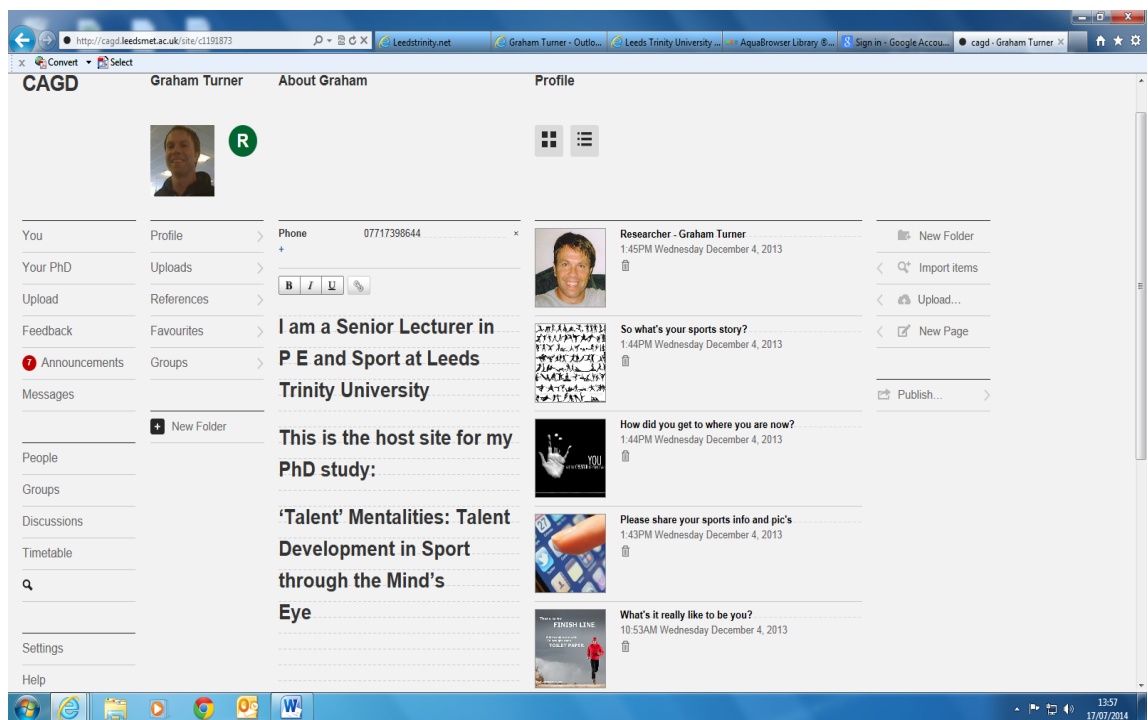
Figure 8. Electronic Portfolio Technology

This system comprised of a website for data storage and included an online portfolio, an interface for connection with social networks, a reflective journal and collaborative space. The system offered each participant a personal space to upload various forms of material and the means, if they wished to share information with other project members. Participants were able to upload images, videos and audio, and communicate with all other project members. The system allowed the researcher to see a complete history of communication and provided a management tool for monitoring engagement to facilitate an early warning system should a concern arise. The system was password protected, each young person had a unique username and each individual created their own password. Access was restricted to members of the research project which consisted of the participant's, the researcher and the University Research Supervisory Team with one additional member of University staff, a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education, appointed to independently undertake regular monitoring and review of uploads and submissions.

Parental consent / participant assent was obtained from 18 participants; subsequently three chose to withdraw (two sisters informed me that they were moving school / one male withdrew without giving a reason) leaving l5. The remaining participants agreed a timescale of twenty two days (which coincided with a three week school holiday) for completion of timelines to represent individual depictions of talent development journeys. Research enquiry sought to encourage each subject to contribute what they believed was and continued to be important to their experience of talent development in sport (Warham, 2012) and in order to support autonomous engagement participants were referred to a short video on the electronic website designed to reinforce information and instructions:
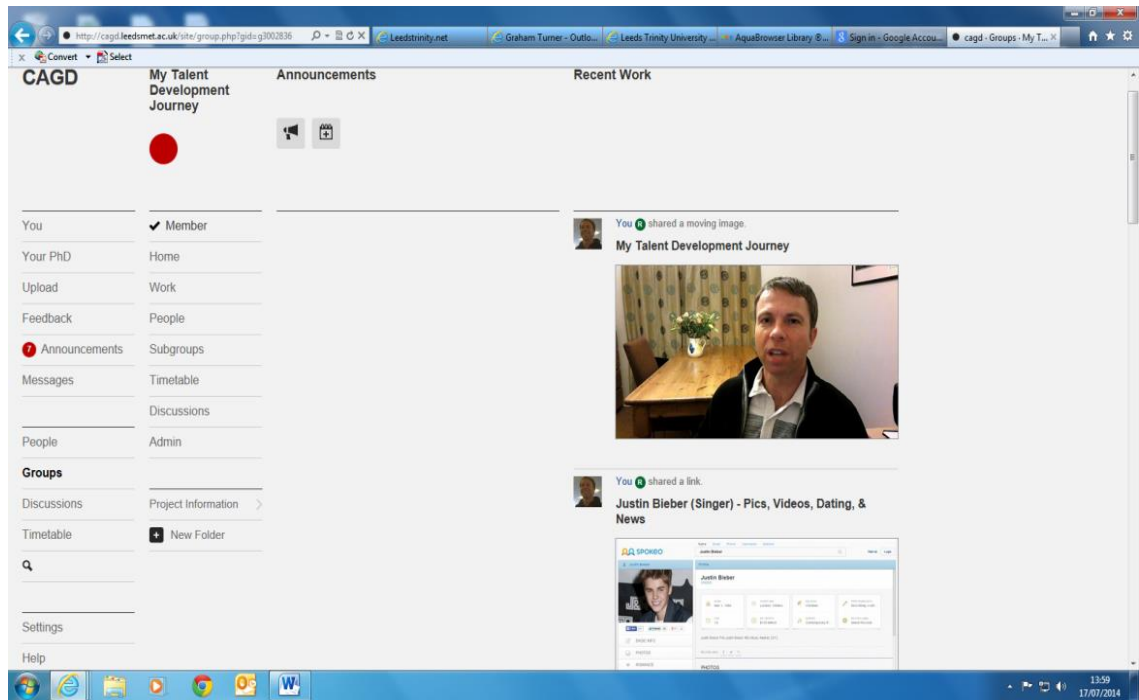
Figure 9. My Talent Development Journey

Preliminary information stated that insight into the characteristics of individual experience would be sought by prospective longitudinal engagement. The pilot provided an opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of participatory methodology, (a method where the establishment of a relationship and rapport is essential to the process) (Randall, 2012) and was designed as a short term study to be used to ascertain the potential and viability of data collection from a limited sample and the implications for longitudinal research. Participants were informed that upon completion of the pilot we would decide together how the study would then continue. Participant information explained that participation in the pilot would not commit the young person to longitudinal engagement and that each individual retained the right to withdraw at any time without consequence (Lambert et al., 2011).

Pilot Results

Although parental consent / participant assent was obtained from 18 young people in total only 5 participants (Angling U16, Rugby Union / Discus U16, Football U14, Netball U16, Rugby Union U15) uploaded some form of information to the electronic portfolio. One other participant tried but could not work out how to make his upload visible so he deleted it. Of these only 1 participant (Angling U16) added written information to his project profile page (available for everyone to see), he also uploaded information to his private feedback space but did not add his photo to his profile page. 4 participants (Angling U16, Rugby Union / Discus U16, Football U14, Netball U16) uploaded information to their private feedback space, of these 2 uploaded a photo to their profile page (Rugby Union / Discus, Football). Neither of these added written information to their profile. 3 participants uploaded a photo to their project profile page, (Rugby Union / Discus U16, Football U14, Rugby Union U15) of these, 2 had also added information to their private feedback space and one had added his photo only.

Limitations of the Pilot

Digital communication provides a unique opportunity for self expression and offers a forum in which the individual may communicate more freely to reveal the true self: 'those identity-important and phenomenally real aspects of self not often or easily expressed to others' (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons, 2002, p. 34). My intention was to use the pilot study to provide participants with an opportunity for empowerment through the option to self select tools to communicate depictions of their talent development journey. I also thought that the electronic portfolio system would provide each young person with the autonomy to decide to permit entry to a confidential space which could then facilitate further engagement and dialogue (Reynaert et al., 2012; Roberts & Foehr, 2008).

This method did not prove to be successful, infact it appeared to have quite the opposite effect and of the 18 young people who originally agreed to participate only 8 were retained. It is contended that the social context of the young person has markedly changed as digital media technologies contribute a new dimension to the identity formation process (Davies, 2013). Adolescence is a time when the young person seeks support from friends through mutual activity and sharing of common interests to create an independent identity (Dolev-Cohen & Barak, 2013). Although social and digital technology offers a valuable means to support connection the pilot study demonstrated that for young people motivation to connect is critical to the process of social interaction.

Participatory Action Research

In order to fulfil the aim of this research project my responsibility lay with an obligation to come to know and to be able to represent what it was like to be in the world (van Manen, 1990) for my participants. As the researcher I held responsibility for initial orchestration of the research project but in order to connect participation with action (Harvey, 2013) I needed to effectively engage young people so that we could then proceed together to gather evidence about experience (Randall, 2012). This interaction constituted a multi-layered endeavour, for whilst the pursuit of knowledge of the experience of talent development in sport would not be orientated towards the resolution of an issue or designed to secure the solution to a problem, the process of inviting young people to provide a rich and detailed account of their personal experience was a problem to be solved and success depended entirely upon finding a way to work together (Smith et al., 2009).

At the operational level, the principles of social justice provided a framework for methodological approach where process of engagement resembled a form of participatory action research (PAR). The concept of PAR associates with the genre of 'the struggle of the oppressed to break free from their oppressors' (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 206) and this method of enquiry has been advocated as a means to bring researcher and community members closer together. The worth of this approach is demonstrated by research collaboration that has effected positive social and emotional wellbeing (Cox et al., 2014); supported learning to improve lives (Hansson, 2015) and promoted empowerment for young people, their families and communities (Smith et al., 2014).

Figure 10. Participatory Action Research (Gardner & Hammett, 2014, p. 10)

In human science research collaboration typically requires researcher and participant to form a social relation, the difference in PAR is that the dynamic of this relation exists as both a process and an object of research enquiry (Gardner & Hammett, 2014). This research project proposed to employ a participatory approach to enable young people to enact the agency of self within research collaboration however this objective remained

to be achieved. The theoretical and methodological assumptions that support PAR demand that the researcher gives due consideration to how knowledge is constructed; how relationships with participants are formed; and how the research may benefit the participant (Frisby et al., 1997). In PAR practitioners are challenged to explain what they are doing, why they are doing it and what their doing has done, to justify how their work contributes to a fairer society (ALARA, 2015). My use of PAR contradicted the typical dynamic for in this process it was I, the researcher who presented my research problem to act in reliance upon young people to help me solve it.

The research project needed to convince young people that their participation would be worthwhile and demonstrate potential to impact positively on the experience associated with their talent development journey (Cheney, 2011). This intention was enacted with limited success (primarily because I had yet to establish an open channel of communication) at commencement of the project when all prospective participants were invited to attend the National Sports Roadshow at Leeds Trinity University on 4th December 2013 (6 attended). This was an event hosted by Careers in Sport that consisted of 'presentations, seminars and workshops to offer young people an opportunity to learn about the diverse careers and leisure opportunities available in the sport, health and fitness industry, the qualifications required and the experience gained within each profession' (Appendix 3). My objective was to find a way to work with young people by developing a reciprocal relationship that was about more than just data collection. I wanted to try and give something back to my participants and the invitation to the Sports Roadshow was my first attempt at trying to demonstrate this. My intention was to apply a bottom up approach to collaboration through practice that was cognisant of power (Holt et al., 2013) and design that embodied the values of voice and agency to democratise the process of knowledge generation (Åmot & Ytterhus, 2014). I had yet to

realise that in order to facilitate this, all that the young people in my study would require would be a sense of trust and commitment.

The Study

The study was proposed to have an emergent design, facilitated if possible by inclusion of young people from the pilot. Following the deadline for pilot completion an email was sent to all participants asking if they would be prepared to be interviewed. Positive replies were received from 8 participants (Angling U16, Rugby Union / Discus U16, Football U14, Gymnastics U15, Rugby Union U14, Rugby Union U14, Rugby Union U15 & Badminton U17) and interviews were arranged at school. Meeting dates and times were organised through independent email communication with individual participants. School staff were not party to these communications and from that point on the school's only role in the organisation of the project was to provide a room for each requested date and time.

Research that has explored children's attitudes towards participating in conversation has confirmed that they enjoy participating when they are free to express their opinion and there is no right or wrong answer (Baxter, 2011). When self completion data collection methods have been compared to interviews researchers have found that a face to face approach can afford the researcher a more nuanced approach and thus be more effective (Flanagan et al., 2015). In this study participants confirmed a preference for interviews rather than use of the electronic portfolio for continuation of the study (Karlsson et al., 2014). Subsequently participative enquiry was pursued through the organisation of interviews where through discussion, each young person was invited to talk about what they believed had been and continued to be important to their talent development journey in sport.

Narrative research has demonstrated that the construction of narrative is essential to the meaning making practice of young people and can afford the researcher an opportunity to gather rich data to reveal the complexity of life (Warham, 2012). The narrative approach prioritises the individual's specific experience (Carless & Douglas, 2013) and allows the researcher to explore how an individual constructs meaning within their social and cultural context (Douglas and Carless, 2009). Narrative enquiry includes a number of different perspectives therefore it is essential that the researcher adopts a specific position and understands the principles of his or her approach (Smith & Sparkes, 2006). In phenomenological research language is the key construct that allows people to make sense of their experience (Burton et al., 2008) and in this study storied lives offered a way to connect with young people's lived experience through 'the universal act of storytelling' (Kearns, 2012). Thus a participatory research process was enacted to enable young people to share stories that represented their personal perspective (Blodgett & Schinke, 2015; Sparkes & Partington, 2003) and to facilitate analysis that would glean the structure and conditions of the generalisation of this situated existence (Smith & Sparkes, 2005). Consequently first person storying of talent development experience was pursued via a phenomenological approach, using an interview prep sheet (Appendix 4) to stimulate description of lived experience from the young person's point of view according to corporeality, time, space and relation (van Manen, 1990).

Cooper Robbins et al.'s (2012) research on 'Adolescents' Views on Engaging Young People in Longitudinal Research' confirms that if research can respond to what adolescents identify as important then young people can be more effectively engaged. Each young person was consulted to determine agreement on how best to share an insightful view of their talent development journey. Participants confirmed that they

favoured face to face communication and were happy to agree multiple points of engagement. The limit of ongoing involvement was forecast to be around twelve months (Hutchfield & Coren, 2011) and the process for bringing closure to the research process clearly explained (Mackey & Vaealiki, 2011). Participants were afforded authentic involvement as co-researchers through engagement with and investment in decision making to determine future research design (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Armour & Macdonald, 2012). Participants suggested that I attend talent development programme environments to observe training and competition and agreement was made to use photographs and video (when available) as a stimulus to generate discussion to enable each young person to share and describe how things appeared to them (Pettersson, 2011). Longitudinal study commenced to rely upon each individual agreeing to communicate with me by email to make me aware of new events. In order to continue to develop relationships and enhance rapport methods of communication continued to be flexible (Greenfield, 2011). Participant autonomy was supported by meetings at school that were arranged on an adhoc basis with all participants agreeing to have individual meetings where possible every half term (McLaughlin, 2005). All meetings were recorded with a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim. Narrative interviews were employed to open up topics and enable each participant to represent experience in relation to corporeality, temporality, space and relation (van Manen, 1990). Subsequently participants began to take increased ownership of data generation and collaborate with me to determine when we would meet (Urry et al., 2015) and how new information would be generated, communicated and shared (Blaisdell, 2012). I engendered longitudinal support for data capture by accepting the participant's reluctance to engage with the electronic portfolio and instead sought to interact through participants pre-existing preferences. To enact this process a Twitter Account GT Talent Tracker, was set up in an attempt to follow participants who were engaging in

social media communication via Twitter. This proved to be a particularly effective way of contributing immediate accounts of talent development experience for one participant. For two others it became evident that their accounts had been created as a means of accessing tweets from peers rather than to serve as a means of personal communication. Permission was given to allow the researcher to follow these accounts but participants did not actively communicate via their accounts and so data was not forthcoming. The remaining 5 participants stated that they did not talk about their sports experience via social media and so for these participants this avenue of data generation was not pursued any further.

During face to face interaction an 'unstructured style approach' (Karlsson et al., 2014) was adopted and participants were invited and actively encouraged to take responsibility for the selection of events to be discussed and to identify opportunities for me to observe them in their talent development environment. During this process I committed to remain ethically answerable to each child (Warham, 2012) and confirmation was given that whilst I would hold ultimate responsibility for decision-making, the rationale for progression of the research and key decisions would be openly discussed. Once participants became engaged I accepted an obligation to prioritise the interests of the young people for the duration of the project, placing their interests above the pursuit of my own personal research agenda by relying upon each individual to determine the extent and nature of their involvement. (A Record of the Frequency and Nature of Research Engagement with each Participant is documented in Appendix 5).

At the final meeting each participant was asked to feedback thoughts on the research project, specifically in relation to their engagement and involvement in participative enquiry and also to the aim of the research, to confirm if they believed that they had

been able to help me secure knowledge and understanding of what talent development experience in sport had been like for them. Participants were informed that findings would be published in a thesis and that academic papers would be written about the young people's experiences of talent development in sport.

Data Analysis

Narrative interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysis was conducted in accordance with Ricoeur's theory of interpretation via three steps: naïve reading, structural analysis and interpretation of the whole, (Ricouer, 2005). Ricouer's (2005) theory asserts that by following these steps we can begin to understand how the series of actions, thoughts, and emotions represented in the narrative represent a connection that is wholly specific to meaning of an experience. Naïve reading refers to a method that requires the reader to attempt to read with as little bias as possible to focus on the descriptions of the narrators and their reflections of experience (Karlsson et al., 2014). During this stage of analysis consideration of text from conversation was combined with review of non-verbal contributions including photos, video recording and social media communication. This process focused on the interpretative rather than the descriptive to look for the shared rather than the particular (Smith et al., 2009). For each participant one whole data set was compiled and organised into chronological order e.g. for Josh this consisted of 30,000 words. The whole data set was then read from start to finish forwards, but then back and forwards to enable confirmation of facts, clarify understanding of events and to cross reference depictions of lived experience referred to on different or multiple occasions. Four days were given over to consideration of each data set and structural analysis was undertaken in an effort aimed at reducing the material whilst at the same time raising it's level of abstraction (Bendassolli, 2013). This process involved active and continuous cognitive effort focused on looking for the

wider picture, identification of themes, and conceptualisation to uncover 'the thing itself' (Halák et al., 2014, p. 118).

Initially this involved a process of reading accompanied by the recording of headings designed to represent in a just few words, the essence of the lived experience as depicted by each individual young person's twelve month experience. Reading aimed to be as unbiased as possible focusing on the description of the narrators and their reflections (Karlsson et al., 2014). The following is an example of the headings that were written during the course of data analysis for Eboni:

Great Expectations / Busy / organised / schoolwork & sport / keeping on top of your work is probably like the hardest thing / school days / I'm constantly having to change and focus

By examining each individual's experience in its entirety I was then able to select one heading to represent an interpretation of the nature of the total experience (Karlsson et al., 2014), as lived by the individual. For Eboni the title eventually chosen was Two Worlds Collide.

Vignettes

The word vignette originally referred to the 'stylised vines that framed a page of photographs', then later a style of photo and eventually to writing (Truman, 2014, p. 89). The purpose of a vignette is to create record of data for interpretation and the key to the creation of a successful vignette is its ability to provide the researcher and each subsequent reader with a clear view of the encounter (Papadimitriou, 2008). 'Hermeneutic phenomenological research is fundamentally a writing activity' (van

Manen, 1990, p. 7) and in Papadimitriou's (2008) view the vignette must allow the reader to feel that they were there during the experience; encourage them to want to explore further for deeper meaning; and show the thing itself. The vignette strives for descriptive accuracy to allow exploration of action in context and provides a valuable technique through which to explore people's perceptions, beliefs and meanings in relation to specific situations (Barter & Renold, 1999). By providing concrete examples of people and their behaviours vignettes offer a way to articulate affective experiences (Truman, 2014) and afford the reader an opportunity to find resonance with their own experiences (Barter & Renold, 1999).

I undertook responsibility for the construction of individual vignettes, attempting to create true interpretations of each individual's personal account. New ways of representing meaning were explored and created through the development of sub headings e.g. in 'Finding a Way' the subheading 'A Difficult Life' was created from the following interaction at the beginning of an interview with Laura:

Laura – 02.07.14

Me	*What is it like to be Laura the gymnast at the moment?*
Laura	*Difficult*
Me	*Is it?!*
Laura	*Yes*
Me	*OK why do you say that?*
Laura	*Because my coach is trying to make me learn a load of new difficult moves and stuff so it is quite difficult*

Vignettes were then produced using structural analysis that identified and ordered narrative segments in order to deepen reader consciousness (Husserl, 1964). The following example demonstrates this by showing an example of how a typed transcript

was extracted and then crafted to become a vignette, giving voice to the participant through the creation of a unique story (Sparkes & Smith, 2014):

Josh:

> *Er, well the England coach sat behind me for like twenty minutes, which is apparently that's a good, that's a good thing if he comes and sit behind you, watch you for a long time, go and see if he's interested in what you're doing. Erm but in terms of speaking, he didn't speak to me. He just watched. They don't, nobody said anything. They just watch you, which again is, 'cause that makes you edgy. You're not sure, am I doing the right thing. It's kind of mind games at these kind of matches. You're, how you're thinking, you don't, it's not, no need to concentrate on your fishing, 'cause you know you're doing the right thing. It's keeping. 'Cause when I got there I was really nervous and erm I get a thing where I start shaking.*

Excerpt from **'Fishing in the Dark'**:

He needed to focus but he was distracted. He could feel eyes on his back. The England coach sat right behind him. *'That's a good thing'* he told himself, *'If he keeps watching me he must be interested?'*, but Josh was getting edgy and that was a bad thing, he had to stop himself from shaking. The Coach sat but he didn't say a word, they never do, they just watch. Josh tried to concentrate, he wasn't sure if he was doing the right thing, it felt like a mind game. Nobody said anything.

This process does not allow the researcher to follow strict methodological rules and instead focuses on trying to interpret out of pre-understanding (recognising that I can never be free from pre-understanding) to try to use imagination (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Analysis systematically examined the data to identify meaning structures that were personal to each individual (Karlsson et al., 2014) and findings were presented as vignettes in the hope that these might help expand, advance and deepen adult consciousness of what talent development experience in sport is like for young people (Truman, 2014). Interpretation of the whole (each individual vignette) was secured by

employment of 'the hermeneutic turn' which involved rereading each story to check that each edited part still represented a truthful account of the original (Smith et al., 2009) whilst striving to achieve representation of the essence of the experience through post hoc conceptualisation (Husserl, 1964).

Post hoc Conceptualisation

Post hoc conceptualisation was derived from a general (a priori) theory of knowledge based upon transcendental philosophy as opposed to empirical psychology (Halák et al., 2014). This follows the approach to theorising in social research advocated by Layder (1998) who states that whereas theorising is always integral to the research process, this process may contain elements that are both fluid and flexible and vary in relation to sequencing and employment. This approach enabled me to locate my findings within the context of social theory and the philosophy of phenomenology and apply previously developed theory to newly revealed insights gained from the lived experience of young people participating in talent development programmes in sport. My attempt to 'bracket' empirical knowledge reflected my commitment to pursue the transcendental structures of the young person's consciousness of the talent development reality. I had not collected specific empirical data and I had no hypothesis to prove, for what I aimed to achieve was a sense of my participant's relationship with reality. I set out to investigate the conditions of lived experience to discover how the structures of this reality were shown but, whereas the personal perspectives I gathered represented subjective accounts my aim was to secure an objective sense of reality. The intention was to uncover the meaning making structures of the phenomena through theoretical deduction rather than empirical observation (Papadimitriou, 2008).

I needed to attend to facts rather than look for facts to reveal a reality that was independent of how it was perceived. The idea of phenomenology is to deal with the experience in general to discover the essential structures that transcend individual experience using words and concepts that are essential to the character of the discourse. My challenge was to demonstrate the essential value of the facts uncovered and my investigation travelled in two directions reflecting back on the things themselves to move forwards to say what had not yet been said (Halák et al., 2014). This process relied upon active conceptual construction and in this approach,

> the participant offers their story, and by looking and relooking at the data, searching beneath the words and at what is not immediately obvious, the researcher aims to end up with an ontological perspective of the participant's experiences (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009, p. 11).

Closeness to the experience does not allow the sportsman or woman to practice phenomenology therefore 'it still belongs to the philosopher to look upon the (sport) activity of other people and to attempt to make it speak about itself' (Halák et al., 2004, p. 119). Analysis was conducted for each participant individually using a process that involved questioning, examining and re-examining the data to produce an ever expanding circle of ideas with which to explore context specific 'being in the world' for each individual (Tuohy et al., 2013). This process is termed hermeneutic enquiry, a process that seeks to uncover the true essence of the experience through resonance (McConnell–Henry et al., 2009). My aim was to investigate experience as it was lived rather than as it is conceptualised by uncovering and interpreting phenomena through reflection on each individual's experience in relation to four 'existential themes':

lived space (experience according to the context specific environment)

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lived time	(meaning that is attributed to context specific events that occur at a specific time in the individual's life)
lived body	(where context specific encounters are represented by bodily experience)
lived human relation	(relationality with others in the context specific world)

(Converse, 2012).

Participant's narratives depicted sports participation that was characterised by uncertain endeavour, and the transcendental nature of talent development experience was revealed to constitute a process of self-presentation, social injustice, self-regulation and the pursuit of personal empowerment. The findings in this thesis represent a unique contribution to the field of talent development in sport research.

Limitations

In this study there were a number of factors that may be perceived as limitations. For example if the sample size had been larger this would have enabled me to give voice to a greater number of young people. On the other hand, if it had been smaller I would have been able to spend more time learning from each individual. Maybe some participants were put off getting involved because they already knew me or my family, but for some this may have been precisely the reason why they were encouraged to get involved. Involvement with school staff who I already knew meant that at times I felt that lack of a formal relationship hindered communication and organisation, once the research commenced however I was very happy to be left to my own devices. When I invited potential participants to the Leeds Trinity University – National Careers in Sport Roadshow, on my part this represented an attempt to engender a reciprocal relationship. For most of the young people however this was not an invitation that appealed, only 6

attended and this example serves to represent how at the beginning of the study my perspective caused me to make assumptions about the interests and values of the young people with whom I was attempting to engage. My initial attempts to collaborate with young people appeared to turn many individuals off, however if this hadn't happened I would not have given this challenge the same amount of thought and so may not have had such a rich experience.

These examples may be considered in relation to two points:

- Qualitative research draws upon a range of methodologies and from the perspective of the physical scientist the method of creativity that has been applied to the production of knowledge in this study may be subject to criticism (Sousa, 2014). To counter this, analytical trustworthiness (Rodham et al., 2015) has been demonstrated through detailed documentation of emergent design which includes specific examples to explain how data was generated and analysed.

- An assessment of the quality of this study relies upon reference to research paradigm and concepts such as reliability, validity and generalisation should be understood in relation to the epistemological and ontological framework that underpins the work (Sousa, 2014).

'The most crucial criterion is 'the phenomenological nodding' that occurs the instant people read or hear the presentation of results' (Helder, 2012, p. 19).

Chapter 7: Findings

This chapter is divided into three sections, 'Lasting Impressions,' 'Vignettes' and 'Learning To Play The Game'. In 'Lasting Impressions' I share insights into the nature of engagement and collaboration between young people and adults gained from both the young person's description of their talent development experience in sport and from our work together in pursuit of participatory research collaboration. In this section my own personal meaning making is structured around a concept that has revealed itself to be an inherent facet of the contextual experience, a phenomenon that is constructed and interpreted according to the process of social interaction between adult and child: self presentational behaviour (Banerjee, Bennett & Luke, 2012).

In section 2 the experience of the 8 young people who collaborated in this study is presented through 8 vignettes. Each vignette constitutes hermeneutical interpretation of the young person's unique experience of participation in a sports talent development programme. This section represents a deliberate attempt to expand, advance and deepen adult consciousness of what talent development experience in sport is like for young people.

In the final section 'Learning To Play The Game!' I draw upon the descriptive accounts of the young person's experience to critically discuss the social relation between adult and young person in the sports talent development programme. The evidence in this section demonstrates how the emergence of self presentational behaviour is particularly relevant to the phenomenon of talent development in sport and shows how social relations may influence the young person's ability to take control of their own learning. The chapter concludes to consider how within the talent development environment autonomy supportive relations may facilitate a process of personal empowerment.

Lasting Impressions

Reflexivity

In striving to understand my role as a researcher I have participated throughout this research project in an active process of reflexivity to seek to understand how my behaviour might have influenced or affected the young people with whom I have engaged (Clancy, 2013). Throughout this research project I made attempts to appeal to young people; to assure those who were involved in the research that the identity that they shared with me would be protected; and encouraged each individual to find ways to convey experience of social encounters within the context of talent development in sport. In return the young people in this project contributed unique insights of the experience of being in the talent development environment to depict a context where the individual develops a distinct consciousness of what it is like to be continually judged and learns to exist in a reality where they are always on trial. The intersection of these experiences promoted a resonance, an 'assemblage' of experience that amplified the relational context of our interaction to reveal a theme that although hidden behind the discourse, was to become just as significant as the discourse itself (Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2015). That theme was self-presentational behaviour and it was a phenomenon that came to represent the essence of my research experience.

Self Presentational Behaviour

Self-presentation is 'the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them' and this behaviour is predicated on the desire to achieve interpersonal goals (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). Leary (1995) suggests that there are three categories of self presentational motive: Interpersonal Influence, (social outcome) Development of Self (identity construction) and Emotional Regulation (social

function). Leary and Kowalski's (1990) Two Component Model of Impression Management differentiates between impression motivation and impression construction, identifying three impression motivation variables (goal relevance of impressions, value of desired goals and discrepancy between desired and current image) and five impression construction variables (self-concept, desired and undesired identity images, role constraints, target values and current or potential social image). Viewed from the interpretivist paradigm it would be incongruent with the philosophical standpoint taken throughout this project to now turn to the approach taken by Leary and Kowalski (1990) and analyse my research experience in relation to a set of theoretical variables. Therefore, in accordance with the philosophy of phenomenology the writing that follows is designed to represent 'the effort of clarification of meaning' (Halák et al., 2014) to reveal the significance of self presentational behaviour as it appeared to permeate both research and talent development experience.

Self Presentational Behaviour within the Context of Research Collaboration

Self-presentation is a behaviour that is employed by a 'low strength' individual (as judged in relation to the concept of power and authority as exercised within the typical western societal hierarchy) in order to impress a 'high strength other', and is designed to generate a particular image to appeal to a specific audience (Payne, 2011). In order to enact a participatory research approach I set out to actively negate the power potential of my adult status to try and invoke a reciprocal rather than obligatory relationship (Holland et al., 2010). By doing so I placed myself in the position of 'low strength' to commence communication by placing each young person in a position of power, for whether they recognised it or not my reality was that actualisation of the research

project was totally dependent upon if they would choose to engage (Hutchfield & Coren, 2010).

I commenced my project following the advice of Isaksen & Roper (2010, p. 306) to work with a 'relevant and interested gatekeeper'. My best intentions were immediately challenged when reliance upon the gatekeeper, the Director of PE & Sport resulted in failure to include one young man who met all of the inclusion criteria. Josh was on the England Talent Pathway for Angling, he should have been invited and he had the right to be included. Further enquiries revealed that the email sent by The Director of PE and Sport to invite students to join the research had been entitled 'PERFORMANCE ATHLETE RESEARCH PROJECT'. The gatekeeper confessed that he had misinterpreted the inclusion criteria and had only sent out information to 'talented athletes'. So it appeared that from commencement my ability to present an accurate image of the project had fallen short. In this circumstance my engagement with the gatekeeper had resulted in a threat to the research and this interaction served to demonstrate not only the influence that adult gatekeeper interpretation can have on research project actualisation but also the ethical implications of their enactment of power. In this case the 'high strength individual' with power over the young person made a judgement based upon an inaccurate perception which then unjustly resulted in denial of the right to participate. It is therefore pertinent to point out the value and significance of 'insider knowledge' to this research project (Unluer, 2012) for were it not for the fact that I already knew the school and knew Josh (he was a friend of my son), then what has proven to be a valuable contribution would have been lost. Josh's opening contribution serves to demonstrate the significance of contextualised experience and reveals how consciousness of difference may motivate initial impression construction,

Hi my name is Josh, many of you will know me but be asking why I am in the programme? The reason is I fish for the North Squad Under 18s and I am also part of the England Talent Pathway. Many of you will be saying that fishing isn't a sport and I agree with you to some degree but with it being the largest participating sport in the country it is very popular.

Information uploaded by Josh to the electronic portfolio December 2013

Self presentational efficacy relates to the individual's confidence in their ability to portray a desired image (Strong et al., 2007) and in this example Josh's contribution demonstrates that whilst he does have the confidence to engage in self-presentational behaviour, he also feels that it is necessary to validate his identity.

Positionality

Research suggests that people believe that self-presentation as an 'exerciser' makes a positive impression on others and there is evidence to confirm that perceptions of the exerciser stereotype can confer self-presentational benefit (Faulkner et al., 2014). I now also recognise that setting out to present myself as an injured 'sports person' (because I walked with a stick) was and is as much about my need to retain a sense of my own personal identity as it was about trying to convey an image to encourage young people to become involved in my research project. In this context I found that the social experience of embracing the role of a developing qualitative researcher was instrumental in my own initial orientation towards self-presentational goals; as for the efficacy of my attempts to appeal to a younger audience I leave this open to your interpretation. 30 young people were invited to attend my initial meeting; I am unable to report how many did attend because the decision not to take a register formed part of a deliberate self-presentational strategy designed to give the impression of the non-

authoritarian adult (Hill, 2013). What I can report is that parental consent / participant assent was obtained from 18 participants and of these only 6 followed through to engage in the pilot phase. As I did not set out to study self-presentational behaviour I draw no conclusions about the effect that my initial face to face self-presentational strategy may or may not have had on participant engagement. Although the existence of self-presentational benefit has been linked to identification with a positive stereotype I have no evidence to verify that I did successfully convey the image of 'a sports person' and this phenomenon has yet to be studied for intergenerational effect (Faulkner et al., 2014).

What has been documented is that the human species is distinguished by a particular sensitivity to being viewed and observational evidence demonstrates that where people depend upon each other for co-operative social engagement behaviour is modified to safeguard and promote positive self reputation (Engelmann et al., 2012). People learn that in order to maintain participation within a societal group they must develop and safeguard an appropriate reputation and observational studies confirm that children as young as five years old engage in the practice of impression management to promote and sustain positive social co-operation (Engelmann et al., 2012). Previous research has emphasised that children's motivation to use self presentation behaviour during childhood is influenced in response to the increasing importance of peer group evaluation and recognition of the effect that this process has on peer group acceptance (Banerjee & Yuill, 1999). Whilst it may seem logical to conclude that for those individuals who did engage motivation to participate was generated by the image of a project that offered association with the identity of the 'talented' sports person, such an assumption should be treated with caution. It is essential to recognise that of the 8 participants who help produced this body of work 6 had a pre-existing social or sporting

connection (or both) to my son or daughter (after the initial meeting one subsequently announced to my daughter in class: Rowan: '*I'm in your Dad's PhD!*'), and therefore it must be stated that although my connection to the school did not position me as 'an insider' within the social group being studied (Moore, 2012) within this research project I was in possession of my own unique portal.

Josh	*I think it has been nice in that I've known you before through ****** (my son) and that has created a good platform to work off and that has made me confident in talking about my field of interest*
Me	*Do you think it made it a difference that you kind of knew me in the beginning?*
George	*Yes, probably*
Me	*Yes?*
George	*Made it a lot easier to actually give information, knowing that you would understand it a lot better*
Steve	*It makes it more personal I think*

The findings in this research project demonstrate that the relationship between young people and adult, and also the adult's familiarity with the age and 'level' of the young person can make a significant contribution to the enhancement of participation (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011, p. 2340).

Participant Engagement

It is now clear to me that in the absence of due consideration of impression motivation, the motivation of the individual to manage the impression that they make on others (Payne, 2011) my attempt to use digital media to engage young people in a common forum was ill conceived. Not only did the pilot fail to recognise the significance of self-presentational efficacy, the young person's confidence in their ability to portray a desired image (Gammage et al., 2004) but it also lacked understanding of the individual's motivation for engaging in social exchange through online digital media behaviour. Whereas the original conception of my pilot study was predicated upon the evidence that has documented a significant growth in young people's engagement with and use of online digital technology (Beninger et al., 2014) what I failed to take into account was the young person's motivation to engage. New and emerging research now provides greater insight into the motivations behind strategic online image management and this work demonstrates how engagement with social network sites is driven by strategic goals and that self presentational behaviour is motivated by the need for social acceptance (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). When this research project began the motivation for collaboration was mine and I now realise that my pilot project represented an awkward attempt to connect a unique set of individuals to a group that had no social relevance. My pilot project taught me that in order to learn about the young person's contextualised experience of being within talent development in sport, first I had to attend to their contextualised experience of being in a research project. Subsequently I attempted to take the research project forwards on their terms and the evidence of this emerging recognition was demonstrated within the email that I sent to potential participants following the pilot:

Hi there,

I would like to do some interviews to help me get more information about talent development experience.

Please let me know if you could spare me 15 or 20 mins. We can use a room at school at lunch time or at the end of the day if this is convenient and the interview can either be:

one on one

with another project member at the same time (you choose who comes along)

or if you want with a friend who is not on a talent development programme but someone you are happy to invite along.

Please let me know if you would like to be interviewed, suggest which day of the week would be good and what time and I will set up a schedule.

Thanks for your help, Graham

(Email 1: 13.1.2014)

Here you will notice the deliberate decision to make no mention whatsoever of the fact that although 18 young people had agreed to upload information to the pilot project only 5 had done so!

Participatory Research

Previous research has reported that children agree to participate in communication exchanges when they are motivated to have their viewpoint taken seriously and want to have their concerns listened to (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011). Less attention has been paid to the form of communication that young people prefer when they agree to engage in research and decisions about mode of communication are still often shaped by the adult's conception of the vulnerable child (Lambert & Glacken, 2011; Houghton et al., 2010). In this research project the University ethics panel were particularly concerned about communication via mobile phone and so approval was granted on condition that this was strictly limited: 'A personal mobile phone number has been provided to allow you or your child to choose to call or text to ask a question prior to commencement of

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the study. This number will not be used in the study' (Information Sheet for Parents). This meant that although permission was given for direct communication between myself and each young person we were not permitted to have direct phone communication. I adhered to this condition and sent all of my communications by email from my computer, whereas my participants accessed their emails on their mobile phone and then responded by email using their phone. The dis-connect between the perspective and understanding of an ethics panel made up of senior academics (middle aged adults) and the modern day social context in which young people exist (Bittman et al., 2011) resulted in a constraint that whilst failing to stop the young person from communicating via their phone, imposed an 'adult' method of communication on the process of engagement. Whilst the young people in this study would regularly check their phone for texts, they would not regularly check their email: '*Sorry I have only just got this email*'. So in this project the stipulation of the ethics panel ultimately came to represent an example of a socially constructed intergenerational imposition. My interaction with young people also reinforced how the use of a diary is an adult construct and it became clear that my participants had yet to adopt the adult's typical method of organisation. I soon learnt that I could not over organise because if things were planned too far in advance, even if I sent a reminder, because emails were not regularly checked there was always the possibility that my participants might forget we had agreed to meet,

Dan   *Yes sorry I completely forgot, tomorrow after school will be fine, thank you.*

Laura's Dad *Hi Graham*

I've just had a text from her (Laura). She's really sorry she's had a few things on her mind today and she completely forgot. She can make tomorrow at the same time if that helps?

This was a frequent occurrence that I actually came to regard as a strength of the research, because unlike the typical process with research in schools where the teacher 'helps' to make sure that the young person is available when required, in this process no teacher was involved and each young person always retained the choice over if, when and where they would meet (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011). These moments reinforced my consciousness of the limits of my knowledge in relation to being for the young person (Clancy, 2013). Subsequently if a meeting was missed or declined,

George *Going to have to be next week, got exams all day today and not in school on Friday*

my behaviour became orientated towards trying to gain a better understanding of the most effective way for us to interact rather than to self present (Coyne & Gallagher, 2011).

Data collected in the pilot project demonstrated that the electronic portfolio did not hold any real appeal for the young people and participant engagement (5) was low. Steve's description *'It is like homework style work'* clearly articulated his thoughts on my original conception of communication and participation and the limited level of engagement suggested that he was not alone in this view. Critical review of models of participation used within different types of research demonstrates that no one form of participation can be applied across all settings and that participation means different things in different contexts (Moules & O'Brien, 2012). Following the pilot, the need to broker a different type of engagement was clearly apparent and participants were invited

to discuss this at interview. Now having gained both a better understanding and a heightened consciousness of the importance to the adolescent of how their identity is perceived by others (Kang et al., 2015) instead of asking them to create an identity for the project, each participant was invited to share the identity that they had already created. The responses given to this request served to reinforce the strategic nature of young people's online behaviour with 7 of the 8 participants choosing to identify as an observer of social media, rather than a sharer or constructor (Beninger, 2014) e.g.

>**Rowan**   *Twitter I don't use it very much, I just look at what other people put, I don't particularly tweet that much*

The one participant to confirm that he could contribute insights from his talent development experience via representations made on social media was George:

>**George**   *Yeah I think that'd be fine for somebody like me I mean, there's nothing that I tweet that wouldn't be something like that you wouldn't want to see or, but I think it would probably be different for like maybe a couple of the other people*

Within this group of young people George was distinguished by his use of social media and his willingness to contribute this form of representation to the research project. Research that has examined athlete self presentation online confirms that professional athletes use social media to convey individual characteristics and present a desired image that is specifically designed for public consumption (Lebel & Danylchuk, 2014). In this study George was differentiated from the other participants by simultaneous participation in two different talent development programmes and by the level of representational honours achieved in each. Whilst the connection between talent

trajectory or time spent in the talent development environment and the development of self presentational behaviour has yet to be studied, it is interesting to note that in this research project it was George's online self presentational behaviour that most closely resembled the strategy of the professional athlete:

George   Oct 12, 2013, 8:14pm via Twitter for iPhone

Get knocked down nine times, stand up ten

Emergent Design

Ultimately 8 young people agreed to participate in a 12 month research project and the credit for emergent design must be given to Phil for stimulating a simple yet powerful idea:

'*stick with people along the way'* (refer to vignette: Being Mindful)

In this research project all of the young people demonstrated a preference for dynamic and fluid organisation to facilitate observational windows and create conversational spaces (Eide & Khan, 2008). Subsequently the ability to respond to messages and make arrangements at very short notice became a distinct feature of the research process:

Me   *So have a think about it and so if you've got a training session or you can say 'This is when my training sessions are if you wanted to come'.*

Eboni *Well we've got a training match tonight*

In this example the invitation was received at 14.00 and six hours later I attended a 2 hour training match (20.00-22.00). On another occasion Steve sent a message on a

Sunday morning inviting me to attend his Rugby Trial. On that day I was given 90 minutes notice and despite the trial being 60 minutes drive away I jumped in the car and arrived just in time. The benefit of this experience was an increased consciousness of the temporality of the young person's lived experience (Langdridge, 2007) and a new appreciation of the significance of timing and method of interaction in relation to the view that would be revealed. The reward to the research project was an increase in the agency of the participant as each young person then began to take greater responsibility for the organisation of discussion and/or observation:

From: Rowan

Sent: 31 March 2014 12:04

To: Graham Turner

Subject: Re: Talent Development Project

Hi graham

As you know i played in the final on sunday and i was wondering if you would like to meet to talk about it.

From: Eboni

Sent: 06 November 2014 23:22

To: Graham Turner

Subject: RE: Talent Research

Hi Graham,

The times for this weekend are

10:30 - ********

11:04 - ******** *******

11:55 - ******** *******

12:29 - ****

13:03 - *********

13:37 - ******** *****

*14:11 - *********

It is a very long day so I would say the best matches to come and watch are the ******** *******, **** matches because they are the two which are the closest. ********** we played recently and won comfortably and ********* are the previous winners under 19s national champions so that will be a very hard match. The others we haven't played in a while so I am not sure.*

Research Relationships

The implementation of emergent design proved to be instrumental in helping develop reciprocal relations and although the importance of developing trust and rapport to the process of qualitative research is often stated (Randall, 2012) the added dimension that this research experience signified was the importance of creating conditions to allow trust to be developed.

At the beginning of the project my discussions with Laura were the shortest and she was the one I felt I knew the least. She was not in the same year group or social circle as either my son or my daughter and when we met, to my knowledge at least we were strangers. She was the only participant who didn't directly communicate with me to arrange meetings and email communication always went through her father:

Email 16.1.2014 Laura –

Hello Graham

Laura has said that she is available for interview most lunchtimes apart from Mondays. If you would like to suggest a date then I'll get Laura to confirm.

Kind regards

####### ####### (Laura's father)

Sent from my iPhone

12 months later having seen her go through and talk about some real highs and lows now she was the one participant who I felt had shared the most of her very personal

talent development experience. At the end of the project we talked about this and Laura was able to explain how creating the conditions for trust to be developed had helped her,

Me   *You did something different that no-one else did in this research project; you brought other people with you.*

Laura   *Yes*

Me   OK, *and that's fine, and I just wanted to ask you a bit about that?*

Laura   *Well, I'm not very good at talking to people when I'm by myself because I get quite nervous especially when I don't know them really well and he just came along this time because he didn't have anything else to do but like at the beginning, if you could tell, I brought people along with me more often than I did towards the end.*

Me   *Yes, because then after a little bit, you came on your own,*

Laura   *I got used to it, yes*

Me   *So I was thinking well it means you have got more confidence in you. Is that right?*

Laura   *Yes*

Me   *So you bringing people has been good for me because if it made you feel like you could speak more then that was better, so I suppose you are saying that has been important to you really?*

Laura   *Especially the first time, (if I'd had to come on my own) I would have been quite nervous*

Young people's perspectives are much better understood when the researcher spends time with them in the relevant setting (Greenfield, 2011) and once I committed to go and see each young person train and/or play it became evident that closer relationships developed.

Email from Rowan

Thanks for coming to watch graham!! And if easier we can do
Next week it's what's ever easier for you

Conversation with Laura

Me	*Coming to see you I felt that that made a difference, did you?*
Laura	*Yes, because you get to see what the competitions are like…….....I think at first because you didn't understand what was going on, if I'd told you everything that I've told you now, you'd probably get a bit confused by all of it.*
Me	*And do you think it is also because you have got to know me as well? Does that make a difference?*
Laura	*Yes*
Me	*I mean it does for me, I feel like I know you much better now because you were Laura who I didn't really know,*
Laura	*Yes*
Me	Now *I feel like I know you and I kind of understand your life, yes?*

> **Laura** *Yes, I think it has worked because you've been to my competitions, you've seen them and you've asked my opinions and I've told you,*

> **Me** *OK, it wouldn't have been the same if I hadn't come to see you?*

> **Laura** *I don't think so no, because you still wouldn't know what it is like because you wouldn't be able to see what is going on*

and in this research project all participants demonstrated and confirmed a clear preference for conversation,

> **Me** *Has conversations been a good way for you?*

> **George** *Yes, it is definitely, probably the best way to do it, especially actually talking to somebody makes it a bit easier and with body language.*

> **Dan** *I think definitely the one to one was the best way of you doing it*

> **Steve** *It is really easy just having a conversation yes*

The conversations with my co-collaborators also confirmed that there were other specifics of research design that were also important to them, namely exclusive commitment (where the young person trusted that their conversations would not be disclosed to Teachers, Coaches, parents or peers) and feedback demonstrated that an exclusive commitment could promote an exclusive conversation,

> **Me** *'Would you have felt different if you were talking to me about a game and then I talked to the adult (coach) about the same game,*

> *would you have felt there are some things you could say and some things you couldn't?'*
>
> **Steve** *'Depends if you were telling them what I said, if I was slagging them off and you were telling them that, I might think about not saying that then.'*

Laura had even shared things with me that she had chosen not to share with her parents, like the time when she didn't want her dad to know that she was thinking of pulling out of a competition,

> **Laura** *'Just don't tell him, because he doesn't know.'*

Once trust and rapport was achieved it seemed as though we were all able to become less concerned with what we might think about each other and instead could spend more time trying to work out how we could make sense of the experience of being in a talent development programme. Analysis of this process therefore not only agrees with the assertions of social researchers who stress the importance of working to understand the way that young people engage with and respond to research (Christensen & Prout, 2002) but also signifies the power of reciprocal relationships. Whilst the research project proposed to rely upon the 'Mosaic approach' (Clark, 2005) and set out to be participatory, reflexive and adaptable ultimately success was dependent upon application of the principles of Participation Action Research as this then empowered each young person to provide new knowledge and insight. In this context the ability to relate to the younger person was critical and the research process confirms that conversation between the generations is the greatest tool for the empowerment of young people (Earnshaw, 2014).

Vignettes

The vignettes on the following pages were generated from researcher and participant interaction and constructed according to hermeneutical interpretation of 8 young people's talent development experience in sport. In accordance with my phenomenological philosophy (Molbak, 2012) within this section I make no attempt to provide further explanation of the events that have occurred within the stories of the young people with whom I have engaged. These stories are designed to stand alone and speak for themselves (Halák et al., 2014).

Fishing In The Dark

Josh has been fishing since he was 8 and is on the Talent pathway for Great Britain Angling.

Waiting

Josh was waiting. Waiting for the letter that would tell him if all of his hard work had paid off, the letter that would confirm if he had made it through, if he had made the cut. If he did there would be just one more trial and the prize at the end was the chance to fish for England U18's at the World Championships in Holland.

The letter finally arrived, before he opened it Josh thought about what had gone before and what could lie ahead. He was anxious.

The trials were a big deal. He remembered the time when he received a letter on the Friday and it only gave him eight days to prepare. He had immediately rung his granddad and said, '*I've got the letter, but we've only got a week.*' He had prepared his

kit the same night and the next day he was there. Five hours on the bank with Grandad sitting behind him watching from the car. The experience lived vividly in his memory,

'Terrible conditions, blowing an absolute gale, wind, rain, freezing cold. So not really what you wanted, but I guess it was a good way to understand what the place was like.'

On the day of that trial Josh couldn't believe it. When he arrived they told him that they had changed the lake! This threw him. On the letter it clearly stated which lake they would be fishing, now they were telling him they hadn't been able to book it. Some of the kids hadn't been for a practice, they weren't affected. He had travelled down twice to practise. What was the point he asked himself? This was supposed to be for the England Team but it felt like a shambles. He had to go in blind, it was a real challenge but he had persevered, felt his way into it, taught himself as he had gone along, learnt the lake and come through.

This time it was a different challenge. The lake was the same but the fishing was different. He was on the lake where he had practised but on the day of the trial he drew a peg that only gave him 3m of water to fish in. He was supposed to have 8, there was 8 when he practised, everyone else had 8! He quickly had to change all of his rigs and he felt himself starting to panic. He knew this was the worst thing he could do. He told himself that he needed to keep his head on. He got organised and he got himself together. Then, first drop in he got a fish, he could feel his nerves start to settle, now he just had to keep repeating the process.

'It's making your body efficient enough to do it quickly, but not too, not rushing, which is another skill, it's just patience and composure.'

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He caught 150 fish, it was a good day, he knew he'd worked hard and done his best. There was nothing else he could do, but was it enough?

He opened the letter: he had made it!

He was through to the final trial but this was no time to celebrate, his thoughts immediately turned to the next test and he wanted to get to work,

'Now I've got to prepare for this one. I've got just over a month to prepare, so that will give me a lot more time to get down to the venue and understand it, which is a bit more important for this one, seeing as it's a lot more. It's a bigger trial, there's a lot more people there.'

He reflected on the letter, he was through but it gave him no feedback. He wanted to know what he had done well? Was there anything that he could do better? What was it they were looking for? But the Coaches were funny like that they didn't really tell you anything, it was just like a guessing game.

The Final Trial

Josh knew that the England Selectors were watching but he didn't know what they were looking for.

'You just don't know. You've just got to turn up, do what you do and see if they like you. They gotta like you. It's like any sport, if you haven't got the right attitude, they won't pick you. You gotta have a hard working team'.

What he did know was that there were only three places available and so five of them wouldn't make it. The stakes were high and Josh was nervous.

'The thing with fishing is, you need your hands ……….. you can't have them shaking or do anything. So I had to sit in the car for five minutes and just calm myself down, which is quite annoying but I know how to deal with it. So it's not too bad. But, yeah it was big, it was a big deal for me'

Josh went to work. He worked with his mind and his hands, the rod was like an extension of his arm, his action was a skill that he had worked hard to develop and he relied upon consistent accuracy. He knew if he could cast to the same spot over and over again and keep the fish in the same area he could build them up into a frenzy. He needed to focus but he was distracted. He could feel eyes on his back. The England coach sat right behind him. *'That's a good thing'* he told himself, *'If he keeps watching me he must be interested?'*, but Josh was getting edgy and that was a bad thing, he had to stop himself from shaking. The Coach sat but he didn't say a word, they never do, they just watch. Josh tried to concentrate, he wasn't sure if he was doing the right thing, it felt like a mind game. Nobody said anything.

Five hours passed; it was time for the weigh in. He had been in a poor area, he knew he couldn't win the match but he had aimed for the next best thing, to win his section,

'That's my mentality. If I do something, I want to win'

He watched as one at a time each catch was weighed in. It was a painful process; had he done enough? The coaches always say that your weight doesn't mean much, *'it*

doesn't matter what you catch' but he knew it did. They want people catching fish consistently;

'At the end of the day, to win, you need to catch fish.'

The Big Shock

Josh was very upset and he was annoyed. He didn't know the reason why he hadn't got in. It had been a really big process, he had put in hours of hard work practising and travelling. On the day he had won his section, and he had performed well. He thought that winning his section would have put him up there,

'the only thing I can do is win my match…………… Try your best they said and that's what I did but apparently my best wasn't good enough'.

'It was such a harsh cut, literally that's it, done, see you next year……… A big shock.'

It was over, just like that, binned. To get so close and then just to miss out, that was the most gutting thing. All he got was a letter, not even a phone call, no feedback, no areas to work on, nothing just sorry you haven't got through hope to see you next year. It was a nightmare, he was back to square one. The only way back in was to start again, to work his way all the way back. It really annoyed him, it really, really got to him.

How was he supposed to improve as an angler when he didn't know what he needed to improve on? There were so many aspects. What had he done wrong? He had beaten his mate but his mate got through. He couldn't understand it? He thought it was poor, poor and frustrating at the same time.

'Talent development programmes need to look at kids who don't get through and tell them what they need to know. When you get binned you don't know what to do, you question yourself……….What did I do? What was wrong? What do I need to do now? …………..You just have to work it out by yourself.'

Josh made a decision. He wasn't going to put himself through that again next year, there was no point. He had put hours and hours into practising and improving only to learn that some of the kids already knew they were in the team even before the final trial; so what was the point? The selectors had made up their minds before they had even started fishing! He knew he could get better, he wanted to improve and he didn't see how the trials were going to help him do that. He would take his fishing into his own hands. He was only 16, he had two more years to make the team. He would take a year out, improve, hone his skills and then go for it again. With more time, practise and experience he still believed he could make the team.

Four weeks passed. A new letter dropped through the letterbox.

An invitation to travel with the England U18 team to the World Championships in Holland! They would leave in a week. The selectors thought that it would be good for him to gain experience of being at a World Championships and he would not compete but he would get to fish. Josh was chuffed to bits. He jumped at the chance. It was a great experience and it opened his eyes. He learnt that the boys who had been selected were not like him. They didn't play rugby and cricket, all they did was fish. Maybe he needed to be more like them? Maybe he had a big decision to make?

In Holland the selectors asked Josh if he was going to go to the next set of trials. He told them he wasn't, he wanted to concentrate on his development and then trial again the

following year. He didn't enjoy the trials and he didn't think he learnt anything from them. He didn't tell them that though! The coaches said that they respected his decision and that he had made a wise choice. With another year practising and perfecting techniques, he would be better prepared. He would be ready. In the meantime he would decide if he was prepared to give up his other sports. Whatever he decided it would be up to him. There would be no more fishing in the dark for Josh.

You've Got To Believe

Rowan is 15 years old and he is a Rugby player on the England Rugby Developing Player Programme (ERDPP)

Early Learning

Rowan started life as a footballer and he started to learn about the Talent Development Programme when he was 8,

'I got released from Man U at the end of Under 8's then like, I just like, it was really really nervous because I didn't know what to do when I got released so like, I was like do I go back & play or do I just stop because I feel like I'm being told that I'm rubbish and I don't deserve to do it? So yeah.'

When Rowan was 10 he switched from Football to Rugby and at age 11 he was invited on to the Rugby Union Talent Development Programme. Now he is progressing well, he is in the Junior Development Squad at a professional club Academy and he wants to become a professional player,

'I want to become a professional rugby player so I'm going to do everything I can to become a professional rugby player.'

Rowan explained that in the Talent Development Programme '*We always know that they are looking to recruit, they are looking to let go,'* and when I asked him how he felt about this he said,

'Yes it gets you slightly worried, I don't know, it does get you'

But Rowan has learnt how to cope with this and the Academy have taught him that,

'You've just got to believe in yourself'

Believing In Yourself!

Rowan plays for the *'best club'* in the area. This year they won the cup final where they *'hammered'* the opposition. The ERDPP is going well and the Coaches have told him that he just needs to keep heading in the same direction. One Coach has told him that if he keeps progressing he could be number 1 in the County in his age group, and for the year above. Another told him that if he puts his mind to it he can make it and he knows that *'it is not very often that people get told that'*.

At school Rowan has been picked to play for the year above,

'It is an honour to me because I am a year below and they are such a good rugby year and they've got so many players to choose from that being picked, as they've already got a 9, as 9 to go play for them in the Daily Mail Cup and in 7s, I was over the moon about'.

The Head of the Academy has said that he is very pleased with Rowan, they can see him developing and they think there is a lot ahead for him if he keeps going the way he is. Rowan's cousin is at the club, he *'is at a very high stage in rugby'* and that's good for Rowan because he tells him what he needs to do and helps him practice. His cousin has told him that the coaches *'look for a hard trainer, because a hard trainer looks like a player that is committed to the sport and wants to learn,'* so Rowan makes sure that even in the warm up he is always at the front.

This year the Academy Coaches have been suitably impressed and they have decided that Rowan doesn't need to go to the District Trial, he can go straight to the final County Trial instead,

'I am nominating myself as a scrum half because I know that I've probably got one of the best passes.'

Rowan understands what the Coaches want, he knows they only want the best players and he is determined to show everyone around him that he is the best,

'It is about me, I can focus on other people, but if I see someone getting better than me, or see someone creeping up behind me that's when I start to go uphill, I don't get phased by anyone that I see who is having a better game than me, I just think yes he's had a better game than me, I'm not saying anything, I'm going to accept it but then next time I'm going to show him and just make sure he knows that I'm there and not that he is just going to walk his way through.'

Rowan is confident in his ability and confident in the Coaches belief in his ability,

'There is not much competition at 9, there is one who is small, (and) skinny and then there is one other who plays at ******* Grammar and coaches don't rate him really.'

He knows how to play like a good player,

'Being a scrum half you have to be vocal haven't you and again they don't like when I'm like that but I can't help it. Everybody else and the good players understand that and they don't mind that. It's the players that aren't too good that don't like that.'

And if another player represents a threat he knows how to deal with it,

'When I see my opposition player on the game, I just watch what he is doing and when playing against Scarborough because their 9 is a tricky little 9 but he doesn't have a kick so that's what I try to notice, I use my kick to put him in positions where he has to kick. OK so like I try and make him look bad compared to me.'

Making Progress

Last year was a good year for Rowan, in the Summer the Academy asked him to train with the year above and he got to play his first game against another professional club side.

'I was so pleased and being an underage and getting a bit opportunity and it was something that I've always wanted to do, play for my home town and then I got about 25 minutes to 30 minutes. Gloucester is a big, big strong side. I mean some of the boys must have been about 6 ft. and weight about 100kg which is scary and I just remember stepping on the pitch and just thinking, is this actually happening because I didn't know what was going on at first but it was an amazing experience.'

Now Rowan has got to know the scrum half in the age group above and that's been really useful,

'Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer. But he's not really an enemy but he is something that I am opposing against so I've just got to make sure that he knows I'm there, so he'll pass a distance, I'll try beat his distance. He doesn't stand out to me. He doesn't do things like he doesn't believe in himself much.'

This year Rowan wants to be first choice 9 for the County. Two teams will be picked but for Rowan it's, '*A's or nothing.*' He's confident and he believes he can do it,

'*I love playing in pressure because that is when I play at my best, that is when I perform.*'

Everything is going great, Rowan is going to be a rugby player and he can feel it getting '*nearer and nearer*'.

Would You Believe It?

It was just a normal game, then 10 minutes into the second half Rowan tackled a player running down the wing, they both fell awkwardly, the winger came down on top of Rowan and landed right on his thumb. Instantly there was a sharp '*nasty pain*'. Rowan got up and tried to carry on playing but he knew something was wrong. He threw a pass and watched as the ball bounced on the turf. The next one was the same, his passing was off. He looked down at his thumb, it was hurting and it was swollen, he knew he'd done something but he had to play on.

Back home after the game he got out the ice. He knew his thumb wasn't right, he couldn't even pull a door open, it hurt, it hurt a lot. The next day was Sunday, he knew if he rested it it would settle down. The day after that it was training, maybe if he got it strapped it would be alright? The physio checked it and strapped it up, it didn't seem too bad but the physio said it was best not to train. By Thursday Rowan had had enough, it was still hurting and hurting a lot. He needed to go to hospital and get it checked. Finally the doctor came back with the results. Rowan's worst fears were confirmed, the

X-ray showed a fracture and he was out of action. Rowan was really annoyed but he was determined to get back as quickly as possible.

Six weeks later Rowan's pot was off and he was ready to go back to training,

'How does it feel Rowan' I asked?

'It feels perfect' he said.

'*Perfect?'* I asked again

'I mean it's not pain free, like I can push against there and I've still got a bit of a niggle on the outside of the bone but it is alright.'

The Doctor had told Rowan that his thumb would need to be strapped and that it would have to be strapped forever, but Rowan was going to be a rugby player and the Academy had taught him that you had to believe. If Rowan said his thumb was perfect, then it would be.

Finding A Way

Laura is 15, she has been a gymnast for 11 years and each year she competes in the National Club Grades regional qualifier, the top 4 placed gymnasts qualify for the National Final.

A Difficult Life

Each training night, as soon as school finishes Laura gets straight into the car and sets off for the gym. There is never any time to spare, she grabs a sandwich, eats it on the way and has just enough time to get changed and be ready before training begins. She trains 5 times a week. Training is hard and lasts for three and a half hours. When Laura gets home it's too late to do homework, she's tired and she needs to sleep. Each morning she gets to school early, she has to keep on top of her work. At the weekend the sessions are longer and harder, four hours on Saturday and four hours on a Sunday. There is no let up, life is difficult.

Laura has been training like this since she was 7 and she has known her coaches since she was small. Helen was really good at bringing on the younger gymnasts, Laura used to really like her, but now Laura was older and it was different. It was like the coaches just didn't know how to deal with teenagers. As each year went by it had got harder. More and more of Laura's friends had dropped out and now there were hardly any older gymnasts left. Helen didn't know how to coach teenagers and she didn't know how to deal with them, that's why they quit. They had tried to tell her but it was like they just kept having the same conversation over and over again. In the end they couldn't be bothered anymore. Helen got upset about it but she didn't listen and nothing changed. She spoke to Laura like she was a child and now, if she was honest, Laura just didn't really like her.

When Laura was 9 John started to coach her. John was a good coach and some of his gymnasts had gone really far. John shouted at you, and when John shouted you did it. But now Laura was older and shouting didn't work anymore. Now when he shouted it had the opposite effect, and Laura didn't want to do it at all. He used to be good but now he didn't know how to motivate her and it seemed like he couldn't be bothered. He was *'getting old'* and he was *'getting lazy'*. He wasn't at all the training sessions and that made it difficult because then Laura had to go back to Helen. Laura preferred a male coach,

'because I'm quite tall as a gymnast and she is smaller than me, so if I'm doing something quite difficult and if I need support for it, it is quite hard because she is not bigger physically, so it is difficult when I have to train with her because I won't do anything, it's like if I need support I just refuse to do anything if she is there'.

Crisis of Confidence

Laura was preparing for a competition, she had two weeks, but she was worried. She hadn't told the coaches and she hadn't told her parents. She wanted to carry on but she was thinking of pulling out. She had a problem with one of her tumbles. She wasn't confident, and she didn't think she could pull it off. In training she had kept trying and trying but it just hadn't gone well. It was the same last time, the Nationals had made her so nervous. It wasn't just the shaking, she was nervous inside and her belly felt really funny. That time she decided to go for it and just try her best and it did start well. After vault and bars, she was coming fourth, but then it was time for floor.

In the warm up Laura had thought about the tumble, should she have one last practice? She decided against it, there was no point now, it wasn't going to change.

The music started.. she got to the tumble, she went for it

……………………………………………….…………………………………………………

…….and then she fell, just like she knew she would. She always fell on the landing.

Laura ended up with a really low score. She beat herself up for days. She was *'really, really upset and annoyed'*. She didn't even know why she was there. It was very upsetting, she would always be annoyed about that.

Laura knew that when she was younger the coaches always thought she was going to be really good. '*When I was 7 I'd just do whatever I was asked or at least try*'. Now they were trying to make her learn a load of new and difficult moves but Laura was scared and she wouldn't do it. The problem was the coaches just didn't understand how difficult some things were.

Laura had two weeks,

'I'm not ready, I don't want to compete, but my coach is just not helping'. I'm getting scared of doing stuff that I shouldn't be scared of doing and instead of helping me get it back, he'll just shout at me and say, you should be able to do that and things like that, so I have to actually get my other friends to help me do it because he won't do it ……………………………………………………….. It's hard, I don't know whether to carry on or not'.

Laura wanted to train by herself, just do what she needed to do and not have other people watching. She wanted to practice without anyone thinking what she was doing was stupid, not have her coach shouting at her. Just a day where she could be by herself.

She had ideas but they never listened to them, they just tried to make her do it. She wanted to leave '*but I don't know where else I could go*'

Laura knew she could learn stuff it was just mentally, now she was too scared. If only Club training was like Squad training. Squad training was at a different gym and there they had pits. Laura liked Squad training because there she knew she could somersault into the pit and she wasn't going to hurt herself.   Her gym didn't have facilities like that so it was difficult to learn new stuff. Now even if she could do it she was still scared because when she got it wrong it hurt; like the other day when she was somersaulting on Vault she didn't tuck in tight enough so she didn't get round, landed on her foot funny and whacked her finger. She couldn't move it after, it was really swollen.

Now she had a problem with beam,

'*When I think about what I am doing, it scares me when I think about what I am actually doing and that is when I lose stuff and I won't do stuff*'

It was on her mind all the time. John had tried to help but he hadn't really done much,

'*I don't really think he cares*'.

Laura was on her own, it was up to her to find a way. She knew that if she kept on practising she could eventually get it, but she was running out of time. She didn't know how she would do it but she did know that on the day she always did it,

'*I knew I'd do everything on the day so I just said, I'm going to compete*'.

Competition Day

On the day of the comp Laura felt really sick. She fell off the beam and she fell again on floor, this time on her easiest tumble.

'I actually thought that she was beating me quite a bit and after floor I thought she was going to win, because I didn't realise I was winning on beam because I fell off and she didn't. I assumed that she was winning when she wasn't, I won beam and then after floor she was almost a mark ahead of me, but then my vault was really good compared to her so then my coach pulled me aside and told me that she was only .3 ahead. If I didn't muck up my bar routine I could win'.

But Laura knew that she would fall off on her bar routine,

'I knew I was going to fall off on that, because it wasn't going right in warm up, and then the girl before me, she fell off, so my coach just said, just leave it out, and I stuck my bar routine and that is why I won'

A New Way Forward

Laura won the comp and winning felt really good but for Laura winning wasn't enough. Laura still wanted to get really good. She thought about changing clubs but that wasn't the answer, she didn't want to leave her friends. Laura needed to keep going, she knew that her coaches could be *'quite difficult people'* but now perhaps she could see a new way forwards, there was a chance to start working with a different coach.

'I think we have sorted it out now because I was talking to her the other day and I think the problem with her is that because she struggles to talk to teenagers as well as younger children so that's where she struggles but she can be nice.'

Laura had got a new idea and now she thought that there was a way that her and her friends could make things work: she was going to teach the coach,

'Quite a few of us have moved into her group now so she is going to have to learn'.

Still Going Strong

Steve is 16 years old and last year he was a Rugby player on the England Rugby Developing Player Programme (ERDPP)

Good All-round

Steve likes to be active, he likes to play sport and now he likes to train. He started off playing football and when he was 8 he got scouted by Burnley. Burnley was a long way away though. He did go across to try it but it was too far to travel, after a couple of weeks he had to stop. At Primary School Steve played Tag Rugby. He liked Rugby and in Year 7 the school put him forward for District Trials. He didn't get in, he was the smallest one there. In the Summer Steve played Cricket. He was good at cricket so last year his teacher put him forward for the Yorkshire Pathway. He got onto the scheme and played a few matches *'but it wasn't very good, the coaches weren't very good'*. They wanted him to go back but Steve decided that one season was enough,

'I didn't feel like I got anything out of it. The coaches weren't very helpful they kind of told you what to do but weren't very good at correcting the stuff that you had wrong, and they were all quite old people so they didn't really know what they were doing.'

Growing Up

Steve started to grow, and by the time he was 14 he had grown a lot. He was still playing rugby at school and now rugby was starting to take notice.

'This year has been the year when I have progressed the most cos I have grown a lot taller, got a lot stronger and I think it has helped my game.'

Steve was invited to trial for the England Rugby Development Player Pathway (ERDPP). He made it through the trial and set off on the talent pathway. Training was good and he enjoyed it,

'Yeah, I think it's good, the coaches are quite good because it's young people from the club who are kind of already in the programme so they kind of know what you need to do to like get into stuff.'

Getting into *'stuff'* was important to Steve. Under 15 was the first year of County Rugby and playing for the County was something he wanted to do. Soon it would be time for the trial. The problem was that Steve wasn't fit. His hips had got really tight and he couldn't play. Growing had become a hindrance instead of a help! Trial time came round and Steve couldn't go, he missed the trial but he was philosophical about it,

'Missing out this year isn't really going to harm me much, I can try next year, because I'll have a better chance next year'

Steve wasn't going to give up and he set his sights on the Under 16s. Time moved on, the Under 15 season ended and Summer came. Steve's hips had settled, he was back in training doing a lot of fitness and he was determined *'to keep going for rugby'*. Next year he would be playing in the Under 18's at school. That would be *'alot harder than normal'* and Steve was *'a bit scared'*. He wanted to get stronger and he was working really hard. He was training four or five times a week using the gym at school and he was really focused. His teacher had taught him Strength and Conditioning exercises and he had Googled stuff on the internet so now he had workouts for legs and workouts for arms. He did Squats and Box Jumps, practised sprints, trained on the rowing machine and went for runs.

Steve had a plan and he was committed, he had been training hard for a year and he could see it was making a difference.

'This has been the year when I have progressed the most cos in rugby, I have grown alot taller, got alot stronger and I think it has helped my game. Training has helped a lot too, my skills have got a lot better.'

The ERDPP finished at the end of the Under 15 season so Steve knew that the Under 16 year was going to be really important.

'They said you will either get through to County or Junior Development Squad JDS which is the next level or you won't get through to anything. They did a presentation on it. We knew it was the last session. We just have to wait and see if we get contacted.'

Steve didn't think he would become a professional player,

'I think when I first started playing, I did but then when you see all the other people, oh they are better than me, you just think no I'll play for fun rather than getting really serious into it'.

But Steve did want to play for his County, that was his target and he believed he could achieve it, *I think my best chance would be this year'.*

The County Trial

Steve was a Centre, he knew the other Centres, he knew who he was up against, and he thought he had *'a decent shot'.*

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The trial was split into two halves. The first half was technical practice, it was going quite well, but something wasn't quite right, Steve was practising with the Wingers! All of the other Centres were in a different group. Why had the Coaches put him with the Wingers when he was a Centre? Ok said the Coach, now it's time for positional practice. Steve had to say something,

'I'm a Centre so I'm going to practice with the Centres'.

'Oh ok' said the Coach *'yes, that's fine'.*

But it wasn't fine. Steve went over and did the rest of the technical practice with the Centres. Then when the practice ended they picked the teams for the games, and Steve was put back on the wing.

'They put in my wrong position because there were four teams and about 9 centres. There were too many so they put me on the wing and didn't give me a chance at centre. I told them I was a Centre and they said 'oh yes we'll give you a chance there' but it didn't happen. It was a disaster, people were just running it in, they weren't passing it out, I got the ball twice in 50 minutes. It was like I didn't even really get a chance to prove myself, we got there and it was already decided. I was just filling up the numbers, just playing the position. I thought they were going to rotate it and I would get a bit of a game at Centre but they didn't. I did ask but there was no point asking again. After the first game I knew they weren't going to change it. I could see that the other centres were quite good, they had been in it before and they were all quite confident that they were going to get in it again.

It put me in a bit of a mood, in the end I just stood there, like I couldn't be bothered, I just gave up'.

At the end of the trial the Coaches sat the boys down to make sure that they knew what would happen next. If you were selected to play for the County you would get an email and the team would be on the website. Steve wasn't really listening, he didn't expect an email. He knew he wasn't going to get in. On Monday morning the team went on the website but Steve didn't look at it, he knew he wouldn't be picked.

'I didn't find out, I just knew, there was a game so if you weren't told that you were in it then you weren't in, so you didn't even get told that you weren't in it?'

Steve had worked hard for a year to get to the County trial. He had worked hard on the training pitch and hard in the gym. He had the physicality and he thought he was good enough but on the day,

'I didn't really have a chance. It was like they just did the trial to see if the people they had last year were still good and I was there just to fill up the numbers. The Coaches didn't care about me'.

Steve made a decision, it was time to move on. There would be trials again next year for the Under 17's but he wasn't prepared to put himself through that again, *'I'm just done with that'.*

With GCSE's approaching Steve had new priorities. He still wanted to play rugby for school but now he would just play for enjoyment, he had given up trying to get somewhere. This summer would be about gym and school work, and in that order. Steve

had his own weights now so he could do most of his gym work at home and he really liked to train on his own. He didn't know why, he just liked it, there were no distractions and he didn't have to take turns he could just get on with it,

'I've got my weights in my bedroom so I like to have a lot of free time at home'.

Steve was looking forwards to his exams because then he would be on exam leave and would get *'the full day to do gym'.* He was committed to his studies, but the truth was he'd

'rather go to the gym then do an hour's revision for a mock exam'.

Steve was no longer on a Talent Development programme and he was no longer trying to be on one. He still liked playing rugby and he thought he might play when he got to Uni but he didn't really see himself playing much after that. Gym though, that was different, Gym always had to be there, Gym was non-negotiable.

Standing Still but Moving Forwards

Dan started playing Badminton for fun with his family when he was 9, now he is 17. By 10 Dan was on the Performance Pathway training 3 times a week and by 13 it was up to 5 times a week. Dan was training hard, and making progress, by 14 he was competing in the Men's League he had a Gold ranking in his sights and he wanted to make the top 3. Dan wanted to be a Badminton player.

At 15 Dan was injured.

'That was probably the reason why I got the injury because I was playing too much.'

Dan had developed patella tendinopathy, his coaches told him to take it easy but Dan wanted to play on, he didn't need to stop, he could play through it and so play on he did. He continued training and playing 5 days a week, playing in the Men's League was tough and each game would cause him quite a bit of pain, but he still carried on. Dan didn't really know what was wrong, he just thought it would go away. The Coaches had left it up to him to sort it out but now it was getting harder. He couldn't cover the court, his knee felt like it was giving way, the pain was 8 out of 10 and the more he played the worse it got. It was becoming a real struggle and he was frustrated. Other players were catching him up, he knew he had to make progress, he was better than them, but he couldn't move. Finally he went to the doctors, he needed to stop, he needed to rest.

Treatment Plan

Dan wanted to get back to play as soon as possible so he did exactly what the doctor said. First it was rest and ice but that didn't work. Next he saw the physio who gave him exercises. Dan tried his best, he did the exercises but it was painful. He needed to

strengthen his leg but he could see he muscle was wasting away. The treatment wasn't helping, he still couldn't play.

Dan thought about what he could do. There was a Badminton coaching course he could do; so he signed up. He was 16 and everyone else on the course was older but that didn't put him off. He got some new ideas and learnt about different tactics. He thought it was good to be able to understand where you might have gone wrong and he learnt how to analyse his game.

Meanwhile Badminton continued without him. It was time for the qualifying rounds for the Nationals, his doubles partner Mark couldn't wait any longer; he found a new partner. That was tough, Mark was his friend, they went to school together, they had known each other since Year 7 and become friends through playing together. Now they were more than just Badminton friends they saw each other every day. Mark told Dan about everything he was missing.

The weeks had rolled on but the treatment hadn't worked, next they wanted Dan to try dry needling, then after two weeks he could try doing some *'really light sport'* in 5 minute blocks. Dan hadn't played at all in the last six months, maybe it was longer. Finally now he could try again. He arranged to meet Mark to play some *'light Badminton'* and finally he was back on court, but it was still painful! *'Maybe it was bruising from the needle'* he thought to himself, *'Yes that's probably what it was'*. He carried on a little longer, it was hard to stick to 5 minutes, he played some good shots, he still had it! But he wasn't really moving his friend was feeding him, he couldn't put his weight through his left leg. It was too soon, it was still painful.

Small Steps

Dan wasn't going to give up. He was determined to get back playing. He went back to the physio, he got new exercises and he did them every day. He tried playing a little longer, was it improving? Now the pain was more like a 5 or 6 out of 10, he did think it was improving. He still couldn't move around quickly but he could play, just not like before. He needed more time and he knew that if he changed his game and played more defensive shots this could help buy him the time to recover. He had to be careful landing and pushing off and so he adjusted his technique to take two steps instead of one, *'everything just took slightly longer'*. Dan wasn't ready to go back to the Talent Development Programme but at least now he had a way to get back playing again. He practised with Mark and he practised against Mark, he still wasn't 100%, he knew he could play a lot better but he was playing and he enjoyed it. Now he wasn't trying to get better, he just wanted to play, he could do that when his knee was right. Dan was 17 now, he had been in pain for 2 years so he wasn't going to rush things, the one thing he didn't want to do now was make it worse.

Moving On

Dan had been told that as soon as he was fit he could go back to the Talent Development Programme. Now his knee was much better, the pain had gone out of his mind and the physio had discharged him. He had done everything he could to try and get back, there wasn't really much more he could have done but it had taken two years, and now Dan recognised that wanting to be a Badminton player was past tense. When people talked about Badminton they didn't talk about him anymore. Dan didn't know how it had happened but things had moved on. He had exams now anyway, his A Levels, he needed to revise, he wanted to study Biology, it was no longer all about Badminton. Dan was focused on the future and planning for University. Dan still loved

Badminton and once he got to Uni he was sure he would play but for now he needed AAB, he was working hard and that was his priority. The future looked bright, but the future wasn't Badminton.

Being Mindful

Phil was 14. He and Rowan were both on the England Rugby Development Player Pathway. Phil and Rowan were good friends, they were in the same year at school, they had classes together and they played rugby together for both school and club. They joined the research project together, they shared similar goals and they liked to talk about things together. But when we started, it soon became clear that Phil's Talent Development experience was not the same as Rowan's and Phil was well aware that they might not stay together,

'I mean obviously I'd love to get into the next stage, I mean like me and Rowan said the other week we are always trying to pinpoint the opposite position, his is 9 obviously and there aren't that many 9s and I'm always looking to see if anyone is slightly better than me or what they are better than me at. I mean, I'd like to think I'd progress onto the next stage but I don't know, if I'm wrong I don't know but I'd like to think so yes.'

Phil was a thinker, he thought about everything he did and when I sought advice about the best way to take the research project forwards he had a clear idea about how this could be done,

Me   *'What I am trying to do is to find out the best way to understand what it is like for you guys…… have you got any ideas about other things I could try to do?'*

Phil   *'I'd probably say from my point of view it would be like when you get released from these things how you feel then and how you then persevere with the sport, whether you drop it or whether you just try so you are like oh right I'm just gonna get back there I'm going to try my hardest'*

Me   *'So stick with people along the way?'*

Phil & Rowan *'Yeah'*

Phil even thought about how if he didn't get to the next stage what that experience might mean for me,

'So good and bad. Because, say this is good for you, say if I don't get in but Rowan gets in then you can obviously compare the two things couldn't you?'

Thinking It Through

The next stage was County and the Coaches had made sure that all the boys knew where they stood,

'If you don't get into County then you are basically out of it altogether so if I don't get into County or to the Junior Development Squad, which is the next thing as well as County then they just say, you are off their radar. ………………… They don't really look at you anymore because obviously if you progress there will be someone to look at you but if I don't get into anything you are a kind of outcast so you don't really mean anything to them anymore.'

Phil had to get through the District trial, if he got into the District side then he could go to the County Trial. Rowan on the other hand had been told that he didn't need to go to the District Trial, he was already past that stage. Phil knew that in the coach's eyes Rowan was ahead of him. If Phil didn't get into District that would be it, it was a big deal and he was nervous.

After The Trial

4 days after the trial the District Squad was published,

'It took ages, I tried to take my mind off it but when, yes, when it means a lot you can't really do anything. It was break, I was outside passing the ball about and Bryan (another of Phil's friends who also attended the trial) got a text from his Dad saying the teams up on the website, you are in. So I said I better have a look then, I scrolled through the names and I wasn't there.'

Phil didn't make the squad!

Now it was my turn to think about it. I had agreed to meet up with Phil to talk about the trial and whenever we met it was always Phil and Rowan together, but now I wasn't sure if that would be ok, I needed to check,

'If you don't want to talk about the District trial when Rowan is there just let me know & we can either leave this or talk about it another time.

'Hi its fine I am okay with it

Thanks Phil'

When we met Phil and Rowan had already talked things over, now Phil explained that he didn't really know where he stood.

'My thought straight away was that because for the County Under 15 squad if you want any chance of getting anywhere close to it you have to be in a District or at least I think

you do? ………………………………………… *I'm still in the ERDPP set up which is good and I'm going to obviously work really hard to stay in that and to play well and show them what I can do'*

Phil was determined to stay *'on the radar'*.

Target Setting

The ERDPP had given Phil a diary and after each session he would take it home, write down what he had learnt, reflect on what he had been good at, think about what he needed to improve on and plan where and how he would do it.

Phil liked the diaries, he thought they were good, he had an analytical mind and he liked to set goals,

'Yes it is good because you pinpoint what you are not so good at and you need to improve on so if you put that all together, it makes you a better player for the future.'

Phil used his diary a lot *'you just need to keep doing that, that's how you are going to improve as a player,'* he wanted to learn and he took advantage of every opportunity:

At school he was selected to play for 7s for the year above,

'The experience in playing with a good team, it affects how you play, I thought it was quite good because they are quite a strong team. Just talent wise I thought it was quite good because it improved my skills and my mind for the game I thought was quite useful.'

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He watched his older brother play,

'I also look at Barry because I admire his pace and that is something that I want a bit more of and how he does things well but also how he needs to improve in certain areas like maybe his kicking . He'll come off the pitch and ask how did I do and I'll tell him what I thought'

He listened to his Coaches,

'What I thought they were trying to put across quite well was how would you think of the game and how would you think of the outcome and what move to do where you do like a scissors or you go yourself or the pass or the support play, that is what they try and get you to do and not just run the ball in and probably lose it. So yes I've thought about that quite a bit'

He learnt from everything that the Talent Development Programme had to offer,

'I did enjoy the rugby but I did also enjoy the seminar so the goal setting as well as I thought that was really helpful.'

He practised,

'We were passing the ball in the garden the other day and he (Barry) was just showing me something that he'd been taught at County level just about the general follow through the ball and make sure you don't hook it and things like that. That was good because he taught me a lot about that and I didn't really, I knew but I didn't really apply it really as much as I should have been doing. So that was quite good.'

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And when he played he tried to challenge his opponent with his mind,

'I just try to put my view on the game because they might not be the best sort of thinker'

As the weeks went by I asked Phil if he thought this was helping:

Me   *'Do you feel that it does make a difference to you, setting these targets?*

Phil   *'Yes definitely'*

Me   *OK, just if you can elaborate on that a little bit for me because how often is that in your mind then?*

Phil   *'It is always there, because there is always something I need to work on unless I say for like passing it is not just going to happen overnight is it? So it is always there'*

Phil was studying hard, he used his targets *'almost like a checklist to see if I've done everything that I could have done'*, and his Coaches were starting to take notice,

'He said for example when you are in the game situation and you are in game play, I can see that you understand the game exceptionally well and you try to help the other players around you.'

The Coaches decided Phil deserved a second chance and even though he hadn't got through to the District he was put forward for the County Trial,

'It turns out that I got told that I have got another trial!'

Phil thought about the trial and decided to email the selectors,

'I was thinking to myself I want to give myself the biggest chance of being able to get in ……….so I decided to send an email and just said look I've also played back row a couple of years ago so if you could take that in consideration that would be good.'

Trials and Tribulations

Phil did everything he could to prepare himself, mind and body were ready. The trial started and first up was the skills session,

'I thought I performed reasonably well, I didn't do anything wrong just sort of trying to go through how I play and reflect on how I'd done and sort of improve.' Next it was time for the games, *'I was thinking to myself, I need to really stand out and get involved.'*

The Game

Phil received the ball and ran straight at the player in front of him ……………………. ..……………...…………………………. The next thing, all he could feel was pain,

'He smashed his hand onto the bridge of my nose and I thought I'd broken it.'

The trial was pretty much over for Phil. He tried to play on but,

'I didn't want to make any tackles, I thought it was really bad………………………… just knocked my confidence completely, I didn't really want to get involved after that.'

It was a couple of days until the squad came out. Phil didn't get in again.

The selectors sent Phil an email and in it was a surprise, a second, second chance! The coaches had recognised what had happened and so had decided to invite him to the first County training session to be assessed again, a third chance to show what he could do! Phil did what he always did, he thought about what to do,

'Another thing, that I have sort of taken from the trial and not really succeeding is I've sort of set myself some targets to meet after the trial was that every game I play of rugby so whether it was for club or for school, which I've tried to do, is really, really work on what I need to work on so that when it comes to February it is going to be easier for me to get stuck in. Like at the weekend, we played ********** and they were hopeless, let's be honest and I really tried, I scored two tries. I was really happy with myself and that is what I needed and confidence wise I needed to sort of build up again and I was trying to work on the side of the game that I need to improve so running with the ball, tackling stuff like that. I thought I did alright in all fairness I thought I did alright and then at club and at training and at school I try to critique everything that I've done and say next time I need to be more aggressive or next time need to pass the ball better and stuff like that and so in a way I am sort of happy, like I said I am happy that I've not succeeded because it has made me realise that it is not going to come easily I need to really work for it.'

After the third trial Phil waited for the result. The result came and then Phil thought about the research project,

----Original Message-----

From: Phil

Sent: 18 February 2015 15:18

To: Graham Turner

Subject: County re-trial

Hi Graham

*Just wanted to let you know that after the re-trial last week I got into the ********
squad, and have my first match this weekend.*

Thanks Will

Sent from my iPhone

Split Decision

George is 17, he plays Rugby Union and throws the Discus. In 2014, when he was an Under 16 he was picked to play Rugby for England Saxons and to represent England in the Schools International Athletics Board Championship.

George has been doing two sports for quite a while. He started out playing rugby aged 6 and took up Discus a few years later when he was about 12. He has done really well in both and by the age of 16 he was ranked UK No.1 in Discus for his age group and had also become a member of a professional Rugby Junior Academy. The question that George is always asked is, *'Which one are you going to choose?'* but for the moment he thought he had, *'another couple of more years at juggling'* and he had yet to make his mind up,

'I think I could probably, probably be quite good at both so I think something is going to happen that makes me choose one of them but at the moment I don't really know.'

For the moment George didn't need to choose because things were going well, very well infact! In Rugby he was picked to play for the North of England, *'Bouncing off the walls! Buzzing! #rugby'* (Twitter) and when he put on that England shirt it was the,

'Best moment of my life so far' (Twitter)

The game for North went well, George was invited onto the England Rugby Training Camp, *'An amazing weekend spent with some fucking amazing people'* (Twitter), which culminated in selection for the England Saxons to play against France,

'Unbelievable experience playing for the England Saxons, one I'll always remember and hopefully not the last #WellingtonFestival' (Twitter)

George was proud of his achievements in rugby, he had worked hard to earn them, especially as this was his first year of doing Winter training for Discus at the same time. Previously George had done a Summer of Athletics then a Winter of Rugby, and then tried to get back into Athletics as fast as he could. He'd done that for the past 3 years but it hadn't worked very well. Last season in his opening competition he had done two no throws then on his third, a standing throw thrown 33 metres. Over the season he had increased his distance to 54 metres but that wasn't the way it was supposed to happen. This year he wanted to start high and gradually increase,

> *'It's such a technical sport you can't take 6 months out and try and come back your technique completely goes out of the window, so with me having quite a big year this year I wanted to kind of do a winters training so, training nights are normally for me Tuesday night, Thursday night and then weekends are both Saturdays and Sundays whenever I am not playing rugby or...'*

As the rugby season came to an end George had his Academy end of season review, the club told him that they were pleased with his progress and that,

'They understood that this year was gonna be quite a big year for me with athletics so they just said if you've got anything big coming up just let us know and we'll let you have a lighter week of training so..'

Now it was

> *'Getting close to athletics season*#buzzing #missedit' (Twitter)

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and George was getting excited, '*Now rugby's finished, I can pretty much focus 100% on discus until rugby starts again.*' The English Schools Championships were in his sights, he had been three times before but the competition always came early in the season and he never felt like he had done his best. Last year he came 3rd.

'*From the English Schools, if you come first or second, you have the Schools Internationals, where you compete for either, England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland.*'

This would be his last chance, he had to make it.

Coming to the Crunch

Winter training had brought dividends. George was throwing further and throwing well but now training was more intense and was becoming harder to cope with. And then came the injury,

'*It was just one competition, er after a couple of throws this, just had a really bad pain in my groin. Never had it before. Erm, left pretty much the next day was completely gone,*

George needed it to be right, he had Rugby pre-season fitness testing coming up!

'*So I went into testing erm, and I was completely fine with like the sort of straight line stuff. But it was like when you're having to come off lines, off maybe something like a bleep test, or a yo-yo test, I was getting that pain back. Erm and that's when I realised that it wasn't just a little tweak*'.

George reported his injury to the Academy staff,

'When I told them this is an injury that's come from athletics, they were again a bit angry about it. Because they expect their players not to do anything in the off season. So when you come to pre-season and you say, I've got injured from my athletics, they think that athletics is like quite a trivial thing and it's kind of like you're doing it for a bit of fun and if especially they don't know who you are in athletics. They can kind of overlook it and…'

July 2014

George began treatment, the English Schools Championships were only two weeks away and he had to compete,

'He's (the physio) being really cautious with it, because he thinks, he knows that a groin injury can come back and everytime it comes back, it comes back worse.'

Finally George got the all clear and was given a date to return to full training. The only problem was that the English School's competition was the Friday before! George explained to the physio how serious the Athletics was. The Physio said that it was his decision and he would have to,

'suffer the consequences.'

George knew the club was,

'Quite hostile towards athletics. They just didn't understand the, what sort of competition it was and it's not one of those things you want to miss.'

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but he was always going to go.

The Competition

George knew that if he threw at his best he would win but going into the competition he hadn't been able to throw for 10 days. Normally he could deal with pressure really well,

'But it's when I put pressure on myself, that's when I normally struggle.'

George threw two no throws in the final and watched as his closest rival took the lead with a throw of 52.07m, a new personal best. George was really nervous, he knew that he couldn't force it, his groin was holding up but he just needed to relax, keep his technique together and make one big throw. George launched the discus,

'Normally discus throwers can tell er, as soon as you've released it, if it's going to be a good throw. You look up and you can normally tell if it's a good throw and you can get feedback from yourself, you actually feel like you've thrown it quite far.'

56.26m!

Just when it mattered he had pulled it off. First place was his, he had finally achieved what he had been striving for for three years and even better was to come, now next week he would get to represent England at the Schools Athletics Internationals in Cardiff. But first it was back to rugby!

Rugby

Back at training George checked in with the Physio, told him his groin was fine and then went to join the others,

'I'd just warmed up and he (the Academy Director) came over and said, "Oh, can I have a chat with you?" Erm, I was like, "Er, that's fine." So we go upstairs and he pretty much just gave me a bollocking.

He said that I was, "An okay rugby player." Which like I mean okay, pretty much means average. And that my "Athletics was just much better." Erm even though I'd pretty much out of three lads in my age down at *****, there was only three of us that played for the top two England teams.

But I was still just an okay rugby player in his eyes.

He asked me what I thought, erm and then he just continued and pretty much just, spoke about the club's ethos and stuff like that. And saying I was like undermining the club by doing it and like I just, all I could do was just sit there and think. Like the club doesn't do anything for me, they don't pay me, there's no sort of like financial or any support whatsoever. It's like I come to training, you turn me into a rugby player. I'm not. They don't really have any sort of like legal control over what I do. So it was kind of, I just had to sit there and listen to it really.

So that was about twenty minutes really, I just had to listen to what he said and then…

He actually said that for my punishment I wasn't going to train……for that day. So I came in for the warm up and he was like, "Oh, right, well, I want you to go home now."

I was probably just angry really. Angry and just a bit disappointed in the club, but erm, I'd given them so much over the last three years and tried to juggle both sports and tried to do it as best I could and they just couldn't, they couldn't fit it in at all. There was nothing there for them to help me with it.

I pretty much just finished what I was doing and then got a lift home.

I didn't feel like I deserved punishment……………………. there's not a need for them to bollock me about it at all.

Time to Choose

Two days later George went back in with his Mum for a Meeting,

'At that meeting he pretty much gave me the ultimatum of you're gonna have to pick one of them'.

George thought about it, he was getting tired of trying to do both and giving 50% to each. He was never going to get really good if he kept trying to focus on both at the same time.

He kind of seemed like he wanted me to make the decision, to say that I wanted to go down the athletic route really. 'Cause that was when I was there, that was when he said I was an okay rugby player, erm and that my athletics was like up here and my rugby was all the way down here. Erm, so when he was talking about it, it seemed that he wanted me to make the decision to go down the athletics route. But…

I hadn't decided at that point, no. But I, just in the lead up to it like they'd always been, like from pre-season, all the way through there'd be like a massive hostility towards athletics. Erm and it was just, it wasn't a very nice atmosphere to be in and especially when you're training, like a really intense environment like that. You wanna enjoy being, because it's not easy and you don't want to be somewhere where you don't actually like being there. I think pretty much after that meeting, I think I'd already made up in my mind that my relationship with them's is pretty much done now.

George was right and his prediction, *'I think something is going to happen that makes me choose one of them'* had come true. The sad reality was that George was still enjoying his rugby *'just as much'* as his athletics. He hadn't actually made a decision to stop playing rugby and he hadn't picked Rugby over Athletics, he had just decided that he couldn't carry on where he was anymore.

July 2015

George was picked as a 17 year old to represent Great Britain at the Under 20 European Athletics Junior Championships in Sweden. He qualified for the final and finished in a creditable 10th position. The Championships were on the same day that the school rugby team set off on their pre-season tour, but that was never going to stop George going with them. That same night he flew from Sweden to Johannesburg to catch up with the touring party. George hadn't given up on rugby,

'I still enjoy my rugby just as much as my athletics at the moment. I'm loving playing for school and that and I'd like to try get down on the England route again.'

Maybe rugby shouldn't give up on him.

Two Worlds Collide

Eboni has been playing netball for 5 years. She started playing for school when she was 12 and at 13 she played for District and County. At 14 Eboni was selected for the regional side and then promoted to the National Talent League Development Squad. At club she played for the Under 16's when she was 14 and her team made it all the way to the National Finals.

> *'We trained a lot to get there'*

Last year the club team missed out on the Nationals but this year it was *'the strongest it has ever been'* and qualified again. Now this was GCSE year for Eboni and the National Finals were during exam week but this was Eboni's last chance to go to the National finals and she wanted to be there.

Count Down

Eboni was really busy, the National Finals were just two weeks away but at the moment *'it was all exams'*. She was still supposed to be training with the Regional Squad and the Regional Coach didn't like anyone to miss so each player had had to send her their 8 week schedule,

> 'A*ll our training, all our extra training, all our revision times and all our like exam timetables as well. It took ages, it took like three hours to fill out with the details she wanted.'*

That helped though because now there was,

'Less regional training, I think she's decided if it's too close to an exam then we don't have to come in but we can't miss all of them obviously.'

Especially with the school work because,

'Your parents are telling you to revise. There's a lot more pressure and it's more. You have to have good time management around this time definitely.'

Eboni was focused on her exams, she hadn't had time to think about the Nationals,

'I think the career side and netball side is completely different in my head that is like two different worlds to me.'

But last night at training the kit was given out and now it was starting to feel real, it was getting close. All of a sudden Eboni felt like she was under pressure,

'A lot more pressure.'

'Netball First'

Last night the Club Coach had told them that she had added in three more training sessions,

'Around six exams! They added one on Wednesday and they added on one for next Wednesday, but I had two exams like the day, the night before, the night after! So I'm just struggling to get revision in.'

The pressure was mounting, exams were bad enough but now the coaches were making it worse. She talked to the other girls about it,

'Yeah we talk about it a lot I think.

Last night, 'cause we've all had our History exam today……and a lot of girls had the PE exam in the afternoon. So I think we were just talking about how much work we got and I think some of them had ten exams this week and then they were doing like double the training.'

They had thought about missing a Regional session but that wasn't going to be easy either,

'Cause I think she wasn't very happy with the fact that we'd missed one anyway. She'd already had words with us. 'Cause she was saying…like, "If you want to progress in the programme and get further in this level, then you have to come to the next few sessions.....or next year will be very difficult." And things like that.'

'She kind of knows we have exams but still expects us to go. So if we had an exam on the Friday, but we had weight training on Wednesday, she'd expect us to be there. But she still might expect us to still go for an hour on the Wednesday, if the exam is on a Thursday for example.'

'Netball's first' is her favourite phrase.

So it's a lot of pressure I think, when she says things like that.'

The Club Coach wasn't as bad as that though, she was more relaxed,

> *'She doesn't tend to shout at us very often, but she expects us to be at training*
> *all the time.*

> *And even if we're injured we're expected to be at the training.'*

Nationals Weekend

Eboni's team came fourth, fourth best Under 16 club team in the country and that was a great way for Eboni to end Junior Netball. It was a really good achievement, especially considering they had gone without their coach,

> *'It wasn't our usual coach, 'cause our usual coach is pregnant and I think she*
> *had the baby this other week when we were down there.'*

Fair Play

Eboni had a really good time at the Nationals, she was picked to start and got plenty of time but she was well aware that that wasn't the case for everyone. Twelve girls made the travelling team but,

> *'some girls didn't even get picked to go down.'*

And of the twelve who did go,

> *'Some girls didn't get to play.'*

Eboni thought about the other girls,

> *'I went down with one of my best friends and she only got a quarter for the weekend.*
>
> *I think she enjoyed it anyway, but you don't really talk about it. ''You didn't really get played that much''. It's not really a conversation anyone really has.'*

But Eboni did have a particular view on that, and she didn't see it the same as the Coach,

> *'I think, to begin with she put the strongest team out, which I would have agreed with. 'Cause you don't know what the teams are like. But when it got to the third quarter and we're miles ahead.........and there's no way we could lose like by that much in a third quarter. You bring on other players, try different combinations for other matches.*
>
> *So there would have been chance to do that if she had of wanted to. Yeah definitely and if we had of lost it by a ridiculous amount and you want to get it back again, you put your strongest team back on for the fourth quarter. That's how I would have thought to do it. But instead she kept like the strongest team, like the main team on.........for most of the matches.'*

Senior Netball

At Eboni's club there was no Under 18 side, so if she wanted to stay she had to trial for the Seniors. That was really hard because now she had to compete against professional Super League Netballers just to stay at her own club. Eboni came through the trial

though and now she was in a squad of 30 or 40 players. This brought a new dynamic, a much higher standard, but although the competition was tough some things were just the same,

'It has kicked off a bit with Club.

No one was turning up to training because everyone does so much training (which) clashes with other things.

Yes, so it clashes with the Super League, a lot of girls got into England this year so if they have an England camp at the weekend, England says you are only allowed to play three hours a week leading up to the England camp and after the England camp as well so they have half an hour in training then they leave so then no one is coming to training and I think they were really annoyed because at one point, they couldn't get a squad out for a game but that meant they had to forfeit the game which cost the club money and obviously a reputation thing.

So then we had our head coach, who is a big Super League manager, and coach as well, come in to try and shout at all of us saying why were you not in training, why are you not turning up for matches and things like that. There is a three strike system so if you miss three training sessions in the year then you are out of the Club completely. The issue was that, everyone who was there being shouted at are the people who are there every single week, and people who weren't there being shouted out were the people who needed to be shouted at.

Most of us come into training all the time.'

Planning Ahead

Eboni still lives in two worlds, and she is still working hard at getting better at Netball but,

> *'I don't think I'd ever go England level or Super League or professional like that'.*

At school Eboni is studying for 4 A Levels and,

> *'It is a lot more, it is harder and the exams which I didn't realise how much I had to revise. I usually I would revise the week leading up and I'd be fine but then I can see the difference definitely. But it is fine, it is I just need to manage my time even more now so if I have got a spare hour, I can't just chill out, I just need to actually do work.'*

Just lately one of the teachers has been a little concerned about Eboni's workload,

> *'So she said write out your schedule for me and she said it was a bit ridiculous so, are you thinking about dropping a subject and I just said no.*

> *Because I want my 4 A-Levels'.*

Eboni has a plan, she is headed to University and she knows what she wants to study,

> '*Human Rights Law.'*

Eboni's two worlds may have more in common than she realises.

Learning to Play the Game!

In this study the descriptive accounts of young people's experience of being in a sports talent development programme demonstrates that the emergence of self presentational behaviour is particularly relevant to the context of talent development in sport where continual evaluation is a critical component of the talent development process.

>
> Me   *Did you get an impression they were looking there?*
>
> Steve   *Yes, I got that. ……………....The people that actually made the decision weren't (looking) in the warm up (and) skills bit, they were just watching the game at the end.*

Steve's description of his experience during a trial demonstrates how in a specific sporting situation the young person can become acutely aware of the attention and focus of the observer. This demonstrates that young people not only learn to look for when they are being watched (watching the watchers) but also that they learn to make judgements about the relative importance of what is being watched, by whom and when: 'Preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of the day' (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 94).

Work by Watling & Banerjee (2007) examining children's use of ingratiation and self-promotion as differentiated self-presentational tactics has found that younger children (children aged six to eleven years) orientate strategic behaviour towards ingratiation (likeability) in order to influence positive social evaluation. However at around the age of ten years old, the research shows that children begin to demonstrate increasing levels of interpersonal motivation, and self-presentational behaviour then starts to change as young people begin to recognise that self-promotional tactics can have a more

instrumental function in relation to the judgement of competence. Research examining children's concerns about their public identity and the effect of social relations on emotional development now allows academics to confirm that self-presentational behaviour increases with age (Banerjee et al., 2012), however the same research also confirms that 'virtually nothing is known about the social contexts that are likely to play a role in this emergence' (Banerjee et al., 2012, p. 1806).

According to the evidence stated by Watling & Banerjee (2007) it is therefore pertinent to recognise that depending upon the age, development and experience of a child, performance within the talent development environment may or may not be influenced by goal directed behaviour where the display of the young person is designed specifically to appeal to a particular audience (Payne, 2011).

Making an Impression

Self-presentation is also referred to as impression management and this concept relates to the phenomenon where young people learn to adjust their behaviour to conform to the expectations and values of important others in the group within which they seek to belong (Huang & Chun-Liang, 2014). Self presentation therefore represents an active attempt to selectively project aspects of the self with the intention to maximise the potential for creating a positive impression (Prapavessis, 2004). The work of Watling & Banerjee (2007) demonstrates that the development of self presentational tactics is specifically related to social contextual factors. In sport, when the young person accepts an invitation to enter a talent development programme, engagement is premised upon the acceptance of having been judged. Interaction is then motivated by a form of co-operation that is driven by the agenda of the adult led talent development programme and enabled by the co-operation of the child and in this circumstance the young person

'must keep up their good reputation in order to keep being chosen to participate' (Engelmann et al., 2012, p. 6).

Participation in the talent development environment exposes young people to a unique set of social and emotional challenges (Levy & Plucker, 2003). Research that has looked at the experience of 'gifted and talented' individuals confirms that success brings its own set of problems which result from and then impact upon subsequent development. Intrapersonal challenge has been attributed to the development of heightened public self-consciousness where sensitivity to the importance of social evaluation combines with social motivation to create increased understanding of self presentational behaviour (Banerjee, 2002).

Peer Learning

In this study Josh's account demonstrates how experience in the context of talent development in sport may contribute to the process of self presentational motivation.

Josh	*But it's quite interesting seeing the other anglers, especially the ones that have been at it a lot longer than me. Because they, when they conduct themselves around the coaches, they're completely different to what I'm like. They're all nicey, nice to them, where I don't really speak to them. I just get on with it.*
Me	*Right.*
Josh	*But they're all talking to them while they're fishing away, while I'm trying to concentrate.*
Me	*So the lot are almost impression managing?*
Josh	*Yeah. I think at the end of the day, I think that's really what it's about. I don't think it's about your fishing. It's how you look, how you conduct yourself and have you got all the best gear you can get?*

Banerjee & Yuill (1999) investigated the effect of peer experience with children in school and found that recognition of self presentational motivation in others was linked

to individual cognitive development and increased understanding of the motivation behind behaviour. This research examined children's capacity to understand the self presentational behaviour of other people and demonstrated that differential levels of success could be attributed to time spent and experience in a specific social setting (Banerjee & Yuill, 1999). The research suggests that self promotion requires the individual to recognise how to impress and this ability relies upon the development of self-awareness (Banerjee & Yuill, 1999). Research confirms that young people with greater context specific experience develop a heightened sensitivity to factors connected to preserving reputation and public image (Goffman, 1990). Studies on self presentation have found that this behaviour is not enacted in the same way for boys as it is for girls and that girls may be less likely to orientate towards self promotion and more likely to employ less overt styles of interaction (Watling & Bannerjee, 2007). From the perspective of phenomenology however it is important to stress that a unique exposure could be expected to facilitate a unique behavioural response.

Young People and Adults

Tawney (1931, p. 115) defines power as 'the capacity of an individual or group of individual's to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner which he desires' and this study revealed how 'talented' young people became subject to pressure exerted by adults who tried to influence them to act in accordance with their wishes (Lenski in Lukes, 1984).

Rowan	*Yes ## ####### got a bit annoyed, yes because we had a cup game that week and I wasn't allowed to play in it*
Me	*Oh because at that time you didn't know it (your thumb) was broken?*
Rowan	*Yes at that time I didn't know it was broken and then I said oh ##### don't want me to play this week and he said oh so you are their player now not ours and he got a bit annoyed*

Me	*And you are just caught in the middle of that are you?*
Rowan	*Yes I didn't know what to say to be honest, I just said to him, if it gets better then I'll play but if it doesn't then I can't help it and they just want the best for me and I didn't say it to him, but to be honest he should want the best, because he'd rather have me fully fit than not giving 100%.*

Rowan's example shows how the talented young person can be exposed to a situation where the wants and needs of the adult may relegate consideration of their best interests and when this happens, if the young person perceives that the influence of the adult is important they will not want to risk conveying a negative impression (Payne, 2011). In the vignette 'Standing Still but Moving Forwards' Dan's story demonstrates the potential power of the young person's desires, beliefs and attitudes to influence their behaviour in such a way that (by playing on with injury) they may find cause to put their own welfare at risk. Steve shared with me his experience of a similar scenario and in this example his response signifies the powerful influence of the coach.

Me	*So how aware of your injury situation was #######?*
Steve	*Yes he knew, he said to me before if it hurts don't do it but don't use it as an excuse not to do it and from that I took it well I'm going to have to do it then*
Me	*Right, that's interesting and so were you feeling it in the session?*
Steve	*Yes, but I just kept running because of what he said. I probably made it worse*
Me	*So from your perspective then, why is that?*
Steve	*It is because if you want to impress the coach, then you do not want to say, oh I'm injured can I drop out, you just want to keep playing because you don't want to look silly not doing it.*
	The coaches don't really care about your injury, like after I was injured for the first week, ###### asked if I was playing that weekend and I said no I'm out for another few weeks and he got really annoyed
Me	*Oh did he?*
Steve	*Yes, and I just said it's not my fault is it*

Me	*When you say he got annoyed, is it what he said or is it the way he reacted?*
Steve	*He didn't say anything he just got in a sulk*
Me	*OK, yes. Because when I get to the end of my research I'm trying to work out if there are things that don't work as well as they should, whether any advice could be given? I mean is there a way that that can be improved?*
Steve	*Well, all the coaches know about injuries don't they, they all know there are certain injuries, it's just they just want you to play, because they are so competitive, they always want to win so they just want you to play even though you are injured.*

In the talent development environment the behaviour of the adult teaches the young person that their behaviour is under constant scrutiny and research demonstrates that as children get older they are better able to recognise and understand the interpersonal motives that underlie self presentational behaviour (Watling & Banerjee, 2007). Here Steve makes an astute observation because of course whilst the adult would agree that it is unethical for the coach to compel a young participant to train or play with an injury, for the young person it appears that their response to such a situation is governed not by what the coach says, but by a motivation to safeguard reputation in the eyes of the coach (Payne, 2011). This finding has significance in relation to the welfare of the young person because whilst researchers focusing on sports injury prevention for the adolescent athlete continue to focus on physiological mechanisms (Rössler et al., 2014) the influence of self presentational behaviour has yet to be fully explored. The influence of context is confirmed by research that has found a significant relative risk for single-sport as opposed to multisport athletes (DiFiori, 2010; Ferguson & Stern, 2014; Hall et al., 2015) however current examination of athlete's self presentational concerns and the link with injury has focused on risk of premature return to participation. Findings in this study suggest that for young people participating in the talent development environment self presentational behaviour may also present as a risk factor that can contribute to the cause of injury.

Coaches and Young People

This research project found that in the sports talent development programme the sense that the young person made of their experience was greatly impacted by the nature of their social interaction with the coach. Self presentational behaviour proved to be a distinct feature of this relationship and the young people's stories demonstrated how this phenomenon could result in a disconnect between what the coach expected and was looking for and the response of the young person in relation to what they believed the coach was really looking for,

> **George**   *They do say you are here to develop as a player but ...**you're not**. They want to find who is the best at that time and they put them in a team, it's got ....very rarely are they trying to develop players, they are trying to develop a team which is going to win **for them,** which is very similar to the ####### set up, there is not alot of,.... they say they are trying to develop players but there is not alot of emphasis on trying to develop players.*

George's account of his experience in representational sport exemplifies this phenomenon as he reveals an inconsistency between the message promoted by his coaches and his perception of the experience received. Such revelations signify the importance of self awareness for the coach and the need for consistency between words that are spoken and message conveyed, for in the absence of open conversation the young person may respond with a form of strategic interaction that is orientated towards a personal rather than an agreed criteria for success (Lukes, 1984).

> **George**   *Yeah over the weekend we did reflection sheets after training, stuff that went well, stuff that we needed to work on. We didn't want to do it, it was kind if a chore. When they said oh you have to do your reflections sheets we were like oh great. But I was really, well I was quite annoyed that I didn't start because I felt that I was probably, I was a lot better than the loosehead who did start and I felt that the reason that he started ahead of me was because he probably had about 15 / 20 kg on me in weight, so that was probably.......*
>
> **Me**   *So did you put that in your reflection sheet?*

George	*Yeah yeah yeah (laughing)*
Me	*Oh did you?*
George	*Nah Nah.... I need to get bigger! Nah but yeah I was definitely annoyed about that*
Me	*So there are certain things, ...they are asking you to reflect on things but you're feeling that yeah I am reflecting but actually some of it I can say to you but ....*
George	*Um yeah*

The power dynamic within the talent development environment is such that when the objectives of the coach and participant do not align participation for the young person may feel more like compulsion.

Me	*Can you think of anything where you've gone along with things that you didn't necessarily think were the best way.*
Eboni	*Yeah, erm. We had a tournament, like a really small tournament a few weeks ago and they said, 'cause we lost one of the matches." They said, "If you have more of a chance of losing, if you have more of a chance of winning the whole thing, if we throw this match."*
Me	*Oh, really?*
Eboni	*And I was like, well what would be the point, why would we not. 'Cause if we won the match we'd have to play the first of the next group. If we lost the match we'd have to play the second of the next group. So if we won the second we'd have more likely of a chance of going on, getting further on in the tournament. So a few of us were like, well no, 'cause it's just wrong.*
Me	*Yeah.*
Eboni	*And in the end I think, she kept, she ended up switching and because we kind of said to her, "Well it's a bit wrong, we just want to play, we don't really mind about winning that much." And she ended up switching all our positions, so we were all out of place. So it kind of ended up us throwing the match and not by our own choice in a way.*
Me	*Oh, okay. So you did lose it then?*
Eboni	*No, I think we ended up drawing. So we didn't end up going any further anyway.*
	So it was kind of like karma.

In this example the negative implications of coach influence are demonstrated by one sided agreement resulting in acquiescence (Lukes, 1984). Arendt (in Lukes, 1984, p. 75) states that the fundamental phenomenon of power is 'the formation of common will in communication directed towards reaching agreement' so if the participant is to be orientated towards their own success it is essential that talent development is built upon an ideology of education for the true power of the talent development process lies within its ability to mobilise the participant to work towards the attainment of mutually agreed goals.

It is therefore necessary to consider self presentation as a reciprocal behaviour and recognise that the coach's ability to self-present will ultimately determine the young person's perception of their status and identity and so have a significant effect on the interaction with and response of the young person within the talent development setting. It is also important for the coach to recognise that what they think of the young person will be directly related to what the young person thinks of them and to understand that in a context of uncertainty the young person's self presentational behaviour will be modified in accordance with what he or she believes to be the goals of the coach (Watling & Banerjee, 2007). The impression that a coach forms of their participant then guides their perception, interpretation and expectation, whilst also shaping their affective, cognitive and behavioural response and interaction (Mrug & Hoza, 2007). Empirical evidence confirms that normative social cognitive development demonstrates within-group variability and research on special populations confirms that individuals at the extremes of variation may exhibit significant behavioural differences (Banerjee, 2002). It is therefore possible to speculate that there are occasions when a decision about the young person's future may be directly impacted by the success of his or her self presentational behaviour. Differential levels of self presentational ability also have

significant potential implications for the participant's rate of progress and developmental pathway e.g. a new entrant to the talent development programme may experience a higher level of transitional challenge because they have less experience of self presentational behaviour, whereas for the participant with a higher level of context specific experience self presentational ability may serve as an affordance that helps facilitate successful transition from one level, or even from one talent development programme in sport, to another (Banerjee, 2002).

Self Regulation

Within this study each young person has demonstrated an individual set of contextualised circumstances that has subsequently influenced the extent to which they have been able to take control of their own learning (Jonker et al., 2010).

George's Twitter account:

Mar 30	**First comp of the season little shaky but still 52m is a good start** #athletics #uk #numberone
Mar 30	**A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.**
Apr 1	**Shocker. Learnt a lot just need to push on from now.** #Athletics
Apr 1	**People that succeed are those that can turn a obstacle into a opportunity.**
May 26	**56.82m today, couldn't be happier! Also unofficially over 60m** #discus
Jun 1	**56.78 good series after a long day..** #discus
Jun 1	**Never wanted something so badly** #60m #GBvest
Jun 8	**59.09m!! Bouncing off the wall!! Still got bigger in me though!** #discus #britishathletics

Research that has examined differences in the abilities of talented athletes confirms that athletes involved in sport at higher levels have learnt to be more goal directed and more self conscious (Jonker et al., 2010) and research states that in order to secure continuous improvement higher level athletes learn to self regulate development by exerting greater control over feelings, thoughts and actions (Toering et al., 2012). Self regulation is defined as 'the degree to which individuals are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally proactive participants in their own learning process (Risemberg & Zimmerman, 1992, p. 98). Within this definition the term metacognition refers to the individual's awareness of and knowledge about their own thinking and George's Twitter account provides an example of engagement in an active process of metacognition that appears to have combined with self motivational behaviour to support learning and progression. Self regulation is not however a discrete mental ability, rather a process that is dependent upon the individual's ability to learn to effectively apply knowledge through the selective use of specific skills (Zimmerman, 2002). These skills include:

'(a) setting specific proximal goals for oneself,

(b) adopting powerful strategies for attaining the goals,

(c) monitoring one's performance selectively for signs of progress,

(d) restructuring one's physical and social context to make it compatible with one's goals,

(e) managing one's time use efficiently,

(f) self-evaluating one's methods,

(g) attributing causation to results, and

(h) adapting future methods'

(Zimmerman, 2002, p. 66)

Expert learners possess high levels of self efficacy, self attribution and intrinsic motivation which in the sporting context translates into a belief in the ability to learn

and perform successfully (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007); a belief in the ability to control outcomes (Coffee, 2010); and the application of self determined motivation (Pope & Wilson, 2012). Developmental journeys of participants within this study provide various depictions of the way that young people self regulate their development by seeking out specific environments,

Phil   *'At the end of this season I think I am going to move to ######……*
            Yes it is a much better team',

and creating specific structures to optimise learning (Zimmerman, 1990).

Eboni   *Time management is the only way I'll ever get anything done otherwise I end up just leaving it. But if I set myself out what I need to do every day, then I'll get it done and it's fine.*

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	
Early Morning	School	School	School	School	School	Work	S&C	
Mid Morning	School	School	Revision Class	School	School	Work	Revision	
Lunch Time								
Afternoon	School	School	Alternative to Practical Science Exam	School	School	Work	Revision	
Early Evening	Science Revision Class	Art Catch-up Class	Games – Athletics Training	School	Travel Home	Work	Revision	
Late Evening	Regional Training	Conditioning/ Gym	S&C	Club Netball Training		S&C/ Revision	Travel to School	
TRAINING / PLAYING TIME	2 Hours	1.5 hours	2 Hours	2 Hours				7.5 Hours
NETBALL TRAVEL TIME	1 Hour	Nil		1.5 Hours				2.5 Hours

Figure 11. RPA Athlete Programme Plan 1 W/c Mon 5th May 2014
        Athlete Name: Eboni

Expert athletes are distinguished by superior self regulatory skills (Jonker et al., 2010) and research states that the level of learning achieved in sport varies in response to the absence or presence of these skills (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). Self-regulation is a context-specific process not a fixed characteristic and studies on elite youth athletes demonstrate that in order to achieve set goals young people must learn to be self-aware, problem-focused and goal-oriented (Jonker et al., 2011). Optimised learning therefore requires the learner to be proactive, independent, resourceful, persistent, demonstrate initiative and take responsibility for their actions (Zimmerman, 1998). Research enquiry that has examined learning in talent development in sport has sought to connect with the learner's self image via a self regulatory model through three distinct phases:

> forethought - the processes and beliefs that occur before the effort to learn is
> > initiated
> performance - the process of behaviour that effects planned execution
> self-reflection- the processes that occur after each learning effort
> > (Zimmerman, 1998).

This research confirms that self regulation depends upon a multidimensional social process where self regulatory skills are developed by feedback and instruction from others such as teachers, coaches and parents (Jonker et al., 2010). The importance of self and the value of self agency in motivation and behaviour therefore appears to be of paramount importance to the talent development experience where, from the phenomenological perspective 'authentic agency is said to be in operation to the extent that individuals self select and define those external influences that appear most nurturing of self ' (McCombs & Marzano, 1990, p. 53).

Empowerment

The vignettes in this study provide examples from young people of the agency of self within the social context of talent development in sport. In 'Split Decision' George told how participation in two talent development programmes for different sports represented a form of personal authority (Spencer, 2014) that was not compatible with the agenda that the Head of the Rugby Academy wished to impose upon him. George's account of this experience demonstrates that ultimately the decision to opt out of rugby and just continue with Athletics was made, not because participating in both had become too difficult to manage but because he was no longer able to manage the relationship with the adult orchestrating his rugby experience.

> **Me** *So was this a conversation or was this just him telling you about what he thought?*
>
> **George** *Pretty much him telling me what he thought really. He asked me what I thought, erm and then he just continued and pretty much just, speak about ***** ethos and stuff like that. And saying I was like undermining the club by doing it stuff and like I just, all I could do was just sit there and think. Like the club doesn't do anything for me, they don't pay me, there's no sort of like financial or any support whatsoever. It's like I come to training, you turn me into a rugby player. I'm not. They don't really have any sort of like legal control over what I do. So it was kind of, I just had to sit there and listen to it really.*
>
> *I was probably just angry really. Angry and just a bit disappointed in the club, but erm, I'd given them so much over the last three years and tried to juggle both sports and tried to do it as best I could and they just couldn't, they couldn't fit it in at all. There was nothing there for them to help me with it.*

Within the talent development environment interaction relies upon an intersection of structure, (institutional norms, rules and beliefs) and agency (the ability of the individual to act in their own best interests) to promote individual autonomy and effect positive change (Pettit, 2012). The power of the talent development programme therefore lies within the creation of a common will where communication between

young people and adults is directed towards reaching shared agreement (Arendt in Lukes, 1986):

> **George** *The relationship between me and my athletics coach is definitely a lot more relaxed. Whereas I'm always trying to impress my rugby coaches*

Empowerment requires a sharing of power and when this is realised it can enhance both individual and collective capacity, support the development of self efficacy and promote wellbeing (Lawson, 2005). Knowledge of the social processes that underpin the process of empowerment for young people is currently limited (Mwaangaa & Bandab, 2014), but in this study participants have reinforced the value of the social support provided by family members who act outside of the talent development environment.

> **Laura** *My mum said that there is no pressure on me, because I told her how I was struggling and then she said there is no pressure and just enjoy it and do my best so that's what I tried to do and I didn't worry really*
>
> **George** *Yeah, yeah I spoke about it with mum, dad, brother and we had quite a good conversation about it and I ended up coming to the conclusion that I just needed to keep going*
>
> **Phil** *Parents, ……………yes they do obviously have, I mean I have the main input but they definitely have some sort of input*
>
> **Rowan** *My cousin is at a very high stage in rugby it is very good for me because I know what I need to do to get to where he is or even better where he is so I'll speak to him and I'll just ask him questions on what he needed to do and how he thinks I could help myself*

These examples demonstrate the importance of relationships to the experience of young people and depict social contexts where conditions have been created to provide each individual with the support they need to solve the problems that they face (Earnshaw, 2014). Research examining the provision of social support for young people in sport highlights the role of both parents and coaches (Sheridan et al., 2014) whereas this study distinguishes the potential contribution of the adult within the talent development

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programme by signifying their ability to empower as opposed to support (Gersch et al., 2014).

The concept of empowerment comes from the Latin word 'potere' which means "to be able" (Grealish, 2013) and empowerment is defined as the process that enables an individual to make an informed decision, exercise their own choice and take charge of their life (Grealish et al., 2013). Empowerment for young people is therefore reliant upon the establishment of democratic relations where interaction is built upon the principles of cooperation and collaboration (Greig et al., 2014; Lawson, 2005). In the talent development environment herein lies the irony for unless the adult has the ability to equalise relationships (Gong & Wright, 2007) s/he is unable to know if from the perspective of the young person, the process he or she has overseen has hindered or supported development (Jones, 2013). Josh's experience of talent development in Angling, 'Fishing in the Dark' provides an example of how within the talent development dynamic the relationship that is developed between young person and adult may conspire to keep everyone in the dark. In this scenario Josh's perception of his ability to influence outcome or control progress was reliant upon an autonomous decision to leave the programme (Jones, 2013). In this impression managed situation Josh's behaviour demonstrates how even when choosing to take control, consciousness of the need to safeguard future engagement influences interaction and in Josh's situation the adults involved were left with little appreciation of his dissatisfaction. Here Josh's account is consistent with the concept of dispositional empowerment where, acting in accordance with the social context the young person secures an 'episodic' moment of power (Spencer, 2014):

> **Josh**   *When I got over there they did ask if I was going to do the process again with the trials.*

Me	*Oh did they?*
Josh	*Yeah and I just said to them, "No." They didn't, they were understanding of my decision and they didn't force, they didn't try to persuade me to do anything. They were just like, "That's absolutely fine. We're fully behind you and it's quite a wise decision."*
Me	*Oh, okay.*
Josh	*I think that that's comforting that they've actually given me some feedback on it as well and not just said, "No, we're forcing you to do it."*
Me	*Yeah.*
Josh	*Which I thought was really good of them.*
Me	*So am I right in thinking then, as far as you're concerned you're still determined to go as far as you can?*
Josh	*Yeah.*
Me	*But you, but now they understand the way you want to do it?*
Josh	*Yeah, because they're understanding my plan.*
Me	*Yeah.*
Josh	*Which I think is always a good thing.*

In talent development in sport when the young person participates in a talent development programme success, as determined by the adult is premised upon judgement of performance rather than judgement of participation. Josh's account confirms how after his talent development experience, following failure to be selected for the National team he decided that the best way for him to keep developing was to opt out of the talent development programme. This example demonstrates how the young person may seek empowerment by choosing to disengage in talent development practice (Earnshaw, 2014) and George's story 'Split Decision' depicts a similar scenario. George explains how in the talent development environment the young person's consciousness of the adult's ability to influence their life constrains communication (Gersch et al., 2014) and this example demonstrates how concern for

the potential consequences of giving the wrong impression disempowers the young person within the talent development environment.

> **George**   *You're pretty much talking to the guys that are gonna decide whether you're gonna become a professional rugby player or not. So you don't want to say anything that's gonna put you in a bad spot with them really. Erm…*
>
> **Me**   *So that means that they don't really find out how people feel about things?*
>
> **George**   *No, no, probably not, no. I mean we never, ever really speak, I've never had an experience where they've spoke to players like if maybe if lads aren't training that well or lads just kind of like don't look there normal selves. There's never been a situation where somebody's pulled them out and said, "You don't look yourself today." It's normally just it all gets left to build up.*

Young people who successfully self regulate eventually become distinguished by their sensitivity to the social context and a proficiency in the ability to recognise how an adult may help or hinder learning (Zimmerman, 1998). The process of empowerment relies upon communication, collaboration and the sharing of power (Lawson, 2005) therefore it is essential that these conditions are created within the talent development programme. In this study participant's accounts of engagement with adults within the talent development environment demonstrate the value that young people place upon being listened to and understood (Grealish et al., 2013).

> **Steve**   *Yes, they are much better, much better coaches, yes.*
>
> **Me**   *OK, so what makes you say that then?*
>
> **Steve**   *They have one on one conversations with you about things like what they want you to do next game or how the last game went and they seem like they care a bit more and they are actually happy that we have done well*
>
> **Eboni**   *I spoke to my coach recently and said well I don't really the see the point in doing it anymore if they are not going to get any further so then we had a talk and she said I need to improve my fitness, which I did, and I needed to get to the next step and need*

> *to go through regional for another half a year, so I can get moved up to the next level which is RPA.*
>
> *So she has moved me up again, so I am half in regional and half in RPA.*

Me *Do you think he (your Athletics Coach) stepped it up as well? You said, "I'm serious." And suddenly he's thought, oh right…*

George *Yeah, definitely. Yeah as soon as he saw I was sort of making decisions to focus on it a lot more, he's given me a lot more time and he's given me a lot more focus.*

Previous research has confirmed that autonomy supportive relations are critical to individual wellbeing therefore it is essential that adults recognise that for the young person, if behaviour is to be truly autonomous it must be self endorsed, 'fully identified with and owned' (Ryan & Deci, 2006, p. 1561).

Laura *My coach didn't make the decision, I made the decision. Because I knew I'd do everything on the day so I just said, I'm going to compete and he said OK*

Josh *Well really, I take my fishing into my own hands............................. When it comes to making the decisions about what I'm going to do fishing wise. That's all down to me.*

George *I am in control of what I'm doing*

In this study young people's accounts of the lived experience of talent development in sport have demonstrated that active participation and personal empowerment are critical to both process and outcome.

Chapter 8: Exegesis

Introduction

An exegesis is a critical examination of a creative product that may be used to situate one's work in contemporary theory and practice (ECU, 2015). This exegesis explores the ideas, influences, decisions and events that resulted in the enactment of a phenomenological stance in this research project; discusses the ethical deliberations and subsequent tensions inherent in interpreting, analysing and representing co-participants' life experiences; and considers the presentation of creative work as research to examine the ways in which the scholar may seek to 'validate' the use of vignettes in qualitative enquiry (Bourke & Neilsen, 2000).

My Methodological Journey

The world of academia is by its very nature traditionalist and conservative and yet the paradox that energises it is the pursuit of significant and original contributions to knowledge, particularly through the PhD process of a major research project (Arnold, 2005). Qualitative research relies upon epistemological theorising that searches for alternative evaluative criteria in an attempt to make sense of, interpret or bring meaning to phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and at commencement of this PhD I stated an intention to find a way to engage with the young person's experience of being in a talent development programme in sport. My hope was that I could provide an alternative insight into this lived experience and so from the outset I sought to give voice to the individual (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) to enable him or her to describe just exactly what the 'real world' of the 'talented' participant was like.

Reflexivity is a critical component of the qualitative process and in this research project examination of my own subjectivity and its link to the process of data generation constituted an essential feature of the learning journey (Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014). The initial challenge I faced was with learning how to engage with the ontological perspective of the young person's contextualised experience when my perception of the world and how it could be known was still subject to influence from my previous affiliation with quantitative and post-positivist research methods. In the beginning I had only one definite tenet: that my co-participant's would orchestrate the research agenda. It may therefore be reassuring for any PhD student considering embarking on a similar undertaking to know, that at commencement of this project not only was I unable to confirm the theoretical construct upon which my work would rely, but also that I had no clear plan of what I intended to do. This was however far from reassuring for my supervisors! This was my first foray into qualitative enquiry and so whilst some viewed my proposal as a risk others went further to state that they did not believe it would work. It is therefore pertinent to state that in my experience the successful completion of this PhD relied upon the advocacy of a Director of Studies who was both committed to and aligned with the way of knowing upon which the research would rely.

The distance I had to travel to 'skill up' as a phenomenological researcher was significant and this is illustrated by a look back at the report from my Confirmation of Registration Event (21.12.12) where '*The panel agreed that the candidate presented innovative, original and coherent ideas that were substantially in advance of the emerging synthesis that was presented in the document*' and I was encouraged to return to my writing to attend to three key themes:

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- To provide a more compelling case for the research

- To clarify and conceptualise the research questions in relation to sport

- To refine the design/methods section, to create a realistic action plan for starting the research

This event marked a critical milestone for it was at this point that I began to think more deeply about the relationship between ontology and epistemology. The ontology of phenomenology is concerned with 'being' and what being is and so the ontological question must ask what it is that makes something distinct from other things (Converse, 2012). I had set out to look for a radical alternative to traditional understanding (Langdridge, 2007) but I had yet to demonstrate that I had secured a way to get to know the reality of talent development experience in sport or how to analyse what this experience might mean to young people. Engagement with the philosophy of phenomenology helped me to focus on the nature of reality as it is perceived in human consciousness and also provided me with a method of enquiry that allowed me to reflect upon my habitual way of thinking. I had begun as most academics would, by turning to the academic literature to identify bio/psycho/social variables relative to talent development in sport. Now I could appreciate the irony of this approach for in doing so I had in fact pursued the very same mode of knowing that I had set out to challenge.

The philosophy of phenomenology provided a framework that allowed me to firmly establish my ontological view and devise a philosophically congruent research design (Converse, 2012). Prior to this the assumption that I must confirm a plan from the beginning had encouraged me to operationalise my research project in a way that had muddied my intention and reduced my focus on the individual. Confirmation of my beliefs about what I could know now supported a focus on the study of experience

rather than the production of empirical or theoretical observations (van Manen, 1997) and with my epistemological premise secure I could proceed to justify emergent design.

The Phenomenological Stance

Eidetic or descriptive phenomenology is a field of enquiry that has been guided by the work of Husserl who advocated a way of knowing that relies upon phenomenological reduction (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Phenomenological reduction is also referred to as epoche or bracketing and this concept represents an attitude of mind that requires the researcher to narrow his focus in an attempt to 'bracket out' his or her previously informed understanding of the world (Held, 2007). This procedure presupposes that the researcher may enable temporary suspension of previously established bias, belief, preconception or assumption and thus be separate from the world in which s/he exists (Sanders, 1982). Heideggerian phenomenology represents an alternative form of enquiry which challenges the legitimacy of this premise and instead acknowledges the researcher as an integral element of the research process (Sandelowski & Boshamer, 2006). The methodological approach used in this study aligned with Heideggerian phenomenology to include a focus on the self (the researcher), the participant's and the text.

Sanders (1982) states that it is necessary for the researcher to learn how to engage in in-depth probing during the interview process and asserts that 'it is only after doing phenomenology that one begins to understand the meaning of intentionality, intersubjectivity, eidetic reduction, and how to practice epoch' (Sanders, 1982, p. 359). In this study, whilst recognising that I could not completely rid myself of preconceptions I sought to rely upon a process of reflexivity to heighten my awareness of researcher influence on the research process (Converse, 2012). Review of interview

transcriptions conducted at the beginning of the study demonstrated how, despite my best intentions the desire to become a non-directive listener was still a work in progress. In my first interview with Josh the opening exchange illustrated how pre-existing assumptions still influenced my thinking and showed how I struggled to bracket out thoughts about causal relationships (underlined).

Interview with Josh (20.1.14)

Me   *You remember what the project is about, it's about young people's experience on TD programmes.*

Josh   *Yeah*

Me   *OK, <u>but I'm interested in hearing about how you kind of got to that place first.</u> So the first thing, can you remember your first sports experience?*

Josh   *In the specific sport that I do?*

Me   *<u>No, just the first thing that you did</u> & then we will come to that aswell.*

Josh   *Right OK, erm probably when I was about 6 yrs old when we did PE, probably erm, that was probably the first thing I did. I think we did gymnastics or something and then it's obviously just snowballed from there really into different things.*

Critical reflection on this interview enabled me to see that I had been overly directive and also helped me to understand why in this example Josh's response had appeared a little contrived. Josh was a talented Angler, Angling was what he had come to talk to me about and Angling was about the present.

Engagement in participative enquiry taught me that in order to attract young people to share their thoughts and beliefs I needed to apply a method that held appeal for each individual (Warham, 2012). Pursuit of phenomenological representation requires the researcher to provide both explanation and reassurance to give each participant the opportunity to engage in their own agenda and the security to disclose their individual perception (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Ten months and many conversations later the opening of my discussion with George (21.11.14) reflected technical application of method that had far greater synergy with phenomenological consciousness,

> *I haven't got any specific agenda today other than what is happening on planet George at the moment!*

Ethical Practice

My research approach was based upon a value orientated strategy applied to ensure that the rights, feelings and interests of the young people remained a focus for ethical practice (Christensen & Prout, 2001). I wanted to develop deep relationships to gain richer data but I also wanted to foster reciprocal relationships to demonstrate that I was interested in each young person for who they were, rather than just what they could do or what they could offer my research project. As a result I built friendships that I hoped could endure outside of the 'research relationship' as each individual learnt to understand my intentions and trust my motives.

> Conversation with Eboni (20.01.15)

> Me *I have got enough data for my PhD but down the line I am interested to see how things work out so if say in six months or a year I drop an email, I don't know where I'll be let alone where you'll be, just to say I'll be*

> *interested to find out what is going on at the moment if you are OK with*
> *that?*

> Eboni   *Yes, that's fine.*

At the end of my study I spent time talking with each individual not just about their talent development experience but also about the experience of being in the research project. This included asking each one about how their understanding of what I was trying to achieve through the research had progressed and also asking each one if they thought that I now had a good understanding of what the experience of talent development in sport was like for them. Each young person assured me that they had directed discussion towards that which was meaningful for them and I committed to rely upon their voices as the primary source material to construct vignettes.

Research shows that by mid-adolescence young people are able to reflect upon past and present events and employ 'autobiographical reasoning' to communicate coherent and purposeful representations of their lives (Robinson, 2015). Autobiographical reasoning goes beyond mere remembering and allows for the construction of personal narrative to derive meaning and value from past experiences (D'Argembeau et al., 2014). I learnt that each individual had a unique story to tell and so accepted a responsibility to achieve descriptive accuracy through the creation of vignettes. Thus the process of interpretive enquiry was shaped by the concept of storying (Schlein et al., 2015).

Halák et al., (2014) asserts that phenomenological representation does not deal with what is self-evident or immediately obvious and instead focuses on that which is concealed or for the most part does not show itself. Therefore whilst each vignette relied upon the young person's reflection on individual interactions within their specific social environment (Bohn, 2011) it remained my responsibility to 'get back closer to the

nucleus of meaning of the thing itself' (Halák et al., 2014, p. 119). In order to achieve such representation I determined that it was necessary to 'give voice' to each young person through my portrayal of their reality. Nevertheless my role in the creation of vignettes did cause me to reflect upon the ethical dimension of this final process.

I had begun my research project with two objectives:

> To employ a participatory approach to enable young people to enact the agency of self within research collaboration, and

> To explore the sense of 'being' for young people in the field of talent development, to be able to promote adult understanding of the subjective nature of this experience.

My co-participants had taught me that youth empowerment occurs in the context of friendship and in an atmosphere of trust (Earnshaw, 2014) and they had entrusted me to represent the meaning of their experience. In order to promote adult understanding of the young person's sense of being in this context I therefore determined that it remained my responsibility to find a way to promote reader exploration of the young person's temporal consciousness of the lived experience of talent development in sport.

Judgement Criteria

Researchers who have studied writing and reader interest have concluded that it is the writers care for the character that makes the reader care about the story (Kendall, 2007). This research project was conceived precisely because I cared about young people and their sporting experience and ultimately, achievement of my final objective would be dependent upon my ability to represent the young person's experience in a way that could connect with and speak to the adult. I decided to put this ability to the test via

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poster presentation at Leeds Trinity University's Research Day (19.06.15). The poster presented my first vignette 'Fishing in the Dark' and it contradicted all design recommendations. The poster was all text, visually it held no appeal and in order to make the story fit the font had to be small. This was however a deliberate strategy where focus was on substance and writing style was put to the test. Two memories of this experience have stayed with me: a fellow academic spoke to me about Josh's story and told me that she had felt really upset for him when he had arrived at the England Angling trial only to be told that 'they had changed the lake!'; and when a senior academic from Loughborough University (UK) sought me out to ask if this work had been published, told me that the young person's voice was what was needed in this field of enquiry and said that he looked forward to reading my finished work. This academic had been invited to Leeds Trinity University on that day specifically to speak about the assessment of research quality in his capacity as a member of the Sports-related Studies sub-panel for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (UK). Feedback from both individuals was highly valued and audience validation (Loh, 2013) encouraged me to believe that my writing could help achieve what I had set out to do.

Qualitative research gains credibility from stories that are plausible (Barter & Renold, 1999) and enable the reader to recognise the experience of others having only read about them (Cutcliffe, 1999). The craft of storying relies upon the ability of the writer to arouse emotion and sustain interest in adherence with one single principle: 'the pursuit of verisimilitude' (Sanchez-Escalonill, 2012, p. 81). Sanchez-Escalonill (2012) asserts that verisimilitude is the quality of appearing true or real and pursuit of this quality requires the writer to search for recreations of life that connect the reader to the character using story to move him or her to reflection. The phenomenological hermeneutical method of interpretation lies between art and science (Lindseth &

Norsberg, 2004) and in this study I presented creative work as research through the production of vignettes that I proposed would stand alone and speak for themselves. This proposition does however connect to debate where tension exists between 'the status of the creative work as research that is being argued for in terms of research quantum (the creative project stands alone), and the model of the creative work as Research Higher Degree (which requires supporting documentation)' (Bourke & Neilsen, 2004, p. 2). When viewed in relation to an arts based ontology the vignettes in this thesis stand alone to provide a local interpretation of reality, valid within their own context whilst at the same time open to re-interpretation when translated into other contexts (Rolling, 2013).

In this thesis I did however take care to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the creative analytical process (Rodham et al., 2015) and subjected storied data to principled analysis (Loh, 2013). Use of a creative methodology represented a risk that I felt was justified by the intention to explore context specific experience to address social justice for the young person (Kearns, 2012). Sanchez-Escalonill (2012) asserts that the motivations of the writer are crucial to the credibility and excellence of the story. In this PhD my approach was underpinned by an ethical imperative (Sparkes & Smith, 2009) to listen to the voices of young people to produce research on talent development in sport that could be characterised by care for virtue and justice.

Conclusion

This research project supported a group of young people participating in sport talent development programmes to share individual views of their lived experience. The study relied upon a participatory approach to create conditions to support the agency of self through collaborative engagement with eight individuals.

Previous research suggests that adolescents are greatly influenced by how they believe their identity is perceived by others (Kang et al., 2015) and so they modify behaviour to safeguard and promote positive self reputation (Engelmann et al., 2012).

> 'Each person's response to another is based, in part, on that individual's impression of the other's personality, abilities, motives and other attributes. Thus people's outcomes in life depend to an extent on their conveying impressions that lead others to respond in desired ways' (Leary, 1992, p. 339).

Emergent design drew from a research approach that treated participants as conversational partners and gave each one a say in how the method should be developed (Earnshaw, 2014). During this process the young people revealed how self presentational behaviour was enacted according to social context and confirmed that reciprocal relations were key to co-operative engagement. In this project I made a conscious effort to equalise relationships in order to create conditions that would support the development of trust and rapport. Collaboration was built within a context of friendship and exclusive commitment was given to the perspective of the individual. Young people affirmed the value that they placed upon longitudinal commitment and empowering relations and emphasised how for them, it was important that not only did I listen to what they had to say but also that I shared their space and saw what they did. By allowing me to enter their world each participant helped me to better appreciate the temporal nature of the young person's being, engaging me in a dynamic reality where

interaction relied upon fluid organisation to facilitate observational windows and create conversational spaces (Eide & Khan, 2008).

In the talent development programme in sport the young person learns that their future will be determined by the impression they make on the adults who control their programme. Subsequently each young person learns to engage in self presentational behaviour in an attempt to ensure that the image that they portray matches the expectation of the adult. This research process has for the first time successfully encouraged young people to share their experience of the interplay between self presentational behaviour and talent development practice in sport to reveal the dynamics of social interaction in this specific context. The young people in this study revealed how their lived experience of being in the talent development programme in sport was shaped by interaction with adults (Earnshaw, 2014). Individual stories depicted how the behaviour of the adult taught the individual how to act and how for the young person their interpretation of and response to this influence came to represent the essence of their talent development experience.

The young people in this study affirm that in order for the adult to best serve the young person it is essential that he or she develops an understanding of the unique nature of what is it like to be a young person in a sports talent development programme (Levy & Plucker, 2003). Adults must recognise that within the talent development environment the young person's experience is subject to the contextualised nature of being judged and that each participant's response to experience will be determined according to their individual interpretation of a combination of social, cognitive and motivational factors (Banerjee, 2002). The principle task of phenomenology is to provide a description of the individual's relationship with reality (Halák et al., 2014) and in this study the essence of

the young person's experience of participation within a talent development programme in sport was found to reside within the social conditions of their lived experience. Ultimately for these young people their experience of talent development in sport was determined by the way they felt they were treated by adults.

The aim of this study was to achieve an interpretative representation of a young person's lived experience, using hermeneutic phenomenology, in order to express the essence of participation in a sport talent development programme. Each participant contributed examples of their perception of the challenges that were imposed by interaction with adults and signified the importance of supportive relations to help them develop positive identities. In this study young people's experiences of social relations with adults within the talent development programme were depicted through description of external interest, authority and power (Lawson, 2005) where the young person's ability to act was constrained and the right to participate in decisions that affected them was denied. Nevertheless, each individual demonstrated how they actively constructed their own learning, sought to develop a sense of agency and acted with autonomy to express their own uniqueness and safeguard their wellbeing. Whilst all participants conveyed their willingness and desire to participate in a process of dialogue, action and critical reflection to support individual development in their sport they also confirmed that authentic participation could only be achieved by a change in the power relations that existed between them and the adults who orchestrated their talent development experience.

Young people's identities, knowledge, capacities and skills are shaped within the context of the relationships they build and self belief is critical to the process of proactive learning (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). The self regulated learner

incorporates self motivational beliefs with task strategies to develop and apply self regulation processes and is influenced reciprocally by the results of those efforts (Zimmerman, 1998). The narratives of the young people in this study demonstrate that in order for them to be able to participate autonomously in their talent development experience change is required both at the level of agency and structure. The young people demonstrated how the experience of talent development extends beyond the time spent in training and competition and can come to influence every area of their life. This existence requires the young person to live in a reality where the expectation is that they are continually striving to improve performance and so for as long as they commit to meet this demand they will constantly search for ways to positively influence individual progress. The aim of the talent development programme should be to facilitate personal empowerment and the experiences of the eight young people in this study show how it is incumbent upon the adult to create conditions to support this process.

My co-collaborators have demonstrated that once young people are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate agency and execute choice the conditions for personal empowerment can be self created and that this process can serve both research and practice in talent development in sport. This study has demonstrated the significance of the individual's interpretation of their own unique experience and demonstrates how the sharing of personal perspective has the potential to empower the adult once they commit to support the young person:

> **Me**   *If you could have a conversation with the Head of the Academy right, and you knew that you could say anything that you wanted to him and it wouldn't be held against you and that he wouldn't judge you because of what you've said, what would you want to know from them?*

| Rowan | *What do you want me to work on, where do you think my weaknesses are; do you think you could help me with them?* |

When the young person is motivated to find solutions to the problems they face the key to collaboration is dependent upon the adult's ability to create conditions that promote engagement (Grealish et al., 2013). It is therefore essential that the adult understands that self is the basis of the young person's phenomenological awareness and intentionality (McCombs & Marzano, 1990) and learns how to engage the young person as a conversational partner in an attempt to see the world from their perspective (Earnshaw, 2014). By learning to listen, the adult must demonstrate that they take the opinion of the young person seriously and that the young person can influence their thinking. The adult must also recognise that the young person's sense of identity will be critical to the relation's that are developed; that the young person's ability to act is central to the temporal dimension of the young person's world; and that unification of perspective and action between young person and adult will be determined by their interaction.

> 'Communicative action is the medium in which the intersubjectively shared life world is formed' (Lukes, 1986, p. 78).

Essence

The young people in this study have revealed that the essence of being in a sports talent development programme is hard work.

| George: | Oct 22, 2013, 6:29pm via Web |
| | People that think sport is easy and don't know the amount of time and effort you have to put into.. #fuckingopenyoureyes |

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Experience in the sports talent development programme teaches young people what it is like to be judged and to live in a world where they are always on trial. In the talent development environment the relationship between young people and adults transcends sports and in this reality the adult controls the power to act. Young people learn that continued existence is dependent upon their ability to interpret and respond to the wishes of the adult and no matter how difficult life becomes they should not question the authority of the coach.

In order to empower young people it is necessary to understand what it is to be a young person and within the sports talent development programme the power of the young person lies within active participation where the individual has the autonomy to choose to adopt a practice or form of behaviour. This study has demonstrated that when young people are involved in active decision making about their learning and their lives they feel better respected and understood. From the young person's perspective the true power of the talent development programme lies with the potential to connect with their desires, beliefs and attitudes. It is therefore incumbent upon adults who work in this environment to find ways to make personal connections, to provide each young person with a voice and to ensure that each voice is heard, for this is the way to support self-regulation and promote personal empowerment.

My co-collaborators and I hope that the depictions of young people's experience of being in a talent development programme in sport revealed in this study may prompt a change to the social context through the promotion of holistic relations where respect is mutual, trust is established and commitment is reciprocated (Spencer, 2014). The power of the talent development programme may then be built upon a new ideology of

education where shared conviction empowers both adult and young person to become masters of their own learning.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Those who regard hermeneutic phenomenology as a 'mere' descriptive methodology fail to recognise its true nature as 'a critical philosophy of action' (van Manen 1990, p. 155). The findings in this study show how the phenomenological attitude can promote a different way of knowing and justify a call for researchers and practitioners working in the field of talent development in sport to embrace an alternative way of thinking. This study demonstrates that there is a need for adults to become more conscious of how their interactions with young people influence practical action, and asserts that effective engagement in collective action requires that the adult must learn to better understand the young person's perspective. Phenomenological engagement offers the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the young person's mentality but such knowledge can only be acquired if the researcher is open to the suggestion that if we are to truly understand what it is like to participate in a sports talent development programme then we must be 'suspicious of any theory, model or system of action that only gives (me) a generalised methodology, sets of techniques or rules for acting in predictable or controllable circumstances.' (van Manen, 1990, p. 155). Such a research approach relies upon a way of knowing that is premised upon the belief that every interaction is unique, that perception is personal and that reality is situated.

In this study the methodological approach adopted relied upon a set of principles that permitted each young person to be treated differently to ensure that all could be treated equitably and this resulted in the discovery of observable truths that were specific to the

lived experience of eight individuals. Research must now be undertaken with different participants in a wider range of contexts to further explore the conditions of the lived experience for the young person in the sports talent development programme. Such research must rely upon a style of thought that will allow the adult to revisit taken for granted assumptions to promote insightful thinking that can strengthen the connection between knowledge of the unique self and talent development practice.

Talent development in sport is a pedagogic practice which demands that the social relation between the young person and adult should be guided by principled interaction. This study has demonstrated how valid knowledge can be acquired through personal engagement and abstraction of the evidence in this thesis informs the following recommendations:

- Provide opportunities for young people to express and debate the issues that are affecting their lives
- Promote trust and effective communication with young people by getting to know them well
- Listen to and respond to young people's views on matters that affect their participation and performance
- Find ways to enable young people to influence practice and individualise learning to assure their health and wellbeing

By focusing upon the conditions of the young person's experience in general these recommendations stay true to the philosophy of phenomenology by not seeking to associate with factual or empirical relationships that may or may not be relevant to the specific process and practice of talent development in sport. These recommendations

transcend context focusing upon the relation between young person and adult to assert principles to guide the creation of conditions within society for the empowerment of young people. Ironically this exercise also aptly demonstrates how abstraction creates a distance that can disconnect from personal engagement and so these recommendations exemplify the need to find new and alternative ways to perform research activity that can secure original insights that can then be applied to specific situations.

Although the pedagogic situation is always unique in this thesis each young person's story has revealed a scenario that has called into question the nature and enactment of the social relation between the adult and young person within the talent development context. The experience of these eight young people has depicted a social reality that has challenged each individual to balance a compulsion to engage in self presentational behaviour with the desire to develop self regulatory ability. These findings require academics and practitioners alike to accept a responsibility to explore and engage with the unique lived experience of the young person's reality to find better ways to listen to the young person's voice and to support their talent development experience in sport. Personal empowerment is the young person's goal, self regulation is key and self presentation must not stand in the way.

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Appendix 1

School Information Sheet

Study title: My Talent Development Journey

Invitation to participate

My name is Graham Turner, I work for Leeds Trinity University as a Senior Lecturer in PE and Sport and I am also a parent of two children who attend ######### ##### School. I would like to invite a group of children at ######### ##### to take part in a research study. This project is for my PhD study with Leeds Metropolitan University and will examine the experience of young people on talent development programmes in sport. Before the school decides to give permission it is important to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, discuss it with others if you wish and feel free to ask any questions. Please talk to me (contact details at the end of this document) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish your pupils to take part.

Participation is entirely voluntary. There is no payment involved for participation.

Thank you for reading this.

Purpose of the study

I am interested in talent development experience in sport from the view of the young person. I want to find out how each child's talent development journey began? What he or she has done to develop their talent? What are their thoughts and feelings about their talent development experience in sport? The aim is to enable young people to share their talent development experience, to help adults learn how they interpret and respond to this experience, to better understand their mentality. Involvement in this project will also provide each participant with a great opportunity to listen to and learn from the experience of different talented performers in different sports.

Invitation to participate

Children will be invited to participate who are currently a member of a national governing body talent development programme. The study will focus on **the young person's** view of the talent development experience, not the view of their teachers, coach or parents.

Does a child have to take part?

Each child's involvement in this study is purely voluntary. The research is designed to be helpful and supportive whilst enabling each child to share their experience of talent development in sport.

It is entirely up to each child how they choose to share their experience and the amount of information they wish to provide. It is not expected that a child will discuss experience that makes them feel uncomfortable but it is understood that not all of the talent development experience disclosed may be positive.

What will happen if the school gives consent for pupils to participate?

Each child will continue with school and their talent development programme as they normally would. I will visit the school at a mutually convenient time to explain the study to the children and their parents. To participate in the study each child will require written consent from the school and their parents. Once consent has been given each child will be free to participate and must commit to meet me three times.

Meeting 1:
I will visit the school and with your permission meet all project members in a classroom where each participant has access to a computer. Each participant will be briefed on their task and given password protected access to an electronic portfolio system and shown how to upload, exchange and store information. The system will enable each young person to independently record the story of their talent development journey. The group will agree a timescale for completion and set a date to meet again to present their story. It is expected that meeting 1 would last no longer than an hour.

Meeting 2:
I will arrange to meet each young person in their talent development context, at a location of their choice, either in training or competition in the presence of a parent or coach or both. My role will be as an observer and with permission, I will photograph each child in their talent development context. I will then send the pictures to the child and invite them to select photos, either these or their own, to use at meeting 3 to show and tell the group about their talent development programme.

Meeting 3:
Project members will meet to share individual stories of their talent development journey and discuss their experiences. They will be asked to reveal how they got to where they are, what has happened along the way and how they feel about their experience. This meeting will be video recorded and it is expected that meeting 3 would last about an hour.

This study will be followed by another study called 'Talent Tracker,' which will then follow young people on their talent development journey in sport over an extended period of time. Your pupils may also be invited to participate in 'Talent Tracker' but they do not have to. More detailed information on 'Talent Tracker' will be provided before this study begins, to help you and them decide.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Access to members of a 'talented' group of young people is sought at a school specifically because this context is external to the sport specific talent development environment. The advantages of this approach are:

- In contrast to the typical talent development dynamic, within the research project the wants and needs of the 'talented' child can be prioritised as opposed to the wants and needs of the sport

- Engagement with the young people will not be influenced by the presence of stakeholders with a sports specific interest

- Each young person can choose to continue to be involved in the research process even if they exit the talent development programme

- Each young person will be afforded the opportunity to engage with and learn from 'talented' peers from a range of different sporting contexts

What happens to the research collected?

Observations and information will be recorded and stored in an electronic portfolio. Electronic data will be password protected and access to this data will be limited to the researcher and project members. Each participant will have the ability to upload material either to a private folder or to a shared space. No-one from the child's school or talent development programme will see the information. I will discuss the project with my supervisors at Leeds Metropolitan University but will not tell them the pupil's names, this will be kept private. Group discussions will be video recorded and down loaded to the pass word protected computer.

A thesis and academic papers will be written about the young people's experiences of talent development in sport. All contributions will be anonymised unless it is the express will of a participant to be identified in the research. Anyone reading the work is highly unlikely to recognise contributions by name.

Are there any risks in taking part?

The risk the pupils take will be the emotional risk of sharing their experiences of the talent development experience. Each young person can share as much information as they feel comfortable with and can therefore control any risks associated with this research. Sharing experiences should provide a positive experience for all parties involved.

What happens if a pupil does not wish to answer questions asked of them?

They do not have to answer any questions. They will be informed that what they say will remain confidential unless they wish to be named in the research and recognised for their contributions. Essentially, they control the amount of input into the research project. If they want to stop a discussion they can. If they decide not answer questions this is fine. Discussions will be as long or as brief as the young people want them to be and any observations will be discussed with each child you to see if they are happy about their inclusion.

What happens if a pupil wants to withdraw from the research?

They can withdraw from the research at any time. If they feel they do not want specific information or photographs included as part of the research they can tell me and I will ensure that these are not included in the research project. I want the young people to be absolutely happy with the research and see it as a positive sharing of experiences. If a pupil feels unhappy in any way at any time they must tell me and they will be able to withdraw at any time.

Who has given permission for this study to go ahead?

Leeds Metropolitan University has approved this study through a robust attendance to ethical procedures that form an important part of any research conducted at the university. This research project has been judged and approved by a panel of research experts from the university on the Carnegie Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Who do I contact for further information?

If you require further information or are unhappy about aspects of the research proposed or undertaken you can contact the following people:

The researcher	Director of Studies
Graham Turner MSc. B.Ed,	Dr. Dave Morley,
Brownberrie Lane,	Fairfax Hall,
Horsforth,	Headingley Campus,
Leeds Trinity University,	Leeds Metropolitan University,
Leeds,	Leeds,
LS18 5HD	LS6 3QH,
0113 283 7100	0113 81 26548
E-mail: g.turner@leedstrinity.ac.uk	E-mail: d.morley@leedsmet.ac.uk

SCHOOL CONSENT FORM

Study title: My Talent Development Journey **Name of researcher:** Graham Turner

Type of research: Observation and focus group

Please indicate YES or NO in the boxes provided by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. Don't forget to date and sign where indicated with a X.

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and understand what is expected of the pupils	☐	☐
I understand their participation is voluntary. I know pupils are free to withdraw at any time with no repercussions	☐	☐
I understand that every effort will be made to anonymise all data collected and pupil's names will not appear in this research unless they explicitly wish this to occur and their parent's agree (see statement below)	☐	☐
I confirm I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study of both the researcher and a person independent to this research and that these were satisfactorily answered	☐	☐
I give consent to any observational work involving ########## ##### pupils being used in this research	☐	☐
I give consent for group discussions to be recorded and transcribed for analysis	☐	☐
I give my consent for photographs and short video clips to be used as part of this research	☐	☐
I agree that ########## ##### pupils can take part in this study	☐	☐

Name of member of staff_____

Position_____

 Signed_____Date_____

Data protection Act

I understand that data collected about my child during participation in this research will be stored on computer and that any files containing information about them will be made anonymous. I agree to Leeds Metropolitan University recording and processing this information about my child's experiences. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose of this study and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the data protection act.

Appendix 2

My Talent Development Journey

Participant Information Sheet

Hi, my name is Graham Turner and I am inviting you to take part in a research project called 'My Talent Development Journey'. I work for Leeds Trinity University as a Senior Lecturer in PE and Sport and I am also a parent of two children who attend your school. This project is for my PhD study at Leeds Metropolitan University. I want to find out about talent development experience in sport from the view of the young person. I want to find out how your talent development journey began? What you have done to develop your talent? Your thoughts and feelings about your talent development experience in sport, now and as you progress?

I am asking young people who are current members of a national governing body talent development programme to volunteer for this project. The study will be based at your school and require you to meet three times. It will focus on **your** view of the talent development experience, not the view of your teachers, coach or parents. The project aims to enable you to share your talent development experience in sport, to help adults learn how you interpret and respond to this experience, to better understand your mentality.

Meeting 1: You will meet in a small group with the other project members. You will be given password protected access to an electronic portfolio system and shown how to upload, exchange and store information.

Meeting 2: I will photograph you in training or in competition to help me learn more about your talent development experience. It will be up to you when this meeting takes place.

Meeting 3: Project members will meet to share their talent development experiences. I want to know how you got to be where you are, what has happened along the way and how you feel about your experience.

Your story and all the information you supply (e.g. photos, personal opinions) will be stored in the electronic portfolio. You will have the ability to upload material either to a private folder or to a shared space. No-one from your school or talent development programme will

see your information. I will discuss the project with my supervisors at Leeds Metropolitan University but I will not tell them your name, this will be kept private.

This project will be followed by 'Talent Tracker' a study which will follow talent development journeys in sport. You may also be invited to participate in 'Talent Tracker' but you do not have to. More detailed information on 'Talent Tracker' will be provided in advance to help you decide.

It is important to know that this project cannot promise to help you make it to the top in your sport. Your view is important because what is learnt may help adults to help other

young people on talent development programmes in the future. This presents a great opportunity for you to listen to and learn from the experience of different talented performers in different sports.

It is completely up to you if you want to take part or not - YOU DECIDE! You do not have to take part in this project. It is up to you to say YES or NO. If you say YES you can change your mind later and STOP AT ANY TIME.

Do you have any questions?

Ask as many questions as you like at anytime, now or later. If you decide to say Yes to take part in this project you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will get a copy of this form to take home.

Researcher Contact Details: If you have any more questions and want more information about this project phone or text Graham on **********

PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

Study title: My Talent Development Journey

Name of researcher: Graham Turner

Type of research: Observation and focus group

Please indicate YES or NO in the boxes provided by ticking (✔) the appropriate box. Don't forget to date and sign where indicated with a X.	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and understand what is expected of me	☐	☐
I understand my participation is voluntary. I know I am free to withdraw at any time with no repercussions	☐	☐
I understand that every effort will be made to anonymise all data collected and my name will not appear in this research unless I explicitly wish this to occur (see statement below)	☐	☐
I confirm I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study of both the researcher and a person independent to this research and that these were satisfactorily answered	☐	☐
I give my consent to any observational work involving myself being used in this research	☐	☐
I give my consent for interviews to be recorded and transcribed for analysis	☐	☐
I give my consent for photographs and short video clips to be used as part of this research	☐	☐
I agree to take part in this study	☐	☐

Name_____ Signed _____

Date _____

Data protection Act

I understand that data collected about me during my participation in this research will be stored on computer and that any files containing information about me will be made anonymous. I agree to Leeds Metropolitan University recording and processing this information about my experiences. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose of this study and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the data protection act.

Name _____ Signed _____Date _____

Information Sheet for Parents

Study title

My Talent Development Journey

Invitation to participate

You son/ daughter has been invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to give permission it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please listen carefully to the briefing accompanying this document and ask questions if you wish. Talk to the researcher Graham Turner (contact details at the end of this document) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish your child/children to take part.

Participation is entirely voluntary. There is no payment involved for participation.

Thank you for reading this.

Purpose of the study

I am interested in talent development experience in sport from the view of the young person. I want to find out how your child's talent development journey began? What he or she has done to develop their talent? What are their thoughts and feelings about their talent development experience in sport? The aim is to enable young people to share their talent development experience, to help adults learn how they interpret and respond to this experience, to better understand their mentality. Involvement in this project will also provide each participant with a great opportunity to listen to and learn from the experience of different talented performers in different sports.

Why has your child been invited?

Your child has been invited to participate because they have been identified by their school as a young person who is currently a member of a national governing body talent development programme. The study will focus on **your child's** view of the talent development experience, not the view of their teachers, coach or parents.

Does your child have to take part?

Your child's involvement in this study is purely voluntary. The research is designed to be helpful and supportive whilst enabling your child to share their experience of talent development in sport.

It is entirely up to each child how they choose to share their experience and the amount of information they wish to provide. It is not expected that a child will discuss experience that makes them feel uncomfortable but it is understood that not all of the talent development experience disclosed may be positive.

What will happen if I give consent for my child to participate?

Your child will continue with their talent development programme as they normally would. The study will be based at school and involve three meetings.

Meeting 1:

Project members will meet at school in a small group. Each participant will be given password protected access to an electronic portfolio system and shown how to upload, exchange and store information. The system will enable each young person to independently record the story of their talent development journey. The group will agree a timescale for completion and set a date to meet again to present their story. It is expected that meeting 1 would last no longer than an hour.

Meeting 2:

I will arrange to meet your child in their talent development context, at a location of their choice, either in training or competition in the presence of a parent or coach or both. My role will be as an observer and with permission, I will photograph your child in their talent development context. I will then send the pictures to your child and invite them to select photos, either these or their own, to use at meeting 3 to show and tell the group about their talent development programme.

Meeting 3:

Project members will meet to share individual stories of their talent development journey and discuss their experiences. They will be asked to reveal how they got to where they are, what has happened along the way and how they feel about their experience. This meeting will be video recorded and it is expected that meeting 3 would last about an hour.

This study will be followed by another study called 'Talent Tracker,' which will then follow young people on their talent development journey in sport over an extended period of time. Your child may also be invited to participate in 'Talent Tracker' but they do not have to. More detailed information on 'Talent Tracker' will be provided before this study begins, to help you and them decide.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Access to members of a 'talented' group of young people is being arranged at a school specifically because this context is external to the sport specific talent development environment. The advantages of this approach are:

In contrast to the typical talent development dynamic, within the research project the wants and needs of the 'talented' child can be prioritised as opposed to the wants and needs of the sport

Engagement with the young people will not be influenced by the presence of stakeholders with a sports specific interest

Each young person can choose to continue to be involved in the research process even if they exit the talent development programme

Each young person will be afforded the opportunity to engage with and learn from 'talented' peers from a range of different sporting contexts

What happens to the research collected?

Observations and information will be recorded and stored in an electronic portfolio. Electronic data will be password protected and access to this data will be limited to the researcher and project members. Each participant will have the ability to upload

material either to a private folder or to a shared space. No-one from the child's school or talent development programme will see the information. I will discuss the project with my supervisors at Leeds Metropolitan University but will not tell them your child's name, this will be kept private. Group discussions will be video recorded and down loaded to the pass word protected computer.

A thesis and academic papers will be written about the young people's experiences of talent development in sport. All contributions will be anonymised unless it is the express will of a participant to be identified in the research. Anyone reading the work is highly unlikely to recognise contributions by name.

Are there any risks in taking part?

The risks your child takes will be the emotional risk of sharing their experiences of the talent development experience. Each young person can share as much information as they feel comfortable with and can therefore control any risks associated with this research. Sharing experiences should provide a positive experience for all parties involved.

What happens if your child does not wish to answer questions asked of them?

They do not have to answer any questions. They will be informed that what they say will remain confidential unless they wish to be named in the research and recognised for their contributions. Essentially, they control the amount of input into the research project. If they want to stop a discussion they can. If they decide not answer questions this is fine. Discussions will be as long or as brief as the young people want them to be and any observations will be discussed with each child you to see if they are happy about their inclusion.

What happens if your child wants to withdraw from the research?

They can withdraw from the research at any time. If they feel they do not want specific information or photographs included as part of the research they can tell me and I will ensure that these are not included in the research project. I want the young people to be absolutely happy with the research and see it as a positive sharing of experiences. If your child feels unhappy in any way at any time they must tell me and they will be able to withdraw at any time.

Who has given permission for this study to go ahead?

Leeds Metropolitan University has approved this study through a robust attendance to ethical procedures that form an important part of any research conducted at the university. This research project has been judged and approved by a panel of research experts from the university on the Carnegie Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Who do I contact for further information?

If you require further information or are unhappy about aspects of the research proposed or undertaken you can contact the following people:

The researcher

Graham Turner MSc. B.Ed,

Brownberrie Lane,

Horsforth,

Leeds Trinity University,

Leeds,

LS18 5HD

0113 283 7100

E-mail: g.turner@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Director of Studies

Dr. Dave Morley,

Fairfax Hall,

Headingley Campus,

Leeds Metropolitan University,

Leeds,

LS6 3QH,

0113 81 26548

E-mail: d.morley@leedsmet.ac.uk

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Study title: My Talent Development Journey **Name of researcher:** Graham Turner

Type of research: Observation and focus group

Please indicate YES or NO in the boxes provided by ticking (✔) the appropriate box. Don't forget to date and sign where indicated with a X.

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and understand what is expected of my child	☐	☐
I understand their participation is voluntary. I know my child is free to withdraw at any time with no repercussions	☐	☐
I understand that every effort will be made to anonymise all data collected and my child's name will not appear in this research unless they explicitly wish this to occur and I agree (see statement below)	☐	☐
I confirm I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study of both the researcher and a person independent to this research and that these were satisfactorily answered	☐	☐
I give my consent to any observational work involving my child being used in this research	☐	☐
I give my consent for group discussions to be recorded and transcribed for analysis	☐	☐
I give my consent for photographs and short video clips to be used as part of this research	☐	☐
I agree that my child can take part in this study	☐	☐

Name of child_____

Name of parent_____ Signed _____

Date_____

Data protection Act

I understand that data collected about my child during participation in this research will be stored on computer and that any files containing information about them will be made anonymous. I agree to Leeds Metropolitan University recording and processing this information about my child's experiences. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose of this study and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the data protection act.

Name of parent_____Signed _____ Date_____

Appendix 3

National Sports Roadshow Event, Hosted by Careers in Sport

Leeds Trinity University

When: 4th December 2013

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm

Where: Leeds Trinity University, Brownberrie Lane, Leeds, LS18 5HD

At the National Sports Roadshow events, hosted by Careers in Sport, well respected professionals and organisations will be on hand to present and impart their area of expertise. The presentations, seminars and workshops will offer you an opportunity to learn the diverse careers and leisure opportunities available in the sport, health and fitness industry, the qualifications required and the experience gained within each profession.

Opening Keynote Presentation - Malcolm Brown MBE

What makes a champion?

Malcolm Brown is the current coach for Leeds-based members of the British Triathlon squad who include London 2012 medalists Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee. Throughout his career, Malcolm has coached athletes to international appearances at Commonwealth, European, World and Olympic level. He was British Triathlon's Olympic Performance Manager for the London 2012 Olympic Games and is the former endurance running coach for UK Athletics.

Career Presentations

Some of the organisations confirmed are:

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences accredited members

BSkyB

England Hockey

Leeds Trinity University

PE Recruitment

Sky Sports

West Ridings Football Association

Career Seminars

The seminar programme enables you to gain career guidance in a specific area and learn the experience and qualifications required for each profession.

Some of the organisations confirmed are:

Camp America

Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

Premier Training International

Royal Lifesaving Society

The Players Football Association (PFA)

Wakefield Trinity Wild Cats

Practical Workshops

Bring your trainers and take part in a series of practical workshops! You can try the latest fitness crazes, a variety of sports and leisure activities and see how you can 'Get Involved' as either as a player, coach, instructor or official!

Some of the organisations confirmed are:

Bokwa

Creating Chaos

Global VX

Hatton Academy

Hour of Power

Kick Fitness

Sports Leaders

UniKurve

Vibe Power

Vive Step

YMCAfit

Sports Science Workshops

Sports Psychology - helping athletes cope under pressure

Sports Conditioning

Sports Technology

Sports Media Workshops

Using Social Media to get the inside track

Writing for Online – Always on Deadline: Come and work on some live breaking news

Football Workshop

After 12 years working in the professional football industry as a coach and sports science practitioner, Guy set up Pro Football Support with a view to make a real difference to the delivery of athletic development for young elite players.

Guy will lead a practical session that covers athletic development for academy players, as delivered within professional football clubs. Guy will also explain the role that Professional Football Support plays within academies at pro clubs, linking this to the necessary skills that are required for a career in pro football.

Careers Guidance

A 'Careers Clinic' is available on site for all attendees to drop in and ask the team of Advisors for Career guidance and advice.

Tips on how to write a UCAS Personal Statement

Build a sports CV for success

Tip on how to write a job application letter

Question and Answer

A series of Q and A sessions will be available throughout the day to talk to experts in their field, including professional athletes and coaches.

Appendix 4

Interview Prep Sheet

Aim:

To attain 1st person description of TD experience

To bring about description of experiences that give meaning to the world from the young person's point of view

Method:

Non Directive Listener – conversation rather than question and answer

Focus on just a few questions

Opening Question:

What can you remember about:

Beginning to participate in the sport you play now	Lived Time
The experience of getting selected for your TD programme	Lived Body
The experience of being on your TD programme	Lived Space
Can you describe a time when you have performed really well?	Lived Body
How would you feel if you were no longer on your TD programme?	

Please can you send me a sports photo of yourself

Prompts

How did do you feel about that?

Avoid Why / What caused you to do that?

Appendix 5: A Record of the Frequency and Nature of Research Engagement With Each Participant

Data Collection Points

Round 1: Interviews

15.1.14   Rowan Rugby UnionU14/ Phil S Rugby Union U14 chose to be interviewed together

20.1.14   Josh Angling U16 interviewed alone

22.1.14   Laura Gymnastics U15 chose to be interviewed with a female friend who was not a member of a TD programme

28.1.14   Steve Rugby Union U15 interviewed alone

3.2.14   Eboni Netball U16 interviewed alone

3.2.14   Dan Badminton U17 interviewed alone

7.2.14   George U16 Rugby Union / Discus Meeting held but interview rearranged due to technical problem with Dictaphone

12.2.14   Dan Badminton U17 interviewed alone (follow up due to lost data!)

13.2.14   George U16 Rugby Union / Discus interviewed alone

Round 2

9.2.14   Josh   Chance encounter - West Park Rugby Club Bramhope Leeds Invitation to interview from Josh by direct conversation following North of England Angling Trial on 16.2.14

| 19.2.14 | Josh | Interview – Permission given from parents (by phone) to interview at home during Half Term |

19.2.14   Josh   Interview – Permission given from parents (by phone) to interview at home during Half Term

25.2.14   Dan   Interview

25.2.14   Dan   Information sent to Sam following interview, via email from me

2.3.14   Eboni   Chance encounter through Instagram (photo of Casey with a plaster cast on her ankle) via 2nd hand commentary

3.3.14   Eboni   Email from me asking Casey if she was ok following her injury

and if we could arrange an interview

5.3.14   Eboni   Email reply

9.3.14   George Chance encounter through Twitter via 2nd hand commentary

10.3.14   Eboni   Interviewed as a result of Instagram lead

11.3.14   George Interviewed following invitation via email from me

Permission given to follow George on Twitter & Instagram

11.3.14   Rowan & Phil Interviewed together following email conversation, date determined by Rowan & Phil to take place the day after their ERDPP training session

Permission given to follow Facebook (Rowan & Phil) / Twitter (Rowan)

14.3.14   Invitation to interview from Phil following selection (Rowan & Phil) to play 7's for the school in the year above on 15.3.14

17.3.14	Rowan & Phil Interviewed following Schools 7's competition playing for the year above, interview suggested & date determined by Phil & Rowan
18.3.14	Phil Interview
26.3.14	Josh Chance encounter - Rosslyn Park National 7's London
27.3.14	Laura Interview
29/30.3.14	Phil Chance encounter - Yorkshire U16 South Wales Tour
31.3.14	Dan Chance encounter – School Careers Evening
1.4.14	Josh Interview

Observation

15.3.14	George	11.00 – 4.00 (5 hrs)	Pocklington 7's North Yorkshire
26.3.14	George	11.30 – 4.30 (5hrs)	Rosslyn Park National 7's London
6.4.14	Laura	9.15 – 2.30 (5hrs)	Regional Grades Competition North Yorks
15.4.14	Rowan & Phil	1.30-3.30 (2 hrs)	ERDPP Training Day North Yorks
24.4.14	Eboni	8.00-10.10 (2hrs 10mins)	Netball Club Training / Game
27.4.14	Steve	11.40 – 13.45 (2 hrs)	Intra District Trial York
30.4.14	Dan	14.00	Games Lesson - School

Round 3

24.4.14	Eboni	Discussed based upon Photo & Video sent by Casey via email in advance
24.4.14	Dan	Injury Update discussion
25.4.14	Laura	Discussion based upon observation at Regional Competition
29.4.14	Eboni	Discussion based upon observation at Training / Game
29.4.14	Rowan & Phil	Discussion based upon observation at Training Day
1.5.14	George	Update Discussion based upon Twitter & Instagram
2.5.14	Steve	Discussion based upon observation at Inter District Trial
4.5.14	Phil	Discussion organised by Phil to discuss his Training Diary
12.5.14	Phil & Rowan	6.30-8.00 (1hr 30mins) ERDDP Training Observation
14.5.14	Laura	Discussion – Finals Sun 18th May
14.5.14	Dan	2.00 Games Lesson
16.5.14	Eboni	Discussion before National Finals May 24th – 25th
16.5.14	Phil & Rowan	Discussion following ERDDP Training session
18.5.14	Laura	10.30-4.40 Observation at National Gymnastics Club Grades Birmingham
22.5.14	Laura	Discussion following National Competition

28.5.14	Rowan	Observation 30 mins technical practice with Coach, cousins and my son at school
4.6.14	Eboni	Discussion following Club National Competition
9.6.14	Josh	Discussion following trial outcome and subsequent decisions
26.6.14	Steve	Discussion concerning current activity
1.7.14	Phil & Rowan	Discussion directly after Sports day (on the day)
2.7.14	Laura	New training regime
7.7.14	Phil & Rowan	Rugby ERDPP Training Leeds Carnegie, Kirkstall (7.00 – 8.30)
11.7.14	George	English Schools Athletics Finals Birmingham (12.00 – 6.00)
18.7.14	George	Dropped off video footage at his house

Round 4:

9.10.14	Eboni	Catch Up Discussion
10.9.14	Laura	Catch Up Discussion
11.9.14	Josh	Catch Up Discussion
11.9.14	Dan	Catch Up Discussion
14. 9.14	George	Observation (2.5 hrs) – Wakefield Athletics Open Meet
15.9.15	George	Post event Discussion

18.9.14	Steve	Catch Up Discussion
19.9.14	Rowan & Phil	Catch Up Discussion
27.9.14	George	Observation 1hr – Rugby School 1st Team v Wilmslow
27.9.14	Laura	Observation (7hrs) – Gymnastics National Voluntary Levels Catterick
4.10.14	Phil & Rowan	Observation (80 mins) School Rugby v Kings
7.10.14	Phil & Rowan	Post Game Discussion
8.10.14	Laura	Post Competition Discussion
11.10.14	Steve	Observation (80 mins) Rugby School 2nd Team v Lymm
16.10.14	Steve	Post Game Discussion
28.10.14	George	Discussion about progress and change – life without TD rugby

Round 5:

8.11.14	Eboni	Observation (2.5 hrs) Netball National Schools Qualifying Tournament
11.11.14	Dan	Discussion – circumstances and intentions- life without TD Badminton
12.11.14	Eboni	Post Competition Discussion
12.11.14	Josh	Discussion – injury and time out

12.11.14	Steve	Observation (80 mins) School Rugby 2nd Team v ********
13.11.14	Phil & Rowan	Observation (70 mins) National Cup Game School v ****
17.11.14	Laura	Email apology, unable to fit me in because of Mock Exams
18.11.14	Rowan	Post Game Discussion – injury and progress
18.11.14	Phil	Post Game Discussion - individual progress
20.11.14	Steve	Post Game Discussion – life without TD Rugby
21.11.14	George	Discussion – TD Athletics

Round 6

16.1.15	Phil & Rowan	Unparallel trajectories
19.1.15	Steve	7's and the tour to South Africa
19.1.15	Dan	Getting ready for University
20.1.15	Eboni	Work / life balance
20.1.15	George	New targets and ambitions
22.1.15	Laura	The year ahead
22.1.15	Josh	Injury update and what next?