

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**Understanding Coach Educators’
Experiences of Everyday Practice:**

A Narrative-Biographical Study

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

In recent years, coach education has been the subject of increasing levels of investigation and associated critique. While such inquiry has provided some fascinating insights into coach learner's engagements with formal coach education provision, the coach educator has, rather surprisingly, remained largely invisible in the coach education literature. We know very little about how coach educators experience and 'make sense' of the everyday realities of their work, inclusive of the dilemmas, ambiguities, and challenges that they may face. The aim of this thesis then was to provide some exploratory insights into how coach educators experienced their workplace, especially as this related to their respective understandings of their social interactions with a variety of key contextual stakeholders (e.g. their line managers, colleagues, and coach learners).

A narrative-biographical approach (Kelchtermans, 2009a) was utilised to explore four participant coach educators' experiences of their work. The focus here was on not only eliciting their understandings of 'what' they did, felt, and thought in the workplace, but also their reasoning as to 'why' they behaved, felt and thought in the ways that they did. Data were collected through a series of in-depth, semi-structured, interviews. The collection, analysis, and representation of data were features of an ongoing, reflexive, and iterative process. Here my analysis comprised of both etic and emic readings of the narrative-biographic data. In-keeping with my interpretive-interactionist stance (Denzin, 2001), the participant coach educators' experiences were principally understood in relation to Kelchtermans' (1996, 2005, 2011) micropolitical framework, Goffman's (1959, 1963) dramaturgical theory, Bauman's (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) discussion of liquid modernity, and Hochschild's (2000 [1983]) thesis of emotional labour.

My analysis revealed that the coach educators attached great store to protecting and advancing their individual interests and reputation within the workplace. It appeared that they placed considerable importance on managing their interactions with their respective line managers, colleagues, and coach learners towards these ends. For example, they explained that obtaining favourable feedback and evaluations from each of these parties was essential if they were to achieve their career goals as coach educators. Similarly, an inability to obtain favourable regard from others was seen as tantamount to failure. In order to sustain a positive sense of professional self-understanding and cope with the vulnerability that they experience in their work, the

participants highlighted how they variously managed the fronts and accompanying emotions that they projected to others. It became increasingly clear, to me, that the participants had developed a sophisticated sense of micropolitical literacy in what they considered to be an increasingly individualised working culture. I believe that the new empirical and theoretical insights outlined in this thesis have furthered our understanding of the complex and dynamic social interactions that lie at the heart of coach educators' work. It is hoped that the findings of this thesis will stimulate additional inquiry that directly engages with the ambiguity, pathos, and politics, which are arguably features of coach education.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 CPD Course ‘Conversation’

25th May 2010: 12.13pm

[A Professional Football Club’s] Youth Academy Training Ground

Football Association (FA) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course

I was in attendance with my Dad (we both worked for the same professional football club’s Youth Academy) and we were in deep conversation at lunch-time about the course and the coach educators delivering the course:

Dad: *“What do you think of today so far?”*

Me: *“The course content is same old same old, don't you think? The FA showing us sessions that we have seen before... But I think Pete [one of the coach educators delivering the course] is very good. His mannerism and knowledge about coaching techniques is different class! His questions are making me think about my approach to coaching.”*

Dad: *“Yes, he is very good. I’ve been impressed with his thought process.”*

Me: *“I can see myself delivering courses like this you know... I think I could impart my knowledge and make coaches feel enthused about the different ways we can improve the kids we coach.”*

Dad: *“Really?”*

Me: *“Yes, definitely! How hard can that be?! It’s just like coaching but instead of coaching players, it’s coaching coaches about the basic technical and tactical information that coaches need to demonstrate to the players.”*

Dad: *“I don’t think it will be that easy. There will be a lot more to it than just coaching coaches. Think how difficult it is just coaching the players at our club; we aren’t allowed to implement our own coaching development plans because of the Head of Youth. We have to do what he tells us to do. Sometimes we disagree with him but we don’t tell him that because we know that it will go against us in the future. Our hands are tied.”*

Me: *“I know, but surely if I were working for the FA that won’t be the case? It would be delivering sessions and discussing good practice with coaches.”*

Dad: *“Well I bet Pete will have to deliver the content like the FA tells him to, but maybe he has a bit of freedom to implement his own delivery techniques into the sessions. We get that at our club but we both know it’s difficult to do that when*

the Head of Youth is telling you to deliver a session in an aggressive manner because the team lost on the weekend and he is on the rampage.”

Me: *“Yeah but I bet the coach educators never have to deal with someone like that telling them what to do and how to do it just because he is angry and frustrated.”*

Dad: *“Well maybe not so much. Remember Pete’s body language when Paul [another coach educator delivering on the course] was delivering the session? He looked frustrated because Paul’s session was very poor and boring, very typical FA style – ‘stop, stand still’. The kids looked bored in his session, and we were bored watching.”*

Me: *“I bet that must be difficult for Pete then, wanting to keep us coaches interested and then all of a sudden Paul starts his sessions and the coaches switch off because his session was boring. It’s like when I’m working with a coach and his session is poor, I want to step in and take over to try and improve it.”*

Dad: *“Unfortunately not everyone is on the same ‘wavelength’ as you though are they? That’s the most difficult part of life, not just coaching son!”*

Me: *“I know it’s a nightmare when that happens!”*

Dad: *“What about other problems too, like when that coach started asking those embarrassing questions to Pete? We all sat there thinking ‘what’s this guy doing?’ But Pete dealt with it brilliantly by just keeping calm and discussing the ideas in the right manner. Would you be able to do that?”*

Me: *“Of course I could!”*

Dad: *“Last week when one of the other coaches disagreed with you, instead of keeping calm, you got defensive on them! You wouldn’t be able to do that if you worked for the FA! You’d have to remain calm and composed to deal with those situations working at the FA.”*

Me: *“I guess... maybe it would be a lot harder than I first thought then... it would be something I would like to do though. I believe I have the credentials to improve and develop coaches like I do young players.”*

Dad: *“I don’t doubt that. I just think that there are more aspects to coaching than just turning up and developing players, as you have found out working at our club. You have to deal with people, disagreements, conflict, your own temperament and other people’s temperaments too. You have to ‘play the game’ to get on in this culture, pal. People are always trying to out-do and out-perform each other. Competition between players and coaches is bad enough; I bet it’s exactly the same with coach educators.”*

Me: *“Maybe you’re right. It’s hard enough in our club. Everyone is trying to backstab each other to get further up the chain and get a better job. I just don’t get that feeling when I watch coach educators’ work.”*

Dad: *“It’s dog-eat-dog son!”*

Dad: *“Maybe... I bet it would be worthwhile to see coaches develop and improve like when I see the players I coach do. That’s the whole reason we coach! I’d definitely like to find out more about this type of work though.”*

1.2 ‘Diary Extract’

7th June 2010: 9.05pm

Home

“After the CPD event, I had more thoughts about coach education and what it would be like to become a coach educator... I went into the library after the last exam of my 3rd year at University thinking about my future work opportunities. I decided to look around the journal articles and books on coach education to see what I could find on coach educators. I must have been searching for around 3 hours or so, and I found there to be very little research conducted focusing on coach educators and their roles. There was a small amount on coach education but that was mostly focused around how to improve coach education courses as there were many criticisms of the programmes and the content. From my own experiences of attending coach education courses, there were similarities in the findings of this research and my own feelings and opinions of coach education programmes. The courses I had attended had been very limited towards obtaining new coaching sessions I could use; it was just the same old sessions delivered in a slightly different way.

However, I did find some very interesting papers and book chapters on coaching though. Some of which built upon those I had come across previously when completing my undergraduate dissertation. These articles addressed the sociological aspects of coaching and I found them extremely stimulating as they resonated with my coaching practices. Interestingly, I found this was not reflected in the coach education research, and definitely not related to coach educators. I decided it was time to leave the library as I was quite frustrated. There was hardly any research conducted in my ‘chosen’ career path!”

1.3 Coach Educator ‘Conversation’

*13th June 2010: 11.25am
Academy Training Ground*

I was at the training ground watching the youth team play an end of season friendly against a touring team from the USA. Alongside me on the sideline was John (a pseudonym), the coach educator who had passed me on my UEFA ‘B’ qualification in 2005:

John: *“What have you done since passing your UEFA ‘B’?”*

Me: *“I’ve been working here for the past 5 years coaching the different age groups, and been on different CPD courses that we have to attend. I’ve just completed a degree in Sports Coaching and Performance at University and very fortunately I am going to start a Ph.D. in September focusing on coaching and coach education.”*

John: *“Very good, well done. How did you find the CPD courses?”*

Me: *“Not bad, some good delivery at times by some of the coach educators, but on the whole I feel I’ve not really progressed. The University programme was good and I’ve learnt about the theoretical content relating to coaching practice, but from an applied perspective I’ve not really learnt anything new. However, the biggest issue I’ve found working as a coach is the amount of problems I’ve faced surrounding politics, emotions, and generally ‘playing the game’. People are more problematic than tactics and techniques!”*

John: *“In what sense?”*

Me: *“It’s a nightmare, there are coaches competing with one another; stabbing each other in the back to get a higher age group! Then there are parents who complain when their son doesn’t get praised enough compared to another player. Then there is the Head of Youth who comes in sometimes like a raging bull and tells you to put a session on because the youth team lost at the weekend because a player didn’t head it properly, so we then have to do heading sessions. You didn’t teach me how to deal with any of this on the UEFA ‘B’ course! [laughs] You just showed me how to organise a session and get my coaching points across.”*

John: *“I know that’s the issue, we’re told to deliver the content that the FA provides us with. The content is very much about the technical and tactical components of the game, not about the issues surrounding coaching. Luckily there is some*

freedom there to deliver how you would like and discuss these issues if they are raised, but mainly it's about hitting the content and candidate coaches being assessed on certain criteria to obtain a coaching badge."

Me: *"Interesting, I was having a conversation with my dad a few weeks ago telling him I'd like to become an FA coach educator in the future. I like the idea of helping coaches to develop. It seems a great job, no hassle, turn up and deliver and assess coaches."*

John: *"[Laughs] You don't know the half of it... if only it was that easy..."*

1.4 Academic Introduction

In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the delivery of, and significance attached to, coach education provision (Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie, 2006; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2013). It would appear that the education of coaching practitioners has become a very 'hot topic', which is unsurprising considering the importance attached to coach education for raising coaching standards in order to make coaching a 'bona-fide' profession (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Lyle, 2002). The increasing significance assigned to coach education has perhaps been best illustrated by the financial investment that both the UK and Canada have made to redesign, improve and sustain their coach education development programmes (Lyle, 2007). However, despite this, it could be argued that the research conducted in this domain has not been equivalent (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006).

The sports coaching and coach education research has, to date, predominantly focused on the technical, tactical and bio-scientific aspects (e.g. physiology, psychology, motor learning, nutrition and biomechanics) of sporting performance (Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011; Nelson *et al.*, 2013). Yet, more recent investigations have increasingly challenged the rationale underpinning much of the coaching literature suggesting that coaching is far from a straightforward and

uncomplicated process (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009; Cushion, 2007; Jones, 2006, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2011). Whilst the number of studies investigating the delivery and impact of coach education remains limited (Nelson *et al.*, 2013), the findings from such work have highlighted how coaches often find the course content and espoused methods to be disconnected from their respective experiences of coaching (Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones, 2010; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003, 2004; Purdy & Jones, 2011).

In response to the criticisms coach education programmes have received, scholars have developed theoretically informed ‘solutions’ to improve the delivery of coach education provision. These include competency-based programmes (e.g. Demers, Woodburn & Savard, 2006), problem-based learning (e.g. Jones & Turner, 2006), issue-based learning (e.g. Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), mentoring (e.g. Cushion, 2006; Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009), model-based instruction (e.g. Roberts, 2010), reflection (e.g. Gilbert & Trudel, 2006), and communities of practice (e.g. Culver & Trudel, 2006). Although this research has been applauded, it has been argued that there is a necessity to explore the realities of the coach education domain in order to gain a more knowledgeable outlook of the apparent dynamic and ambiguous coach education environment (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Indeed, there is a call for researchers to more adequately explore coaching and coach education from a critical sociological perspective if we are to better understand and engage with the ambiguity and complexity inherent within coaching and coach education settings (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour & Hoff, 2000; Potrac, Jones & Nelson, *in press*). It has been suggested that our attempts to better understand and thus develop coach education could be well served through the adoption of a knowledge-for-understanding intellectual project (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Rather than continuing with the prescriptive knowledge-for-action approach that has dominated in the coach education literature, it is argued that an exploration of the everyday realities of learning and

practice provides us with a more reality grounded base upon which to subsequently develop suggestions for coach education (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Unlike the wider coaching literature that has begun to recognise the inherent social complexity of coaching practice, in particular the micropolitical and emotional aspects to recently surface (Jones *et al.*, 2011; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2013; Purdy & Jones, 2011), there has been little reality grounded inquiry into the working lives of coach educators. It would seem that coach education scholarship would benefit from greater consideration of the ‘realities’ of coach education, especially coach educators’ perspectives of the emotional and micropolitical aspects of their work. In reflecting the wider coaching literature, it could be argued that coach educators’ engagements with key contextual stakeholders (e.g. administrators, colleagues, coach learners) are far from straightforward and entirely functional affairs that occur within a socio-political vacuum (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac *et al.*, 2013). In doing so, exploring the role of coach educators, and their subjective experiences, can be utilised as a ‘pre-cursor for action’ providing an initial insight into the nature of coach education (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Indeed, this would be useful in terms of preparing current, and potentially new, coach educators for the everyday realities of their role.

Arguably, coach educators play a pivotal role in the development and learning of coaches at all levels of sport. Indeed they are, in many ways, the individuals who are ultimately held accountable for facilitating positive changes in the learning and practices of coaches. Similar to coaches then, coach educators’ work is arguably a socially complex activity, as it requires them to make connections to and from other people, as well as to different scientific knowledge bases and ideas (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, & Ronglan, 2011). Similarly, coach educators are, in the main, also employed by organisations that may be characterised as much by ambiguity and pathos as they are

by rationality and unproblematic collaboration between individuals (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). Being a coach educator in such circumstances is perhaps a challenging and multi-faceted experience for the individuals concerned. However, while scholars have increasingly recognised the need to “put the person” back into the study of coaching, we know very little about the person of the coach educator, especially in terms of how they understand and respond to the everyday realities, challenges, and dilemmas of their work. Such inquiry is necessary if the coach education literature base is to move beyond the unproblematic and functionalistic models of practice that continue to be promoted by some (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

While recent research has positioned coaching as a “personal, power-ridden, everyday pursuit where practitioners’ management of micro-relations with the other stakeholders” (i.e. athletes, coaches, managers, owners, etc.) are focal aspects of the role (e.g. Potrac & Jones, 2009b, p. 223; Potrac *et al.*, 2013), there has been no comparable investigations in coach education. Indeed, little has been done to shed light onto the ‘dark side’ of organisational life by illustrating the everyday strategic and ‘manipulatory’ aspects of coach educators’ work (Potrac *et al.*, 2012). For example, we know very little about the relationships and interactions between coach educators and a variety of organisational stakeholders, especially in terms of how the former seek “to protect” and ultimately “keep a job” (Potrac *et al.*, 2012, p. 83). As such, this study seeks to gain rich insights into the ambiguous, micropolitical realities of coach educators’ work. To ignore the gritty and nuanced realities would, I believe, deprive coach educators of their realities and would lead to the production of a literature base that only partially reflects the challenges entailed in such work (i.e. Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac *et al.*, 2013).

While coaching scholars have also recognised the need to research and understand coaching as an emotional practice, the benefits of exploring the emotional

dimensions of coach educators' work have received little such attention (Jones, 2006; Jones, 2009; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2013). The limited appreciation of the emotional 'self' and the emotional 'other' means that the coach education literature has arguably contributed to strangely 'inhuman' accounts of what is in reality an inherently relational, social and emotional, as well as cognitive, activity (Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2012). This situation is surprising given the increasing recognition that emotions are never absent from our relationships and connections with others (e.g. Zembylas, 2006). Indeed, the mainstream sociology and education literature has paid increasing attention to emotions in social and organisational life (e.g. Theodosius, 2008), as well as within pedagogical relationships and interactions (e.g. Hargreaves, 2005; Zembylas, 2005, 2011). As such, this thesis also aims to explore coach educators' understandings of the emotional demands of their work. Indeed, it is hoped that such insights can allow readers to 'see' and 'feel' how the participants dealt with the dilemmas they faced, as well the motivations that underpinned their behaviours and actions. Focusing on an emotional perspective, the data from this study can, I believe, make a contribution to a wider effort to 'reverse' the rush to provide solutions to coach education's woes without first better understanding some of its contextual realities, nuances, and dilemmas (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Finally, while the findings of coaching research have started to hint at a possible relationship between micro-politics and emotions (i.e. Jones *et al.*, 2011), the link between these two features of organisational life in sport has yet to be explicitly investigated in the context of coach education. In an attempt to address this situation the thesis will see to explore if, and how, the coach educators' understandings of their working environments impacts on the types of emotions that they experienced and choose to conceal and share during their interactions with key contextual stakeholders.

In doing so it is hoped that this thesis would make a significant contribution by better understanding the dynamic and ambiguous nature of this social role.

1.5 Aim of this Study

The aim of this study was to explore the participant FA coach educators' subjective understanding of the socio-political and emotional nature of their workplace interactions. In particular, specific attention was given to exploring the coach educators' perceptions and understandings of their working relationships with key contextual stakeholders (e.g. FA managers, fellow coach educators, coach learners, etc.) in their respective coach education settings. Towards this end, narrative-biographical interviews were used to explore the following research questions:

- a) How did the participant coach educators experience their interactions and relationships with their managers, co-coach educators, and coach learners?
- b) What issues did the participant coach educators believe they faced in their working relationships with these various individuals? How have they attempted to manage or resolve these issues? Why did they choose to act in certain ways and not others?
- c) What emotions have accompanied their engagement in these workplace interactions and relationships? Which emotions did they feel they could display or should instead hide? How did they come to understand the emotional nature of their work in this way?
- d) What contextual and situational factors did the participant coach educators perceive to impact upon their actions and understandings of the social and emotional nature of practice?

2.0 Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of the coach education literature. Initially, this review focuses on the development of coach education research that has been conducted, and how scholars have critically evaluated the current literature. Following this, I will discuss the research that has seemingly prescribed ‘solutions’ for improving coach education. I will then discuss the recent view that academic scholars have presented of the ‘need’ for more empirical research to be conducted in the coach education domain, especially from the perspective of the coach educator’s role. Finally, I will summarise the key points of the review, especially as they relate to my chosen topic of inquiry.

2.1 Formal Coach Education Provision

Recently, there has been a substantial increase in the delivery of, and significance attached to, coach education provision in many western nations (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2011). Coach education has been described as a vehicle for raising coaching standards, as well as for developing this occupation into a bona-fide profession (Lyle, 2002, 2007). Due to the increased importance attached to coach education in the UK and Canada, there has been considerable government investment in the redevelopment and redesigning of these coach education programmes (Lyle, 2007). This financial investment can perhaps be understood when acknowledging that coaches are seen to play a vital role in the obtainment of competitive success at the elite level of sporting competition, as well as the achievement of social policy outcomes within communities (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006). Predominantly, the formal coach education programmes that National Governing Bodies (NGB) have developed include large-scale coach certification courses that require candidates to demonstrate coaching

competencies through enforced compulsory attendance and curricula (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2006).

Somewhat paradoxically, the interest in coach education within professional circles has not been equivalently matched in terms of academic research in, and on, coach education (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). To date, despite the growing research in to coaching courses, there have been relatively few studies that have sought to analyse coach education programmes and the role of coach educators within such provision. Although not unequivocal, the existing research has largely demonstrated that, while attendance can assist coaches' knowledge and practice, such provision is often far from optimal (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006; Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Irwin, Hanton & Kerwin, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007). Recently, scholars have also criticised the 'rationalistic' content that coach education programmes provide (Jones, 2000; Potrac *et al.*, 2000). It has been argued that such courses have tended to be disconnected from the everyday realities of practice (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Cushion *et al.*, 2010).

In light of this, it has been suggested that critical inquiry into coach education has become one of the most pressing issues in recent sport coaching and science research (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Nelson *et al.*, 2013). Abraham and Collins (1998) suggested that coach education programmes seemingly develop "a large number of 'method' coaches" through a "one size fits all approach" (p. 71). They argued that this 'gold standard' approach fails to educate coaches in adaptability, identified as a crucial aspect of coaching, as the courses only demonstrate one method of coaching rather than multi-methods. Additionally, Côté (2006) identified that the limited impact of coach education is due to a 'top-down approach'. Other scholars (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Potrac *et al.*, 2000) have suggested that coach education programmes often 'paint a false picture'. It was stated that they create an impression that effective coaching is a

“straightforward, bio-scientific, and unproblematic process” (Potrac *et al.*, 2000, p. 188), which consequently ignores the ambiguities and complexities that have recently been identified within coaching due to the interactive, cognitive and contextual processes that are evident within the ‘ever-changing’ coaching environment (MacDonald & Tinning, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2000). Recent studies within the broader coaching research domain have advocated that within the social processes of coaching and coach learning, there are issues surrounding emotions, micropolitics, knowledge acquisition and power (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008).

For example, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2004) argued that rationalistic representations of coaching fail to consider the complexity of human interaction and learning. Instead, they are perhaps guilty of producing limited, one-dimensional coach education programmes that have seemingly ignored the problematic, complex nature of the ‘everyday realities’ of the coaching environment (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria & Russell, 1995; Potrac *et al.*, 2000; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002). It is perhaps unsurprising that neophyte coaches speak of experiencing a ‘reality shock’ when they try to translate the methods and content delivered on coach education courses into their coaching environment (Wright *et al.*, 2007). In addition, this may also explain why more experienced coaches have been critical of the applicability and situational relevance of several aspects of coach education (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010).

2.2 Coaches’ Mixed Perceptions of NGB Coach Education Provision

Early investigations have highlighted that there are mixed perceptions of coach education from coaches’ perspectives. Despite the paucity of empirical research exploring the actual contextual realities of coach education, and an even smaller amount

focusing on coach educators' experiences, a number of pertinent findings have emerged from empirical studies conducted within coaching and coach education literature (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Irwin *et al.*, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Wright *et al.*, 2007). Indeed, these studies have analysed coaches' behavioural, experiential and contextual philosophies, and the results illustrated the thoughts, opinions and experiences of attending coach education provision.

Some coaches have reported that formal coach education programmes have been useful because it has led them to implement new coaching practices within their own coaching environments (Jones *et al.*, 2004; Lemyre *et al.*, 2007; Misener & Danylchuk, 2009). However, despite these positive experiences of attending coach education courses, it was highlighted that coach education provision can not only be basic with little new knowledge gained, but also that some of the material covered was not relevant for everyday practice in their coaching environments (e.g. Abraham *et al.*, 2006; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2003). 'Neophyte' coaches were often unable to apply and modify practices demonstrated on coach education courses effectively in their own coaching environments, which devalued the reasoning behind attending coach education provision (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004).

Jones *et al.* (2004) conducted a narrative study of eight elite coaching practitioners, from a range of different sports, utilising a narrative-biographical interview methodology that attempted to explore coaching beliefs, philosophies, opinions and experiences from their coaching backgrounds. From the findings, it was highlighted that there appeared to be mixed experiences of formal coach education from the different coaches. Within the interviews, each coach reflected on their coach education experiences and their perception of attending coach education programmes. Steve Harrison, one of the elite football coaches interviewed, believed that coach

education programmes varied in quality and suitability. He deemed them to be useful in terms of general organisational practice set-ups; however, he found that they were too functional, which diminished any chance of being open-minded towards different coaching pedagogical methods that could be utilised within the coaching environment. Similarly, Lois Muir, a netball coach, recognised coach certification was limited, even though she supported coach education, because she felt it “starts coaches along the path” (p. 91). She believed that coach education programmes should emphasise the cognitive side of coaching by aiding coaches to understand game-related issues employing a problem-solving approach, in cooperation with providing pedagogical methodologies that could then be incorporated back in club coaching environments. In addition, she also proposed that coach learning should be focused on the management of people, philosophies, decision making under stress and the observation of individuals, which would provide other alternatives, as opposed to just instructing coaches how to implement practice sessions.

Another coach interviewed, Ian McGeehan, a rugby union coach, stated that he had never attained an official coaching qualification and remained unconvinced about the coaching system, as he felt that it can devalue the uniqueness of coaches. He felt that his teacher training gave him a much more solid background than a coaching course could provide. However, he did acknowledge that coach education programmes can provide a basic knowledge of rugby specifics. Yet, he believed that there was a lack of opportunities to interact and share thoughts, theories and problems with other coaches at coach education courses. He stated that if this was to change, it could potentially lead to better coach development and progression. Similarly, this was echoed by Peter Stanley, an athletics coach, who thought the potential value of working with and observing other coaches would be a more beneficial aspect of coach development rather than completing a written exam to gain the senior athletics award.

Conversely, Hope Powell, a female football coach, believed that coach certification had many positive aspects to it, such as the development of new coaching techniques. Despite this, she suggested that mentoring must become an established part of coach education in order to improve coaches more effectively through coach education programmes, as she deemed that this method would develop confidence through support systems. Also, her main concern was that too many coaches were unable to apply and modify practices shown on the coach education programmes, to implement them effectively back in the coaching environment, which she believed devalued the whole coach education process. Another elite coach, Graham Taylor, an international football coach, thought that coaching courses were just the start of the coach education process, but he insisted that too many coaches felt that once they had gained the qualification then they had all the knowledge they needed to progress. This in his opinion was an extremely negative aspect of the coach education system, and he explained that experience was more important than qualifications. However, Bob Dwyer, an elite rugby union coach, believed that coach education programmes in Australia had influenced his pedagogical coaching methods. He highlighted that these courses demonstrated “what not to coach, but how to coach” (p. 44), therefore he found them insightful with regard to the structuring of coaching practices, which increased his enthusiasm to keep attending courses in order to obtain new knowledge that assisted his coaching practice.

In another empirical study, utilising a case-study narrative-biographical approach, Jones *et al.* (2003) interviewed an elite football coach, and it was identified that he had found coach education provision to be useful, but he felt he rarely gained any in-depth new knowledge when attending courses. In addition, the coach interviewed was extremely critical of the highest coach education qualification within football, as he believed the coaches attending the courses predominantly “came out knowing and doing

the same things because that is what [they] passed at” (p. 222). It was evident that both studies illustrated that the expert coaches all recognised coach education provision to be useful as a starting reference for coaches, as they learnt good organisational skills, but it was limited in terms of acquiring new knowledge to develop the coaches further. Similarly, it was highlighted in other research studies that the vast majority of high performance coaches consider coach education courses of minor importance to their development (Christensen, 2011; Nash & Sproule, 2009, 2012; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).

Furthermore, these findings were comparable to a study conducted by Abraham *et al.* (2006). This study investigated coach development and the validity of the coaching process by interviewing 16 expert coaches in the hope of gaining an understanding of coaching models and schematics. The findings identified that coaches believed formal coach education qualifications were a source of knowledge, but some reservations were expressed about the usefulness of the coach education provision. There was a section within the study that explored the coaches’ acquirement of knowledge from different sources. The participant coaches were from a variety of different sports and had a minimum of 10 years’ coaching experience at the highest level of their respective sports. The coaches were interviewed, using 10 structured questions, which probed into their roles, aims, processes and knowledge as coaches. Within these interviews, the coaches openly criticised formal coach education programmes they had attended, with one coach stating that it gave a grounding of basic understanding but only a “very basic working knowledge to begin with” in coaching (p. 29).

Lemyre *et al.* (2007) investigated coach learning through interviewing 36 youth sport coaches from three different sports. These were football, ice hockey and baseball. The investigation explored the coaches’ perceptions of the Canadian National Coaching Certification Programme (NCCP), as well as their experiential learning through

previous athlete experiences, coaching interactions and other resources. It was highlighted that the football coaches, who had little experience, thought the course was disappointing as it failed to educate them about the rules, techniques and tactics of the sport, as well as coaching pedagogy. Due to the course content being focused on formal discussions surrounding sport science and coaching experience, the participant coaches felt that because of their lack of experience the course was irrelevant for their needs. Despite the negativity surrounding the experiences of attending the course, it was highlighted that the coaches' interactions with one another were an extremely useful aspect of coach education. This was echoed by the ice hockey coaches interviewed who found the NCCP courses provided opportunities to meet other coaches and network. Also, it was established that the NCCP courses provided the coaches with a booklet known as 'The Coaching Bible', which included pedagogical strategies, tactics, methods and psychology techniques. The coaches interviewed felt that this Bible gave them enthusiasm and confidence to implement the practices within their own coaching environments. Many of the coaches preferred the practical elements of the course over the theory elements, as they were deemed more useful in terms of their own coaching practice. The conclusion suggested that the impact of such large-scale formal coach education programmes seemed to 'be of limited value' in comparison to other learning sources, such as past experiences and informal learning situations.

Within a study exploring university graduates' experiences of an undergraduate sports coaching degree programme, in which the completion of an NGB award was a compulsory requirement, Turner and Nelson (2009) reported that the NGB coach education course they attended was costly, inappropriate for their needs and failed to adequately cover the theoretical aspects of coaching. Through the utilisation of in-depth semi-structured interviews, the students also recognised that the course assessors assisted them in passing the award, even if someone was struggling to comprehend the

course content. However, despite this, some of the students interviewed identified that the positive aspect of the NGB coaching award was the provision of sport-specific technical and tactical knowledge and understanding, which enhanced the attainment of baseline coaching competency. One coach stated that “it gives coaching standards – a minimum really... it’s a very good practical guideline – but a baseline” (p. 16). Overall, the students identified that obtaining NGB awards is an essential progression in their professional development and preparation. The participant coaches suggested that attaining NGB certification was more important than achieving an honours degree, because they believed NGB coaching qualifications are considered to be the ‘standard’ within the coaching industry, whereas university coaching degrees are recognised as additional qualifications.

The findings to have emerged from the initial, empirical studies highlighting coaches’ experiences of attending coach education courses have illustrated a particularly negative stance of coach education provision. Despite the positive aspects of coach education programmes regarding the neophyte coaches who are beginning their ‘coaching path’, the evidence highlights that the impact coach education content has had on coaching practice is mainly irrelevant to the actual coaching environment (Jones *et al.*, 2004; Roberts, 2010). The negative aspects that have surfaced are more evident from elite coaches, who have implied that the more courses they attended, the less new knowledge they gained (Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004). It is believed that formal coach education programmes have not met the expectations and learning needs of coaches because of the apparent disregard of the everyday realities of the coaching environment, as well as the failure to consider developing other learning sources, such as experiential learning, coaching observations, reflection and mentoring into courses (Abraham *et al.*, 2006; Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).

These ‘snapshots’ of coaches’ perceptions have not been drawn from research focusing on actual coach education programmes, but rather from the insights of coaches reflecting on their past coach education experiences. However, within the current coaching and coach education literature there are two studies which have focused upon empirically studying NGB coach education provision specifically. A study by Chesterfield *et al.* (2010) investigated six coach learners and their perceptions and responses to the content knowledge and assessment processes of the Union of European Football Associations’ (UEFA) ‘A’ Licence in the UK, which is the second highest level football coaching qualification in Europe. Each coach was interviewed for 90 minutes using a semi-structured interviewing process that included open-ended questions relating to the nature of the course content, methodology and assessment procedure. It was found that the coaches felt that the course failed to meet their expectations in relation to the course content, as before attending the course they all expected to gain “new knowledge... greater tactical understanding... understanding for every system and how to get [their] points across to the players” (p. 308). Furthermore, the coaches felt that compared to the previous coaching level, UEFA ‘B’, the course content was not sufficient. Also, they believed that they could not apply the prescribed sessions that were delivered on the course into their own coaching environments because of a lack of appropriateness to the players they work with on a day-to-day basis and the method of the ‘overly prescriptive coach-led pedagogy’, which was highlighted by a coach who suggested “working with players three times a week, it’s impossible to keep the players motivated by constantly doing functional practices (11v11)” (p. 308). These findings reiterated that coach education programmes fail to recognise the situational contextual variability of coaches’ work (Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones, 2000).

Chesterfield *et al.* (2010) also argued that coach educators seem to assume that coaches attend coach education courses as “empty vessels waiting to be filled”, but their

previous playing and coaching experiences have normally influenced their coaching methods (p. 308). Therefore, it was suggested that educators should recognise this by attempting to actively engage coaches to critically analyse their own philosophies and methods. However, coach education programmes appear to be functionalistic and unproblematic and as a result they are ineffective in capturing the dynamic, complex realities of the coaching environment (Nelson *et al.*, 2006). This was highlighted in the study as the coaches were exposed to a single set of prescribed values, attitudes and practices that they had to adhere to, which has also been suggested in other studies as the ‘gold standard, one size fits all’ procedure (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2004; Jones & Turner, 2006). The perceptions of the final assessment procedure emphasised this as all of the coaches stated that they adapted their coaching behaviours by ‘acting’ to “meet the expectations and requirements of the coach educators” by engaging in ‘synthetic coaching’ (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010, p. 309). The coaches felt they had to behave in this way to pass the course and they admitted that they would not coach this way in their own environment but they felt that they had to imitate the way the coach educators had delivered the sessions. This related to Goffman’s (1959) theory, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, as the coaches ‘acted’ how they perceived coach educators would deem appropriate by “upholding standards of appearance and behaviour expected by someone in a particular position” (p. 56).

Chesterfield *et al.* (2010) suggested that coach educators may benefit from considering different perspectives of the current methodologies implemented in formal coach education, as the participant coaches interviewed in this study stated they had not employed the practices demonstrated on the courses in their own coaching environments. This was also echoed by coaches interviewed in other coaching studies (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2004; Jones & Turner, 2006). It

was therefore suggested that coach educators may profit from utilising their expertise differently, such as being a facilitator, which develops and assists coaches to explore, deconstruct and analyse the coaching experiences, philosophies and practices that impact upon their development through critical reflection and interactions with other coaches.

The other study, conducted by McCullick, Belcher and Schempp (2005), explored the candidates' and coach educators' perceptions of the Coaching and Sport Instructor Certification (CSIC) programme, which was associated with the Ladies Professional Golf Association – National Education Programme (LPGA-NEP), through the use of interviews, observations and journals. This study aimed to gain an insight into the contextual reality of a coach education programme by empirically approaching 'what' should be taught and 'how', as previous studies focusing on the CSIC failed to identify these important factors. The past research conducted on the CSIC instead opted for prescribing solutions to improve the programme based on the assumptions of other studies in other fields (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Dils & Ziatz, 2000; McCullick, Schempp & Clark, 2002).

McCullick *et al.* (2005) selected the LPGA-NEP as the course to study because of the 100 per cent success rate guarantee and the lack of specific criteria for entrance onto the course. A total of 26 female candidates and 5 coach educators participated in the courses, all with a range of experience from playing and coaching at amateur level to professional level. The use of group interviews at the end of each day was an informal, interactive process that incorporated the use of open-ended questions and allowed the participants to 'spark off one another' by being encouraged to discuss their perceptions and experiences of the course. There were four main themes identified from the data: (a) the structure of the programme must be such that it has a logical, sequential and comfortable format; (b) pedagogical knowledge should be taught to the candidates

and modelled by the coach educators; (c) knowledgeable coach educators must provide relevant content knowledge; and (d) the introduction and integration of pertinent research in sport pedagogy and subject matter content must be apparent.

Initially, the participants found that the course structure was progressive as the content gradually built up from basic to more complex material. They believed the atmosphere created within the course was a positive experience as it was “laid back and comfortable”, which aided the development of the coaches because they were not afraid to ask questions (McCullick *et al.*, 2005, p. 129). Secondly, the pedagogical knowledge the candidates received was perceived positively because they felt that learning ‘how’ (and not just ‘what’) to teach the general principles and strategies was the main strength of the programme. The coaches also felt that the coach educators modelled their pedagogical knowledge successfully by “making the students feel as comfortable as possible rather than going in there and changing everything to make the students’ golf swing so that it looks perfect” (p. 130). Additionally, several participants stated that the coach educators got to know the candidates, which added to the ‘comfortable atmosphere’. Thirdly, the candidates found that the content knowledge was the most important part of the CSIC programme as they thought that the structure of the course was the main reason many of the coaches attended the course. However, interestingly the coaches had differing opinions about this because of the different coaching philosophies and methodologies. Therefore, it was found the coach educators’ philosophies may conflict with those of the coaches, which can affect coach learning, which in turn can cause the coach educators to put on a façade to influence the coaches, as they are seen as this ‘fountain of knowledge’ and they have to be seen to know what they are talking about.

Concluding the study, McCullick *et al.* (2005) stated that the CSIC programme was perceived to be effective by the participants and coach educators because of the

comfortable learning environment that created the freedom to engage in learning. However, it was suggested the findings from this study should be viewed with caution, even though the results were worthwhile, because of the small conflict between the coaches about the application of the content knowledge. McCullick *et al.* (2005) proposed that the balance between adequate content knowledge and philosophical perceptions has started to become a focal point in relation to improving coaching effectiveness, so the exploration of developing future research within coach education is critical. Indeed, it was advocated that the perceptions and concerns that were illustrated in this study could be utilised as a research design to further explore the contextual realities of the coach education setting. In turn, it was suggested that this could provide supportive evidence to help design and develop future coach education programmes that candidates can ‘buy into’.

Despite the small amount of empirical research that has focused on coach education, the mixed perceptions surrounding coach education provision have led scholars to produce work prescribing potential ‘solutions’ of how to improve coach education courses through the implementation of different theoretical frameworks. This is opposed to studies initially exploring the coach education environment, identifying the key stakeholders involved with the delivery of the courses (i.e. coach educators) and examining their role within the delivery, content and assessment of coach education provision.

2.3 Suggested Possible Solutions

Due to the small amount of research highlighting the mixed perceptions surrounding the provision of coach education, academics within the field of coaching science have enthusiastically attempted to provide a range of different pedagogical

methods and approaches that could be utilised to optimise coach learning and development within the context of formal coach education provision. It could be argued that the numerous potential theories that have been proposed using different frameworks could enable coach education programmes to produce “adaptable, multi-method coaches, who are aware of the need to tune coaching style to meet the degrees of freedom inherent in the learning environment” (Abraham & Collins, 1998, p. 71). These frameworks include competency-based programmes (Demers *et al.*, 2006), problem-based learning (e.g. Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Jones & Turner, 2006), issue-based learning (e.g. Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), mentoring (e.g. Cushion, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2009), model-based instruction (e.g. Roberts, 2010), reflection (e.g. Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) and communities of practice (e.g. Culver & Trudel, 2006). These theoretically informed pedagogical methods have prescribed solutions to ‘fix’ coach education because of the issues that have surfaced from the empirical research into the coaches’ experiences and perceptions of attending coach education courses (Jones *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2004; Lemyre *et al.*, 2007).

Competency-based coach education programmes are the most commonly attended form of coach education provision. Within these courses, candidates are judged on a pass or fail basis (Lyle, 2007). Competency-based learning is described as an approach to teaching and learning that utilises concrete skills as opposed to abstract learning (Demers *et al.*, 2006). Yet, to date, there has been a paucity of research attempting to directly investigate and evaluate coach education programmes in relation to coaching competency, despite many courses being actually competency-based (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). However, Demers *et al.* (2006) conducted a study that prescribed competency-based solutions for the NCCP coach education programme, as well as exploring this approach in practice through the implementation of competency-based learning in a university teaching programme addressing the primary concerns of coach

education. It was found that the proposed competency-based theoretical framework aided the improvement of the programme as 85 per cent of students passed the university course due to the implementation of this approach. This investigation explored and evaluated the coaching undergraduate programme at Laval University, Quebec, through the incorporation of three phases: (1) the design phase, which defined the programme competencies and focused on structuring learning outcomes; (2) the implementation phase, which incorporated selected learning strategies and faculty considerations; and (3) the evaluation phase, which assessed the results of the university course.

In the design phase, seven professional competencies were formed, which were *making ethical decisions, planning a practice, analysing performance, providing support to athletes, supporting the competitive, designing a sport programme, and finally managing a sport programme*. In the implementation phase, structured learning strategies were integrated into the programme, but it was recognised that these approaches had to be action-based, complex and closely related to realistic tasks, and had to occur in a realistic setting. Through the application of these learning strategies within each coaching module of the programme, the students learnt to not only become reflective practitioners, but also to become effective at providing and receiving feedback, engaging in experiential learning and using problem-solving methods. The evaluation of this competency-based practised solution was that integrating these methods into a programme can illustrate the underlying problems in the course and therefore become an indicator of how programmes can be improved and developed. The conclusion of this study identified that 50 per cent of students were not competent during their first assessment, but 85 per cent of students proved that they were competent during their second attempt. However, it was recognised that the programme still needed to be regulated in order to improve and develop coaches to become more

competent by processing the design, implementation and evaluation of the programme. To conclude the study, Demers and colleagues suggested that this competency-based approach could be incorporated into the NCCP coach education programmes as a possible means of improving the coach education courses. However, it could be argued that this alternative pedagogical approach ignored the exploration of the complex and ambiguous nature of coach education courses, as well as the coach educators' roles within them. Therefore, it would be difficult to comprehend how this prescribed resolution would in fact be implemented, especially without having an in-depth understanding regarding the coach educators that actually deliver the NCCP courses.

Another framework identified and suggested in relation to improving formal coach education was problem-based learning (PBL). PBL frameworks have provided a relatively new concept within coach learning, as it has been incorporated from other research disciplines such as medicine (e.g. Cohen-Schontanus *et al.*, 2008; Smits, Verbeek & de Buissonje, 2002). PBL methods include role-related problems that challenge people to provide solutions to scenarios that are as near as possible to real life (Jarvis, Holford & Griffin, 2003). Cassidy *et al.* (2004) suggested that a PBL approach would involve coach educators integrating scenarios for the coaches that were relevant to improving coaching performance by facilitating group problem-solving tasks, communicating ideas, dealing with conflict and identifying effective solutions to situations. These proposed PBL scenarios would focus around circumstances such as disruptive players or parents, relationship breakdown, dealing with poor discipline and inheriting opinionated players. It was proposed that the programmes would effectively aid coaches' development because incorporating PBL strategies within coach education courses would allow for a "creative engagement with novel situations and strategies, which the standard model of coach education just doesn't permit" (Jones & Turner, 2006, p. 189). It was suggested that this was important because PBL methods

incorporate many features of Schon's (1983, 1987) reflective practitioner framework, which would allow opportunities for coaches to critically discuss strategies, techniques and methods that have previously been identified within effective coaching (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Irwin *et al.*, 2004; Lemyre *et al.*, 2007).

A study examining PBL within coach education was carried out by Jones and Turner (2006), who implemented a PBL approach within a 12-week coach education and sport development module that was part of an undergraduate degree programme at the University of Bath. The participants partaking in the study were final year students. The tutors incorporated PBL into the course with the aim of developing "an awareness in students of the holistic and integrated nature of effective coaching, and to foster reflective practice and the ability to synthesise various knowledge strands in order to tackle a range of coaching problems in a professional manner" (p. 191). The first week of the 12-week module focused on introducing the principles of PBL and holistic coaching by dividing the students into small groups. Each week after that the groups were given scenarios where they had to discuss their solutions, but these sessions employed problematic interruptions, which engaged problem-solving techniques that developed time-constrained decision making skills. In week 5, the group had to present their solutions and demonstrate how their solutions to the problems could be utilised within the coaching environment. Week 6 was used for reflection, consisting of tutor-led discussions that considered different learning outcomes to the PBL approaches. The process was then repeated for the final six weeks with the students forming new groups and incorporating fresh scenarios that helped develop experiential learning. The study also adopted semi-structured interviews to aid gaining an understanding of the students' perceptions who had participated in the module. Initially, the students felt positive about the PBL approach implemented within the degree programme; however, the interruptions were thought to be negative, as even though it was felt they were a good

idea they seemed to be inappropriate in relation to the original scenarios. The students were also asked if the unit prepared them for coaching “in the real world” (Jones & Turner, 2006, p. 197). It was generally agreed that participating in this type of approach made them more aware of the problems that could occur. It was believed that the scenarios integrated the different roles of a coach that the students did not realise coaching entailed, such as collaborating with physiotherapists, doctors, universities and clubs.

Concluding this paper, Jones and Turner (2006) argued that the positive responses of the students suggested that coach education programmes incorporating PBL approaches can encourage coaches to become more aware of the ‘coaching dilemmas’ that are ‘apparent’ within the coaching environment. The students seemingly recognised the complex nature of coaching and suggested that incorporating a PBL approach allowed them to gain further understanding of how to attempt to manage the dynamic nature of the coaching process. However, limitations surfaced from the study as the actual scenarios and interruptions, along with the time restraints and the group work, were perceived to be the main problems of the unit, but there was an obvious appreciation that PBL approaches can provide an insight into ‘real life’ coaching, which was shown through the students’ perceptions of the modules.

Despite the suggestions that implementing PBL into large-scale coach education can develop more accomplished coaches who understand the problematic, complex nature of coaching (Potrac *et al.*, 2000; Potrac *et al.*, 2002), it could be argued this application would be extremely difficult due to the time restraints and perceptions of large groups of coaches compared to the smaller groups of coaches within a degree programme. Equally, Bridges and Hallinger (1996) acknowledged the importance of the time frame of PBL exercises and that there must be an end product during these scenarios. It was also advocated that incorporating interruptions into the PBL scenarios

could address “unpredictability, ambiguity and working on several problems at once”, which provides different learning outcomes for the coaches (p. 56). Due to the lack of empirical research on incorporating a PBL approach into NGB coach education provision, it could be argued that without addressing the realities of the ‘everyday nature’ of coach education programmes, the suggestions of implementing a PBL approach may need to be delayed. This would allow scholars to initially gain an in-depth understanding of the coach education environment to acknowledge whether PBL strategies are actually being utilised, and if not, how they could be integrated effectively into the course content through the coach educators’ delivery of the programmes.

Another theoretical pedagogical approach proposed to aid the improvement of coach education provision was issue-based learning. An issue-based coach learning framework was developed by Trudel and Gilbert (2006), which focused on the implications of reflection and mentoring within coach learning. This framework was developed from Gilbert and Trudel’s (2001) reflection model that incorporated the five main issues that coaches reported in previous studies by Gilbert and Trudel (2001, 2005). These were *athlete behaviour*, *athlete performance*, *personal characteristics*, *parental influence* and *team organisation*. Gilbert and Trudel’s (2001) model suggested that the reflective strategies of the coaches use their knowledge, experiences and environment in order to evaluate and solve problems. From this, it was acknowledged that coaches learn through experience and it was implied that issue-based learning should be used within coach education programmes because it utilises a person’s actual experiences which can be discussed to provide solutions. Trudel and Gilbert’s (2006) approach suggested that instead of coaches discussing solutions to solve a ‘common problem’, the situations should be based on real life events that coaches can address together to solve.

Despite the advantages of this approach, Trudel and Gilbert (2006) recognised that applying this to NGB coach education programmes would be difficult because of time restraints, similar to the PBL approach mentioned previously. Another identified limitation of incorporating issue-based learning in coach education programmes was the relevancy of the coaches' reflections, as it was advocated that coaches could sometimes be afraid to engage in reflective participation effectively because of confidence issues (Moon, 1999). Also, false scenarios and novice coaches who have no personal experience of coaching to reflect upon were other suggested limitations of this approach (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). In addition, this method could be construed as PBL, as it could be seen as participation learning (Sfard, 1998). Issue-based learning approaches have yet to be investigated within a coach education environment to identify how this method could be implemented into coach education provision and how coach educators could adapt their coaching pedagogies from the use of issue-based learning. These reflective strategies have proven useful within other domains, but due to the paucity of empirical research into issue-based learning within NGB coach education programmes, it is impossible to advocate that applying an issue-based learning approach will improve coach education courses, without actually exploring this strategy contextually.

Reflection is another framework that has been suggested within the coaching literature as a strategy to improve coaching techniques (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne & Eubank, 2006; Nash, 2003). In previous research, it was highlighted that individuals learn best through observing, doing, commenting and questioning (Erikson, Bruner, MacDonald & Côté, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2004), so the implementation of reflection in coach education provision would facilitate the development of coaches' knowledge through experiential, contextual and socio-cultural processes, as well as mentoring and issue-based problem methods. Arguably, this reflective intervention is central to other frameworks that other scholars have presented,

such as PBL, issue-based learning, critical task-based approach, communities of practice and mentoring (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006).

Gilbert and Trudel (2006) conducted a study exploring reflective strategies that could be incorporated into coach education. This study analysed six youth team coaches in different sports using observations and semi-structured interviews that focused on their reflections on their learning strategies. Within this reflection framework, Gilbert and Trudel proposed that incorporating Schon's (1983) reflective practice theory could guide the examination of how coaches transfer coaching experience into coaching knowledge. Through the analysis of Gilbert and Trudel's (2001) reflection model, and the evaluations of coaches from other reflection studies (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004), it was found that coaches adopt *reflection-on-action*, which was defined as reflection after the event. There was also evidence of coaches implementing *reflection-in-action*, which was described as reflection during the event or activity. Gilbert and Trudel (2006) found that the coaches believed reflection was important in terms of their coach development, and this research advocated that through the use of reflecting on past experiences and using methods to create reflection-in-action scenarios, the coaches could develop their decision making process by amalgamating interventions that can be implemented during coaching practices.

From these findings, Gilbert and Trudel (2006) suggested that reflection should be incorporated into formal NGB coach education programmes because how these conditions can influence the experiential learning process is critical to helping coaches develop their coaching repertoires. This notion was also identified in other studies that stated reflection is an important aspect of coach development due to the importance attached to coach development through experience (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2003; Nelson *et al.*, 2006; Potrac *et al.*, 2000; Schempp, McCullick & Mason, 2006). However, Gilbert and Trudel (2006) recognised the limitations to initiating reflective

practice within NGB coach education programmes due to the complex nature of reflective practice and whether individuals would learn and develop it effectively through coach education provision. It was also established that coaches seemed to reflect more on negative experiences, which could reduce confidence levels within coaching if utilising this approach. Additionally, it was emphasised that describing what a reflective practitioner is to coaches may be a first step, but it is not enough to expect them to become reflective and use the intervention strategies of their own accord. Therefore, it would be almost impossible for coach educators to assume that development of reflective skills would be a naturally occurring phenomenon that runs parallel to increasing coaching experience (Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie & Neville, 2001).

Despite the theories supporting reflection within other research fields (e.g. nursing: Burns & Bulman, 2000; teaching: Hatton & Smith, 1995), the problematic question of ‘how’ it would be implemented into coach education programmes has been raised (Knowles, *et al.*, 2001; Knowles, Borrie & Telfer, 2005). Due to the lack of empirical knowledge of ‘what’ is actually involved within coach education programmes, it is difficult to comprehend how this framework could be successfully incorporated into NGB coach education provision. Additionally, it was advocated that for this framework to be applied effectively into NGB coach education programmes, it was imperative that coach educators and coach learners had to initially understand and perform the correct reflective techniques in order to develop more effectively (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006).

Another framework suggested to improve coach education programmes within the coaching research domain is model-based instruction (MBI) (Roberts, 2010). This is a model that allows opportunities for teachers, coaches and coach educators to adopt alternative pedagogical methods when delivering their respective lessons or coaching

sessions (Metzler, 2000). Largely based upon Instructional Model (IM) pedagogical theory, Lund, Metzler and Gurvitch (2008) advocated that MBI provides teachers with a framework for organising lessons, preparing content, and engaging pupils in learning activities. Within MBI, Metzler (2000) outlined eight distinctive teaching models: *direct instruction*, *personalised system for instruction*, *co-operative learning*, *sport education (SE)*, *peer teaching*, *inquiry teaching*, *tactical games concepts (TGC)*, and *teaching for personal and social responsibility*.

In a study by Roberts (2010), it was suggested how two of the models, TGC and SE, could be utilised in the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) coach education programme in order to enhance their delivery of coach education provision. Roberts selected these two options, as opposed to the other MBI teaching models, to focus solely on the pedagogical technical and tactical aspects of coaching, rather than any other additional coaching skills (e.g. injury prevention, player management, etc.). The TGC model encourages problem solving and decision making (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; Griffin, Oslin & Mitchell, 1997). It was advocated that the utilisation of TGC in the ECB Level 2 certification, modules 3 (Coaching Children and Young Players) and 7 (Coaching Tactical Play), could assist in improving the coach education programme. It was proposed that the practical application of TGC would be tutor-led by implementing different small modified games to allow coaches “opportunities to develop experientially their knowledge and understanding” (p. 112). Within this, coaches would be encouraged to consider different features congruent to TGC, such as how the game is to be modified and the appropriate use of questioning.

Roberts (2010) suggested that the second model, SE, devised by Siedentop and colleagues (1994, 2004), could also be implemented into the ECB programme. This model was designed to “provide authentic, educationally rich, sport experiences for girls and boys in the context of physical education” (Siedentop, 1994, p. 18). SE has a

number of features which are essentially adopted from organised sport, which include seasons, group affiliation, formal competition, a culminating event, record keeping and festivity (Siedentop, Hastie & Van der Mars, 2004). In addition, it was believed that SE develops the capacity for learning interaction in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains as the pupils are required to adopt roles beyond those of merely performing. Roberts (2010) advocated that SE was already incorporated into aspects of the ECB coach education programme, as the unique features of the SE model surround the contextualisation of sporting experience and attempt to provide performers with a more realistic and meaningful sporting environment (Reid, 2003). However, Roberts (2010) discussed the importance of applying the SE model through leadership opportunity, by the lead tutor retreating “from centre-stage” and their role “devolving into one of facilitator” in order to allow the coach learners to understand how their organisational roles, coaching methods and differentiation techniques assist their players (p. 113).

Roberts (2010) recognised that implementing MBI into NGB coach education programmes should be applauded, as it encourages “coaches to think of ‘learning’ and their players as ‘learners’” (p. 113), which is a positive attempt at placing the player/athlete at the heart of the coaching process, as opposed to the coach. It was concluded that despite the positives of MBI, which may allow coaches to develop their values and beliefs surrounding the importance of the player in the coaching process, the limitations to utilising it could amplify potential conflict for coaches working at the performance “end of the spectrum” (p. 113). Again, Roberts’ (2010) study drew upon data collected from observations of ECB coach education provision (Roberts, 2007), like other frameworks discussed previously. Although scholars applaud this method as one that could be integrated successfully and positively into NGB coach education programmes, the lack of empirical research on how coach educators deliver these

programmes suggests that there needs to be an underlying understanding of coach education prior to incorporating these frameworks.

Another framework suggested to improve coach education programmes was the notion of mentoring (Cushion, 2001, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2009). Cushion *et al.* (2010) described mentoring as “offering both structured and unstructured support for coach learning”, as a mentor advises a coach utilising their experiences and knowledge in order to improve their development (p. ii). According to Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke and Salmela (1998), mentoring has become a more commonly used practice within sports coaching, as it can develop coaches’ knowledge and expertise. It was advocated that embedding formalised mentoring techniques into coach education programmes could improve provision because a large part of acquiring coaching knowledge and practice is based on personal interpretation of coaching and past athlete experiences (Jones *et al.*, 2004; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). So, it was advocated that this would be a useful approach within coach education (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Cushion, 2006; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Nash, 2003). Furthermore, Coakley (1978) suggested that coach learning predominantly begins when coaches are participating as athletes in their desired sports, which is then reflected upon when they become coaches because of the informal learning processes that occur during practices. So, Cushion (2001) advocated that, through these experiences, cultural understandings begin to develop because of this operational ‘mentoring’, which illustrates the unstructured, informal, complex nature of the mentoring and the coaching process. Due to these findings within the sports coaching research, Cushion *et al.* (2003) recommended incorporating mentoring into formal coach education programmes.

Cushion’s (2006) work analysed the theoretical frameworks of communities of practice (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991), reflection (e.g. Hatton & Smith, 1995; Schon, 1983) and zones of proximal development (ZPD) (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978) to illustrate an

understanding of how mentoring could be applied to coach education programmes. From this, it was suggested that these concepts, in relation to mentoring, could be implemented into coach education programmes to provide useful insights into coach learning. Also, this could illustrate how coaches acquire knowledge from observations and interactions with their mentors. It was advocated that this 'hands-on' approach could be structured and formalised in a way that would enable coaches to consider different coaching approaches, and to make mistakes and learn from them, which could provide multiple opportunities to refine knowable skills and judgements within the pragmatic constraints of the coaching environment (Cushion *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, Cushion (2006) acknowledged that formal mentoring programmes would not only benefit the developing coach but also the mentor, by expanding and diversifying their own learning experiences when working with one another. It was concluded that integrating formal mentoring programmes within coach education could arguably facilitate the construction of knowledge through experiential and contextual methods in a real world environment.

A study by Jones *et al.* (2009) explored mentoring by providing guided practices that could be realistically applied in the coach education setting. This study scrutinised the body of existing research on mentoring, before discussing mentoring in the current situation of sports coaching. The findings identified there was a paucity of research addressing mentoring within coaching, but reiterated the experiential aspects of how coaches acquire knowledge. From the existing research in other countries, Jones and colleagues (2009) suggested a model designed by the Coaching Association of Canada. This incorporated planned mentoring programmes, development training for mentors and coach learners, career development plans and a primary coordinator to oversee the whole process. It was considered that this model could be employed within formal coach education programmes to aid the development of coaches in constructing

knowledge from observing and partaking in coaching practices with their mentor. It was concluded that formalising a mentoring scheme within coach education could be beneficial as a means to 'individualise' the coach learners attending coach education courses, which would provide an additional focus on coaches' development skills. Also, it was recommended that the facilitation of a mentoring scheme can allow coaches (and mentors) to develop their practice within the complex coaching environment.

Both Cushion's (2006) and Jones *et al.*'s (2009) work focusing on mentoring outlined the value of utilising mentoring within coach education provision in an attempt to produce critical, self-reflective coaches. The research in other domains such as business, nursing and education highlighted that mentoring was successful and this has driven scholars to suggest that applying mentoring to sports coaching could improve coaches by underpinning understanding through social interaction (Cushion, 2001). However, it could be argued that, due to the lack of exploration into applying mentoring to actual NGB coach education programmes, applying mentoring to coach education programmes without considering the understanding of such an approach into the 'messy' domain of the coach education environment would be difficult. Therefore, there is a need to explore the coach educators', or mentors', perceptions of applying a mentoring pedagogical framework within coach education provision to discover whether it is beneficial and a useful tool to aid coach development through NGB coach education courses. The limitations of prescribing potentially workable 'solutions' before acquiring an in-depth understanding of the coach education environment and content raises the question of how mentoring can actually be incorporated into coach education due to time constraints, the need to educate mentors and the required resources (Cushion, 2006).

Culver and Trudel (2006) suggested framework of communities of practice could be implemented into coach education provision. A community of practice is "a

group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Culver and Trudel (2006) incorporated Wenger’s (1998) social learning conceptual theory into their pedagogical approach to underpin coaches’ experiential learning by suggesting that group discussions can facilitate coach development. Previous studies have highlighted that coaches engage and interact with other coaches and discuss their own pedagogical techniques and philosophy on coaching strategies (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2003; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Indeed, Culver and Trudel (2006) adapted this framework, referring to it as the coaches’ communities of practice (CCoP).

Culver and Trudel (2006) conducted a study exploring CCoP within two different club settings: an athletics club and a ski club. The first part of the study was carried out over a six-month period in an athletics club in Canada. Six of the seventeen coaches at the athletics club were analysed, and the aim of this part of the project was to observe their interactions with each other. The researcher (Culver) was available as a sport psychology/pedagogy consultant throughout this period and utilised a non-prescriptive stance during the sessions, which incorporated defining and discussing the coaches own practice-related problems rather than conveying new concepts for the coaches to comprehend. Within this project, coaches’ discussions with one another were examined through interviews and observations of their interactions at the club. Recent studies have identified that this type of informal exchange is the main source of learning and developing as a coach (e.g. Cushion, *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Nelson *et al.*, 2006).

From the examinations of the types of interactions between the coaches in the first part of the study, it was found that there was no CCoP in operation. There seemed to be a lack of interaction between the coaches; however, when they did interact, the

main exchanges were on issues surrounding an athlete's development, or organisational problems or asking a coach to work with their athletes. From interviewing the six coaches, it was established that the relationships between the coaches were very cliquey, as the senior, international coaches seemed to have an 'inner circle' and the younger coaches felt that they had to penetrate this inner circle to gain the respect from the other coaches before they would interact with them. These findings illustrated that the use of CCoP and incorporating a consultant within a sporting environment can increase coaches' knowledge and help them develop using interactions with other people in the environment, although in this part of the study the lack of interactions between coaches and a recognised CCoP programme essentially made the coaches feel like 'outsiders' due to a lack of respect from more senior coaches. Yet, the inclusion of the consultant was positive as these coaches were able to express their problems and thoughts to someone who would listen and offer their opinion, which influenced the coaches' interactions and development and aided them to reflect on their practice.

The second aspect of Culver and Trudel's (2006) study explored coaches' interactions within a ski club in eastern Canada over three separate periods of time: the winter, the summer and the following winter. The first part of the study included the researcher (Culver) acting as an initiating researcher/facilitator to 6 of the 20 coaches, as well as the head coach of the ski club, who all worked at the club coaching 11–19-year-olds. The six participating coaches all worked with the K1s (11- and 12-year-olds) and there was a mixture of experienced, novice and intermediate coaches who formed a CCoP. Interviews were conducted early in the first winter time period. They highlighted that the coaches felt they had a strong support network within the club. The researcher/facilitator then aimed to learn the coaches' everyday working experiences using non-prescriptive approaches. This was done by facilitating an open, participative environment using round table meetings which were designed for discussions and the

sharing of ideas. Initially, there was a lack of interaction during the first couple of sessions but eventually the coaches became more confident and took responsibility for the sessions to create an interactive process. The coaches evaluated the sessions positively during interviews conducted at the end of the first winter time period, with the focal point being the sharing of ideas and information valuable to the development of coaching, as well as the sessions creating a proactive, positive coaching environment that brought the coaches closer together to share their ideas and improve their coaching knowledge.

The next stage of the study was performed in a three-week summer camp in the French Alps, with the 6 coaches, the head coach and 30 athletes. The coaches stayed in a hotel, which created more opportunity for them to form a CCoP compared to the first part of the ski study. Also, the summer programmes incorporated more coaching, with more time to concentrate on techniques rather than training for competitions. During this camp, three coaches from other clubs also attended the round table meetings. The first few meetings were directed by the facilitator who asked the coaches to bring to the meetings the lessons learnt from their daily coaching practices, but the coaches' discussions were of a more general, philosophical nature that formed animated debates about coaching and coaching experiences. Again, the follow-up interviews found that the coaches were positive about the interactions and process of CCoP, and the importance of it to them in developing coaching knowledge. The interactions of the CCoP showed the three elements that enable communities of practice to be successful: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). This demonstrated the importance of coaches working closely together and the opportunities they had to develop and learn as coaches through those interactions.

The final part of the ski club study incorporated two groups, K1 and K2. Two of the five K1 coaches and four of the six K2 coaches had been exposed to CCoP in the

previous parts of the study. The K1 coaches had one meeting with the facilitator and then the group carried on, using the same learning activities without the facilitator present, but it was found that their interactions became more organisation-based rather than discussing coaching philosophies and experiences. The K2 group had an initial meeting with the facilitator mid-season, in the second winter time period, but this group never operated as a CCoP due to the lack of leadership to promote and develop the group through social co-participation. This group had four members who had all previously participated in a CCoP; however, this showed that even coaches with previous experience of CCoP cannot always develop a CCoP. Therefore, Wenger *et al.* (2002) suggested that the role of a facilitator who understands the principles of cultivating communities of practice is important to promote a CCoP and develop coaches so that they can share their knowledge and experiences.

From the results of this study, Culver and Trudel (2006) proposed that incorporating this pedagogical approach within formal NGB coach education programmes could prepare coaches to solve potential problems they may face in the coaching environment. It was advised that CCoP could be formed through the coaching staff of a team or club, but predominantly by integrating CCoP during coach education courses as coaches can engage in interactions that can enhance coaching knowledge. This suggested 'solution' was based solely on previous research conducted in other domains (e.g. Wenger, 1998) and the perceptions of coach education from other studies (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2004; Lemyre *et al.*, 2007). However, it was recognised that the main defect of CCoP is that coaches may not want to interact with coaches from other clubs in a formal coach education setting, which can restrict the whole process of communities of practice (Culver & Trudel, 2006).

Additionally, Cassidy *et al.* (2006) produced a study exploring the perceptions of the coaches participating in the Rugby Union CoDe programme. The CoDe

programme was described as a “boutique, community-orientated, short-term (28 hours over six months), classroom-based, theoretical, educational/personal development coaching program with no assessment component that was offered free of charge to the volunteer coaches” (p. 148). Eight rugby union coaches participated in the CoDe programme, which incorporated semi-structured interviews with each coach after they had completed the course. These interviews explored their perceptions and opinions of the course. There were three main themes identified from the analysis of the interviews: athlete learning, reflection on practical sessions and discussions with colleagues. It was identified that during group discussions on the course, the coaches enjoyed talking about the complexities attached to coaching, instead of coaching techniques and methods. It was highlighted how the coaches felt this approach was totally different to any of their previous experiences of coach education programmes, as many of their past experiences involved discussions specific to technical and tactical information. The coaches found that the discussions of coaching philosophies, different coaching techniques and understanding the coaching process as a group were positive, as they were able to discuss and share their ideas of the processes that were involved in rugby union coaching. They felt that these discussions were thought provoking and stimulated their minds to develop as coaches. Previous studies exploring coach education programmes suggested that this reflective, interactive process is valuable because of the opportunity to gain a greater understanding and underpinning knowledge, given that listening to the experiences of other coaches is the major learning source for coaches (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006).

In addition, it was identified that the coaches believed discussions with other coaches during this course were beneficial. It was stated that these discussions were very open and honest as the coaches were able to disagree and argue with each other as they shared ideas. Again, previous studies have suggested that informal learning

processes, such as conversations with other coaches, provide valuable information for coaches, due to the everyday realities that they discuss (e.g. Cushion, *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004). Other studies have criticised formal coach education programmes that fail to draw upon actual coaching experiences and instead focus on the theoretical knowledge they advocate to coaches (Potrac *et al.*, 2000; Saury & Durand, 1998). However, in the Cassidy *et al.* (2006) study, one coach found that the discussions were dominated by the same coaches and he found that many of the discussions went off track too often. Therefore, it was explained that is important for a trained facilitator to oversee discussions within the coach education environment because there is a responsibility to lead the discussions by providing guidance (Culver & Trudel, 2006). Without this leadership, the learning community would have the potential to quickly dissolve and old practices would perhaps once again become the norm for that setting (Culver & Trudel, 2008; Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders & Goldenberg, 2009).

Additionally, Culver, Trudel and Werthner (2009) conducted a study examining a sport leader's attempt to foster a CCoP in a competitive youth baseball league, the Midget AAA League. Seven participants within the league structure were interviewed; these included coaches, league managers, supervisors and technical coordinators. Each participant was initially interviewed using semi-structured interviews that focused on their experiences in the league, as well as questions formulated around the observations that were recorded from video clips and mid-season tournaments. The purpose of these observations was to analyse the coaches' interactions with each other during these tournaments. The interviews were conducted during three different time periods and they concentrated on each participant's role within that time frame. The first time period (TP1) was based on the time the sport leader, Andy, was the technical director of the league. The second time period (TP2) focused on the three seasons following Andy's immediate departure. Finally, the third time period (TP3) was the season when the study

was conducted. From the analysis of these interviews, Culver *et al.* (2009) then discussed the possibility of implementing some components to improve the CCoP in terms of Wenger's (1998) conception communities of practice framework.

Andy and Rick, the league manager, initiated a major change in the baseball league by implementing player development before competition. Andy mentioned that as a young coach he was frustrated at the lack of structure for coaches to share their knowledge about developing athletes, therefore when he became technical director he employed a new leadership method, focusing on coaches sharing their knowledge, and organised a development structure for coaches to work cooperatively. However, the coaches who were working within this structure found his leadership to be a dictatorship but they respected the development structure and the chance to develop players because of Andy's past credentials in the league as a coach. Coaches found that the implementation of this strategy was important in developing players and coaches, especially during training camps, which gave an opportunity for the coaches to discuss their coaching philosophies and techniques.

It was highlighted that during TP2 the technical director had changed three times, and it was found that the league had a lack of direction and went back to competition over player development. The coaches found that during an annual coaches meeting in Florida, coaches were reluctant to share their coaching knowledge and techniques and there had been poor uniformity and discipline within the coaching structure due to the lack of leadership from the technical director. The coaching philosophy implemented by Andy was not mandatory and coaches were able to coach without the focus on player development, which resulted in players feeling humiliated if a game was stopped and coaches went over to coach them.

TP3 was focused around trying to bring the league back to Andy's previous structure. However, the negotiations between the coaches concerning player development had occurred without the mutual agreement that Andy had implemented previously. As a result the coaches failed to open up to one another. This was revealed during a mid-season tournament as coaches were using individual team signals that caused conflict between the coaches, as some argued that they should all use the same signals for the development of the players. This showed the lack of joint collaboration between the coaches and the league structure. It was concluded that there was an attempt to try and bring back the focus on player development; however, the philosophy behind this was not explained explicitly enough, which then affected the coaches, administrators and supervisors who were not able to develop practices focused on player development over competition. The coaches interviewed felt the changes were positive, but there was a lack of leadership to clarify these adaptations successfully compared to those fundamentals that were explicit in TP1. This supported Wenger's (1998) notion of CCoP that the participation of a facilitator and leader is important for programme development within coaching communities and environments. This was identified in the direction shown in TP1 compared to the lack of direction and the 'falling apart' of the coaches in TP2. Andy showed his direction and leadership skills in TP1 by incorporating a cooperative environment focusing on player development that was enforced throughout the league structure, which again supported Wenger's (1998) concept that "community of practice is not defined merely by who knows whom or who talks with whom in a network of interpersonal relations through which information flows" (p. 74).

In further related research, Gilbert, Gallimore and Trudel (2009) focused on CCoP by analysing the existing literature and then proposing a community-based learning approach within large-scale coach education programmes. Through the use of

the results of the previous empirical studies (e.g. Culver, 2004; Culver & Trudel, 2006; Culver *et al.*, 2009), it was suggested that applying CCoP within coach education courses could be beneficial, although the difficulty of implementing this approach was recognised due to time restraints, lack of resources and development protocols. Therefore, it was recommended that youth sport teams could apply CCoP within their clubs to improve the development of coaches, rather than implementing it within a large-scale coach education programme. Indeed, the limitations of incorporating CCoP in a youth sports club environment were taken into consideration. The realisation that the peer facilitator would have to be chosen and trained to deliver sessions was the major constraint that was identified. Wenger *et al.* (2002) established that it is imperative that facilitators optimally control discussions during communities of practice because “the most important factor within the community is its vitality of leadership” (p. 80). However, the study concluded by suggesting further evidence-based research was needed to “provide real solutions created by real coaches working in real settings with real athletes just like the ones other coaches in similar settings will be working with” (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009, p. 15).

Finally, Gilbert and Trudel (2006) argued that CCoP can be a significant development ‘coaching tool’ because of the research that demonstrates that experiential, informal and non-formal learning are the key learning sources for coaches to develop their knowledge and understanding. Cushion *et al.* (2010) suggested that CCoP is mainly an informal learning approach but this learning is mainly provided outside formal coach education provision. Previous studies have established that coaches believe they have developed and improved as a coach because of their dealings and interactions within the everyday ‘realistic’ environment, something they think formal coach education programmes fail to accomplish (Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Potrac *et al.* (2000) criticised formal coach education

for not incorporating coaches' experiences; therefore the suggestions and assumptions derived from incorporating CCoP within coach education programmes would be beneficial. However, there is a paucity of empirical research that has applied CCoP strategies within an actual coach education environment, or that has investigated coach educators' perceptions of applying CCoP techniques and how they would facilitate this approach. Gaining an understanding of how CCoP could be used through coach educators and even determining whether CCoP methods are actually being utilised already can help researchers to gain a better understanding of how this process can improve and develop coaches (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009).

2.4 Towards an Empirical Understanding of Coach Educators

To date, scholars who have offered these various pedagogical theories have implied the importance of their implementation into formal coach education provision to aid the development of coach learning. These suggested 'solutions' have been produced to improve coach education provision that has been negatively perceived by coaches who have been dissatisfied with their engagement with coach education in its current format (Abraham *et al.*, 2006; Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Lemyre *et al.*, 2007; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Indeed, these alternative frameworks have created new techniques that coach educators may employ within their practice, that focus on experiential and contextual methods (Cushion, 2006). Yet, it could be argued that these prescriptions are based on presumptions of trying to provide 'solutions' to further the development of coaches without initially establishing the complex, contextual realities and nature of formal coach education programmes. In addition, it could be contended that these studies were not actually 'solutions in practice' because they were not conducted in formal NGB coach education programmes; instead they

were conducted in university and club settings, with the researchers providing suggestions of how they might be implemented into formal coach education programmes. Therefore, these studies have not gained the ‘whole picture’ of how these strategies can be employed in a formal coach education setting.

Despite a concerted effort to raise coach educators’ awareness of different pedagogical methods by providing frameworks which could usefully underpin and guide their practices, it could be argued that without gaining an understanding of the dynamic realities of their job role first, it is difficult to comprehend how these ‘solutions’ could best fit the practice that coach educators are currently performing. Although the introduction of these approaches and their accompanying theories has been applauded by scholars, it is imperative to undertake further empirical work addressing the nature of formal coach education, and more specifically the coach educators who deliver this provision, in order to gain a more in-depth insight into the realities of coach education courses before prescribing theories and ‘solutions’ designed to improve them. Many of these prescriptions have seemingly ignored the aspect of gaining a greater in-depth understanding and insight into the respected research areas, which has presented a “fundamental problem” because scholars have failed to patiently explore and identify the complex nature of coach education “before developing general explanations of and recommendations for good practice” (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 123). Therefore, by first gaining an understanding of the complex nature of coach education from the coach educators’ perspective, these frameworks could then be prescribed with an in-depth knowledge supporting them, which could then provide fewer limitations to and arguments about implementing these recommendations (Cushion, 2011; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Lyle, 2007; Nelson, Groom & Potrac, *in press*).

Whilst the small amount of empirical coach education research has focused largely on the coach learners' experiences, perceptions and opinions of the coach education programmes they have attended, there remains little understanding of the dynamic realities surrounding coach education courses, and more specifically the experiences and perceptions of the coach educators delivering them. Indeed, there is a paucity of literature addressing the coach educators' role, delivery and behaviour within coach education programmes. It has been advocated that this must be addressed to gain a much more in-depth understanding of how coach education programmes are delivered, as well as acknowledging the surrounding issues they may have to deal with while delivering the content of the courses (Jones *et al.*, 2011; Nelson *et al.*, 2013).

Such a position draws upon Jones and Wallace's (2005) work, as they suggested that the outlook of coaching and coach education practice is 'robotic' and unrealistic. To date, research has tended to view coach education programmes from a 'rationalistic' perspective, based on assumptions. This has guided many scholars to ignore the humble contextual reality of the dynamic and complex nature of coaching by suggesting 'clean' unrealistic solutions that have not thoroughly considered the relatively uncontrollable environment (Cushion, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2000) that has been identified previously. Jones and Wallace (2005) stated that this 'knowledge-for-action' has dominated the field of coaching and coach education research in order to offer solutions and improve practice. Furthermore, the ambiguity and complexity inherent in the coach education process appear to have been 'lost to view' to coaching scholars, which has resulted in the lack of a comprehensive framework that represents the complex realities within which coach educators work. So, it was suggested that researchers and theorists in this field should engage in seeking 'knowledge-for-understanding', which in turn would offer a more secure foundation on which 'knowledge-for-action' and instrumentalist projects could grow to yield more realistic practical guidance (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

For example, Potrac and Jones's (2009a) study explored the micropolitical aspects of a semi-professional football head coach with regard to the strategies he utilised to attempt to persuade players, coaches and the chairman to 'buy into' his coaching methods. The procedure for the data collection was three semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 90 minutes each. After extensively analysing and interpreting the data collected, the findings highlighted that the coach utilised specific strategies in an attempt to persuade the players to see the merits of his coaching. Indeed, this was related to Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a) notion of micropolitical literacy, as the coach had expressed his understanding of having to establish effective power relationships with groups of people with different interests to his own. It was illustrated that the coach recognised that the culture was "an arena of struggle" (i.e. Ball, 1987, p. 17); therefore, he demonstrated face work (related to Goffman's (1959) concept of face work) in order to impress and convince the chairman that he was performing his role as expected because he felt threatened that the assistant manager wanted his role. It was concluded that this study, despite the limitation of it being a case study, provided further empirical evidence to support the growing contention that coaching requires a performance in terms of 'on-field' personal enactment.

In another study, Potrac *et al.* (2013) explored the competitive, calculating world of performance football coaching. This investigation employed an auto-ethnographic approach to demonstrate the role of a part-time football coach within a semi-professional football club. The author's story illustrated the 'murky' waters of the coaching environment through the relationships of the numerous coaches working within the same organisation. Indeed, the results highlighted the 'political underbelly' that impacts the problematic, dynamic culture within the coaching setting at 'performance' level. To understand the auto-ethnographic narrative, Potrac *et al.* (2013) drew upon the work of Bauman's (1996, 2007) liquid modernity to illustrate the

constantly 'changing social world'. Potrac and colleagues (2013) attempted to make sense of the coach's experiences through the micropolitical theoretical concepts highlighted by Ball (1987) and Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) that suggested organisations are "arenas of struggle" (Ball, 1987, p. 18), which relates to how groups of individuals attempt to use power, conformity and strategies to achieve their desired goals and protect their own roles. Incorporating these two concepts, liquid modernity and micropolitics, it was identified that within the struggle of the problematic complex reality, the dilemmas and evident choices of the individual were based upon the development of professional relationships that were formed but were "quicksand in contingency" (Bauman, 2007, p. 57). It was concluded that there was an attached importance to remaining 'in the game' the longest to survive in the coaching environment.

Within the coaching studies that have analysed their findings micropolitically, it has been suggested that there is also an apparent emotional undercurrent that has constantly surfaced within the data and that has been initially ignored in the theoretical analysis of these studies (Jones, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2004). Indeed, the investigation of emotions has recently increased within other research domains, especially within teaching (e.g. Hargreaves, 1998, 2001, Zembylas, 2011), as it has been contended that emotions are indispensable to rational decision making in pedagogical activities (Hargreaves, 2000, 2005). Potrac and Marshall (2011) indicated that emotional analysis has largely been ignored within coaching and coach education research, but they believed that exploring this in more detail could provide some valuable analytical tools for supporting efforts to develop a more critical understanding of the social nature of coaching, coach education and coaching practice. Thus far, emotions within coaching have been treated as little more than another variable that coaches and athletes need to manage appropriately so that they can focus on the other 'important' technical and

cognitive components of their roles (Hargreaves, 1998). Despite the recent increasingly voiced opinion of scholars to ‘put the person’ back into the study of coaching and coach education, there still remains a paucity of research addressing the emotional nature of practice for coaches, coach educators and athletes (Potrac & Marshall, 2011). So, by focusing on the emotional aspect within coaching and coach education, Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson and Marshall (2012) argued that such work could inform scholars and professionals regarding the relationship between emotions and decision making. In doing so, echoing Hargreaves’ (1998) suggestions, Jones *et al.* (2011) suggested that adopting a sociological view to understand the emotional value within coaching and coach education could perhaps allow for further understanding of the socio-cultural, political and institutional forces that dynamically and “continuously shape and re-shape the terrain of identity and practice” (p. 182).

Indeed, the chapter in Potrac and Marshall’s (2011), book which included an athletics coach’s commentary, identified Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) theoretical concept of emotional labour to demonstrate the relevance to coaching practice. It was highlighted that the coach significantly utilised emotion management during his coaching practice due to his understanding that the coach has now become more of a focus of external stakeholders than the athletes. He recognised that during training and competitive events, parents, officials, spectators and even athletes are often observing coaches as they are expected to have “all the answers” (Potrac & Marshall, 2011, p. 64). Therefore, the coach, Phil Marshall, recognised that he was expected to present himself professionally by saying and doing the ‘right things’ and making the ‘right’ decisions, even with the pressures, frustrations, boredom, disappointment, happiness or relief that he might be feeling at the time. Furthermore, he believed that he was ‘trained’ to conceal these feelings within the coaching environment by not acknowledging them and to conform to the ‘rules’ (Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) notion of feeling rules). Within

this emotion management and feeling rules, Phil declared that this all equated to the notion of emotional labour (Hochschild, 2000 [1983]). This was because he felt that he was coaching for commercial and professional value, and by giving the ‘right’ impression to the athletes, parents, officials, spectators, etc. they would ‘buy into’ the commodity of his coaching. In performing emotional labour, Phil believed that it offered many positives overall, but despite acknowledging the emotional cost, he also acknowledged that coaching was a hugely rewarding experience, which gave way to immense satisfaction when his athletes, as well as he himself, achieved their goals.

Another study conducted by Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne, Allanson, Gale and Marshall (2013) explored the relationship between emotion, cognition and behaviour in the coaching context, through a narrative exploration of the experiences of a head coach of a semi-professional football team. Utilising an ‘interpretivist’ approach, the methodological procedure included six semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 120 minutes each. After analysing and interpreting the data collected, it was found that the head coach frequently displayed emotions and engaged in behaviours that did not reflect his true feelings and thoughts at the time, which were often driven by his determination to achieve competitive success. These findings were related to Goffman’s (1959) notion of impression management and Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) concept of emotional labour/emotion management. It was found that the participant coach often engaged in Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) notion of surface acting in order to regulate his emotional front to portray an ‘up beat’ image that the players would respond to more effectively, as opposed to showing frustration and anger, which was in keeping with the display rules to express certain overt emotions within certain situations in the club setting. This effectively led to engaging in emotional labour by not falling out with supporters as the coach recognised the importance that they had in bringing money into the club. In addition, the data also was heavily related to Denzin’s (1984)

concept of emotional understanding. The coach recognised that understanding how the players and staff were feeling at times, through his own reflection on his similar personal experiences, allowed him to refrain from expressing emotions he would normally portray. Denzin's concepts of reflective emotional consciousness and emotional temporality were related to the data, as one experience resulted in a disagreement with a player which led to the coach reflecting on the impact certain situations might have in the future as a coach. To conclude, Nelson and colleagues (2013) believed that these findings are useful to better prepare coaches for the complex day-to-day realities of practice. Through better understanding of emotional aspects inherent within the coaching process, Nelson *et al.* encouraged scholars to conduct studies providing rich emotional accounts of practice through qualitative methodological approaches. They believed that such approaches would house the potential to explore beyond the surface of coaching and illuminate how coaches and athletes feel, and how they respond to the dilemmas, challenges and ambiguities that they encounter.

From these studies, while 'putting the person' back into the study of coaching has been increasingly advocated within the literature addressing coaching behaviour and coach-athlete relationships, it is clear that this has been much less apparent within coach education scholarship. Given the tentative findings within the wider coaching literature, it is perhaps surprising that there has been a paucity of research investigating the complex social nature of coach education, especially studies that actually examine the coach education environment empirically. Even more surprisingly, the deficiency of research investigating the coach educators' roles and experiences in delivering these coach education provisions has only just recently started to be commented on (Cushion, 2011; Cushion *et al.*, 2010; Nelson *et al.*, 2013). After all, like coaching, coach education entails interaction between individuals with potentially differing outlooks,

motivations, philosophies and biographies within a particular sporting subculture. However, there has to date been a lack of exploration into the realities, emotions and potential ambiguities inherent in the working relationships of coach educators within formal coach education contexts. So, through the exploration of coach educators' biographies, interactions, experiences, perceptions and emotions, it was suggested that the sociologically orientated approach to the study of emotion and micropolitics could potentially explain the relationship between the physical body, cognitive processes and cultural constructions of the coach education setting (Jones *et al.*, 2011; Turner & Stets, 2005).

In adopting a sociological perspective to explore the micropolitical and emotional aspects of coaching and coach education, the proposed methodological design to be utilised would be a narrative-biographical approach (e.g. Kelchtermans, 1993a, 2005) because implementing such an approach can allow researchers to 'see' and 'feel' how participants dealt with the dilemmas they faced, as well as the motivations underpinning behaviours and actions (Jones, 2006). In addition, this approach not only provides "rich, detailed accounts of the indeterminacy" of the participants' experiences, but also enhances the complexities surrounding the understandings of coaching and coach education and "the capability to examine in considerable depth the frequently misunderstood or overlooked everyday aspects of coaching" and coach education (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, p. 564). This in turn could initially begin to 'reverse' the academic research of coach education from 'knowledge-for-action' to 'knowledge-for-understanding'.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has analysed the coach education literature. It has revealed mixed perceptions from coaches who have attended coach education provision, which in turn has made researchers question the effectiveness of these programmes. The empirical research to date has found that coaches feel their development is mainly enhanced through informal learning sources, such as reflection on previous playing and coaching experiences, as well as observations and interactions with other coaches (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006; Culver & Trudel, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, formal coach education programmes seem to have a minimal effect on coaches' learning in their "lifelong learning journey" in coaching (Trudel, Gilbert & Werthner, 2010, p.149). Due to this learning capacity during a coach's career, it was highlighted through broader coaching studies that the majority of coaches have perceived formal coach education courses negatively, especially the more experienced, expert coaches. However, it was also highlighted that coach education courses have been beneficial and impacted positively upon other coaches as they have enhanced their coaching development and knowledge (Lemyre *et al.*, 2007; McCullick *et al.*, 2005; Wright *et al.*, 2007).

Due to these mixed perceptions, scholars have been quick to prescribe 'solutions', as opposed to investigating a "thorough grasp of the practice itself" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 123). Despite these theoretical recommendations being informative and valuable for the coach educators to improve their delivery, without understanding the contextual, cultural and dynamic nature of the coach education environment, especially from a coach educators' perspective, these 'solutions' are impossible to implement effectively. Coach educators are seen to be a vital part of coach education provision, so it is important to gain an understanding of how they experience their

working roles (Cushion, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Nelson *et al.*, 2013). The two-way interactional process between coach educators and their key contextual stakeholders may then start to be unravelled and acknowledged in order to understand how the coach learning process shapes coaches' methodologies, philosophies and perceptions of effective coaching practice and coach development.

Thus far, scholars have started to conduct empirical studies focusing on the sociological aspects of coaching within the broader coaching literature (i.e. coach learning, knowledge acquisition, emotions and micropolitics). However, these aspects have been largely ignored within the coach education research. Therefore, the only empirical understandings we have of the coach education environment have been the 'snapshots' of mixed perceptions of the coach learners. So, by implementing a more narrative-biographical approach within coach education research (Jones *et al.*, 2003; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2009a), one which focuses on the coach educators delivering the provision, it is hoped that the insight into coach educators' experiences can maybe inform professionals and scholars of the complexities of the coach education setting. Furthermore, in doing so, utilising a 'bottom-up' approach, as opposed to the 'knowledge-for-action' approach that has so far dominated the coach education research, the foundations can potentially be laid for future research to utilise prescriptive frameworks in NGB coach education programmes (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

3.0 Methodology

Within this chapter I will present the methodology I employed for this study, including my reasoning behind the decisions that I made and strategies I utilised. Initially, I begin with the exploration of the paradigm debate, where I give specific consideration to the interpretive paradigm. I then introduce the narrative-biographical approach that was utilised in this study. Following this, I not only discuss the participants' backgrounds, but also the means by which I gained access to them. I will then provide a detailed description of both the data collection and the analytical processes, before finally outlining the criteria by which I wish the reader to judge the quality of this study.

3.1 The Interpretive Paradigm

From a social sciences perspective, the term paradigm is used to describe the set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect the way an individual perceives reality and responds to that perception (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Paradigms allow researchers to distinguish relationships between variables that specify appropriate methodological procedures in order to conduct particular research (Crotty, 1998). There are two key paradigms that have been predominantly used in sports coaching research: positivism and interpretivism (Gratton & Jones, 2004; Potrac *et al.*, *in press*). These differ according to the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions used to analyse the task of examining and exploring human behaviour (Bryman, 2012).

Ontology is described as:

“whether the ‘reality’ to be investigated is external to the individual – imposing itself on the individual from without – or the product of individual conscience; whether reality is of an ‘objective’ nature, or

the product of an individual cognition; whether ‘reality’ is ‘out there in the world’ or the products of one’s mind” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 1).

Ontology consists of two diametrically opposed positions known as ‘realism’ and ‘relativism’, which revolve around questions regarding the nature of human existence, or in essence ‘reality’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Positivists subscribe to the belief that “individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured and known for what they really are” (Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). This realist perspective considers the social world (or reality) to be made up of structures and objects that have ‘cause-effect relationships’. Conversely, the interpretivist position conforms to an ‘idealist’ ontology (i.e. there is no reality independent of perception), which suggests that the ‘social world’ is founded upon the premise that realities are complex and dynamic, and that people subjectively define their own ‘meanings’ within social, political and cultural settings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Markula & Silk, 2011). Central to the interpretive paradigm is an understanding of how objects and events may be understood by individuals in a variety of different ways. In short, reality is what an individual perceives to exist (Potrac *et al.*, *in press*). This, however, does not mean that “the mind creates what people say and do” (Smith, 1989, p. 74), or that the social world only exists in people’s heads. Instead, the interpretivist perspective is based upon the premise that the mind influences “how we interpret movements and utterances”, as well as “the meanings we assign to the intentions, motivations and so on of ourselves and others” (Smith, 1989, p. 27). As such, interpretivist researchers focus their efforts on describing and interpreting peoples’ lived experiences (Coe, 2012; Crotty, 1998; Dawson & Prus, 1995). Ultimately, this approach fundamentally rejects the belief that the social world can be examined and understood through the assumptions and methodologies that natural scientists use to examine the physical world (Nelson, Groom & Potrac, *in press*).

Epistemology refers to how knowledge is acquired and constructed (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). As a 'theory of knowledge', epistemology considers "whether knowledge is something that can be acquired on the one hand or something which has to be personally experienced on the other" (Burrell & Morgan, 1992, p. 2). It is a philosophical belief system that addresses how knowledge is created in terms of 'how we know, what we know' (Crotty, 1998). There are two philosophically opposed positions addressing the 'nature of knowledge' and 'how understanding is developed'. These are 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' (Sparkes, 1992; Willig, 2001). Positivists subscribe to objectivism, which Sparkes (2001) described as an assumption that reality exists independently from consciousness. From a positivist perspective, knowledge is created by focusing on gaining impartial, unbiased data through 'an outside view' of the social world. Positivist researchers seek to remove themselves from the research process and employ nomothetic methodologies that emphasise the production of statistical data that chart relationships between variables (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sparkes, 2001; Willig, 2001).

In contrast, interpretive researchers utilise methods that are hermeneutic and dialectical in order to interactively explore and interpret the lived experiences of others (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretivists prefer an 'ideographic' modus operandi, which is derived from understanding the social world by obtaining first-hand knowledge of the subject in question by emphasising exploration into a person's detailed background and history (Sparkes, 2001). These assumptions significantly shape the research process through methodological deliberation that:

"moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise; it recognises research is concerned with understanding the world and that is the information by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purpose of understanding" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 3).

Emphasis is placed upon gaining rich, in-depth descriptions of small populations, and utilising ‘thick interpretation’ of a research context in order to understand the subjects’ meanings of lived experiences (Denzin, 1989; Howell, 2013; Markula & Silk, 2011; Sparkes, 1992). Unlike positivists, interpretive researchers recognise how they, as researchers, play a central role in the collection, analysis, interpretation and representation of data (Nelson *et al.*, *in press*; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

I decided to adopt an interpretivist approach because of my desire to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of coach educators. The adoption of the interpretivist approach allowed me to begin to understand and explain the social realities of coach educators’ everyday working lives, inclusive of the trials, tribulations and dilemmas that they may experience. Indeed, it has been argued that an interpretive approach to coach education research allows us to develop rich understandings of how “emotion, cognition, self and context, ethical judgement, and purposeful action” are “all intertwined” (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 996). Such understandings can help us to move beyond the largely inhuman representations of practice that, some would argue, are a feature of positivistic modes of investigation (Potrac *et al.*, *in press*).

It should also be noted that, from a theoretical perspective, I adopted an *interpretive-interactionist* stance. According to Denzin (1992), there are many interpretive stances of how researchers interpret cultures and behaviours (e.g. structuralism, poststructuralism, symbolic interactionism, interpretive interactionism, postmodernism). Denzin’s (1992) interpretive-interactionist perspective originates from symbolic interactionism, and in particular how humans act towards things and other people, the interactions and meaning towards these things and people, and finally how these meanings are “handled in, and through, an interpretive process” (Denzin, 2001, p. 2). In other words, it focuses on how people interact with and interpret the objects with which they engage. In addition, Denzin (1992) acknowledged that society is more than

just symbolic interaction, because of what goes on at the ‘hierarchical level’ of opinion, status, class, education, politics and power that all occur in society. Yet, while it retains many of the original theoretical tenets, interpretive interactionism is best understood as a “response to past criticisms of symbolic interactionism particularly the charges of a structural bias”, and offers a useful lens through which to understand the social meanings behind the interpretation of social experiences (Richardson, 2010, p. 138).

Denzin advocated that traditionalist symbolic interactionists have previously failed to incorporate elements of postmodern and poststructural theory into interpreting the social demeanours of different organisations and cultures. In keeping with Denzin’s stance, within this research study I drew upon poststructuralist and postmodern readings to further understand the social positions of how the human subject is constructed through language and ideology. Denzin (1992) explained that texts (e.g. visual, oral, print) and deconstruction (e.g. critical analysis of the text) are central to the poststructuralist position, which is considered open-ended, indeterminate and interactional. Therefore, from my perspective, it was essential that I considered utilising this approach within my interpretive-interactionist stance in order to critically analyse the findings by exploring how the meanings are related to historical moments (in relation to the individuals), and the relationship between the individual and the society. In doing so, I believe I was able to investigate not only the interpretive-interactionist endeavours of the coach educators in this study, but was also able to bring to life the emotionally and politically laden nature of everyday interactions through the ‘critical’ historical moments in the coach educators’ careers that influenced their present and future actions and interactions.

Whilst I have acquired significant understanding from traditional symbolic interactionist theory, I find myself in agreement with Denzin’s (1989) critiques, and more specifically his ideas of symbolic interactionism incorporating elements of

postmodern and poststructural theory through combining an interactionist sociological stance with a critical, feminist, cultural studies stance. Indeed, whereas a structuralist analysis provides the impact of structural and material forces on coach educators' experiences of managing their interactions with the contextual stakeholders, I echoed Bridgman and Willmott's (2006) contention that determining individual action, structural and material forces are best understood as "simultaneously physical and social" (p. 122). Therefore, I believed that the coach educators' identities were "socially bestowed, socially maintained, and socially transformed" during through the process of social interaction (Berger, 1963, p. 98). So, through this interpretive-interactionist perspective, I analysed the coach educators' understandings of themselves as a continuously developing process through their social experiences and interactions with their managers, co-workers, and coach learners attending the courses (Richardson, 2010). By taking into consideration the cultural, political, educational, emotional and hierarchical elements surrounding these interactions, I believed I was able to develop a more nuanced understanding of the coach educators' experiences than would have been achieved through the adoption of a traditional interactionist perspective alone.

3.2 A Narrative-Biographical Approach

According to Kelchtermans (1993a, 1993b), the narrative-biographical approach is characterised by four theoretical aspects, namely *biographical*, *narrative*, *constructivist* and *interactionist*. These concepts combine to reflect a person's "so-called subjective career" and their "personal experiences [they have] in their professional lives over time" (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 30). Kelchtermans argued that the biographical aspect of this perspective refers to the life a person lives, and how their interpretations, thoughts and actions in the present are then influenced in the future.

Therefore, this aspect focuses on the ‘meaning’ that events and incidents have on the people that live them. So, in the context of this study:

“this perspective is centred on the practical understandings that [coach educators] develop as they enter into and begin [coach educating] and on the ways in which beginning and/or experienced [coach educators] come to frame their understandings within their life stories or life experiences” (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 26).

Similarly, the narrative aspect refers to the central role of an individual’s story in relation to their life and/or career experiences. Narratives are considered to be a powerful way to understand the complex process of ‘making sense’ of an individual’s story (Clandinin, 2006).

This approach is in line with constructivist thinking as it is based on the premise that people “actively (re)construct their experiences into a narrative that makes sense to them” (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 31). Indeed, the importance and relevance of narrative-biographical work lies not within the historical truth, but rather in the meanings that these experiences have for individuals. In addition, Kelchtermans implied that the interactionist stance refers to understanding meaningful interaction with other individuals within the environment or context. Both of these constructivist and interactionist characteristics help avoid the conception that human action is too cognitivist; instead it considers what happens ‘inside’ the individual (Kelchtermans, 2009b). In essence, there are two combined approaches related to ‘making sense’ of a person’s particular experience in both a temporal and a spatial sense. There is a *when* (e.g. the particular moment or period in time) and a *where* (e.g. the organisational, imitational, political, social, cultural and material environment) of individuals’ experiences.

Furthermore, it was advocated that “the interactionist, constructivist and contextualised characteristic implies that the narrative-biographical perspective takes a

largely anti-deterministic stance, which is only relevant to that person telling their story” (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 32). So, specifically, this perspective allows for the “reconstruction and analysis” of a person’s “professional learning and development based on the experiences during their career” (p. 32). Therefore, utilising a narrative-biographical perspective allows researchers to analyse a person’s career and what has impacted on their future perceptions, deliberations and actions (Kelchtermans, 2009b). In relation to my own study, utilising a narrative-biographical approach included the collection and production of rich, in-depth, detailed data that enabled the exploration of someone’s ‘subjective reality’, which assisted the understanding of the contextual world that practitioners work in (Dowling Næss, 1996, 1998, 2001; Streat, 1998). Through the application of this approach, it was believed a narrative-biographical approach would enable me to gain a greater understanding of the motivations, aspirations and behaviours that underpinned the participants’ actions and interactions on a daily basis (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

3.3 The Participants

3.3.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was utilised within this study (Tracy, 2013). The selection of participants in this research was based on particular features and characteristics that facilitated a detailed understanding of the central themes of exploring the everyday working relationships and realities of FA coach educators. Therefore, this study required a sample of FA coach educators who specialised in delivering, or had delivered, football coach education course at FA Level 1 or higher. The type of purposive sampling utilised for this study was *typical instance sampling*, where

participants “are chosen because they are typical of the phenomenon under examination” (Tracy, 2013, p. 136).

In order to secure my participants, contact was made with a number of coach educators who I knew personally, or who had delivered courses I had attended throughout my coaching career. I contacted them and provided them with a brief overview of the intended study and I subsequently gained their informed consent to participate in the study. In terms of purposeful sampling then, this could be considered an *opportunistic sample* as the coach educators were already known to me (Merriam, 2009; Tracy, 2013).

3.3.2 Andy

Andy had been an FA coach educator for 18 years, working on a part-time basis, delivering FA Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3/UEFA ‘B’ coach education qualifications. At the time of the interviews he was 59 years old. He attained his UEFA ‘A’ award before he started as a coach educator and had his own personal football coaching academy for 20 years, where he coached young children to develop their football skills and improve performance. Prior to becoming an FA coach educator, Andy played semi-professional football until a stomach injury ended his career prematurely.

3.3.3 Brian

Brian, aged 51 years old, had been an FA coach educator for 15 years and delivered FA Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3/UEFA ‘B’ coaching qualifications. He also had recently begun delivering the new FA Youth Module 1, Module 2 and Module 3 coach education programmes. Before becoming a coach educator, Brian had a long and

successful professional football career, playing for a number of teams in England. Brian had always shown a keen interest in coaching and began coaching a local boys' team during a spell with his hometown professional football club at the age of 28 years.

3.3.4 Carol

Carol had been a part-time FA coach educator for two years, and had delivered FA Level 1 and FA Youth Module 1 awards. Before becoming a coach educator, she worked for a community-based football coaching company for nine years, and then obtained a full-time job working with boys and girls aged 5-11 within the local schools and community. At the time of this study, Carol was 27 years old. She had played football since the age of 11 for different girls' and women's teams before becoming the player/coach of a local women's team.

3.3.5 Dean

Dean, 58 years old, had been an FA coach educator delivering the FA Level 1 award for over eight years. He had performed this role on a part-time basis while he worked full-time as a police officer, a job from which he had recently retired. Before becoming a coach educator, Dean spent several years coaching recreational children's football teams. He combined this with his coaching of elite youth footballers at his local professional club.

3.4 Collecting the Narrative-Biographical Data

Interviews are the most common method used in narrative-biographical studies (e.g. Denzin, 1970; Kelchtermans, 2009a; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a; Plummer,

1983; Tracy, 2013). There are three main types of interviews: structured, unstructured and semi-structured. The structured interview involves standardised questions in a particular order that are pre-determined ahead of time (Berg, 2001). These are typically found among surveys and are used for large sample sizes (Seidman, 2006). Additionally, these interviews are appropriate when a large number of people are to conduct interviews on the same topic and the researchers wish to reduce the variation in questions asked and responses received (Tracy, 2013). The limitations of this approach are that it is ultimately designed to eliminate the role of the researcher and to introduce objectivity into the situation, and permit no room for further investigation such as probing (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the interviews fail to consider understanding the individual's experiences in detail, as the structured questions constrict and limit answers because of the lack of opportunity to discuss emerging issues that could arise from the questions (Patton, 1990). So, the participants must fit their experiences and feelings into the researchers' categories, which may be perceived as impersonal, irrelevant, and mechanistic. This can distort what respondents really experienced and limit their response choices (Patton, 2002).

The second interview technique is categorised as unstructured interviews and operates from a different set of assumptions (Patton, 2002). These interviews begin with the assumption that the researcher does not know in advance what all the necessary questions are, so he or she is unable to predetermine a full list of questions to ask (Berg, 2001). Ultimately, the idea of this interview approach is to maintain as much flexibility as possible, and to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate. Often, most of the questions flow from the interactions between the interviewer and interviewee (Tracy, 2013). The strengths of the unstructured interview are that it allows the interviewer to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes, as well as to increase the salience and relevance of questions that relate to the

individual (Merriam, 2009). However, this approach does require a skilled researcher to handle the great flexibility demanded by the unstructured interview. The interviewer must have the ability to develop, adapt and generate the questions that are appropriate to the given situation and the central purpose of the investigation (Merriam, 2009; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). The conversational interviewer must be able to interact easily with people in a variety of settings, generate rapid insights, formulate questions quickly and smoothly, and guard against asking questions that impose interpretations on the situation by the structure of the questions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990).

The final interview technique Merriam (1998, 2009) described was the semi-structured interview. This was the chosen method for this study, and is in keeping with many empirical studies within the sports coaching domain (e.g. Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Purdy *et al.*, 2008). This approach to interviewing permits broad topics to be covered that are specified prior to the interviews taking place, while also allowing new and emerging topics to be explored in detail (Britten, 1999; Merriam, 2009). The general structure of these interviews is maintained, but the questions can be adapted and varied depending upon the conversations that take place. This allows the interviewer a freedom to digress and probe far beyond the already prepared questions in order to produce more in-depth answers (Berg, 2001). In addition, applying this format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand in a flexible conversational manner (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview approach considers the uniqueness of the individual and their viewpoints, which allows the researcher to follow up on specific ideas or issues that may have emerged from the data (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995; Silverman, 2006). Also, this type of qualitative interviewing is seen to be particularly useful as a research method for accessing an

individual's thoughts, which are things that cannot be easily accessed through a standardised questionnaire (Roulston, deMarrais & Lewis, 2003).

3.5 Data Collection, Analysis and Writing

3.5.1 Procedure

Data were collected through a series of informal, semi-structured interviews, with each participant being interviewed for approximately 20 hours in total. However some participants were interviewed more times than others. This reflected the time they had available for each interview, the progress that was made in a particular interview session, and, not least, my ability to pursue, as well as obtain, greater detail and understanding of their respective experiences as coach educators. The interviews with each participant were conducted until data saturation occurred. This is the point at which no new data emerged during the interview sessions with each participant (Merriam, 2009; Parahoo, 2007). The interviews were conducted at a time and venue that best suited the needs of the coach educators and ensured that the subjects were comfortable and relaxed within their surroundings (Tracy, 2013). Seidman (2006) stated that, during an interview, the more comfortable a person is in their own environment, the more expressive they will be. Also, it was important that the locations of the interviews were free from high levels of background noise to ensure the quality of the recorded audio files (Merriam, 2009).

During the first interview with each participant, the ethical principles underpinning the interview process were described. I told the participants that the content of the interviews would be confidential, and I as the researcher would be the only person who would listen to the audiotapes of the interviews. In addition, it would be the coach educators' choice at the end of the project as to whether the audiotapes

were returned to them or erased (Sparkes, 2000). Also, I explained that each subject would be given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity during the project (Merriam, 1998). Initially, it was important that I formed a relationship with each of the participants, because interviews require an openness that allows for the participant to 'share' their experiences (Denzin, 1989; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, it was essential that I adopted an interactive role throughout the interview process. Importantly, I assumed the role of an 'active listener', which allowed me to feedback to the participant what they had already said in order to confirm my own interpretation of their stories (Sparkes, 2000). In doing so, I was able to extend discussions to explore a range of further issues in relation to the coach educators' shared experiences (Jones *et al.*, 2003; Purdy & Jones, 2011).

The initial interview with each participant began with general information about the purpose of the project and then focused on the background of the coach educator, before open-ended questions were utilised to explore the experiential, contextual and situational factors that the subject perceived to influence their behaviours, opinions, philosophies and issues within the coach education environment (Jones *et al.*, 2004; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Before the next interviews occurred, the data was fully transcribed verbatim, which allowed the researcher to identify relevant issues and 'analytically memo' common themes and categories within the data to be further discussed (Merriam, 1998). Indeed, this process was 'cyclical' in nature, which referred to the interview process being continually ongoing throughout the research project. It was suggested that because of the cyclic nature of the interview and data analysis process, it was important to transcribe and analyse each interview before the next interview took place. In this way, it was possible to identify themes and issues to explore in the next interview (Sparkes & Smith, 2002). Indeed, while a list of topics for discussion was prepared in advance, any new themes that emerged during the course of the interviews

were probed and explored. Such an approach allowed greater freedom in terms of the sequencing of questions and the amount of time given to each topic (Potrac *et al.*, 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a). These themes were reflected upon and they shaped the subsequent interview in order to explore the meaning behind what had been said in the previous interview. This process is explored in further detail in the following section addressing the iterative analysis of the data collected.

3.5.2 Iterative Data Analysis

The objective of the data analysis was to organise and interpret the interview transcripts to analyse the situational, experiential and contextual factors that the coach educators discussed throughout the interview process. Traditional data analysis approaches within qualitative research have been seen to be a somewhat linear process with regard to interviews (Creswell, 2007; Taylor, *in press*). This has been characterised as relatively unproblematic in nature, especially with the number of ‘step-by-step’ accounts that suggest the necessary methodology explaining how to collect and analyse qualitative data (Taylor, *in press*). While these instructional explanations are useful in terms of the research process, these representations were different to my own experiences of continually working back and forth between data collection, data analysis and the writing up of my research findings. Therefore, my approach to data analysis may be best described as being iterative, as opposed to being purely inductive, in nature (Tracy, 2013).

This iterative approach to data analysis has been described as a cyclical process that combines emic or emergent readings of the data with an etic use of existing models, explanations and theories (Tracy, 2013). This analysis approach encourages reflection upon the active interests, current literature and various theories that the researcher

relates to the data. Therefore, unlike traditional descriptions of inductive analysis, iterative data analysis is a reflexive process in which the researcher visits and revisits his or her data. This allows the researcher to connect the emerging insights, themes and concepts by continually refining his or her understanding of the topic being investigated (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Within this reflexive framework of analysis, I immersed myself in my data, and engaged in reflective discussions with my supervisors. Tracy (2013) suggested that this was the *data immersion phase* and it was a continuous process throughout this research project.

Also, in keeping with Tracy's (2013) description of iterative data analysis, my research approach comprised two main aspects that were engaged on multiple occasions. The first aspect was the analysis of the interview transcripts, so that themes could be identified from the emerging data. Initially, the collected data was 'coded' into segments that represented themes. These codes were based upon key words or phrases the coach educators' had used during the interviews. These 'stand out' fragments of information primarily illustrated key events of the coach educators' professional lives, which related to 'critical incidents', 'critical people' and 'critical phases of time' (Kelchtermans, 1993a; 2009b). These were determined by the participants' identification of them as being meaningful (e.g. "that had a huge impact on me"); my interpretations of an event, person or phase of time being critical being confirmed by the participants; and when they linked an incident, person or phase of time to their sense of professional self and behaviour (Kelchtermans, 1993a, 1993b, 2009a). I found that the common theme between all of the participant coach educators was their relationships and interactions with three key contextual stakeholders – staff members of the FA, co-coach educators and coach learners attending the courses. From the identification of these early themes, additional questions were then formed and asked in subsequent

interviews in an attempt to expand the initial insight gained in the previous interviews (Kelchtermans, 2009a).

Throughout the data analysis phase, I also engaged in a secondary cyclical analysis. This entailed critically examining the meaning codes that had been already identified in the primary data analysis. Within this secondary cycle, organising, synthesising and categorising the data into interpretive concepts occurred. More specifically the principal aim was attempting to understand the data in relation to theoretical frameworks through ‘analytical memos’, which primarily and tentatively linked theoretical concepts that could help make sense of the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Similar to the emic engagement of the data, this etic process allowed me to raise further questions that could be explored in subsequent interviews. In practice, I found that these two approaches were often carried out simultaneously, which made for an extremely ‘messy’ and complex process of data analysis. This differed markedly from the supposedly ‘unproblematic’ and straightforward representations of data analysis, where data is grouped into themes through a process of inductive content analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990).

Furthermore, the writing of the research results occurred simultaneously with the data collection and data analysis, and in essence is a form of analysis itself (Richardson, 1996). Therefore, writing the narratives of the respective coach educators while I was still in the process of the data collection and data analysis allowed me to identify gaps in my understanding. It also allowed me to identify areas in the analytical themes that needed readdressing in further detail during subsequent interviews (Sparkes, 2000; Smith & Sparkes, 2002). In addition, the writing of these narratives led me to reflect upon how to ‘best’ represent my data. Here, I found myself in agreement with Jones *et al.* (2003), who noted that “the multi-layered process of analysing and writing [a narrative] is a difficult story to retell” (p. 237). Therefore, while I believe the narratives

to be ‘accurate’ accounts of the coach educators’ experiences, I recognise that the narratives told are ultimately created by me, the researcher (King, 1993). It is because of this that I decided to write the narratives in the first person. Once I had completed the narratives for each participant coach educator, I gave them the opportunity to read through their stories. This was done from an ethical perspective as well as to gauge their understanding of how I represented their experiences and understandings (Merriam, 2009). This gave each participant the opportunity to ask me to change anything they deemed to have been interpreted incorrectly, as well as giving them the chance to inform me if they were unhappy with any aspect of the written narrative that could expose their anonymity. One of the participants, Andy, asked me to remove some of his demographic information in order to further maintain his anonymity. Apart from this minor exception, all of the participants were happy with the way I had interpreted their experiences.

In an attempt to ‘make sense’ of the stories of the FA coach educators, I drew upon a number of interactionist theoretical frameworks. Initially, I related the coach educators’ experiences to the work of Kelchtermans and colleagues (1996, 2002a, 2005, 2009a) on micropolitics, and more specifically their professional self-understanding within the job role. Kelchtermans *et al.* (2002a, 2009a) provided an interesting window into *micropolitical literacy* that is often an inherent feature of everyday life. Their research was conducted in educational environments, focusing on teachers’ roles, but coaching research scholars have suggested that this theoretical lens can be closely related to the context of the coaching domain (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). This micropolitical perspective fundamentally explored how individuals experience and understand their subjective experiences of practice and the “learning that takes place on the job” (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 29).

The majority of Kelchtermans' work has been aimed at 'making sense' of the personal experiences of teachers in their professional lives over a period of time, and it was suggested that individual teachers' "interpretations, thoughts and actions of the present are influenced by experiences in the past, and expectations for the future" (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 1001). In particular, Kelchtermans and colleagues' (1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2009a) body of research explored how 'beginning' teachers come to understand and navigate their way through the political aspects of their job. Their research addressed how teachers' micropolitical literacy is developed, which refers to the process by which individuals learn to read the micropolitical 'reality' of their job (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1998). It was suggested that micropolitical activity was then performed as individuals protected their self-interests, organisational, cultural-ideological, socio-professional and material interests (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). Also, self-esteem, self-image, job motivation, task perception and future perspectives were identified as aspects that teachers considered important within their job roles.

In addition to this micropolitical framework, the FA coach educators' behaviours and interactions were also understood in relation to Goffman's (1959) work addressing dramaturgical theorising, described in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. Indeed, his framework of *impression management*, which Williams (1998) referred to as the events that occur whenever two or more people are in one another's presence, was identified as a central concept to explain the interactions of coach educators. This notion examined the expectations that people hold of what normal and acceptable behaviour is, and was based on the belief that in everyday life individuals play roles, negotiate situations and, to a certain extent, are forced to be actors (Jones *et al.*, 2004). Central to Goffman's argument was the notion that individuals are not entirely determined by society, because they are able to strategically

manipulate social situations and other's impressions of themselves. Goffman's thinking allows researchers to explore how people not only produce recognisable performance for others, but also how they strategically manipulate others' perceptions of themselves and social situations to reach their goals (Jones *et al.*, 2003). Considering Goffman's work, this dramaturgical approach not only examined the mode of presentation employed by the social actor, but also explained its meaning in a broader sports coaching social context (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, Ronglan & Davey, 2011).

A further analytic framework employed to 'make sense' of the coach educators' stories was provided by Bauman's (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) ideas on work and social relationships, in what he termed a period of *liquid modernity*. In this regard, Bauman argued that we live in an individualistic, uncertain, private and precarious time. Central to this thesis is Bauman's belief that we live in a world that puts "a premium on competitive attitudes", while also relegating "collaboration and team work to the rank of temporary stratagems that need to be terminated the moment their benefits have been used up" (Bauman, 2007, pp. 2-3). He additionally argued that our preoccupation with protecting our own of self-interests, self-standing and status has to a wearing away "our capacity to think in terms of common fates and interests" (Bauman, 1996, p. 18). As such, he believes that we increasingly find ourselves living "separately side by side" with others. Such social arrangements have, from his perspective, not only led to "the decay of an active culture of political argument and action", but also to an erosion of social bonds and a greater sense of individual insecurity (Bauman, 1996, 2007). In light of Bauman's discussions it could be considered that this may be of relevance to my study in order to better understand the actions and behaviours FA coach educators' utilise in their everyday working role.

The final analytic framework utilised to 'make sense' of the interview data was the emotional aspect presented in the work undertaken by Hochschild (2000 [1983]).

Hochschild was among the first to develop a sociological understanding of emotion, with her work considered to be ‘ground-breaking’ in understanding the significance of emotion in everyday life for individuals and families and in the work place (Theodosius, 2008). Hochschild’s work is most notably known for its accounts addressing the binds, intimacy and emotions that are a feature of social life at work and in the home (Hochschild, 1979, 2000 [1983], 2003). Her findings in this area are best illustrated in *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling* (2000 [1983]), *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (1989), and *The Commercialisation of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work* (2003). Hochschild’s work provides a deep insight into the social actor’s ability to work on emotions in order to present a socially desirable performance for the benefit of those around them (Bolton & Boyd, 2003). Hochschild is most known for her detailed study of the everyday realities of flight attendants in the commercial airline industry, from which she developed the concept of *emotional labour* (Hochschild, 2003, p. 7). Furthermore, Hochschild introduced the concepts of *emotional management*, *feeling rules*, *surface* and *deep acting*, and the *inauthenticity of the self*, which may be of relevance to this study in order to better understand the emotions played out in the FA coach educators’ everyday working lives.

3.6 Judging the Study

Recently, the ‘standard’ criteria for judging qualitative research has been increasingly disputed (McGannon & Schweinbenz, 2011; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). This is due to an increasing recognition of the various ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the production of qualitative research, and what these may mean for how research is judged (Sparkes, 1998; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Within the sports domain, it has been argued that qualitative and quantitative research is different,

so the criteria for judging the quality of research needs to be different also. Whereas quantitative researchers conform to the tenets of validity, reliability and generalisability, qualitative researchers have tended to draw on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) *trustworthiness* criterion when judging the quality of their investigations.

While Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criterion remains the 'gold standard' of judging the quality of qualitative research in sports science, this stance has been subjected to critique by Sparkes (1998, 2002), and Sparkes and Smith (2009). They argued that the techniques proposed to achieve trustworthiness were not appropriate to the logic of qualitative research. For example, they critiqued the importance that Lincoln and Guba (1985) attached to *member checking* as the primary means to establish the credibility of qualitative studies. In drawing upon the work of Gallagher (1995), they suggested that this method of verification was problematic because in the midst of multiple realities, those being studied are the 'real knowers' and 'possessors' of the truth. This assumes that participants have privileged status as commentators on their actions, which then advocates the possibility of disagreements about the interpretations between researcher and participant.

Secondly, Sparkes and Smith (2009) critiqued Lincoln and Guba's (1985) work as a 'philosophical contradiction', suggesting that they "paid lip service to ontological relativism but on the other hand they espoused epistemological foundationalism in the form of procedures or method to sort out trustworthy and untrustworthy interpretations of reality" (Sparkes & Smith, 2009, p. 493). Indeed, in doing so, it was found that these two paradigm positions are incompatible. Smith, Papatomas, Martin-Ginis and Latimer-Cheung (*in press*) suggested that believing in a world of multiple mind-dependent realities, and a world in which reality can be found objectively, leads to an untenable situation. Therefore, Sparkes and Smith (2009) suggested two outcomes of 'escaping' this philosophical position: either the acceptance that in a relativistic world

of multiple realities that are dependent upon the researcher there is no way to distinguish trustworthy interpretations from untrustworthy ones, or, through the use of appropriate techniques and methods, the existence of a reality outside ourselves can be known objectively. Yet, despite the sports scholars preferring the latter approach, the problematic nature of this was “there is no way to ‘get at’ that reality as it really is”, which then causes further problems of the failure to capture the ‘real’ social reality. This results in a reality that cannot be called upon, and therefore it is impossible to “achieve theory-free observation or knowledge” (Sparkes & Smith, 2009, p. 34). In light of this problematic stance, Sparkes and Smith (2009) highlighted how Lincoln and Guba changed their original position, especially the idea of achieving trustworthiness through specific data gathering techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Despite this, sports scholars continue to frequently employ Lincoln and Guba’s framework when designing and evaluating qualitative studies.

In light of their critiques, Sparkes and Smith (2013) suggested implementing a different position that proposed that sports coaching researchers should ‘let go’ of all traditional views regarding trustworthiness, and call upon other more relativist criteria to judge the ‘quality’ of a qualitative study. Indeed, Smith and Deemer (2000) pointed out that relativists can, and will, make judgements on research, but they also understand that the *characteristic traits* of judging qualitative inquiries, which are ongoing and can be adapted, are based on what a researcher *may* do, as opposed to what they *must* do. Smith *et al.* (*in press*) focused upon what characterising traits is already being performed in the field and how criterion is constructed (*phronesis*) (Flyvberg, 2001). The criterion suggested by Smith *et al.* (*in press*) is dependent upon the type of study one is judging, its purpose, and what has been done in the research domain. It was advocated that this list of criteria was not ‘set in stone’. However, despite the long list

of criteria created, Smith and colleagues state that ‘more’ does not mean better, but instead the criteria have to be appropriate and relevant to the study conducted.

In relation to the criteria Smith *et al.* (*in press*) assembled, the quality of my study could be judged against a number of these. Indeed, I would like the reader to consider whether or not this study was a *worthy topic*. Was it relevant, significant and interesting to the coaching education research domain? Did this study have *width* (i.e. do I provide comprehensive evidence that supports the analysis and interpretation subsequently provided)? Also, I would like the reader to consider if this study has *personal narrative and storytelling as an obligation to critique*, which refers to the story enacting ethical obligations to critique subject positions and acts within and outside of the work. Finally, did this study have an *impact* upon you as a reader, to generate further research questions and motivate new research actions and practices?

4.0 Results

In this section, I will present the narrative-biographies of the four respective coach educators, which will highlight the key experiences shared by the participants during the data collection. These four narrative-biographies will be split into four different chapters for each of the participants, and each chapter will include sub-headings. These will relate to the four main concepts that were recognised when analysing the ‘life-stories’. These are; how the participant became an FA coach educator, how they dealt with the NGB and respected local County FAs, the relationships they have with their colleagues when working on FA courses, and finally their relationships, perceptions and experiences of dealing with candidates.

4.1 Andy's Narrative

Andy had been a coach educator for 17 years, on a part-time basis, delivering FA Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3/UEFA 'B' courses, a role he was extremely proud to have obtained and continually performed. He had predominantly facilitated UEFA 'B' courses, and I established that he thoroughly enjoyed educating coach learners on these courses. Despite his long career in coach education, he had never applied for a full-time role within the FA, and was happy to deliver on a part-time basis for the different County FAs.

During my meetings with Andy, I found that he was very open and it became apparent early on during our interviews that he discussed personal experiences without hesitation. From these discussions, I realised that he had to create, build and maintain relationships with the key stakeholders he interacted with (e.g. the FA and local County FAs, colleagues and coach learners) when delivering, assessing and attending meetings regarding coach education provision. Indeed, I found that many of Andy's experiences working as a coach educator, interacting with those individuals, were extremely positive. However, during the interviews he did highlight a few negative experiences that hinted towards how he managed his actions within problematic working conditions, and explored what the consequences of those actions were. Additionally, within these experiences, I also discovered the emotional impact they had on Andy, as he admitted to sometimes having to control and manage feelings in order to maintain professionalism, as well as protect interests and the reputation he had within his role as a coach educator.

Within Andy's narrative, political and emotional issues were explored surrounding his experiences he shared with me during our discussions. His working relationships with the individuals employed by the FA and County FAs, his fellow coach educators and the coach learners attending the courses he delivered were all

identified as the key stakeholders Andy interacted with. Therefore, the structure of this narrative focused on the main events of his career interacting with these individuals throughout his role as an FA coach educator.

4.1.1 Becoming a Coach Educator

Initial Role as an FA Coach Educator: “Do you fancy the job?”

Andy admitted he became an FA coach educator by “default really”. Whilst he had been coaching players and teams for eight years before he attained his role as a coach educator, he was offered the role working for the FA as the County Coaching Representative. The position entailed him delivering all of the coach education courses for his local County FA on a part time basis. Andy believed he was offered this job because he had “recently attained the UEFA ‘A’ license” and had been assisting a close personal friend on a few coach education courses. After impressing on these courses co-delivering, Andy was then approached about the role by the County FA Chief Executive:

The guy who was the County Coaching Representative at the time fell out with County FA’s coaching hierarchy and I was approached, as I was the latest UEFA ‘A’ license coach to have come through the system. He said “Do you fancy the job?” and I went “What’s it entail?” and he told me. I did know to a large degree what to expect because I had done some assisting on courses before I became the County Coaching Rep, and I took over as the County Coaching Rep and part of that job was to deliver courses and that’s what I did from 1995 through to 2000.

Before becoming a coach, Andy had played semi-professional football, but he had to unfortunately retire after a serious stomach injury that prevented him from playing. He then decided to start coaching and began delivering sessions to local youngsters. Andy stated that he became interested in coaching because of the enjoyment

he had gotten from watching his managers actually coach him while he was playing semi-professionally:

When we actually had coaches who were qualified coming in and teaching us at 17 at semi-pro level it was good because they were all organised – you understood your job and I thought this is good compared to those who said “Get on with it and go and play”. It was structured and it was always organised.

After a few years coaching local children and teams, he then began to coach local representative teams and started to obtain FA coaching qualifications. Andy eventually attained the UEFA ‘A’ license in 1993, which was the highest coaching award available at that time in the United Kingdom. A couple of years later he decided to open a coaching academy for talented local children, aged between 7-14 years-old, in order to aid youth development in the local area. Andy successfully managed this business for over 25 years before eventually passing it over to another coach, as he felt that he had “taken the coaching academy as far as it could go”.

Andy believed that he had started to develop a reputation within the professional coaching circles of the local community, and believed that was one of the main reasons behind why he was approached for the FA County Coach Representative role. Since then, Andy had facilitated coach education courses for over 17 years, delivering FA Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3/UEFA ‘B’ coaching qualifications. Initially, when Andy began coaching, he told me he never aspired to become a coach educator, but once he started delivering coach education provision, it had ignited an enthusiasm to assist coaches to improve and develop. Andy gained a lot of satisfaction in observing candidates enhance their coaching skills through his guidance. Indeed, he acknowledged that this was the main reason as to why he continually delivered coach education programmes because he “loved talking football, mixing with footballers, and meeting people from different walks of life”.

Andy's role as a coach educator was always a part-time one and he had to constantly coordinate this with his full-time job. He admitted to feeling very fortunate to have been able to organise his FA coach educator role around his career, as he was allowed allotted time off work through annual leave in order to deliver FA courses. Andy was happy to deliver a few courses throughout a year, which fitted around the annual leave he was entitled to:

For me if I got two Level 3's a year I was happy, because it meant I had to take a week's holiday for both of them... For me it was five days holiday and the other days too, so I would have to take half my annual leave from my full-time job to do the football courses. I wasn't bothered, it was a good thing. I enjoyed the courses I delivered and looked forward to delivering them. It was my release from work... It was good money for the week too.

Andy admitted that the money he received working as an FA coach educator had always been an added extra incentive, but he insisted it was never the sole reason as to why he continued to deliver coach education provisions:

It was a nice little added extra. But daft as it sounds by taking a week's annual leave, by the time the course had finished I wouldn't get that annual leave time back to actually use it for time off to spend with my family. It was eight days and then evenings... In coach education, and even in normal coaching, unless you are full-time and somewhere high up the tree, its crap money. Coach education is ok for that immediate hit, that's pretty good, but it is hard graft, you do bloody work hard for the week you are doing it... It got me away from my full-time job for a week, so it was Sunday to Friday, or Monday to Saturday, 9-5, some evenings slung in for support days, but the phone is going or people are e-mailing you saying, "I'm on tomorrow morning and my head has gone, help me?" You don't get paid for that but that's not what it's about. If it's always about the money then people wouldn't do it.

Consequently, because of this, Andy believed he had never felt the added 'pressure' of having to obtain work as a coach educator for financial reasons; he believed it was just an added bonus rather than a necessity. He did stress that it was hard work delivering courses, both physically and mentally tiring, but he felt that it was his 'release' from his

daily routine and he enjoyed delivering the coach education courses. He said that the satisfaction he gained from observing the candidates become better and learn from his coaching expertise and experiences was the reason why he had delivered coach education programmes:

It was because I was passionate about what I do... I was proud that I had been able to assist so many to achieve their goal of becoming a 'qualified' football coach.

4.1.2 Working with the NGB

Working Relationships with County FAs: "Take your computer and shove it up your arse"

Andy discussed how he obtained work for the FA, and mentioned that he delivered coach education programmes through the local County FAs. He told me that they approached him to seek his availability to facilitate courses that were organised by these County FAs. He said there was a "pool of coach educators that each County FA could choose from" for the designated courses. Because of his full-time engagement to his job, he was able to choose the dates that coordinated with his work schedule:

It normally comes through the County FA, whichever one it is. They plan the courses for the year, it's well in advance, and they send us an itinerary of when the dates are and ask us about our availability. Then they decide who is going to do it.... It's like you have done one, so he can do the other. They tend to make it even around everyone, so that they don't give it to someone to do five because they like him. It's different at UEFA 'B'/Level 3, because there aren't as many educators in the pot to deliver them. That's why I always used to deliver them. They used to be three of us that delivered the UEFA 'B'/Level 3s.

Andy stated that it was the County FAs decision of who to employ to deliver the specific courses, but he said it was generally based on 'fairness'. However, I established that Andy believed that this fairness was dependent upon the relationship the coach

educator had with the key contextual stakeholders within each County FA. He recalled an experience that resulted in Andy losing his role as the County Coaching Representative:

For five years with the [local County FA] it was fantastic because I was County Coaching Rep, but me and the secretary fell out... It was all over my Coaching Academy. They thought there was a conflict of interests because at the time I was working for a [professional football club] that wasn't the [local] pro football club. I was sending kids to that club rather than the [local team]... I couldn't understand the problem, and unfortunately it affected my role as an educator, and I never worked for that County FA for a long time because of [the County FA secretary].

Andy was angry about the situation, as he felt that his coaching academy did not affect how he educated coaches during the courses he delivered. However, the County FA believed it did as “there was a conflict of interests in [the County FA’s] eyes”. The conflict was unresolved and Andy resigned from the post but there was a more problematic issue within this. The County FA had given Andy a computer for him to use when he delivered the courses, and the secretary wanted him to return it back personally, but at the time Andy was going through some personal problems:

One of my friends, who worked for the County FA, knew of my problems and stress at the time, as my mother-in-law had suddenly passed away, so he had said that he would take the computer in for me to the guy I had fallen out with. [The County FA secretary] then replied to my friend saying “No you won't, he will bring it in”. I'm thinking what a fucking tit!... So I took it in to him and said, “Look mate, there are far more important things going on in this world, so take your computer and shove it up your arse!”... I showed my true emotions as it was a difficult time personally as I was dealing with all the funeral arrangements, family feuds, upset children and wife, but he wasn't bothered about that; so I told him what to do with his computer. I knew it wasn't very professional. I was wrong to do that, I was annoyed, I was stressed.

Andy realised that his reaction to the situation may have damaged his ‘professional image’. However, during this situation he admitted that he had failed to control his

emotions, which then affected the professional image to which he upheld. Andy explained he was not only angry through the disagreement that had affected his role as a coach educator, but also described that he felt “furious and humiliated that [he] had to take in the computer after [his] close friend said he would do it for [him]”. In his own words Andy described the moment he had had to return the laptop:

I do not know why the secretary asked me to deliver the computer; I think it was a power thing with him in that he wanted me to do as he wanted when he wanted, ‘schoolteacher-naughty pupil’ scenario... I felt embarrassed and humiliated that I had to return the computer at the [County FA] headquarters, because there were people in there that were my friends, so having to go back there was not a nice experience for me. I went in and fucking told him how I felt though because I was so pissed off with it all. It was a shame really after all the excellent relationships I had built up, and this idiot spoilt it on something that wasn't even related to coach education.

On reflection, Andy admitted that he partly regretted his outburst directly after because he was “worried in case it had affected [him] with the other County FAs [he] delivered for”. He described to me that he was very conscious of portraying this professional image, and emphasised it as “the way you look and behave during a certain situation”. He felt that within any working conditions it was “important to behave appropriately with the language [he] uses and speak to people in a dignified manner”. Therefore, he recognised that the situation with one County FA may have tarnished his reputation, which in turn would affect other County FAs employing him to deliver their coach education programmes. Fortunately, it did not impact upon him obtaining work, but Andy mentioned that he never discussed the situation with the other County FAs. Indeed, he believed that even if they had known about the situation with the secretary and computer, his established affiliation and reputation he had already gained with them was the reason behind obtaining future work. He was never told whether the account of what happened was made available to the other County FAs in which he worked, but

they always contacted him in the same way they normally did after his outburst, and he remained employed by the other County FAs:

I started doing more work in other County FAs because of it... I had to go to them and say to them "I'm here to work for you". Luckily I had already delivered quite a few courses for them, so I was already in with them... They had liked the way I delivered and represented myself professionally to the staff working for them... When I had packed it in for [the local County FA] I was doing a Level 3 a year, and two Level 2's a year. I went looking elsewhere then, but I did it for me to keep ticking over and wanting to be involved at that level affecting coaches that came on the courses.

Eventually, he was reinstated with his local County FA again six years after the 'computer event'. The secretary that had humiliated Andy had since retired and a personal friend of Andy's had obtained the role as the Football Development Officer at the County FA and persuaded him to deliver coach education programmes for them again. Andy admitted he felt very disappointed to have lost the initial role that he enjoyed doing, but had become aware that the relationships he had formed and maintained while working for different County FAs could affect how much work he obtained to deliver coach education programmes. Therefore, Andy felt that he had to sustain his relationships even more so after he was reinstated by working very closely with his friend, the County FA Football Development Manager:

To be fair it was six years later, so some had moved on, but the County FA Football Development Manager did a great job just keeping me out of the way. At first I was brought back in to just assess, so there was no need for me to attend the office. He was aware of what had happened and he was very supportive and our arrangement was I would deal with him. When I came to deliver again the secretary had gone and so the 'clash' never happened... On saying that from my part nothing would have been said from me to him, on the same token I wasn't offering any olive branch! The rest of the office made me feel welcome again and I felt I had a very good relationship with all the staff in there and nothing was tarnished.

From my discussions with Andy, I realised that he had learnt that obtaining work ‘fairly’ within the coach education structure could quickly succumb if relationships with key stakeholders within the County FAs were negatively impacted upon. It was apparent that he felt he had formed a good reputation from his delivery methods and the way he portrayed himself professionally to the County FAs when they employed him:

I conducted myself professionally by being organised and I made sure my delivery style was positive, so that the candidates learn and enjoy the course. It’s about promoting a good environment, so they can learn, but mostly enjoy the course; so that they go away from the course thinking ‘I enjoyed that, it was very good’... Hopefully by doing this I have done a good job and I think I must have because I was offered more work from different County FAs... I must have been doing something right.

Consequently, he believed the importance of portraying this professional image was because his “attitude and behaviour is seen by candidates and colleagues, which can be quickly relayed back to my employers”. Indeed, when I asked him where he had learnt how to behave ‘professionally’ he told me:

I observed other coaches who I had as tutors, plus those who mentored me on my educational courses, as well as fellow educators I worked with. I took from them the good and ensured I did not get into what I saw as the ‘wrong’ way to be a professional. I believed the right way to be a professional is you must set good examples with attitude, enthusiasm, behaviour, knowledge, openness, appearance, ability to deliver, support and availability. I wanted the students to feel they had had the best experience on a coaching course and they went away having become a better coach.

Therefore, in doing so, Andy felt that by demonstrating the ‘right’ image from observing how others behaved would result in him obtaining further work and further enhance his reputation with the County FA, his colleagues and the candidates on the course. He believed that if he failed to demonstrate the right attitude and behaviour

when delivering coach education provision “under the FA” then he may not have gained further work with that particular county.

Concluding this section, Andy believed that to obtain work from his local County FAs it was essential to portray a professional image in order to uphold his reputation. He suggested that by maintaining relationships with the County FAs, as well as performing his role effectively, which involved managing and organising the course so that the candidates learnt and enjoyed it, he found that he was offered work year after year. I understood that coach educators obtaining work from County FAs must ensure that they built positive working relations with the individual staff members in order to sustain their role. It was apparent in Andy’s account that in order to maintain these good working relationships, it was essential that those key individuals at the County FAs were seen to be portraying the ‘right’ image, by being professional and performing the role effectively. However, I recognised that negatively impacting relationships within County FAs affected the coach educator’s role too. Andy’s outburst of showing his true emotions, and portraying that ‘professional image’ was detrimental towards maintaining his role as a coach educator, and evidently the conflict was resolved through Andy’s resignation. Yet, because of Andy’s reputation and working relationships with other County FAs, he was able to remain as a coach educator, but consciously managed his relationships effectively to continue obtaining work.

Assessed as a Coach Educator: “He slaughtered me”

During our discussions, Andy mentioned that every so often when he delivered an FA coach education programme an FA external verifier attended a course. These verifiers observed and evaluated the coach educators’ delivery of the techniques, the structure of the course and the facilities available at the course venue:

It's from a quality assurance thing really to make sure you are delivering the right thing, check if the facilities are good and the equipment is ok, and you're telling them the right stuff and they have got all the things they need to complete the course. Then people will see you delivering sessions. It's all pre-arranged, so you know they are coming. I never had to change anything for when they came in.

Despite Andy mentioning that he never had to change his delivery technique for the FA external verifiers, he did describe how his first ever experience of delivering a coach education programme shaped the way he had to manage and deliver future courses after an external verifier observed the course:

It was my first ever time and no one had ever said to me that this must happen, or that must happen... I was 'slaughtered' by an external verifier because of certain things on the course. It was more to do with health and safety and formal procedures, but we did have them, just not as it should have been maybe. He came in on the final assessment, it ran differently then, you did the course then you finally assessed them as well. I was doing it with another educator, who was very experienced, and he was a very good educator, but even he was bemused by the issue that this guy had. We were supposed to start at 9am, but didn't start till half 10 because he was that thorough in the procedures by saying that the toilets were too far away from the classroom and that we didn't have up the telephone number all of the time in case of an emergency. But I didn't even know that I had to do this stuff, and he put a little bit of a dampener on a really good course... This guy had never been on an FA Level 3 course, he had never delivered an FA Level 3 course, and he was a verifier on an FA Level 3 course, so I couldn't understand how he could tell us about certain things.

From that moment, Andy admitted that he used that experience to shape how he conducted himself whenever an external verifier observed a course he delivered. He made sure that from an organisation and management perspective of every course he delivered was “of the right standard that the verifier expected”. The ‘standard’ Andy adhered to was from that first experience by reflecting upon the FA external verifier’s feedback report constantly. Because of that, Andy believed he never had to change his

delivery methods in order to impress any external verifier that ever observed a course he delivered again.

During that first experience delivering a coach education course, Andy described a situation where he was “slaughtered for helping a candidate on his final assessment”:

The one that got me was this guy was going on to do his final assessment, and he was setting up a phase of play, defending in and around the box. So as he was setting up, no players were even on the pitch, he wasn't going to start for another 2 minutes, I said to him “Be careful where your starting position is from and make sure you check your session plan”... He slaughtered me... After the session the verifier just came up to me and slaughtered me for helping him. He said I shouldn't be telling them anything or helping them whatsoever on a final assessment. But I said to him “Isn't that my job to educate the students? It's not to fail somebody for the sake of moving the ball forward 15 yards?” He replied, “They should know”.

Andy struggled to comprehend why he was unable to help candidates' before their session started by assisting their organisation. Consequently, “it was officially the FA way and [he] had to accept it and learn from it”. After being ‘slaughtered’ previously for this, Andy recognised that whenever an external verifier was observing a course he would not aid the candidates because he acknowledged from that first experience that FA verifiers sanctioned coach educators for that. Even though he disagreed with this, Andy believed that he had to be seen doing the “right things in front of the verifiers so that they wouldn't ‘slaughter’ [him] again”. Andy recognised the problematic consequences of this, as the County FA would have known about it, and Andy wanted to be ‘seen’ as though he was performing his role professionally. However, once Andy had gained more experience on assessing candidates, as well as observing other educators, he soon realised that assisting the candidate before their session was ‘unofficially acceptable’. Andy admitted that he helped the candidates, as did other coach educators, because they “all wanted them to pass, so [they] gave [the candidates]

a nudge in the right direction”. So, whenever there was FA external verifiers present Andy never assisted candidates in that way, but he did reveal that he whenever a verifier was not present, he helped candidates organise their sessions.

Andy had many years without a problem regarding FA external verifiers’ visits, and he explained that whenever they observed a course he delivered, they were happy with his conduct and performance through their feedback after their observations. However, there was one other experience in which Andy had a disagreement with an external verifier observing a course he delivered:

We had two females on the course and he didn't like the fact that I had mentioned, in front of everyone, that there was a Female Mentoring Scheme available. It confused me a little bit and we actually had an hour and half's discussion about it. When he finished I still didn't know why we had had this discussion. He said it was about the two girls feeling picked on by the blokes as a result of you saying that. But I was like, "No one has come to me and said anything", but supposedly what had happened was some of the blokes had said, "It's charming that the women get support and we get nothing". I can understand why they were pissed off though, but they never came to me and said it. The guy kept saying this has happened and I was again shocked because no one had ever said anything to me. I reflected on it and I asked my colleague and asked if I was out of order and he said, "No because it's something that you do because there is a Female Mentoring Scheme and you can tell them that". I found it weird for getting collared for telling them a message that the FA wanted to relay.

Andy found this situation not only frustrating, but very confusing too, because the Female Mentoring Scheme was driven by the FA. Yet, an actual FA staff member did not agree with him sharing the information. Andy understood that “the verifier was making the comment from an equality perspective”, but no matter what problem that had caused on the course, Andy believed he still had to notify females on future courses that there was a Female Mentoring Scheme. Andy felt that even though he could discuss his problem with the verifier, he believed he had to control his emotions in order to maintain his professionalism:

I could have been in there another hour with him trying to get my head round it, but in the end I thought to myself, “‘Bollocks’ to you, I’m not looking like an idiot about this”. I still told females on courses that there is a Female Mentoring Scheme, but I realised that [the verifier] wasn't worth the hassle in the end and by walking away from the situation I kept my professionalism and didn't cause a problem that may affected me with the FA by showing confrontation. I wanted to tell him, “You're an idiot for the way you have approached the situation”, but he wasn't worth it. So I kept my dignity and walked away. It was never a problem after that and nothing came of it.

The consequences of Andy's actions could have been different if he was less experienced and not had dealings with external verifiers in the past. However, he realised that by calming down and disengaging himself from the situation, he was able to ensure that nothing would damage his reputation from the FA's perspective through being unprofessional.

To summarise, Andy's engagements with the FA's external verifiers were predominantly positive. However, following his first encounter with an external verifier, he learnt that he sometimes had to control and manage his emotions when he disagreed with them. Indeed, I found that Andy had to be seen to be agreeing with the verifiers' comments in order to maintain his professional image. In doing so, I considered that Andy's actions were not jeopardising his role as a coach educator through conflict with individuals that would report the incident. So, by Andy not showing his true feelings, he was able to maintain the 'right' working relationships with the verifiers in order to uphold his reputation and, therefore, obtain further work from the County FAs. I found that predominantly Andy's professional interests were more important than his actual thoughts towards the FA's methods of observing their educators. Yet, I also established that when the verifiers were not present, Andy and other coach educators would slightly change their delivery regarding the assistance of candidates' final assessments in order to aid their organisation before they attempted their sessions. Therefore, coach

educators want to remain in the role, so they never jeopardised this when being observed, but they would often adjust their methods in order to benefit the candidates on other occasions.

4.1.3 Working with Colleagues

Gaining and Losing Friendships: “They did our legs in”

Andy discussed that when delivering a coach education course, FA coach educators predominantly worked together in pairs “running the course; there were always two on the FA Level 3/UEFA ‘B’, but sometimes on the Level 2 [he] did it on [his] own”. From our discussions, I recognised that Andy enjoyed working with many of his colleagues delivering these courses. Indeed, he admitted that from this he had gained several strong friendships with his co-tutors and had countless good experiences delivering courses with them. Andy highlighted that he had gained two very good friends from delivering coach education courses and “believed [the] feeling was reciprocal, it was a natural thing because [they] all had a passion about the same thing”. Andy explained that he was friendly with others too, and that good working relationships with his colleagues were one of the highlights of his long career delivering courses. He described how he established these positive working relationships:

When you work with people for the first time you are always cautious, but it soon becomes very clear that you get along because you just ‘connect’ and it then transfers outside the course too... The lucky thing was there were tutor meetings around the country [where] you got to know people too and when you were paired up delivering the courses it was straightforward, as you tended to know their personalities a little bit from speaking to them at the meetings. I have to say I was lucky as I got on with all those I worked with extremely well. All the educators I delivered with were all easy to work with and great to ‘bounce off’ each other with ideas... It was always nice because you can reminisce and you can talk about anything... Mostly with the educators I have worked with

it would be “I will get the McDonalds, I will get the buns; you get the coffees” and we do it that way.

He reiterated that by having such good working relationships “it made it easier with delivering the course” because Andy and his colleagues could discuss “who is doing what by just sitting and chatting about the content and sessions”. He also mentioned that by working with the same coach educators over time he was able to gain a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses:

If you work with people a lot of times, you get to know the strengths. Some like to do the attacking sessions; I like to do the defending sessions. I was a defender, so it falls into personal preference really.

Andy realised that when he had built these good working relationships everything else about the course became better, such as the interactions with one another, which then improved the course delivery to the candidates. Indeed, Andy believed the coach learners responded to the coach educators more because “the atmosphere in the room and on the pitches seemed to lift because everyone got along so well”. In turn, this improved courses as a whole because the candidates engaged in the content more thoroughly, which Andy realised from the candidate’s feedback at the end of a course. Additionally, Andy acknowledged that better working relationships with the co-tutors allowed for his own performance to improve delivering the course content.

Unfortunately, despite his good experiences working with colleagues and gaining friendships, Andy explained one experience that regrettably damaged his working relationship with one of his co-tutors, James (a pseudonym). Andy mentioned that before the FA changed the content, candidates were allowed to perform their final assessment before they had finished their portfolio, whereas currently the candidates must complete their portfolio before they can attend their final assessment. On this occasion before the FA adjusted the content, Andy was delivering a UEFA ‘B’ course

with a colleague and the final assessments were to be assessed by two other educators. Andy recalled that “the course had gone very well”, but then on the morning of the final assessment, some months after the initial course had taken place, Andy received a phone call from James saying that he had to cancel the whole assessment weekend:

So we aren't there obviously and I get a phone call. So I'm trying to tell the candidates and the assessors that they don't have to have them completed, but they just cancelled the weekend. So these coaches are 'up in arms' because they had given up the weekend to do it, and they cancelled it! So the argument was that James, who was the external assessor assessing the candidates, had rung another coach educator, who had nothing to do with the course, and asked him. He had supposedly said, "Yeah they must have the portfolios completed". I then found this out and rang a different coach educator and he said, "No they don't, they can do it". The little clique that had formed, James, the other external assessor and this other coach educator, they had spoken to each other and said they had to be completed and they don't. They told the FA that we had lied to them and it was wrong... You could take the final assessment and be successful, but you wouldn't get the award until your portfolio was signed off. That was something we knew about, but the two external assessors didn't know about. So at our final get together we had eight candidates who needed to finish off their portfolio, so we put post-it notes in them with what they needed to finish... They got to the assessment and they cancelled the assessment for the weekend because their portfolios weren't finished.

This situation was then reported to the County FA. Even though it was eventually dealt with, Andy had to report his version of events, which he felt upset about. For Andy, it was the fact that James, a close friend gained from working together delivering coach education courses, had suddenly tried to undermine him in front of the County FA. He had called Andy “a liar” and for that Andy was hurt and deeply saddened by the events that had taken place. Indeed, Andy’s working relationship, as well as friendship, with James was evidently destroyed:

Neither of them apologised directly to me, although James tentatively apologised to the County FA in a roundabout way. By

that time the damage had been done in my eyes, and the relationship was never the same again.

Even worse was to follow when Andy was then meant to deliver an FA Level 3 course with James a few months after the event. However, James dropped out at the last minute before the course began. I asked Andy to recall his thoughts of actually knowing that he had to work together with James again and how he approached the course:

I was thinking that it would be really difficult when I knew I was going to be doing it with him. I just had that massive apprehension because I'm thinking, 'How am I going to deal with this?' I worked with him more than anybody over the years and it was a shame really when it got to that, and he never did another FA Level 3 after that.

Andy told me that he eventually did have to work with him on an FA Level 2 course a year or so after that:

I did a final assessment with him. I was professional. I couldn't let it affect me because what would the students think?... It was very professional, in as much as, "How you doing? Cup of tea?" and that's how it was... There was a little bit of coldness, but the students didn't have a clue because you can't let it come out because that's your image, that professional image. I'm working for the FA, so the professional image for the FA has got to be that the two educators are in cahoots with each other, they are both working together for the good of them. We can't be at each other. If we started arguing with each other, straightaway the candidates are going to think what are these two doing? So you can't let personal stuff come into when it's there. As it happened it didn't come up, he never raised it but I never worked with him again.

By managing his appearance and image, Andy believed that he was performing his job to the capabilities and standards that he targets on a consistent basis, and therefore, any personal vendettas had to be disregarded while delivering the course. Indeed, Andy admitted that by maintaining the 'right' attitude and behaviour towards the situation, he believed that he was "doing the right thing" because the consequences of not being professional in that situation in his opinion could have resulted in him losing his role as an FA coach educator:

You have to put this professional front on, with how you act, what you look like and how you present yourself, because I am representing the FA, and it's my image that I want the candidates to see that I am professional. If I had started to show my true emotions towards James then they would have seen it, and then what does that look like from their perspective? It would have looked an utter joke. So for that course, and any other that I had to do with James, luckily it wasn't anymore, I knew that I couldn't let my personal problems with him affect my work. If I did, I know I would have lost the role. I didn't want that because I get on with too many other tutors and enjoy delivering the courses too much.

When reflecting upon this situation, it was apparent that Andy was poignant that his friendship with the educator had effectively collapsed because before this problem occurred, he had a very good working relationship with him. Andy discussed their numerous good previous working experiences together:

He very much had this old theory of we have got to do it this way because this is the way we were shown. But I said to him we change with computers and overheads but he would still use flip charts that he had done on his first ever Level 3 and still used them. We had them all on PowerPoint, but he was like "I can't touch them son, don't know anything about them son" and his answer to the students would be "Andy is going to do his fandangle thing up here and I'm going to have a coffee"... But it worked and I had such a good time delivering with him. He used to make me cry with laughter with his personality on the course, he was brilliant and the students loved him. We would sit down and chat beforehand about what we were going to do, but he used to have it set out in their heads how it would be done. He used to say, "Now then son, I will do this and that", and then he would say, "But look son, you do the modern stuff" because I would mention the about the PowerPoint and the confusion in his face about technology was a hilarious sight. Then after the sessions I delivered he would say, "That was really good that son; isn't it good how you can get it up on that screen like that, where does that come through?" He just hadn't a clue about computers and Smartboards. I got on really well with him and the rapport between us rubbed off on the students, it was superb learning from him and seeing his knowledge. I just had to implement the new technological methods because he didn't have a clue about them!

Reflecting upon this, I could tell that it still hurt Andy what had happened to his relationship with James. In his own words:

It was such a shame something so trivial became such a big issue, and evidently I lost a great working relationship and a good friend in the process... I still smile when I think about how good the courses were that we delivered together. His style was more autocratic, but it was good for the students to see differing styles. I had a good relationship with him until the incident. I would like to think I and he were on good terms after it all, but working with him wasn't the same again unfortunately.

To conclude, Andy believed that good working relationships with his colleagues improved the quality of the experience of delivering the course in his opinion. He also mentioned that these good working relationships had evolved over a period of time into personal friendships and he maintained good relationships through his own personality and delivering the courses in a professional manner. I found that by creating good working relationships, and friendships, with his co-tutors, Andy was able to enjoy the courses more. In this respect, he believed this allowed for the candidates to enjoy the courses because the delivery was better due to the interaction between the two educators. However, by negatively impacting such relationships, such as the incident with James, affects not only the delivery of the course to the candidates, but also the interaction two co-coach educators have between one another. Therefore, it could result in poor working conditions for the coach educators, which would have a detrimental effect on the candidates' and coach educators' experiences of the course. Additionally, I found that the experience Andy discussed had emotionally hurt him, but even more so after this, he had to work with James, and Andy admitted that he had to manage his appearance and image. In doing so, Andy believed that his actual feelings towards James had to be obscured during the course to facilitate the candidates' experience. Again, Andy demonstrated that to keep his professional interests of delivering courses,

he had to maintain his ‘professional image’, even though admittedly he struggled to do so.

4.1.4 Dealing with the Candidates

Frustrations of Candidate ‘Footballing’ Quality: “Putting a cross in from a cone because nobody could cross a ball”

Andy’s role as an FA tutor was to deliver practical coaching sessions to the candidates within a set criterion, which was based on the technical and tactical components of the course content. During these sessions, the coach learners actually participated as ‘players’ in the practices. Andy explained that when he delivered these sessions he wanted them to be “as slick as possible so it looked good and then the candidates could see exactly what a good coaching session should look like”. He emphasised the importance of delivering these sessions expertly, as after performing in these practices, the candidates then coached similar sessions. Therefore, in order for the coach learners to understand the practices Andy delivered, he believed it was important that his sessions “looked structured and organised, with the players all putting it in” so that the candidates could identify the key coaching points Andy was coaching them “in order for [the candidates] to see how they need to coach it”.

According to Andy, the ‘look’ of his sessions were often varied because he realised “that the demonstrative coaching sessions [he] delivered were totally dictated by the quality of the players that join in on the course”. Andy explained that he always enjoyed delivering a course, but even more so when he had a group of candidates attending the course “that could all play football”. Generally, he believed that when he delivered courses where this occurred, these were the best courses to be involved in because “the attitudes of the whole group was that they all wanted to be there and they

all wanted to learn”. In his opinion, he believed that the performance levels of his coaching sessions were enhanced when the group’s quality in performing the practical coaching sessions was good. He explained that the best group he had worked with on a coach education course was the one that possessed the best ‘footballing’ ability:

A Level 3 course I delivered was great, a few years ago now... We had 24 people on it and it was probably the most enjoyable that I did. Everyone was a footballer, in the sense that they could play and they played at a reasonable level... The level they played at, the intensity that they had played at was high, so there was a high pass rate.

Andy regarded this course as “a fantastic experience because [his] coaching sessions were great, everything came off and the quality was superb”. Indeed, he explained his feelings coming away from that course:

I was absolutely delighted with the way the course had gone. It was such a pleasing feeling to work with a group that took so much from the course and then tried to implement it. The discussions we had were thought-provoking and it was a joy to watch them play and then coach each other. I remember halfway through one lad’s sessions thinking, ‘This is it, he has got it’ and then there were many more of the same... I felt proud in my delivery, I felt very happy, like buzzing, tingling sensation coming away from the course thinking, ‘I can’t wait to get on and do the next one’... I guess my emotions were that of happiness, that pleasing sensation that is like a glow around my whole body.

Andy described that this positive emotion he felt was due to the fact he had “affected [the candidates] by showing them the sessions and coaching techniques in a way they could learn and implement them for their development”. Indeed, he mentioned that the vast majority of courses he delivered had pleased him, but he believed that this specific course was the “standout one for [him]”.

Despite countless extremely good experiences delivering FA coach education courses, Andy admitted that the most problematic aspect of the initial course was “when [he] had a group of ‘not quality’ footballers” because he felt that “it was the biggest

challenge coaching the practical content when the candidates couldn't actually do what [he] wanted them to do". He reflected upon one experience where he was delivering a crossing and shooting technical drill on a UEFA 'B' course and the quality of the candidates was so poor that only "1 cross in 10 was of the desired quality". He found this frustrating because he struggled to comprehend that on a high level coaching course there were coaches who could not play football at a competent enough level to demonstrate the practices:

When you turn up on day one you never know the quality of the group of players, but my role is to educate... We have had crossers with a ball on a cone, stood still, them putting a cross in from a cone because nobody could cross a ball... Whilst it is frustrating yes, I have to adapt, improvise, and overcome to achieve a common goal for all the students. If that meant adjusting the sessions I delivered by watering it down or increasing the intensity then that had to be done.

Andy believed it was important that he managed his interactions with the candidates, even though he was extremely frustrated with them. So, he adjusted the practice to "get the point across about what [he] wanted to show" by putting the ball on a cone to be crossed from. He described the importance of how he portrayed his body language in the right manner during this instance. Andy believed he "could not display frustrated or dejected gestures in front of them because [he] wasn't happy". So instead, he iterated the necessity of employing "an upbeat, positive body language that portrayed the right image to the candidates". By implementing this, he explained that the candidates could then perform the technical element of the practice better so that Andy could then demonstrate the session more accurately because the quality of the cross had improved. However, Andy felt that he could not show his true frustrations towards the candidates because he believed he could have "lost the candidates' enthusiasm and attention towards learning the coaching topic [he] was delivering".

Another example Andy shared with me was when he delivered a UEFA 'B' course where the candidates' quality was so poor "footballing ability-wise" that it affected his session. He experienced a group who struggled with the demands of playing to the expectation levels that Andy deemed necessary to be on that level of qualification. Therefore, Andy felt he had struggled to get his message across to the candidates as the session kept breaking down due to the playing ability on the course:

There was one that was defending in central areas in a phase of play, but I wasn't happy. So I did it again and put the players I wanted in the positions I wanted, and we went back into it. It worked this time because the two people who were in the centre before just didn't understand about when to press, when to stand off, where to mark... After the session I said to the coaches, "What was the difference between that session and the session before?" because I had put my hands up and said, "It wasn't good enough". They said that the centre half dictated everything. It worked because the others didn't understand about squeezing up. No matter how many times you said to them in the first session they couldn't get it.

Andy explained that the candidates failed to understand the elements of the session, so he adapted it by changing the personnel and he re-created the same practice in order to generate a more effective coaching session. Andy admitted that he "felt he had let the students down because the session didn't look good, but all it came down to was the poor quality that was in the session from the coaches". Again, Andy adjusted the session, but even though he was disappointed with the performance of the candidates previously, he managed his emotions and maintained his professionalism by not revealing his disappointment. In doing so, he believed he was able to "keep the candidates interested and enthused to repeat the session more effectively by changing the personnel slightly". Reflecting on that experience of adapting the practice in order to show the candidates the session again, he realised that it could have also been partly his fault the session failed to be delivered in the way he wanted it to be:

I could have called it a day, but it wasn't good enough, so I said to them, "Let's have another go at that session but adjust it slightly as I didn't get the message across that I intended"... Some days you have off days yourself and you feel like you have let yourself down... It just wasn't working at all and I felt really bad about it... Tiredness probably was creeping in, but I went away from that thinking, 'Why didn't I see that?' You beat yourself up a little bit because you do want to be perfection. You're never going to get it 100%, but you do want to be that little bit perfect. It's the way I am. I'm a total professional and perfectionist when I deliver the sessions... Whenever I delivered a session that wasn't what I thought was up to the required standard I would explain to the students and I would do the same session again for a dual purpose, to show that it can alter from session to session, but also to ensure the educational points were delivered.

The way a session appeared was of importance to Andy, as he felt that the sessions he delivered had to be “up to [his] own personal standard”. I realised that Andy felt that he had to control his frustrations and disappointment of ‘poor’ sessions, however, he believed that there were very few occasions where he considered his sessions to be of a lesser standard than he believed necessary. On those rare instances, he did admit that he was frustrated with himself, because he felt that he had failed to help the students as he knew he could have done. In his own words:

That's just my own standards. You just want to be that little bit better for the students, and I don't like it when I'm not... I didn't feel guilty or anything, it was more of that wasn't good enough. So I did them again because I had pride in the fact my sessions were always the best I could deliver and if that required me to adjust or redeliver then I had to.

Within this, Andy believed that due to his role he could not show the candidates that he was frustrated with his own delivery of the sessions, as he acknowledged that he had an ‘image’ to uphold as a tutor that assists coaches to become better:

You have to be professional all the time because it's that image, if you turned round and said "I can't be arsed anymore", what are the candidates going to think?... They are here to learn, to pass the course, and become better coaches. I have to show them the right techniques in order for them to do that, so I have to do my job as

professionally as possible... They just want to gain the qualification and learn more about coaching, so I can't stop that by being mad at them or shouting at them for getting things wrong. I have to help them succeed, no matter how frustrated I get coaching and observing sessions. I need them on my side so that they will want to learn from me and then they will become better and hopefully pass the course.

On the few instances where Andy found he was not happy with his performance, he admitted that he “didn’t have a problem as soon as [he] got back [on the course] the next day”. Indeed, he recognised that he had to “learn from and adapt the sessions depending on the ability of the group” so that he could affect their learning to become better coaches.

Concluding, I recognised that Andy’s management of emotions and image was of huge importance when delivering sessions to the candidates, because he wanted to portray ‘perfect’ coaching sessions. However, when these practices were not to his standards, Andy could quickly become frustrated with the candidates, as well as himself, for not portraying the session as effectively as possible. By delivering ‘slick’ demonstrative sessions, he believed that candidates could then learn how to coach that topic and improve their own coaching performance levels. However, because the candidates had to participate in the sessions as ‘players’ the quality of the sessions occasionally failed to reach the expectation and standards that Andy felt they should. Due to this, he admitted that he had to maintain his ‘professional image’ in order for the candidates to keep enthused, because he acknowledged that if he exposed his true frustrations towards the coach learners then he would lose their attention. Indeed, I found that Andy’s role as a coach educator was that driven by the need to put on ‘slick’ sessions for the candidates to observe and then reproduce, but because the coach learners participate in those practices, it can sometimes be frustrating. Therefore,

managing his frustrations was a key component in order to “not lose the candidates” and instead adjust the technique of his delivery.

Improving the Candidates Coaching Quality: “My job is to educate you, so if you don’t want me to come in then I don’t educate you so I’m not doing my job”

Throughout our discussions, Andy explained that during an FA coach education course every candidate had to deliver two 25 minute internally assessed coaching sessions, which demonstrated the candidates’ coaching credentials. Within his role as an FA coach educator, Andy was allowed to ‘step in’ and help the candidates during these practices. He said that these sessions normally take place on day 3 of a week-long course on the FA Level 2 and Level 3/UEFA ‘B’, therefore the candidates have had the technical aspects of the coaching criteria delivered to them before their sessions.

Andy admitted that, at times, he found it hard to control his frustrations when observing, analysing and evaluating these sessions. This was mainly when candidates had struggled to evidence whether or not they had taken on board the practices Andy had previously delivered to them earlier on the course. Andy mentioned that when observing a session that failed to reach his expected standards of the course, he then needed to “step in and show the coach learner a more effective way to coach the session”. In his own words he described what it was like when this occurred:

It is difficult really because when a session is going and you have got 20-25 minutes to deliver something and you can see that it’s going absolutely nowhere and you can see they are lost. I’m thinking the session isn’t going very well and that’s when I go in and stop the session and I always try and say to them, “What is the topic?” so I need to make sure they start in a position where they can coach their topic. But when you go in and show them what you want they say, “Oh yeah, I got that” and two minutes later they are back to what it was before. That’s frustrating.

However, no matter how the session was coached, Andy acknowledged that it was important to not display his actual feelings of frustration to the candidate:

I would never show it. You have to be professional all the time because it's that image, if you turned round and said, "That is awful, how can you not get this? Just talk about what we have been doing in the classroom for the last 3 days!" what are the candidates going to think?... I always portray this professional image. I have to keep the candidates on my side so that they know I'm trying to help them, which is what I effectively am doing, but it's difficult when you keep seeing the same things go wrong and the standard being poor... At the end of the day it's my job to tell them and 'educate' them though.

Andy explained there have been occasions when he has had to 'step in' to a candidates' session "a second time or a third time, or even a fourth time for them to get it right" in the 20 minutes allotted to perform their session. However, he realised that 'stepping in' to a candidates session meant that they were coaching it wrong, and therefore all the other candidates also knew this, which would affect the confidence of the coach learner performing the session. So, Andy admitted he was very conscious of the amount of times he 'stepped in', as he was aware he "[didn't] want to take over the session too much". He recognised there was a balance of how many times he could step in. He recalled experiences where he felt "there was too much of [him] in that and the candidate must have felt it a little bit", but he firmly believed that he must step in and "educate the individual when the same thing is happening over and over again". When I asked Andy to reflect on why candidates may not like coach educators 'stepping into' their sessions, he believed it was due to "embarrassment and humiliation that it's not going right":

No session was ever shit; they were just not up to the required standard for the stage of the course. My role was to educate and if that required me to step in then that's what I had to do. Some found it off-putting, but others found it useful, the latter in much higher numbers.

Andy could empathise with the small minority of candidates who thought that someone stepping in to their session was distracting. This was due to a personal past experience where he had attended an FA coach education course and the coach educator had stepped into his session:

I know that going in sometimes puts them off, it used to put me off... I can always remember when I was going through the coach education pathway, I used to hate it when coach educators came in and just took over the session... It was defending in a small sided game. The guy who was playing in my defence was a professional at Bradford City and I wanted him to come out and press the ball, but the coach stepped in and said, "Stop! What would you do in a pro game?" to the centre half. He said, "I would stay here" so I then said, "But it's my session and I want him to press the ball". The coach educator said, "No, let him stay where he is" so when the session got going again I said to the striker who got the ball to shoot, so he got the ball, turned and stuck it in the top corner. The coach educator then stopped it and said, "You should have coached the defender to come out and press the ball" and I said, "Ok I did say that to him but he never did it".

Andy often reflected on his own experiences attending coach education provision as a coach, and he acknowledged that he delivered differently to how he has observed other coach educators perform. On one occasion he had attended a preparatory course prior to attending his UEFA 'A' license and a candidate was coaching a session in which Andy was participating as a player before he attempted to coach his prescribed session:

I have been in some sessions where as a player on a course leading up to going on my 'A' license, the coach educator has taken over and I just think, 'That's embarrassing for the guy', it shouldn't happen... The coach came in after a minute and the bloke just stood on the touchline and it was his session. And the bloke went, "Well done mate" and gave him a sheet of paper, and I'm thinking why has he given him a sheet of paper? Looking at an educator thinking if I ever become one of them, there was no way I was going to destroy people like that. I hope I never have done... I don't think I have ever got to the stage where I have gone in and destroyed someone like that.

Andy was adamant that he “doesn’t want people thinking that [he] does that” in his own delivery when coaching the candidates. However, he repeatedly stressed the importance of “educating the candidates” within his role as an FA tutor. He believed that when he did step in to a candidates’ session he “got in and out as quickly as possible”.

Reflecting upon one experience, he described the candidates subjected to his method of stepping into their sessions. During an FA Level 3 course, Andy and another coach educator had split the group of 24 candidates into two smaller groups and assessed their internal coaching sessions to get through them quicker. Unfortunately, some of the candidates weren’t happy with Andy’s process:

The 12 my fellow educator had on this course said to me that “[the other educator] hardly comes in when we are coaching the sessions” and they said I came in more... However I said to them, “Would you rather have me just leave you to falter? Or would you rather have me come in to help you?” and sometimes that means coming in a bit more. I asked them the question, “If you want me to leave you then I can leave you”. It was raised after the second session and we had a support weekend coming up and I was going to be on my own with the whole group, so I was doing all 20 odd on that weekend. It was their final session before their assessment and they were concerned with the fact that I came in a bit more and I said, “If you don’t want me to come in, I won’t come in at all. But that’s your choice. However, for me as an educator, bear in mind that my job is to educate you, so if you don’t want me to come in then I don’t educate you so I’m not doing my job... What would you rather me do, come in and help you if it takes 2, 3, 4 minutes? Or would you rather come off at the end and me just give you an action plan?” Then they turn round and say, “Why didn’t you tell me?”... Sadly due to differing personalities some candidates sulked after I went in, but I always explained in full during the debriefs the reason and how they should look to improve. The majority took the feedback on board and looked to improve. Unfortunately odd ones didn’t.

Andy explained he was frustrated with the reaction of the candidates, but he recognised that he had to remain professional and conceal his true feelings upon the matter. He believed that they had sulked and reacted negatively to the feedback they had received.

Even though he understood their reaction, he explained that he “couldn’t tell them this in a roundabout way, so [he] described [his] methodology to them”. He thought that if he portrayed his true emotions of frustration “in front of them, then they weren’t going to respond in the way that [he] wanted them to in order for them to develop on the course”. He realised that it was difficult to maintain this ‘image’ in this one instance, but Andy understood the importance of sustaining professionalism for the candidates benefit in order to assist them and help them to develop.

Andy recalled another similar experience on a different course, when a candidate was angry with the way he had ‘stepped into’ his session:

I got criticised once. Someone had mentioned it to the FA staff that I went in a bit too much on their session. On the feedback to the candidate, I actually said, “I had to come in a lot on your session because it wasn’t going anywhere”... You need to help them, and that’s what I do as a coach educator if they’re going completely down the wrong path.

Again, I found that Andy was frustrated by those situations in which he required to observe candidates coaching the wrong technical aspects of the topic he had taught them. However, Andy believed that “rather than letting them come off at the end and slaughtering them”; he stepped in to assist the candidate in order to ‘educate’ the candidate. Consequently, even though Andy believed he was in a “lose/lose situation” as a coach educator willing to step in and help, he thought that he needed to step in to the candidates’ sessions to fulfil his role as an FA coach educator:

I would rather be in that winning situation where I’m going in to show them and if they come out the other side and don’t like it, at least I have tried to educate them, because that’s what it’s about, educating them.

By managing his image and interactions with the candidates, Andy considered that acting in such a way “affected the candidates positively and they learnt and responded to [his] delivery methods”.

With every conversation, Andy described that the majority of the time he had assisted the candidates on a course, they had perceived it positively. Indeed, many candidates “took [his] feedback on board and looked to improve”, which Andy believed was a satisfying aspect of his role as an FA coach educator. In his own words, Andy explained this:

It was pleasing to see them take feedback on board and implement it. It makes it all worthwhile, like I'm doing my job right. When they take the feedback and then work hard and practice the aspects that I have suggested they need working on. Eventually when the penny drops and they start to respond better because they use the right coaching formula, that's when I'm happy.

Andy admitted that the pleasing aspects of his career as a coach educator were assisting candidates who “utilised his feedback effectively and showed improvement over the whole course”. Additionally, he described that in order to assist candidates, it was important that he “was able to gauge what everyone wanted from the course”. Therefore, he implemented a “needs, concerns and expectations introduction to the courses to help the candidates and [himself]”. Andy believed this was a very useful tool to utilise because it occasionally highlighted the candidates who may have needed special attention towards some of the content of the course, for instance dyslexia or other learning difficulties. Indeed, Andy recalled one experience where he had to assist a candidate:

I did have a girl on an FA Level 2 course that couldn't read small print and couldn't read black on white. So I got the governing body 1st4sport to produce documents of size 16 font on light blue paper off my own back. We didn't know it when the course started, but this thing about needs, concerns and expectations; that came up from her.

He described another candidate that he had to assist on the course too:

One example was that a lad was dyslexic, but severe dyslexia. He couldn't read anything for a prolonged amount of time, but practically understood everything... He couldn't sit down and concentrate for a long time in the classroom, and couldn't read a

book and retain the information. So during the exams they took I had to sit down and read the questions to him because he could retain information when I talked to him. So for everyone we had to do an injury identification and recognition exam, we did the teaching stuff, and then two nights later he came on his own and we did a 3 hour session with him because that was the only way he could learn. I decided that because of his learning needs. I rang the County FA up and told them the situation and they were happy for us to bring him back. I didn't have to do it, but for him he needed it and wanted it... The course was for him and if we as educators have to put ourselves out a little bit then that's what we had to do.

In both of these instances, the candidates were more than happy to receive the support Andy had given them, and in return Andy stated that he was extremely satisfied because he had helped them with their difficulties. His methods had received a positive reaction. Andy admitted he had never obtained “any information or training from the FA on how to deal with learning difficulties”, but instead drew upon his own experiences from his full-time job, which was within education, in order to support those candidates.

Andy also mentioned that even though the candidates were sometimes happy to receive assistance on the course, not everyone was satisfied with Andy's actions. He recalled upon the situation that involved him trying to help a candidate:

This young girl, when I showed them a DVD on a Level 2, said she couldn't see it because it was a blur. So I gave her the DVD to take home to watch and I gave her my mobile for any problems and she rang me because she couldn't get it to work, so I helped her through it over the phone... She told some other girls on the course, who had then told other girl coaches, and the external assessor who was assessing their final assessments then found out and confronted me over it. I told him the reasons as to why I did it because she couldn't see it, and he came back and said, “You shouldn't be giving people things like that”. I questioned him as to why he had even rung me because he was only an external assessor, but he then reported it to the internal verifier. He then rang me up and I had to explain the reasons about the disability and everything and he was ok with it. I was challenged but I put my rationale behind it, and the first guy didn't like it because he thought I was showing favouritism towards her... I thought, ‘Why is he even getting involved?’ but I just let the County FA deal with it all, and in the end nothing came of it, so I

wasn't too fussed. Just couldn't get why on earth he was so bothered that I had tried to assist someone to help them develop.

Andy felt he was frustrated at the reaction of the external assessor because he wanted to help the candidate. However, Andy rationally discussed his thoughts with the verifier and the County FA, and by keeping his composure, he did not expose his true emotions. In doing so, the situation was dealt with efficiently and he had learnt to always “run it through the County FA first to see if [he] was able to adapt anything” so that if a problem emerged again he had the backing of his employers to facilitate such measures.

To summarise this section, I established that occasionally Andy had to conceal his actual feelings and thoughts while assisting the candidates on the courses. It was evident that he felt frustration when he saw them coaching below the expected standards of the course, during their coaching sessions. He stated that he had always managed to control his emotions and interacted with the candidates in a calm manner when ‘stepping in’ to their sessions, even though he found it frustrating. I found that Andy’s emotional aspect towards his experiences were driven by the fact that he wanted to help learners, but when they struggled to accept his assistance, he had to maintain his professionalism in order to keep aiding them in the future. In doing so, Andy believed the candidates trusted that he was aiming to help them and they responded to his delivery methods, even though initially they perhaps failed to recognise his methods to assist. On the other hand, when candidates accepted his support he was satisfied, and that pleasing feeling was the drive behind wanting to assist the candidates. So I found that Andy’s actions of wanting to feel satisfied from assisting the coach learners was a key aspect towards his behaviour of hiding his frustrations when they failed to accept it.

The Demands of the Final Assessments: “No matter what I said he just didn’t accept it... He got quite aggressive”

During our interviews, Andy explained the assessment procedure of a given course. A candidate’s final assessment consisted of two different coaching sessions, one attacking and one defending practice. Andy’s role was then to observe, analyse and evaluate their sessions through a set criterion which determined whether a candidate was deemed competent to attain the coaching qualification.

Andy explained that over his long career as a coach educator, the assessment procedures have changed three times. To begin with, the coach educator who delivered the initial course assessed the candidates on their final assessment. Then it changed to an external assessor coming to observe the candidates’ final assessments, with the internal coach educator who delivered the course not allowed to observe the sessions. More recently, it reverted back to how it was when Andy first started tutoring FA coach education programmes; with him delivering the initial course and finally assessing them too. Andy discussed the difference between the different assessment procedures:

When you’re an external assessor you don’t know them, that’s the problem. You don’t know their strengths, you don’t know their weaknesses, which could be a good thing because you literally have a blank canvas and just watch them coach. I don’t assess any different from that person on a blank canvas to someone that I have known for six weeks, or six months, between start and finish of a course. If they coach badly on the day, they coach badly on the day, and I have always been like that from day one.

From our discussions, I found that Andy believed the hardest aspect of his role was “telling someone who has put so much effort and hard work into passing but then isn’t competent enough at that time”. Andy declared that assessing candidates was very difficult, mainly because after all of the assessments are performed he had to sit down with each of them to discuss their sessions and disclose whether they had been

successful or not. He preferred it when there were two educators assessing the same person, but unfortunately before this became a mandatory requirement, Andy often had to discuss the candidates' final assessments in a one-on-one situation. Andy recalled an experience where one candidate had become very aggressive towards him after the candidate had been told he was not yet competent to be awarded the qualification:

It was an FA Level 2 course, the guy had done it and during his session he hadn't coached at all. In fact, he coached the wrong topic, and his argument was that he needed to coach that topic to bring my topic out. No matter what I said he just didn't accept it... He got quite aggressive, it was a one-on-one in a little room, but I'm quite fortunate with the job I do that it never worried me. I did have to say to him, "I think you should be very careful about what you are saying because you are now beginning to threaten and if you start threatening me anymore then I'm going to have to start looking at dealing with it in a different way".

Andy stated he remained professional during this exchange by controlling his emotions and interactions with the candidate. He explained that he was able to do this because of the training he had received in his full-time job. He described that he had been trained to deal with confrontation:

I use a thing called transactional analysis with how you speak to people that I have learnt through education. It's about how you speak to people and as we are speaking now, we're speaking as 'adult'. So we have a P.A.C. down each side, representing a conversation. The P stands for 'parent'; one side is 'critical parent' the other is 'nurturing parent'. The A stands for 'adult', and the C is 'children'. Now if I become a 'critical parent' and start raising my voice this other person may come up and join me as a 'critical parent'. There is nothing wrong with being a critical parent sometimes to get control of a group. However, if you get control of the group doing too much as a 'critical parent' they will drop into 'sulky child'. The other side to that is 'playful child', which everyone becomes now and again and there is nothing wrong with a bit of fun, but when we talk to people we try and keep it in 'adult'. When they go up to 'critical parent' to you, your job is to bring them down. This is what I tried to do with this guy, I said, "It isn't going anywhere; you have got to be very careful what you say". It's the same in policing; if you go in and someone is up there and irate, your job is bring them down, because if you go up there with them

then it's difficult. So your job is to try and bring them down to your level first off.

From his training, Andy explained that he used all his knowledge and professionalism to control his emotions and maintain his 'image'. By engaging in transactional analysis, the situation was quickly defused. The candidate backed down and left, but Andy said that he sent a written complaint to the County FA to overturn Andy's decision:

To be fair to him he grabbed his stuff, swore a little bit and wrote a letter to the County FA and they dealt with it and they were happy with my decision... On every course that I deliver, they get told about the appeals procedure. So they get told that if they aren't happy about something then they know what to do.

Even though Andy had used his experience from his working background to deal with this individual, he admitted that the FA had never discussed or taught him how to deal with these situations during his training or development as a coach educator. Instead, he had to draw upon his understanding of dealing with conflict in order to diffuse the situation. He described the lack of training from the FA:

The FA has given me no information and no training with regard to dealing with people. We have had no impact of it at all from them, but I have at work in my normal day-to-day job, teaching, without that I wouldn't have been able to do it.

The other official complaint Andy received was during another external assessment:

This guy had brought some under 15s to play and be runners, so this guy put the better players on the course against a 14 year old lad at full back. So it was mismatch straight away. In the middle he put a lad who was a useful centre forward against a small adult, so crosses were coming in and the guy was getting on the end of them, however it was a mismatch and one of the big things I said was, "Because we have got a mix make sure you match up equal for equal". His feedback at the end was I felt he didn't coach, a lot of it was talking and a lot of shouting, but he didn't actually coach, and the bottom line was he failed and he didn't like it. He grabbed his stuff and told me he was going to complain. One of his complaints was that I was on my mobile phone and I replied to the County FA

that I did answer my phone, however I answered the phone in the last 3-4 minutes of his session, when I had seen the majority of it, and it was an emergency because I had an electrician at my house. So I put my hands up and said, "Yeah, I shouldn't have done that but it was an emergency call". The County FA to appease him paid for another coach educator to travel up to Cumbria to assess him and he failed. The coach educator that went up there said, "He wasn't just weak; he was a country mile off". Four weeks later he travelled to Lancashire and was assessed again and failed. After that he went to Greater Manchester and failed. He finally ended up in the west Midlands, bear in mind he lives in Cumbria, and passed. He ended up passing on his fifth time.

Fortunately, Andy revealed to the County FA that he had made the phone call, before then explaining that the candidate had already failed a number of times. Andy felt his role as an educator was not questioned by the FA because of his honesty to the situation. Andy was adamant that he would always justify his decision because of his experience within coach education he has learnt that the coaches must hit the FA criteria as a mandatory aspect of a final assessment. He believed that he has enough knowledge through coaching and observing coaches that he could validate his opinion when anyone questioned his decision.

In the 17 years of Andy assessing candidates on coaching courses, he was "quite chuffed that only two people had really objected to a decision that [he] made". Even though it is obviously disappointing that his decisions were questioned, the County FA have to analyse the situation. Therefore, Andy had to defend his actions, but he understood that it was part of the process of coach education and candidates were not happy with certain decisions. He admitted that "all the candidates want good news and if they don't, they look for every excuse in the book, starting with me as the educator". Therefore, Andy's professional behaviour throughout delivering a course, or externally assessing candidates, must be impeccable so that "they didn't have a comeback against" him. In this respect, he felt that "it was imperative [he] covered his own back". Indeed,

he recognised the importance of validating everything he delivered on the course, so if there was ever a complaint against him, he was able to justify his verdict. Andy felt that the consequences of him not ‘covering his back’ could then question his professionalism and in turn give the candidates another excuse to debate the assessment, which could then “jeopardise [his] role as an FA coach educator if the County FA’s thought [he] hadn’t enough evidence to back [his] opinion up”.

Andy emphasised the importance to portray a ‘professional image’ when justifying his decision to the candidates:

I do it the same way. I talk to them constructively and try to put it across in the right way, by telling them why they weren’t successful but what they can go away and improve on. There is never an easy way to do it, it’s always disappointing for people and I say to people, “Some will be successful, some will not be successful”, that is statistics that dictate that. Our job is to get every single one of them through, that’s what our aim is. We haven’t got five little badges here and say which five do we like. It doesn’t boil down to that. So when it comes to the end no one can turn round and say, “You only give it to them because it’s your mate”. It doesn’t come into it. I have had to fail people who are my mates, and that’s not nice either. I assess what’s in front of me, and I don’t care if they are the best coach on the course or the worst coach on the course, I assess it as I see it. The one that got really nasty, the one that went to different County FAs and eventually got it, he was on a course and pointed out to one kid who was successful and actually questioned why I had passed him. It was my decision and he and another guy were by far the best two and he came back with, “Well he was crap on the course”, but I’m not bothered about what happened on the course, it’s what I see in front of me during that assessment.

In doing so, Andy believed that his actions remained justified in front of the candidates, as he was aware that the candidates would discuss each other’s feedback together. So in keeping with his attitude towards the assessment procedure, Andy acknowledge the importance to ensure that he “didn’t leave [himself] vulnerable for candidates to complain about me”.

Throughout our interviews, Andy discussed that there were numerous positive experiences of assessing candidates and giving them the news that they had passed. He described that “every time he passed a candidate, the relief and pleasure they showed made what [he does] worthwhile”. Also, he reflected that when he assessed a UEFA ‘B’/Level 3 and witnessed a “good session from a good coach, that was very pleasing and [he] looked to signpost them to the UEFA ‘A’ award”. Additionally, Andy declared that another satisfying factor of his job role as an FA coach educator was when the “penny dropped” with some candidates and he had heard or observed them pass their final assessment after struggling on the initial course:

It's really pleasing when you see or hear that somebody who you know has got the ability to do it, but doesn't do it on the course, has passed on their final assessment... That to me is good because it shows that they have taken on board what I have said, gone away and practised and got through and that rewarding... Generally they will leave the course with a certain level and you have an idea who stands a chance, some improve, some go backwards, but what I do like is when someone comes back and I think 'where did that come from?' and they just produce good sessions because they have gone away and practised.

Andy admitted that he had a vague idea as to who he thought would stand a good chance of obtaining the award from their performances on the initial training course, but “some people surprise” him. Even though Andy would not have observed the candidates on their final assessment, he would still take huge satisfaction when he had heard candidates had been successful. An example of this was a female candidate that played at a good standard in women’s football:

On the course itself she struggled with confidence, so we put an action plan to her, everyone on the initial course leaves with a personal action plan. When they had their final assessments I was talking to one of the other students and I asked about this girl and it came back she was outstanding. That's one person I thought would struggle and it feeds back to me and I think, 'Oh yeah I'm happy'.

Although Andy may not have mentored her to become a better coach away from the course, he still felt that his initial tutoring and action plan had affected the girl to become a better coach and actually become successful enough to pass the assessment. Also, the preconception of candidates “surprising [him]” occurred when Andy actually externally assessed a candidate. He had failed the person previously and was asked to reassess him six months later:

The difference from when I first assessed him to then was huge! He worked with groups of players, it was everything I was looking for, but he was so good and it was good to see that he had gone from a very weak candidate to a competent candidate. I asked him what had changed with him, and he said, “The penny dropped”. He went and watched better coaches working. He was weak before because he didn’t understand about coaching groups of players, he was very good individually, so he knew what the man on the ball had to do, but then he struggled with other players around him and coaching points away from the ball. Within the first five minutes of this session I thought, ‘Totally different guy’.

Andy believed that informing candidates that they had passed was the most satisfactory aspect of his role as an FA coach educator, because he “could see how happy it made someone when they had put all this effort in and it had become worthwhile”.

Concluding this section, I recognised that the assessment procedure could be the most difficult aspect of Andy’s role as a coach educator. Indeed, Andy revealed that he “covers his own back” during the assessment procedure in order to ‘protect’ himself in case there is a complaint, as I established that even though there is a set criterion, the assessment decision is quite subjective. Also, Andy explained that when he had to inform a candidate that he had been unsuccessful he maintained a ‘professional image’. Indeed, Andy ensured he did this, drawing upon his full time work experience, to justify his decision, which in turn, led to the County FA supporting his decisions. Additionally, he recognised the vulnerability of not validating his verdict, because of the fear that the County FA failed to support him, and in doing so, could have resulted to him losing his

role as an external assessor. However, not all of his experiences were negative as Andy believed a satisfying part of his role is explaining to a candidate that they have successfully passed the course. This could be considered to be the most pleasing aspect for a coach educator because they have observed a candidate's effort and commitment to successfully achieve the coaching award.

4.2 Brian's Narrative

Brian was an FA coach educator for 16 years and had delivered FA Level 1, FA Level 2 and UEFA 'B'/FA Level 3 awards predominantly. He had also delivered the recently developed FA Youth Module 1, 2 and 3 qualifications, as well as the FA Emergency First Aid certificate. He had attained his UEFA 'A' coaching license just before he retired as a professional footballer.

Brian began his career as an FA tutor assisting his local County FA Development Manager, who delivered all of the coach education provision in the region at the time. In addition, Brian had become a fully qualified physiotherapist and delivered the medical aspects of coach education, before he finally became an FA coach educator. For the majority of his FA tutor career, Brian classed himself as a 'self-employed, full-time' coach educator obtaining work from many different County FAs that sourced his income. Throughout our interviews, I acknowledged that Brian thoroughly enjoyed his position as an FA coach educator, and demonstrated himself to be a highly motivated individual who had progressed and developed as an FA tutor to become a 'full-time' coach educator. Indeed, this determination to continue as his 'self-employed, full-time' role had reaped the benefits as during our interviews he had obtained a new full-time job position, employed by the FA and Premier League as an FA coach educator mentor to six professional club's academies.

During my interviews with Brian, I found him to be a very highly motivated individual who portrayed ultimate professionalism at all times. He seemed to be extremely meticulous in his approach to coach education and learning, which was a key aspect as to why he had become a 'full-time, self-employed' coach educator, as I established that his reputation of performing coach education provision so successfully was why he had always obtained work easily from numerous different County FAs.

However, due to his ‘ultra-professional’ nature I found that he was not always easy to ‘open-up’ to share his experiences and true thoughts regarding the subjects I questioned him about. From the data I received from our interviews, I recognised that there were aspects of micropolitical activity which Brian engaged in, in order for him to maintain effective working relationships and conditions when delivering coach education provision. Yet, I considered Brian to conceal his emotions at all times, which was maybe due to his professional nature, so, I really struggled to ‘open’ him up to share his true feelings on his previous experiences or related coach education subjects.

Within Brian’s narrative, his experiences and thoughts of dealing with problematic political aspects of his job being a coach educator were explored. The construction of his account was structured around his working relationships with the numerous County FAs he worked for, his co-colleagues that he delivered courses with and the coach learners he interacted with. From this, I described Brian’s experiences and opinions on the dealings with these individuals in order to enhance his working conditions, which in turn highlighted how he had progressed as an FA tutor.

4.2.1 Becoming a Coach Educator

Being a Full-time, Self-Employed FA Coach Educator: “I’m just waiting for a call and sorting my life round in order to keep me working and getting money”

During our discussions, Brian admitted that being an FA coach educator was not a “conscious decision” as a career after he retired from his 17 year professional football career. Towards the end of his playing career, Brian had started to think about coaching, and obtained his UEFA ‘A’ license in 1999. Throughout his professional football career, Brian divulged that he had always coached a local community team wherever he played, and he admitted that this had “ignited his passion for coaching” and then after a

number of years coaching football in the community, he started to attend FA coach education courses to improve his delivery and methodology of his coaching.

Yet, when he retired from professional football, Brian had started to develop a huge interest of science, and in particular physiotherapy. Whilst he had been obtaining his coaching qualifications towards the end of his playing career, he had also attained FA physiotherapy qualifications that enabled him to become a fully qualified physiotherapist. Although he was offered opportunities to assist other coach educators' delivery of coach education provision, to which he obliged as he had enjoyed attaining his FA coaching qualifications and it was a source of income, he was presented with the prospect of a full-time position as the physiotherapist of his local home town football club, whom he had played for during his long, illustrious football career. He was then offered the position with his home town rugby club and a part-time role with the Great Britain ice hockey team. Brian additionally opened a physiotherapist clinic with his business partner and very close friend.

Due to his high qualifications, in not only physiotherapy, but also football coaching, the local County FA contacted him about delivering the FA Emergency First Aid certificate to coaches, which Brian accepted, as it was another way to generate income. Indeed, he believed that the County FA approached him because they “predominantly liked to use ‘in-house’ coach educators, and even though they were higher qualified people from universities” he was more than happy to acquire the role. In his own words he highlighted why he accepted the position:

When they approached me, they give me the right training. I gave up my time because they came and asked me... There was a crossover straightaway though with the physio stuff that went hand in hand with the coaching side of it, which I had already done a little bit. They taught me how to deal with different learning styles, how to work in the classroom environment and how to engage the candidates... It's very generic for all FA coach education provision.

After a few years performing the medical aspect of FA coach education provision, as well as working as a full-time physiotherapist, Brian was approached to assist in delivering County FA coach education courses focusing on the coaching perspective, due to his coaching qualifications and previous professional playing experience. From there he said that he “ended up getting into it”:

Because I had assisted the County FA Development Manager previously on a few courses, and I guess the County FA wanted more experienced ex-pros coaching, I was a capable candidate to deliver the courses. I had enjoyed doing the few sessions before, assisting, but this time I was asked to take more of a lead role and end up delivering a lot of the courses on my own... I really enjoyed coaching coaches who really hadn't much experience in 'proper' coaching. The candidates seemed to enjoy the sessions I put had put on, which I had basically learn from watching other coaches and coach educators I had seen work... From there I just started delivering more and more without realising it because I was concentrating on the physio side of everything... I'm not sure whether it was a choice, like definite choice that I wanted to deliver coach education as a full-time job, I just think it evolved.

When I asked as to why it had just evolved, Brian believed that he had established “a passion for coaching coaches” and he “loved sharing his knowledge, experience and methods with coach learners”. He explained how those first few sessions assisting the County FA Development Manager had created a ‘buzz’ about educating coaches that wanted to learn and improve. Indeed, Brian believed that it was his “satisfaction of seeing the candidates develop as coaches mostly from the interaction between everyone on a course” that gave him the buzz to continue delivering coach education. He believed that was the key reason as to why he had always delivered coach education provision, whether from a medical or coaching perspective, since he had retired from his professional football career. Certainly, Brian recognised that this was “the catalyst as to why [he] had ended up delivering coach education for the FA”.

Brian realised that delivering coach education could be a “full-time job role, and one that [he] would prefer over physiotherapy”. So, he had soon become a ‘full-time’ FA tutor as he was beginning to deliver for other County FAs, all of which had approached Brian due to his already well-respected reputation, and he eventually quit his physiotherapy career, and started to deliver coach education provision for the FA and different County FAs. However, even though he was a full-time coach educator, he acknowledged that even though his work was governed through the FA, he was not officially employed as an FA staff member. Therefore, he realised he was “self-employed working for the FA delivering coach education courses”. Due to this, Brian emphasised the importance of obtaining work consistently, in order to maintain a regular income:

It's the same as anyone self-employed; I'm just waiting for a call and sorting my life round in order to keep me working and getting money... I do have a huge passion for coach education, I'm very fortunate in the role I do, but first and foremost I have always looked upon it as a career choice. I still do to this day as that's how I earn my living. I do enjoy doing it but first and foremost that's what pays the bills.

4.2.2 Working with the NGB

Building Relationships with County FAs: “I'm trying to keep my relationship because I want work from them another time to keep work coming my way”

During our interviews, Brian explained how he obtained work through the different County FAs, as he described that they will approach him offering him courses to deliver. Brian also revealed that he was on the National FA coach educators database, which allowed County FAs to choose the FA tutors they wanted to deliver their coach education courses. Brian stated that his delivery of coach education qualifications was “75% the coaching aspect, with the other 25% made up of delivering sports medicine,

mainly the FA Emergency First Aid certificate”. To obtain work he said that the County FAs usually contacted him early in the year, to plan their schedule, and offered him courses to deliver:

At the beginning of the year I will be contacted, or meet up, with the different County FAs and get all the dates in my diary that I can definitely do to deliver the courses, no matter what level. Then I know exactly how many jobs I have for that year and which County FA I am working for and when.

Due to the ‘self-employed’ role he had, Brian emphasised the importance in establishing many positive relationships with the County FAs, in order to be able to create a living through coach education. Indeed, Brian believed that these relationships were “built and maintained on [his] reputation of his delivery performance” and he admitted that whenever he delivered a coach education provision for a County FA for the first time, it was important he “delivered the course at the high standards [he] sets for [himself]”. Brian attached significant importance on building positive working relationships with his ‘employers’ because he felt that the County FAs would then ‘employ’ him again to deliver their courses, which is something he believed he had achieved throughout his career as an FA coach educator:

The relationships I have built with the County FAs have been the most important thing to keep obtaining work I think. Thinking about it, it has come quite naturally, and I have not consciously thought about how I need to build up relations. I guess it’s just me as a person and how I interact with people.... I guess my reputation has also helped, especially with the contacts you can build up with in football. Realistically, I have always respected people and I guess when you do that people respect you back. I guess really that’s all I have done, and it’s transcended into coach education with the contacts I gained working for different County FAs... From a delivery point of view, it comes from being reliable and being trusted, even when no one is watching you. Just because no one is observing you, I’m still delivering it to the best of my ability and that same way because I want to maintain my standards.

Brian recognised that throughout his career as an FA tutor, the relationships he had developed with the County FAs he had worked for was the main reason as to why he was able to become a ‘self-employed’ coach educator. Even though, he admitted to never consciously realising he was gaining strong, trusting relations with his employers, Brian understood the importance of it, and recognised that his reputation was key to obtaining work delivering the FA’s coach education programmes for numerous County FAs.

However, due to the nature of his “self-employed, full-time work as an FA coach educator”, Brian recognised the potential loss of earnings if a course was cancelled. So, Brian admitted that, at times, he would “double-book” himself in order to remain in work, especially as he began to realise that some County FAs sometimes failed to “fill the courses with candidates when they had scheduled them”, which would result in the cancellation of that course. When that occurred, Brian would “be out of pocket without any money”. On one occasion he said that a course was cancelled in one County FA, due to the lack of candidates that applied, which “ultimately lost [him] £1,000”. Fortunately for Brian, he had many more courses on around that time for it not to be a major problem with loss of earnings. When I asked him how he felt about the potential loss of substantial amounts of money if a course was cancelled, he explained that “there was nothing [he] felt, as [he] knew that it could happen... [He] accepted it and moved on quickly rather than dwelling on it”. Indeed, he described in his own words how he ‘double-booked’ with certain County FAs that were “renowned for struggling to fill courses”:

I know certain County FAs fill courses, but others aren't great for filling up... One time I was booked in with one County FA, but I knew they would struggle to fill a UEFA 'B' course, so when another County FA asked me to deliver an FA Level 2 that same week I accepted that too. Then the UEFA 'B' course got cancelled, I knew it would, and then I could deliver this FA Level 2 for that County FA without a problem.

Brain recognised the problematic nature of ‘double-booking’ himself, because at times he had the dilemma of having to be “in two places at once, which was impossible”:

Occasionally when I have double booked myself, and as it gets nearer to delivering the course, I think, ‘Right, can I shift that?’... Obviously I can’t turn round to one County FA and say, “By the way I can’t do that now because another County FA have offered me a job in the same week”. So I shift things round in my schedule weeks before it... It’s like an FA Youth Module 2 that I have just delivered, at the same time I’m doing a UEFA ‘B’ course on the same week with another FA tutor. I wanted to keep that job so I suggested to the County FA to do it a week earlier, which is pencilled in, but I know the candidates would have to take a week off work, so that wouldn’t work. So instead I suggested we did it over 2 weekends. But then during that weekend I had a Level 2 support day from a different County FA on one of the Saturdays. So what I did was get the FA tutor I was delivering the support day with to cover it and he did it on his own.

Brian understood that by “covering [his] own back” through changing the schedule of the course, or obtaining ‘cover’ from a colleague, the course was able to still occur. Additionally, in this regard, he was also able to maintain his own credibility with his ‘employers’. He acknowledged that he would not have been able to have done this earlier in his career, but due to the strong relationships he had established with the County FAs he was able to adapt courses to his needs effectively:

I’m trying to keep my relationships with the County FAs because I want work from them another time. It’s important to keep work coming my way... You can’t piss people about too much... I think I have built up a very good relationship with many people in different counties, now I know that they come to me for work in those areas even though there are educators that live closer than me that they could use but they come to me because I am reliable and have got a good reputation of educating coaches well through my knowledge and personality. These relationships have been built up purely through getting to know people and networking with people that I have come across in the game. Also if they ask me for work and I can’t do it because I’m already booked with something else, I will source and get someone to do it instead of me and they don’t have to do that work, as I can get someone in I know personally that will

do a good job and they respect my judgement. I'm always trying to build bridges all of the time.

Therefore, Brian's working relationships with the respective County FAs were essentially the main aspect of him obtaining work, which allowed him to adapt the County FA's schedule in relation to his own. This was predominantly because of his performance as a coach educator and the fact that the County FA insisted that they wanted him to deliver their coach education programmes because they realised that they would be acquiring an FA tutor who delivered the content to the highest standard.

To conclude this section, I acknowledged that through Brian's working professionalism, he was able to adapt his workload to his match own needs, without disrupting his working relationships with his 'employers'. He was able to do this through honesty, as well as assistance for the occasions he was unavailable to deliver coach education programmes, in order for him to sustain those working relations. In turn, I established that Brian's performances, and reputation, had allowed him to gain trust and respect from the County FAs, which permitted better working conditions (e.g. adapting and changing course dates to his own schedule). I found that this had occurred over time during his long career as a coach educator, and Brian reflected upon this as being an important aspect of his role, but he understood to achieve this he had to portray a professional attitude when interacting with the County FAs. Essentially, because he was 'self-employed', Brian recognised the potential of courses being cancelled, which would result in him losing out on financial income. Therefore, Brian, at times, 'double-booked' himself in case a course was postponed, which was something Brian had learnt over his career, as he recognised which courses could potentially be cancelled. Yet, he attached significant importance on the working relationships he had built with his 'employers' in order for him to adapt his schedule effectively to ensure that he "never let [the County FAs] down" because he acknowledged the potential consequences in

doing so. Brian believed that if he was unable to fulfil his role as an FA coach educator with a County FA, he knew he may not be able to obtain future work with them again and, ultimately, his working relationships would be damaged. Additionally, he understood that if that did happen, potentially his reputation within the circles of FA coach education could also be harmed, which could result in other County FAs not employing him to deliver their courses.

4.2.3 Working with Colleagues

Positive Working Relationships: “I prefer working with a colleague because I believe the quality of the course is better because of the different voices they can hear... It freshens it up, and it freshens me up too”

Brian discussed that when he delivered an FA coach education course, he predominantly worked alongside a colleague. This was something he preferred, as opposed to delivering courses on his own, as he mentioned he could “bounce off [his] partner”. He believed the delivery was “less intense with two educators because [he] didn’t have to always be in charge delivering the content”. From our conversations, I found that Brian’s experiences delivering alone were a much harder feat because of the mental strain he explained he was under:

Most of my local County FA courses I deliver on my own, but with other County FAs I buddy up because of the numbers that are on the courses... When I’m on my own, I sometimes don’t get a breather just to recharge the batteries so to speak and prepare before the next task needs delivering... It’s very mentally constraining, tiring job to do it on my own. Trying to assess people back to back over a full day can be hard. It takes a lot of concentration... I prefer working with someone else though because they can give you feedback, and it gives me a chance to clear my head... But I prefer working with a colleague because I believe the quality of the course is better because of the different voices they can hear... It freshens it up, and it freshens me up too.

Brian said that even when he found it mentally challenging delivering on his own, he described how he “never let [his] enthusiasm levels dip” as he believed in displaying a positive delivery style in front of the candidates. Brian found that when he worked with a fellow FA co-tutor, he was able to keep refreshed as it “gave [him] a chance to clear [his] head at times” in order to be ready to prepare for the next section he would deliver. Additionally, Brian recognised that when working alongside a colleague, he was able to discuss the sections they had delivered so far and receive feedback from each other to improve their own performances. This was a major part of Brian’s outlook on his delivery process, because he acknowledged the importance of gaining a different opinion of “how the course was going”. It became apparent that Brian and his colleagues discussed their views on the delivery of the course with the outlook of how to improve the course in general. Therefore, the feedback was always aimed at influencing the future aspects of delivering the content, rather than focusing on how they performed previously. In his own words he described this:

There are never any problems with the feedback we give to one another because it’s never critical. We always discuss how we can make the next section better. I’m big on reflecting on how I can improve all of the time, and it’s important that we as educators are on the same wavelength. When I work with my colleagues we all have enough experience for that to happen and that way we can discuss about the next part to make it effective, especially the practical sessions outside. I’m comfortable adding ideas and opinions to my colleagues’ sessions and vice versa, I am more than happy when they add things onto my sessions because I believe that they always add things that I may have missed... It invaluable so the candidates when they can hear more than one voice... That planning, reflecting and feedback from each other is essential towards improved delivery to engage the candidates effectively.

Brian recognised the significant added value of working with his colleagues, as he felt that ‘bouncing off’ one another allowed for the candidates to gain further knowledge and expertise from the coach educators. Indeed, Brian believed that this was one of the most vital aspects of coach education, “learning from everyone in the room”. In doing

so, Brian said that these courses were the most enjoyable ones to be involved in. He described one of them courses in detail:

There was one course I delivered; it was a UEFA 'B' course for [his local County FA]. We had around some very capable footballers and coaches on the course, as well as some very insightful grassroots coaches too. There was a buzz in the room for the whole week while delivering the course. Whenever I spoke, the candidates just seemed to soak everything in, but then the discussions that were focused from the stuff that came out from me and my colleague on that week were fantastic. It was just a great learning process for everyone involved. For me what made it that bit special to be involved in delivering was the fact I was able to bring in a coach educator, a good friend of mine, just for one day to deliver attacking sessions. Doing that really helped split up the week, because he was fresh and me and the co-tutor delivering it could just learn from him. Obviously I had to pass it through the County FA, but because he was so well thought of by everyone at the County FA they were more than happy to allow him to come in for one day... It helps when there are even more bodies in the room with even more expertise, especially when we all get along like us three did.

Brian admitted that the relationships he had built with his colleagues were the key factor as to why he enjoyed delivering with fellow FA co-tutors. He realised that establishing positive working relationships enhanced his working conditions, and therefore, “the candidates benefited from a better atmosphere that was created because of the FA tutors ‘bouncing off’ each other”. Additionally, I found that these positive working relations also had another benefit. On the rare occasions when Brian had ‘double-booked’ himself with different County FAs, because of his good relationships with his colleagues he was able to ask them to “cover [him] and deliver a day or two of the course, which would then give them money”. Brian acknowledged that this would never have happened if he had failed to originate strong working relations with his colleagues.

Throughout our interviews, it became apparent that Brian had always sustained positive working relations with every individual he came into contact with over his

coach educator career, especially his colleagues. However, to begin with, Brian believed that he formed his working relations with his colleagues through learning from the more experienced coach educators he delivered alongside. Indeed, he believed he “cloned” coach educators and “kind of copied [his] mentors, other educators [he] saw and worked with”, which involved very much a command style. Brian realised that after receiving positive feedback from other coach educators, as well as the candidates, when he first began delivering coach education provision, he reflected that it was “more about the effect and influence as a role model, rather than what [he] actually did as part of the content”. He described his initial experiences that were influenced from his colleagues when he began as a coach educator:

You look at the sort of style of FA tutors, and again it's not to say that everyone is the same, but I would say the similar sort of characteristics and manner that came from that style of coaching, so it was almost like cloning in a way I guess... I think the sort of way I got the information over was quite specific, in the fact of stopping practices and talking it through... When I first started out I certainly lacked an understanding of all the different learning styles people have, because we were just told to do it that certain way... I didn't understand the different methodologies that are now used to target different learning styles... After a while I knew that I could change that and be more productive with my delivery techniques by affecting the candidates better by asking them questions rather than telling them. I guess that came through the more coaches I observed and the more courses I went on and learnt about different teaching styles.

Brian soon realised that he had to develop his own personality into his delivery of the courses, and he found that his “own manner and rapport with [the candidates] during the practices was different to some [other coach educators]”. He acknowledged that his actual practical delivery style was “very similar to theirs” but he felt he was more positive giving feedback compared to his colleagues. As he delivered more courses, he admitted how he had learnt to adapt the delivery of the content through his observations of his colleagues, rather than just ‘cloning’ their style. Brian believed this was an

important point in his career, because he recognised that he could improve his own performance as an FA coach educator by “progressing [his] own development from [his] reflective evaluations of my co-tutors”.

Despite his excellent working relationships with his colleagues, Brian did describe one instance when observing another educator he was co-delivering a course that made him reflect upon his own delivery methodology. I found that Brian’s colleague was the most experienced FA coach educator in the region at the time. On this occasion, Brian believed that the way his co-tutor ‘assisted’ a coach learner on the course was inappropriate. It was on a UEFA ‘B’ support day and the coach educator stopped the candidate’s practical session:

When he stopped it, the ball didn’t move for ages, even though his detail was great. This candidate’s session had started and you could tell already [the coach educator] wanted to get in and show his knowledge, but I believe there is a way of doing it and there is a way of giving the candidate a chance to actually coach. Anyway, this candidate had travelled all the way from the opposite side of the country and he was a good coach, worked at a professional club, and he started the session off and I’m thought ‘This is a good positive start this’, next thing [the coach educator] stopped his session and said, “No, no, no”, stopped it, and then for the next 25 minutes delivered the session. The poor candidate just stood there like a plank next to him. Then he started dragging the candidate around with him as he coached, and it was like he was his fucking shadow. I’m stood next to another tutor watching, and he turned round to me and said, “How can he give feedback on his performance? He hasn’t even coached!” At the end of it the coach educator turned round and said, “There you go son, that’s helped you hasn’t it?”

Whilst Brian watched the session unfold, he recognised that his colleague had embarrassed the candidate in front of everyone, and believed that it was an “unfair technique of how to educate coach learners”. However, when I asked Brian if he mentioned anything about disagreeing with his colleague’s method, he responded by saying that he felt that he couldn’t question or undermine his co-tutor’s delivery because

he “had to work with the guy and had known him a few years”. So, instead Brian went over to speak to the candidate and told him to “chill out” and “discussed a few things with him so that he was ready for the next session he was about to deliver”. In doing so, Brian believed that he had assisted the candidate more appropriately, without demonstrating to his colleague that he disagreed with his methods. Brian had to accept that some coach educators in the FA were “so old school it was unbelievable”. Instead, he concentrated on his own performances by trying to ensure the coach learners on the courses he delivered enjoyed it because “that’s how [he is] as a person... [He] wanted it to be a good experience for them... [He] set [himself] high expectations of trying to get effective messages across”.

To conclude this section, it was evident that Brian’s positive working relationships with his colleagues were an important aspect of his role as an FA tutor. He acknowledged that when he co-delivered coach education provision, the quality of the courses could be enhanced due to being able to ‘bounce off’ his colleagues, get a ‘breather’ to plan and evaluate aspects of his delivery, and also discuss how to improve the course. I established that even though Brian was competent to deliver coach education programmes independently, he believed that it could be more difficult to affect candidates learning compared to when co-delivering course. This was due to the courses being mentally demanding and time-consuming, so he then felt he was unable to reflect on improving his own delivery. Additionally, I recognised that, initially, Brian had ‘cloned’ his colleagues on his delivering coach education provision. However, once he had gained further experience delivering the courses, he began to implement different teaching techniques to assist the coach learners. The incident relating to his colleague stopping the candidates session had changed his opinion of how to deliver certain coach education points. Indeed, he recognised this as a ‘turning point’ in his career. Nevertheless, within this experience, Brian understood that he felt he should not

publicly disagree with his colleague's methods, so he remained quiet in order to maintain his working relationships. Interestingly, Brian recognised the potential consequences of causing conflict, which he believed would have possibly damaged his working relationship with his colleague. Brian instead opted to learn from this experience, and adapt his own delivery in order to not humiliate or embarrass the candidates in front of everyone on a course.

4.2.4 Dealing with the Candidates

Engaging the Candidates: "When they are enthused and start to engage in the course fully, the quality of the coaching, discussions, atmosphere, etc. all improves"

During our discussions, Brian considered that the candidates on the course were "the most important individuals to affect within his role" as a coach educator. He felt that his responsibility as an FA tutor was to develop and improve coaches of all ability and experience levels. Brian admitted that engaging the candidates in this way was the reason why he became so passionate about initially becoming a coach educator. He described those early feelings in his own words:

The energy, the feedback and the interest from the coaches who were in the room was where my passion evolved from... It's the fact I saw them develop as coaches and the interactions that I had with them stimulated some debate as the week went on... I knew it went well because of the feedback at the end of the sessions where they told me how they understood the processes I showed them. I think that's when the 'buzz' came.

Brian believed that the 'buzz' he gained from the relationships he developed with the different groups of candidates attending courses was the most satisfying aspect of delivering FA coach education programmes. He deemed that it was an essential aspect of being a coach educator to be able to positively affect his own working conditions through facilitating the course so "candidates would be generating questions and

discussions to want to learn more about coaching”. Brian mentioned that in order to enhance opportunities for the coach learners to be able to discuss different methodologies and techniques was important. He believed he did this by attempting to create the ‘right’ learning environment on the course:

I try to make them feel at ease because it is a training course, so I have to try and make it a comfortable environment first and foremost, where they feel at ease and they aren't threatened or intimidated so that they firstly enjoy the course, and that they are going to learn from it.... By doing this I have found that I could generate developing relationships with the candidates as people and as coaches, regardless of their ability levels... The fact that I try to develop a good relationship with the candidates, so it's more of a 'buzz' that I feel that I'm effecting their thinking and learning, and I do try and do this by providing the right environment where they can think that they come and talk to me, so I know that I'm generating an environment where they can express themselves... The candidates gain in confidence to speak about things and come up with their own opinions during the course if that interaction and environment is right. It's just that more personal interaction, because the 'buzz' comes from my own interaction with the coaches on the courses... It shows to me that they are enjoying it if they are generating questions so you I know that then I have engaged them, so that's where it comes from.

Brian believed that by attempting to create a “learning environment that allowed the candidates to all be open-minded and discuss their opinions” he was able to learn from them also.

Brian recognised that his interactions with the candidates, and the relationships he developed with them, was essential. He believed that it was important in order to establish trust and respect from the candidates as soon as possible, as they would then respond to the course content more effectively:

If they don't believe in my technical knowledge then why should they listen to me? I think it's a key part of the jigsaw with the other things I have mentioned too; like the rapport with [the candidates] and the way you manage the environment... That trust and rapport is key for the candidates to understand that you're there to help them learn and develop as coaches. So, I think it's important that

my delivery to them is spot-on and professional... Practically in the sessions, I make sure that my manner and communication is something they can respond to, which allows them to ask questions and learn. It comes from using different methods as well; it can be in a classroom discussion, or the use visuals, like using a tactics board or DVD clips. But predominantly I think that respect comes out practically on the pitch because I think that's where they learn from my delivery the most.

Brian placed emphasis on developing these relationships with the group in order for the candidates to feel comfortable on a course. He deemed it to be an essential factor of being a coach educator because he could then give the candidates opportunities for them to improve, and ultimately obtain the qualifications:

The goal is that I'm improving them technically, with their organisation, management and different coaching styles. Ultimately, I have maintained or instilled more enthusiasm for the candidates to learn, and them going out there, more importantly, and staying in the game and getting out on the pitches working with youngsters.

Despite the fact Brian aimed to develop and improve the candidates on the courses he delivered, he acknowledged that not everyone would improve to the standard needed to pass. He described that his main aim when delivering any course was “enthusing [the candidates] to think about things that [he] showed them on the courses”. In doing so, he considered “he had done his job” as he had “attempted to inspire coaches to develop and incorporate new methods to take away with them”. Brian described this in detail:

It gives me great satisfaction that I have probably influenced most of them in the room to some degree, even if it's only that I have enthused them to the point where they are pleased with what they are doing and it's given them some ideas. So that gives me a very good feeling when things go well... I come away from the courses and reflect on why it went well, and I just think that when I have influenced the majority, or even all, the coaches on the course then I'm obviously quite pleased, and it's a knock on effect because when they are enthused and start to engage in the course fully, the quality of the coaching, discussions, atmosphere, etc. all improves and it's

great to deliver when a course is like that... There are many, many courses that I have delivered that have been exactly like that. That's when I know I'm doing my job well, because I'm affecting the coaches to want to learn and get better, that's the whole point of coach education in my eyes.

With regard to Brian delivering successful courses, he told me that he “never rested on his laurels and accepted the next course would be just as good as the previous”. Indeed, I found he seemed extremely meticulous reflecting on delivering courses, which then assisted his planning of the next course he delivered:

On the reflection side of things, every new course that I deliver I want it to be the best one, as far as teaching and providing the quality goes, and I think I set myself high expectations of trying to get effective messages across.

He believed his meticulous planning before delivering was a major reason as to why he was always met with such good feedback from candidates. However, I found Brian to be critical of his delivery techniques, despite considering that he was performing well and affecting the candidates attending courses. He reflected that during the initial stage of his career, this planning failed to meet his expected standards he had developed:

I think initially that performance is based on the planning, and I guess in the past I never really reflected on how well I was doing, and that's something I think I still need to work on. I have to develop that, but I think it's more down to the relationships and the interactions with people. I don't set aside thinking how I am going to do it, when I deliver I just try to do it as best as I can by engaging the group I'm working with, through my personality and my knowledge of the game... I guess I had remained kind of static in terms of my development but since I have started to reflect more on how I delivered a certain course; I have become a better coach educator I think.

Brian acknowledged that he believed his performance related to the candidates response to his delivery techniques and considered his role relying on the candidates to engage with the content of the course. He deemed, at times, that this related to his own performance, which, he recognised, had developed through experience. Indeed, he

stated that “the more courses [he] delivered, the better [he had] become at understanding and acknowledging how well the candidates are responding”. Brian felt that he gauged this was “from the atmosphere generated by the candidates on the course”.

During our discussions, Brian mentioned that despite number of courses he had enjoyed delivering, he acknowledged that coach education course had a “major fault”. Brian described delivering a course to the candidates for a week was not enough time in order to “really affect them”. Brian recognised once they had completed the courses, the coach learners then had to “self-develop”, which could sometimes be problematic in his opinion:

Coaches have to self-develop though, we would all love to go on courses that support us and assist our development for years, but that's impossible for logistical reasons so instead we, as coaches, and I as a coach educator, must develop my own coaching methods elsewhere... These FA Level 2 courses could be done over a year, if you were to go in-depth about the level of different coaching methods and ways to coach different personalities and so on. The FA Youth Module course is four days, and we are introducing teaching and learning. It just brushes the surface but it's not enough in my opinion to affect coaches and their methods... Unfortunately, some candidates don't have the skill set to understand how to self-develop, again I as an educator can assist them in a small capacity, but at the end of the day it's difficult. I tell them to read this article, or go on this website, or this course. However, it's difficult for most candidates as there are many different issues that affects how they can develop to the top standard we want all our coaches to be at. It's impossible. For some it might be time, work commitments, family commitments, etc. Then coaches working at professional clubs, who are part-time, it becomes difficult when they have another full-time job too. Time constraints is a huge thing that us as coach educators struggle to assist and mentor coaches in the best way possible because unfortunately many coaches are doing it part-time, unpaid because there is no one else to do it.

Brian's frustration of the logistics of the FA's coach education system was obvious, yet he understood the difficulties for candidates to sustain their development. Due to his passion towards coaching, learning, and development, Brian acknowledged that even

though he was a full-time within the coaching domain, the majority of the candidates he educated on FA coach education courses were only part-time, or volunteers, to the profession of coaching. As a result, Brian believed that the most important aspect of his role was not only to ‘enthuse’ the candidates to want to develop, but also attempt to make the courses enjoyable.

To summarise this section, Brian regularly evaluated and reflected on his performance of how he delivered courses to the candidates. Even though he recognised that not every coach learner would maybe obtain the qualification, he understood that there were two key roles that he aspired to when working within his role. On one level, I realised that Brian acknowledged the importance of engaging candidates on the courses, which he attempted by trying to create the ‘right learning environment’ for the candidates. Also, Brian attached significant importance to developing relationships with every group of candidates, which he believed gained the respect and trust from the candidates due to his “strong technical knowledge” base and his approachable manner. On another level, Brian stressed that, within his role, it was essential that he ‘enthused’ the coach learners to want to learn and self-develop. In relation to this, Brian felt that his performance was related to how the candidates engaged in the content, as the candidates created a ‘better atmosphere’ which created a ‘better course’.

Effectiveness of Delivering the Content to the Candidates: “It’s just giving them the right knowledge of what would be the appropriate method of getting that information across”

During our discussions, I found that there was a diverse range of candidates attending FA coach education course. Before delivering a course, Brian would not know the candidates attending, but quickly recognised that he “had to be aware that there were

different levels of ability and needs on each course”. Brian discussed the different cohorts he had delivered to:

You go from people who want it to be a career pathway, to those who actually aren't even coaching any teams. Then I have delivered to the grassroots parents, to people in a professional environment. So, you get a full spectrum of people there for different reasons. Mainly, they are on a course to improve their knowledge just to help the kids, or to improve their career pathways working in a professional club... You get a wide spectrum, so I had to quickly understand that some of the information I delivered may not be relevant for some of the people in the group. So, I have to always make sure that I meet all those needs throughout the course of a week.

Brian admitted that he learnt how to deliver different methods in relation to the diverse range of candidates on courses as he progressed during his career:

That's sort of experience I believe that's built up where I certainly don't have to think twice about it now because I know that's how I operate... I think it's just the case of explaining the right coaching methodology you would probably use with different players, for example, comparing coaching Under 10s to coaching professionals, with what their expectations are and how they learn. So, I think the actual structure of the sessions and the technical detail doesn't change drastically, it's just giving them the right knowledge of what would be the appropriate method of getting that information across. That's the key I think, making sure everyone understands the terminology I'm using. So, it's important that I value the candidates for what they are contributing to coaching... The main thing for me throughout the week is that everybody shares opinions and values each other's' opinions in the different environments and to make sure that stays on track, where you're not predominantly favouring a certain group. For instance it could be the professional people in the room working at the elite level. I know I have to be careful that I cover the full breadth of the experiences in the room and not focus on one particular group of people. I tend to be more comfortable to discussing things at the elite end than the grassroots level, but I know that I need to consciously make the effort that there is an equal amount of input from everybody and the contribution is equal across the board from all the different participants.

Brian recognised that when he began delivering coach education programmes, he predominantly thought he would just have to coach candidates on how to organise and

manage practical coaching sessions. However, he soon realised that he had to develop relationships with the coach learners, which he attached more importance to, than just demonstrating coaching sessions. Due to the diverse range of candidates attending courses, Brian admitted he was able to “take things from the candidates and apply them to [his] coaching and coach educating methods”:

There have been people on courses from other walks of life and different skills. For instance there have been sports scientists and nutritionists that have attended FA Level 2 courses. Once there was a fully qualified doctor on one course, so we talked about neurology and patterning of movements and so on. They have more expertise in their field so I try to learn from them. I think for me I have a little bit of knowledge on those things, but I'm comfortable in asking for further feedback from people in the room to contribute. That's where hopefully I am able to learn from their expertise and implement it into my own knowledge base.

Brian's willingness to learn from others was a major aspect of his delivery style. He admitted that he “looked forward to every course [he] delivered because of the different candidates that attended that he could affect”. From this, Brian believed that the diversity of candidates he had worked with had, in his opinion, assisted him on becoming a better coach educator. This was due to the fact Brian not only learnt from them, but also how he had learnt to engage with them.

Despite Brian's predominantly positive outlook of working with coach learners on coach education courses, he did admit that, at times, candidates who attended the courses were problematic. Brian believed that some candidates he had delivered the courses to had struggled to work efficiently, especially with regard to failing to comprehend the messages he was attempting to emphasise. In his own words he described one candidate:

I had this FA Level 2 assessment coming up and we had a support day before it. There was this grassroots coach there, and he was quite bright with his technical stuff, and he said the 'right' things in front of me, like how his coaching philosophy was set similar to the

FA's and how his sessions were always progressing and set out with FA templates. It's good to see, but I'm not sure if he was really doing it. He was just trying to please everyone on the course, trying to please me, and make a name for himself. He has great enthusiasm, and his pack was immaculate, and I like that, but it just seemed too false from him at times and you could see the other lads that did the course and support days with him thinking, 'It's not him speaking again is it?'... He had an under 9s team, and he told me that he had to cancel two games while he did these support days and assessment weekend. So I said to him, "So you don't have a parent who could look after the kids for them two games", we were just chatting while someone was setting up ready to do their session, and he said, "Well I'm not there to look after them". So I said to him, "Why have you cancelled both games? The kids would have loved it, it's about them playing". He replied with, "No they would have missed me too much; they rely on me to tell them what to do". So I walked away after having a little joke with him and the session was ready to start, but all I was thinking was that, 'The kids wouldn't miss him, it just showed me that he's there making all the decisions for the kids on the sideline'. He was doing it purely for him, no one else, not for the kids, it's for him. On the other hand he is taking his time, unpaid, to run that team. If he didn't run it, and nobody else would, then the kids would suffer because they won't have a team to play for. So I had to be very careful with it that I can't get too heavy with knocking him the way he does it, but he's like a bit of a control freak... There have been a few like that. Think the kids rely on them as coaches but don't see that they aren't coaching the right way to let the kids think for themselves. That can be the frustrating part of my role, so I try and help them by implementing some coaching techniques relevant to age-appropriate stuff, even though it's not technically on the content for an FA Level 2 course.

Brian understood the potential difficulties dealing with grassroots coaches because they are work on voluntary basis. Brian's frustrations of these coach learners were based on their technical knowledge of coaching "even though they are getting kids to play, the quality of the sessions still have to good enough". Similarly, Brian mentioned that he had delivered to some candidates who had struggled to grasp the age-specific fundamentals of coaching. With the example of the candidate discussed previously,

Brian quickly recognised that “[the candidate’s] enthusiasm towards coaching was fantastic, but from his evaluations [Brian] could see he didn’t grasp it”:

I’m reading his evaluations, and he has got tactical 4-3-3 sessions, and I’m sat there thinking this looks fantastic in the pack, but he’s working with an under 9 team. He thinks he is running an adult team. He has got all the technical points in but it’s like he has evaluated a Premier League team, not an under 9s grassroots team.

Additionally, Brian’s frustrations were not only aimed towards the candidates, but also to himself in the way the FA’s course content had to be delivered:

There are a few candidates like that, not many to be fair over the long time I have been doing it, but I reflect on it and think is that because of the way I have to deliver the content on an FA Level 2? Because it’s an assessed course, and the criteria is looking at the technical knowledge of coaching in a game, I have probably influenced some of that ‘stop and start’ coaching methodology because of the way the FA coach education content is delivered. Some of it is our fault, as in the FA, I guess.

Due to the expertise and experience in coaching at grassroots level, as well as observing professional coaches he had worked under, Brian believed that sometimes candidates failed to comprehend the techniques required to coach young children while employing the methods that were shown on the course. Therefore, Brian believed he had to try and incorporate some of the age-specific content from the FA Youth Modules during his delivery of the FA Level 1 and Level 2 courses. In doing so, Brian felt he was “being a better educator by taking longer to explain the different processes needed for coaching different age groups”.

To conclude, I acknowledged that Brian’s attitude towards delivering the course content had slightly changed over his career, especially with recognition of the diverse range of candidates that attended courses. During his role, Brian felt his main aim was to affect coach learners and assist their needs to help improve their coaching technique. However, it became apparent that occasionally, some candidates who grasped the

content on the course, failed to demonstrate it outside the coach education environment. In this regard, Brian believed his role as an FA coach educator failed to effectively assist coach learners as successfully as he initially imagined. His frustrations of candidates failing to understand the concept of the FA Level 1 and Level 2 qualification in relation to how they would coach subsequently away from the course was apparent. Yet, Brian understood the reasoning behind it and believed that by employing other delivery techniques (e.g. content from the FA Youth Module qualifications) would better prepare the coach learners.

4.3 Carol's Narrative

Carol had been an FA coach educator for two years delivering the FA Level 1 and FA Youth Module 1 awards. This was a part-time role that entailed delivering up to six courses a year. This role was in conjunction with Carol's full-time job working as an FA Tesco Skills Coach. She had been in this role for four years, and it involved her working closely with the County FA she delivered coach education courses. Indeed, she recognised she was in a fortunate position as this job had given her the opportunity to obtain a position as a coach educator. I acknowledged that Carol was very proud of her role delivering courses for the County FA, and she acknowledged that it was a good position in which she could learn and improve her professional development not only as a coach educator, but also as a coach. Her aim was to deliver higher qualifications for the FA, which she believed she could potentially achieve, but this meant attaining further coaching qualifications. Due to this she was frequently attending coach education courses, which furthered her progression delivering further coach education provision.

Throughout our discussions, I found Carol to be a positive and enthusiastic individual. She described the many benefits of her role as a coach educator, and she shared with me numerous enjoyable experiences from her short career. As our interviewer/interviewee relationship developed, I found she relaxed and started to explain, in detail, how her experiences had shaped her attitude and behaviour within her role. Indeed, it was evident that Carol attached significant importance of being professional within her role, as she understood there was a certain 'image' that was required to be represented in the 'eyes' of the County FA, her colleagues, and candidates she interacted with. Throughout the interview process Carol discussed the importance of gaining a positive reputation within the FA. She identified that this was significant in order to remain and progress in her role as a coach educator. I understood

that Carol distinguished that the perceptions of her colleagues, and the candidates she delivered to, could affect this reputation. So, it was essential that she was seen to be performing competently in order to achieve her respective goals and objectives.

Within this section, Carol's experiences of being professional and portraying the 'correct' image in front of the various stakeholders in which she interacted with were explored. The structure of her account was constructed around her working relationships with these individual stakeholders and how her actions consequently affected her future interactions and behaviours within her working role.

4.3.1 Becoming a Coach Educator

Deciding to Become an FA Coach Educator: "I thought I could use my expertise of coaching children and help other coaches' work with younger players"

Carol explained that when she had left school at 16 years old, she started coaching football in the local community. However, she had never intended on becoming a coach educator when she initially started coaching. She gained her FA Level 1 and 2 awards while working as a full-time community football coach for five years. Then she obtained the County FA Community Sports Officer role, which involved delivering coaching sessions within the local community, as well as developing programmes to get children into football. During this role, she attained her UEFA 'B' qualification, which was a proud achievement for Carol, as she was only 24 years-old when she achieved this.

Carol began to recognise despite her qualifications, there were few opportunities to work full-time coaching adults, and realised that community coaching, especially with children, was the only pathway for her coaching career. So, she applied for a new coaching scheme the FA had put in place, the FA Tesco Skills Programme, which

involved coaching children, aged 5-11 in advanced FA Tesco's Skills Centres. Working for the FA, she was soon involved in coach education training programmes, as her job entailed her attending many FA coach education programmes as a coach learner. Carol admitted that this was when passion ignited to become a coach educator and coach adults rather than children:

I attended these courses and because it had a lot more theory side to it than the other qualifications I had done, it made me think how important coaching styles can affect kids, so I thought I could use my expertise of coaching children and help other coaches work with younger players... I have worked with kids for seven or eight years, primary schools and clubs, and it had got to the stage where I wanted to challenge myself a little bit more. With all the experience I have I just thought that I may have the knowledge to up-scale young and older adults really into football.

Carol was in a fortunate position with her FA Skills Coach role, because she had the opportunity to attend a generic tutor training (GTT) course as "part of [her] personal development as a skills coach". From this, Carol had the qualification and applied for a coach educator role at her local County FA delivering FA Level 1 qualifications. She admitted that this role was not only recommended to her by the staff members she worked with, but a position she was extremely interested in as soon as she had seen the advertisement. She described that once she had obtained the role, she had to learn how to deliver the Level 1 course content:

I went away for two days on a training course, which was delivered nationally. There was a pool of 70 new Level 1 and Youth Module 1 coach educators there. You get shown the games that are on the course, and then the topics that we do on theory side of it, you get shown different ways, so there is six or seven different learning styles that you can put your own task onto it.

After that training course, Carol was then able to begin delivering the FA Level 1 and FA Youth Module 1 coach education qualifications.

4.3.2 Working with the NGB

Awareness of Reputation and Perceptions of the FA: “I don't want a bad reputation so I try and do the job to the best of my ability”

During our discussions, Carol described how she obtained work delivering courses for the County FA. She explained that the secretary at the County FA contacted her with dates of every course delivered in the region, and Carol disclosed which dates she was available to facilitate the courses. Carol mentioned that each coach educator who delivered for the County FA had similar amount of courses as “its split fairly so [the coach educators] get to deliver a minimum of four each”. However, she soon realised that not every coach educator wanted to deliver that many. Initially Carol said that she wanted to deliver as many as she could in her first year to “develop and learn the content”. The County FA allowed her to deliver six FA Level 1 courses and one FA Youth Module course. She admitted that the first three courses she delivered were with two other experienced educators. Carol told me that this was a method the County FA utilised in order to assist new coach educators to develop their understanding of the content, and Carol acknowledged that this was used as part of her training to advance her delivery techniques. She admitted that the County FA had explained this process to her beforehand, which this was a system she considered hugely influential on her own development because she “learnt so much in [her] first few courses”.

Carol believed that this was a key aspect to her positive working relationships with the members of the County FA, because she felt “they looked after [her], and helped [her] to become a better FA tutor by putting [her] on so many courses with experienced educators”. Additionally, Carol thought that this was partly due to her previous job role as the County FA’s Community Sports Officer, which had allowed her

to previously create positive working relations with the staff working there. I found that Carol believed the reputation she had gained as a coach previously, as well as her performance as the Community Sports Officer, was a significant as to why the County FA accepted her application to be a coach educator:

I got on so well with the members of the County FA, I always have done. Working there beforehand was fantastic. Everyone is like family there, and the atmosphere around the office is so good. I loved working there full-time, and I'm happy to be liaising with them so closely with my job as a skills coach. This has definitely helped me as a tutor because I am comfortable in asking about the content and delivery with the County FA Football Development Manager, who is also an FA Level 1 tutor.... It's strange really, I guess when I first got the job as the Community Sports Officer I hit it off with everyone in the office and the banter was fantastic. I get on well with a lot of people anyway because I'm quite bubbly and like chatting, so I guess I have created these relationships personally, and then it goes hand-in-hand with working conditions I think. Luckily, I get on with everyone and it's always good to be in the office and working around these people.

Carol explained that as part of her FA Tesco Skills Coach role, she was in the County FA headquarters regularly. Therefore, she felt she was in a fortunate situation for her coach educators' position because she was "in the office the most out of all the tutors so [she] was always in the loop of what was going on and if there were any changes [she] knew about it". Carol believed that the benefits of working so closely within the County FA allowed her to not only "learn the ins and outs of the coach education system and talk to the staff about [her] role whenever she needed to know what was happening with courses", but also build and sustain her relationships with the staff members working there.

However, during our discussions it became clear that despite the positive relationships that Carol felt she had established over her time working in the County FA, she recognised that individuals' reputations could easily be affected both positively and negatively by their actions and behaviours, especially as a coach educator:

You do hear stories about other tutors that County FAs have used and they had gotten a name for themselves, so they got rid of them... I guess I have heard them from the FA tutors I have worked with, as it is easy for word to soon get round as coach educators all talk to each other, especially if they are close or have worked together before for other County FAs... I don't want a bad reputation so I try and do the job to the best of my ability. I don't want to be talked about by other members of the FA because I have gotten a bad name for myself. Reputation is key because you never know who you are going to come across during my time as an FA tutor, or as an FA Skills Coach for that matter... I'm trying to get a good name for myself. It's easier to get a bad name for yourself, and it's very hard to change someone's opinions... But I want to impress and then I think that I will stand a better chance moving up the ladder and deliver the highest qualifications I can from my own coaching qualifications and experience.

Carol realised that as a coach educator, working with other FA tutors, and delivering the courses to many candidates, it could be easy for someone to negatively perceive her performance as coach educator if she failed to perform to the expected standards. She appeared to attach significant importance to performing her role to the required principles that were set by the FA. Despite this, Carol described that these performance expectations were not explained to her during her tutor training, but it was highlighted during FA CPD events that she attended for her Skills Coach role. Carol believed she was able to utilise what she had learnt from these training provisions and implement them into her coach educator role:

They tell us from the outset that we have to behave in a certain way, very professional, and do certain things... They see me as an FA spokesperson, but as an educator, part-time, it's slightly different, as I'm representing the County FA I work for. But to me it's still in the same bracket, we as educators have to promote and behave in a certain way dependent on how the County FA want to be perceived. It's the same as the National FA, because they are representing the FA within the local county.

Carol believed it was important to portray the same attitude and image she had learnt to show in her full time role with the FA when working as an FA coach educator. She

acknowledged that it could be more difficult as a coach educator because she felt she “would be getting judged by adults, the candidates and the co-tutors, rather than children that [she] normally delivered to”. Therefore, Carol admitted that she realised she had to conform to the ‘correct’ behaviours whenever she was working for the FA in general, but even more so as an FA tutor:

The perception of everyone involved has to be right. I have to be seen as doing the right thing, and doing my job properly because in front of everyone I have to portray the correct image. This is behaving professionally and in the right way all of the time and performing my job roles to the best of my ability. If I don't do that then people will know because there are too many people out there that see what I do, and it's so easy for it to get back to the County FA and my bosses within the FA. I'm under the microscope.

Carol admitted that this professional image was not always easy to manage, and she felt that “there was some pressure there for [her] to always be ultra-professional”. Indeed, she believed that this ‘pressure’ she experienced within her role as an FA tutor was considered to have come from her own beliefs of performing at the required level she felt she needed to maintain while delivering coach education courses. When I asked her about this, she divulged that it was due to her own aspirations of “wanting to be a good coach educator”. According to Carol, this was “probably the reason [she] felt pressure to maintain total professionalism because [she] wanted to improve, progress and increase [her] reputation”. Therefore, Carol’s difficulties in sustaining this image sometimes surfaced, but she never allowed them to be exposed:

I do feel that the majority of the time it's not a problem, and I believe in what the FA are trying to promote, but there are some days where I feel like I can't be arsed, or interested, we all have days like that at some time or other. When I feel like that, I have to manage what I do correctly, and keeping my thoughts, feelings, opinions to myself... If I don't manage them correctly then that's when I'm going to get in trouble because all it takes is for me to say or act on something I shouldn't and it will get back to the County FA and could damage my reputation. Luckily, so far, this has never

happened because I'm always making sure that if I feel disinterested, I make sure I act appropriately in front of everyone.

Carol discussed that that it was most difficult for her to manage and sustain the 'correct image' she believed the FA wanted was through social media channels:

Social media is the biggest one for me, I have to keep my own personal opinions about the FA to myself – I can't post it on Twitter or Facebook, because I have to promote what the FA are doing in a positive light... The first CPD course I ever did for my FA Tesco Skills Coach role, this was driven by the FA. They mentioned that because I am representing the FA, it's important to be giving off the right message for them. If I give off the wrong message then it can affect my job, my full-time job as well as my coach educator role... The FA are my bosses at the end of the day, so even though my role as a tutor is part-time, they do employ you and they expect us to give the FA off in a positive light... I am very aware that I have to behave, look and act in the right way, even so much with the social media aspects, Facebook and Twitter. I have to keep my opinions to myself and not saying things that the general public are discussing, because people will see it as 'she works for the FA and this is what her thoughts are'. Again, the FA is big on this and tells their employees that they have to be careful what they put on the social media sites. It's understandable but sometimes when I want to share things with my friends I have to make sure that there isn't any bad language or things like that because I guess I am portraying the FA's image so I have to be making sure I'm doing the right things at all times, which is a pain sometimes when I just want to relax and have a laugh.

From this, Carol explained that she recognised her reputation could be negatively affected by posting controversial comments on social media websites and understood that the consequences could potentially result in her losing her job. Additionally, she understood that anything affecting her reputation negatively could infringe any possible future jobs she may apply for. When I asked her why she thought that would happen, she recalled upon a previous experience that nearly resulted in losing her role as the Community Sports Officer role at the County FA:

When I was younger and working as a coach at the [professional football clubs] Football in the Community, I maybe didn't see that you had to be professional all of the time when in the eyes of other

people. The amount of times I have gone somewhere with the tracksuit on, and the general public saw me as a representative of that organisation but I didn't realise this... This one time I was in my tracksuit with a team I coached and we won a really important game and went to the pub for a Sunday lunch afterwards. I had an alcoholic drink with my meal with the rest of the parents of the children's team I was coaching. Anyway later on the kids had finished their meal and went outside the pub to play football. There was a person in the pub that complained about the kids messing about outside and he came over to me and said, "I should know better because I worked for [the professional football club] and shouldn't allow the kids to run riot outside while drinking". It all got sorted out by the rest of the parents but I was quite shocked about it. The next day I was at work in the office and got called into my manager's office, where he asked me to explain the incident as the guy had complained to [the club's] chairman about me and it had been then sent down to my manager. It all got sorted out and there wasn't a problem, but I then applied for the Community Sports Officer role with the County FA and when I got the job my new boss had a word with me about my conduct away from the club because he had heard that story. He said, "I have given you the job on your credentials, but if anything like that happens it's breach of the code of conduct here" so straight away I knew I had to behave whenever I have the tracksuit on. In fact it's all of the time because you never know who is out and about that knows who you are... I wouldn't now end up in that same situation because I know there are people out there that would love to shoot you down because of where you are or what you are representing, like working for the FA. It comes back down to that image and that professionalism that I have to show when I'm representing the FA. It's that perception of what people see and think of me when doing my job.

At the time, Carol felt fortunate that she did not lose her job as a result of this incident, and even more so when she was given the role in the County FA with her new manager knowing the situation that had occurred. However, she was adamant that despite her reputation being "dented a little from it", she believed her performance as a coach in the community was the reason she was offered the role. She also stated that since the experience, Carol "maintained [her] professional behaviour at all times", and in doing so, she believed she had given herself a good opportunity to progress in the FA.

During our interviews, Carol discussed that when attending CPD events, she believed she had to maintain the ‘correct behaviours’. She described that when attending CPD days, she felt she had “to try and get a good name for [herself]” because she wanted to appear to “be doing the right things in front of the FA”. She explained how she did this on a recent course she attended:

I have just been to one a few weeks ago and I found that the people running these notice how all the tutors behave... They sit down over lunch and they will see who is talking, who is networking, who is inputting their ideas into the tasks that they put on. So away from your actual tutor delivery, the FA are looking at the way you put yourself across and are the tutors representing themselves in a good manner. It’s down to this image I think, of one: looking the part, and two: my own development. So if we are doing a workshop and if I’m sat at the back and look uninterested they will pick up on that silently, they won’t make a big thing of it. But then if you’re quite attentive and take in what they say, then they know they have you on board to deliver the highest quality courses... I’m trying to get a good name for myself on these CPD days. It’s easy to get a good name, or a bad name for yourself. It’s hard to change people’s opinions of you once you have that reputation. First impressions for me count so I know that I’m trying to make that good first impression.

Carol recognised that making a good impression on these CPD events in front of the right individuals could enhance her reputation in order for potential future work opportunities within the FA. Carol admitted that her career aspirations as a coach educator could improve by networking and showing “the right attitude at CPD days by having an input to the courses”. Indeed, she found that in doing so, she was offered work to deliver coach education provision from another County FA:

After my first full year as a coach educator I emailed the County FA Chief Executive at another County FA to ask if I could deliver courses, really to just put myself in the hat to deliver more courses really because I want to deliver more and more now. So I emailed him and he replied saying, “Yes no problem, I will put you on our tutor list”. So I was happy, but then the courses for the year came out in that County FA and I wasn’t down to deliver any. I was a little disappointed but I had six from the County FA I already

deliver for so it wasn't a big deal. Then I attended a CPD event and this chief executive was at the course so I went up to him and asked him, "Why wasn't I put on any courses to deliver?" He turned round to me and said, "I didn't realise you were the woman that emailed me, I thought it was someone else from your county". He then said, "Don't worry; I will sort something out because I want you delivering for our County FA because I have heard very good things". And he did, I am down to deliver in the summer for them... People in coach education circles hear about you, they know about you. So that's why it's so important for me to maintain and enhance my reputation. I want more jobs and deliver as many coach education provisions as I can... I'm learning all of the time, but by enhancing my reputation and gaining more experience delivering at different County FAs then it can only be positive for me in case I ever apply for a job there and they already know about me.

Carol realised that because she had gained a good reputation, even though others may not have known her by name, she had been given further opportunities to develop her coach education career. She believed that the County FA Chief Executive whom had recognised who Carol actually was would not have given her the chance to deliver if she had not interacted the way she did on previous CPD events she attended. Therefore, her outlook of whenever working as a coach educator was "you never know who is watching and observing". So, she believed that it was essential that she portrayed the 'right image' in order to enhance her reputation, which in turn could, and had, increase her future job opportunities within the FA.

To summarise, Carol's working relationships with the FA, especially the County FA, was positive and she had established good working relations with her colleagues and superiors. She believed that her previous role working at the County FA was a major aspect to these reputable working relationships, but she also acknowledged that she had to sustain these relations, and indeed create new ones, in order to progress within her role as a coach educator. Carol believed that her positive working conditions were based on the professionalism she displayed when working, but she did admit that it was not always easy to portray 'professional behaviour' at all times, which she

especially found difficult when “having an off day”. However, predominantly Carol rarely found this to be a problem. She did recognise that she still had to portray the ‘correct behaviour’ even during those ‘off-days’ as she realised that her reputation could easily be damaged by behaving in the ‘wrong way’, which she had found from her previous experience of wearing the tracksuit in the pub. She had found that even though she was fortunate to keep her job from this, the incident had been noticed by others and had ‘stuck to her’. Finally, she discussed the importance of behaving in the same manner at CPD days, due to FA members noticing how tutors interacted on the courses. Therefore, Carol accepted that her actions could enhance or harm her reputation, and she understood the significance of gaining a good reputation within the FA, as this could augment her career opportunities to progress as a coach educator, which is what she wanted.

4.3.3 Working with Colleagues

Working with FA Coach Educators: “I would take a back seat”

During our discussions, Carol mentioned that whenever she delivered FA Level 1 and FA Youth Module 1 courses, she had always worked with another FA coach educator. She recognised that because she was the least experienced coach educator within the local County FA, she admitted that when she initially began her role as an FA tutor, she perceived that she was ‘inferior’ compared to the more experienced FA tutors:

With the Level 1 we work in two’s within the County FA, so with this being my first year being a tutor, I have worked with five different other coach educators... I think it was because they have the experience, so I felt that they were more knowledgeable about the course than I was, especially with how the course ran... I perceived myself as I’m still learning and take on-board what they

do and take my own things from that... Maybe they may have seen me as 'an equal' but that's how I perceived myself.

She reflected upon her own perceptions and realised that “it wasn’t [her] colleagues’ doing, it was [her] own from that lack of confidence and knowledge to deliver a course” and she admitted that even though she “didn’t feel that [she] was being judged by [her colleagues]” she would have felt “a little bit silly if she made a mistake and the tutor would have to step in, [she] would have been gutted”. This feeling had occurred during the first time she delivered a coach education course, as she admitted to feeling nervous beforehand because she wanted to do a good job in front of her colleague:

I was quite nervous to be fair. I expected my first delivery to be hard... I think it was more nerves than anything; I was out of my comfort zone. I was apprehensive of the timings and stuff, and I remember when I first delivered my first task and my co-tutor was watching me, I was very conscious of time and how long it took rather than just having a debate or just talking through things.

Carol quickly realised that it was more difficult than she had imagined, especially when attempting to manage and deliver the course. She recognised that she struggled to engage the candidates as successfully as she wanted during one of the classroom-based tasks:

When it came to one of the tasks, it was so quiet, there were no questions flying around the room or no answers either... The feedback wasn't happening and it was very silent because they didn't know the answers... At first it was very awkward because I wasn't getting any feedback here so I thought, 'What do I do now?' Luckily there were another two tutors in there, so one of them stood up and helped me out a little by reflecting upon a personal experience of his. I was thinking, 'It's my first course and this is happening'... It was like a massive relief he helped me.

Despite this ‘relief’ she felt when her colleague assisted her; Carol’s confidence was deeply affected. Carol admitted that when she first experienced that she was “struggling to engage the coach learners in the room” she was very conscious of not portraying this over towards the candidates or her colleagues. Even though she was feeling anxious and

unconfident, she still believed she had to demonstrate an ‘image’ that highlighted she was capable of delivering the coach education course. Also, once the “FA tutor had stepped in to support” her, she again felt she had to portray a ‘false front’, and “not reveal [she] was relieved and a little embarrassed”:

The candidates never knew at the time. I couldn't show them that I had just doubted myself because I couldn't engage them, because straight away I would have lost their attention even more and even their respect... I knew I needed more support and felt uneasy delivering the rest of that task as I then doubted myself with the information and knowledge I had on that... I didn't show anything to the group or to the tutor when they stepped in, it was more of looking back on what I needed to work on in my own time... I guess I made sure that I didn't show to everyone that I doubted my ability, so I never let on that I had become anxious about the rest of the task, I just tried to compose myself and deliver it with the aid of the tutor supporting me.

In doing so, Carol believed she had maintained her “FA tutor image” in front of her colleagues and the candidates. Yet, she admitted that her lack of experience delivering coach education provision had caused her confidence levels to suffer because she had doubted her delivery of the content. It became apparent to me that she wanted her colleagues to take control and lead tasks from the outset. So, she consciously allowed the more experienced educators to lead the tasks while she took “a step back to observe how they deliver each task” during the next few courses:

It felt like the other people had been doing it a lot longer than me, so they would lead the course and I would take a back seat... I don't look at it and think ‘if you lead, I will take a back step’ but that's how I perceived it during the first few course I delivered because I did not want to step on anyone's toes and I was still learning on how to deliver.... We have always shared the tasks out, so I have never said “no you do them all because I don't know it”, but they would start the course off and I would let them do it and then join in when and where was needed... I don't think that was their doing, it was my own doing from that lack of confidence and knowledge to deliver a course.

Her perception towards feeling inferior to her colleagues and avoid making mistakes was an aspect Carol had to confront. She recognised that she lacked confidence in delivering during those first few courses because she felt “out of her comfort zone”:

I am comfortable coaching children and this was the next step for me to start delivering to older people, so I was out of my comfort zone... I think it was a progression I wanted to take, to challenge myself... Three years ago the biggest group of people I had coached or presented anything in front of was like nine people, now I'm delivering in front of 25 people on a course now.

During the next few courses she delivered, Carol consciously devised a strategy to “take a back seat” because in order to avoid making more mistakes in front of her colleagues. I found that Carol tried to turn the situation into a learning experience, by observing and learning from co-coach educators in order to gain a better understanding of how to deliver the content. Instead, Carol played a more observant role, but still assisted with the delivery of every task in a more informal role, by joining in with the discussions and helping the candidates individually during the practical coaching sessions. By engaging in this way, she highlighted that through “watching them, when [she] did the next course, [she] was able to do the tasks that [she] felt more comfortable with”:

I never felt ashamed in stepping back... It was more about understanding the course content and delivering to the best of my ability... I guess I just wanted to do well all of the time and I realised that this was the best way for me to do it. It probably has helped me in the bigger scheme of my own delivery of the content to be fair.

After performing this ‘observant, back seat role’, Carol became aware that she then had to begin to take more of an ‘equal’ role in delivering the course content. It became apparent to me that because of her willingness to improve as a coach educator, Carol believed she had to “step up to the plate and start leading the courses” as she recognise that her colleagues may start “to think [she] was inadequate or taking an easy

option sitting back”. Therefore, from the confidence she had gained from implementing observational strategies and reflecting upon feedback, Carol considered that through gaining a better understanding, she was able to implement improved techniques to assist her co-tutors and lead tasks during the courses she co-delivered:

The penny dropped and I changed when I became more relaxed and I knew the timings of the course, and how long each task took... This year I have done two [courses], but I definitely see myself now as an equal, and after delivering six or seven courses last year I have got the confidence to have more of an input and I know what the course is totally about now... [My co-tutors] would ring me before the course started, but now I will ring them and I will say “I’m going to deliver this, and do you want to do that?” Now I feel it’s a little more equal... I didn’t think right, this year I’m going to take the lead, it happened naturally. I had seen the different educators, I had seen how they had worked; I picked what I liked and just took it from there really. It was more the case of because I had a year under my belt already doing it, I had more confidence to take it on, and I felt that I’m no different to anybody else now. I have seen enough of the Level 1s and worked enough with other tutors to understand what works well and what doesn’t.

She perceived that playing a lesser ‘active’ role in the delivery of the coach education content would not only cause her colleagues to possibly think she was incompetent, but also may consider that she was “lazy and not pulling [her] weight”:

I guess at the end of the day, it sounds silly, and it’s not about the money but we are both getting paid the same amount of money. So there is only a matter of time where you have to stand on your own two feet and can’t use that excuse of ‘I’m new to it’ anymore. I had enough time and enough support from my co-tutors for me to start progressing within my tutoring. So that was it... I didn’t want my colleagues to think ‘she is taking the piss here’, but because I spoke to them about wanting to learn from them, they understood. Then it was a case of easing my way back into it. Then I thought ‘right, I best get up there and start taking a bit more responsibility now’. I did and I think on the whole I did the right thing taking that back seat to observe others and learn.

I found that once Carol had started to take more responsibility, she began to feel ‘more of an equal’ when delivering with her co-tutors.

Carol believed that when her colleagues have stepped in while she was delivering a certain aspect on a task, she perceived it to be negative, and that she had made a mistake, which again affected her confidence. For instance she remembered that moment from her first course she delivered, when no one in the room answered her question and her colleague had to step in and help her:

He picked up on the fact that when I posed the question, no one had picked up an answer, so he gave me some ideas of how to then get the room engaged again, rather than just saying, "No one knows, let's move on". So instead of skirting over it and no one knows; he gave me a few ideas of how to pose questions in a better way.

At the time, Carol felt that she was being criticised by her co-tutor, and this was one of the reasons as to why she decided to take more of a 'back seat' when delivering a course. However, it soon became apparent that her fellow coach educators were trying to help her, and as soon as she realised this, Carol felt she could seek advice and feedback from her colleagues, as opposed to accept it as criticism:

I have realised that when they step in it's actually to share their own experiences and ideas, and a lot of tutors are very different. I step in now when another tutor is delivering and I give a little more information on it and relate back to my experiences, it's not because they have missed anything, it's actually because I have got an experience to share. I understand that's what they were doing to me, but I didn't realise it until I gained confidence to step in and understand that I can add things from my personal experiences. But for me I thought it was because I had missed something off.

Not only had this added to Carol becoming "more involved" working with her colleagues, it also demonstrated that she felt more confident within the situation. Indeed, from our discussions I recognised the importance Carol placed upon actively participating as a coach educator, especially after her initial struggle, when delivering coach education programmes. Indeed, she realised that to progress as an FA tutor, she had to perform the coach education courses adequately in front of her colleagues, which in would enhance her reputation to be able to gain further work:

Even though everyone is good friends, in the tutor environment, you do hear stories about other tutors that the County FA used to use and they had gotten a name for themselves for being lazy, and they got rid of them. When I'm working with tutors, they aren't shy in saying, "Look you need to do this", eventually they pick up on it and it will start to stick, and they will be like, "I'm working with so-and-so this week", and then someone will say, "Oh not them, they will be late, they will not doing anything, etc." it's that reputation and perception of how people see you.

To conclude this section, I found that Carol's first experience of delivering a coach education course was not a pleasant one. The problems that arose from her delivery techniques, especially the way in which she posed certain questions to the candidates, was a cause of concern for Carol because she consciously felt that her colleagues were judging her performance negatively. This caused her to not only lose confidence, but also made her "feel inferior to the other FA tutors". Consequently, Carol strategically used a 'back seat' technique that allowed her colleagues to lead the courses, while she observed their delivery methods in order to improve her own delivery of the content. In doing so, she avoided making mistakes in front of the candidates and her colleagues, and, additionally, gained confidence by implementing this technique of sharing her own experiences from a supportive role to the coach educators she delivered with. However, after doing this for a number of courses, she began to feel that she needed to start leading the courses, as she believed her performances in the presence of her colleagues would then start to enhance her reputation with her co-workers in order to enhance her reputation for future work within the FA.

4.3.4 Dealing with the Candidates

Attempting to Build Relationships with the Candidates: “We decided we should give them more time on the practical side of the course, which would engage them more”

Carol discussed that working relationships with the coach learners that attended FA coach education courses can be somewhat varied. Predominantly, she admitted that most of the groups she had delivered to were quite attentive, which in turn “lead to a more enjoyable course because the candidates interacted well and the atmosphere was better during the tasks”. However, she did admit that, on some occasions, it was not always easy to establish similar relations with the candidates. She explained that the diverse range of the candidates attending FA Level 1 and FA Youth Module 1 courses was perhaps the main reason behind this. She said that the types of individuals she got on the courses ranged from “people from clubs, people from universities and colleges, teachers, and people who want the Level 1 to just go to America”. Therefore, because of the different backgrounds of those that attend the courses, it could be, at times, problematic for Carol to create positive working relationships with the candidates for her to affect their development and improvement. This was due to Carol’s understandings that it could be challenging interacting with coach learners that had different agendas towards their motivation of attaining the qualification.

An example of this was during a Level 1 course Carol co-delivered to a Prince’s Trust group. She found the group to be quite difficult to manage during the theoretical tasks of the course:

With this group none of them run a club, never been involved in a club, so the reasons why they are on a Level 1 is completely different to when the County FA runs one. So when it came to the theory tasks of how to run a club, it was a lot harder to get them to understand what people do because they had no interest in that side of it, they just want to become a coach, they wanted the sessions and the practical side of the course... when it came to one of the

tasks, it was so quiet, there were no questions flying around the room or no answers either... At first it can be awkward because I wasn't getting any feedback, but then I put them in groups, and working in groups gave them the confidence, as they wasn't too confident in shouting out the answers in front of the whole group, so working in little groups meant they could discuss amongst themselves so they were less afraid of speaking out and maybe getting the wrong answer in front of just two or three people rather than the whole group.

Carol adapted the course differently to how she usually delivers the course content in order to engage the candidates accordingly. By attempting to understand the candidates early on in the course, Carol was able to amend her delivery techniques to “make it more appropriate to the needs of the group”. In her own words she described this:

In the first half hour of any course I am gauging why the candidates are on the course, so I do this by using post-it notes asking them why are they on the course. I had got this from another coach educator that said works nicely to understand a group... So me and my co-tutor decided on this course that we had to change the amount of time spent on the theoretical tasks than we normally would and we decided that we should give them more time on the practical side of the course, which would engage them more and also benefit them more too... So we spent longer outside because that was what they were there for, but still didn't brush over the tasks inside but knew that going outside benefitted them more.

In doing so, Carol believed that she had gained a more positive rapport with the candidates than she would have if she had failed to adapt the course accordingly. From this, she found that the coach learners committed to the theoretical content of the course. In fact, when I asked her about the course and the difficulties she faced, she explained that it was one of the most rewarding courses she had delivered:

At the beginning you have 20 candidates, some had never coached before and some have, and I thought it was going to be quite a task to get the coaching points across to them. But when we finished the course on the Friday, they had all passed but it was nice to get some feedback. One of the things that had stuck with me was that not all of them wanted to be coaches, it was more about life skills, so standing up in front of 20 other people and presenting a football session for 15 minutes was the most they had ever done. One of the

candidates couldn't stand up and say his name for two minutes at the beginning of the week, then for him to deliver a 20 minute session and for it to run smoothly... At the beginning I was thinking 'why are some of these on the course when they don't want to be football coaches?' and the real reason was because they needed to gain life skills and giving themselves some self-respect too I suppose, knowing that they can achieve something if they do work at it. So I don't look at an FA Level 1 course anymore as people on it to become football coaches but I see it as a course that they come on it to develop personal and social skills too... I think that was one of my highlights since I have become a coach educator.

Carol's satisfaction of this course was predominantly because of the feedback she had received from the candidates, which highlighted that her delivery adjustments had positively engaged the coach learners. This, in turn, had enhanced Carol's experience of the course as she felt she had affected the candidates to pass the course, which then made her "look good to [the candidates] and the County FA because [she] had a successful pass percentage from the course". Indeed, Carol acknowledged that she needed to adapt the course because of her experiences delivering previous coach education provision. When I asked why and how she had changed her delivery, she replied that "it was from learning from other educators and how they did things when [she] took that 'back seat'".

During our discussions, despite Carol enjoying working with many of the candidates that attended courses, every so often, there were candidates "that annoyed her with stupid comments". Carol explained to me that there were only a couple of instances when this had occurred, and explained this one of these occasions to me:

Some candidates ask me about the England team, and I can't be arsed to answer these questions on a course, it's annoying. I have to tell them, it's like automatic now, "we have to get it right at the bottom, to get it right with the National team" but then that starts to open up a can of worms and the discussions can be quite heated and go off topic from the Level 1 I'm delivering so I have to get them back on track. It's annoying because us educators feel like we can get attacked by these candidates, the general public, because

they see us as 'FA members' and get their frustrations out by having a go at us on these courses saying how bad we are at the National level. This one guy would not shut up about it. He was complaining about the players in the media for the wrong reasons, the National Team, Wembley Stadium, how bad the FA is as a NGB. I'm stood there at the front of the classroom having to give him a 'diplomatic' response, even though I have my own opinion on the matter. I was just thinking 'he loves to moan about this and that; is this why he is on the course?'... I guess I was annoyed and mainly frustrated, but I guess it didn't affect me to the point that I felt I had to really control this, but it was annoying, yes. I had to just get on with my job and deflect the conversations back on track.

Carol believed that she had to display the 'right image' during this moment, because even though she had to answer 'diplomatically', she was becoming increasingly frustrated with the candidate. Despite feeling this way, she acknowledged that she "couldn't show this frustration in front of the candidate" because she realised that if she did demonstrate her own opinion on the candidate's grievances with the FA, it could potentially cause conflict. Admittedly, at times, Carol admitted to finding this difficult as she felt that the candidates "wasted [her] time on courses with stupid comments":

I do feel that the majority of the time it's not a problem, but there are some days where I feel like I can't be arsed, or interested, we all have days like that at some time or other. When I feel like that, I have to manage what I do correctly, and keeping my thoughts, feelings, opinions to myself... I think because people have different opinions and my opinion might not always be right, it is personal opinion and working with the FA the smallest thing can cause a the biggest uproar, and candidates see us as FA workers. We might not have any contact with those at Wembley but we are the first and maybe only point of contact that they will ever get with the FA... At the end of the day the FA are my bosses and they do employ me, even though it's a part-time role as coach educator, but I'm expected to give the FA off in a positive light so I have to do that when I'm educating coach learners on courses.

Carol reiterated that even though she "stuck up for the FA's beliefs" by explaining the reasons behind the FA's methods, she understood the consequences of initiating potential conflict with candidates could ultimately result in her losing her FA tutor role,

and also could affect her full time job as an FA Tesco Skills coach. Fortunately, Carol had been taught during the FA's CPD events to "sit on the fence and deflect away from the comment" if such events occurred. So, she used her training during these moments, especially with the candidate that constantly moaned about the FA.

Carol then explained a different example of having to conceal her true feelings and thoughts during one course when a coach learner disagreed with some of the coaching methods she demonstrated during the practical element of the course:

There was one coach who did an under 9s team and it was FA Level 1 and I mentioned about fundamental warm-ups and he posed a question about ladders and poles and parachutes and said, "Is that not a big thing within child development?" and it was like his way and no other way. He was brilliant at coaching and he wanted the best for his club so he had poles, free kick dummies, all the equipment, but he had no reasoning behind why that would benefit any of the players. We gave him a reason why it would benefit his players to play a game of tig while balancing, instead of running round the pitch. So he kind of questioned why players can't run around the pitch when he did it, so I dealt with it by asking him a question of, "How is it beneficial?" and he didn't know what to say.

Again, Carol responded diplomatically, this time by asking him a question, which "put the onus on him", which she believed "stumped him a lot because he didn't know how to respond". In doing so, Carol admitted that engaging this way released some of her frustrations of the candidate. Also, Carol stated that she believed "in the content and how the FA wanted their coach educators to deliver it", which was why she replied in the way that she did. Carol explained why she avoided answering the candidate in the way she actually wanted to at the time:

I wanted to tell him that running around a pitch is so 'old school' and start opening your mind to new techniques you dinosaur... But I couldn't do that because it's very unprofessional... It is frustrating but again there is nothing to say what we deliver is right and nothing to say what he does is wrong or right either.

Once more, Carol documented that she recognised that by not illustrating her true feelings, she would avoid conflict with the candidate, which potentially could have been detrimental towards her coach educator role, as well as her full-time job. So, by remaining ‘ultra-professional’, she methodically questioned why his technique would work in a better way. In doing so, she hoped to not only engage that candidate’s thoughts on changing his approach, but also the other candidates too. Indeed, she addressed all of the candidates on the course, and explained her role as a coach educator:

I told the candidates “all I can do as an FA tutor is show you some ideas and it’s up to you if you want to take it on board or not. If you walk away and still say “I’m going to still warm my players up by running them around the pitch” then that’s fine but at least I have passed on some ideas you could use to benefit your players”... I think that if 19 candidates out of 20 take it on board then there are in it for the right reasons and I have done my job, which is satisfying because that’s all I’m there for.

Carol recognised that, at times, she could not guarantee that the coach learners would always learn and benefit from the courses she delivered, but her main aim was to affect as many of the candidates as she could in the hope that they would ‘buy’ into the methods she demonstrated.

To conclude, I found that Carol’s relationships with the candidates who attended the courses she delivered were predominantly unproblematic. However, at times, the coach learners had caused small problems, with regard to disagreeing or being uninterested with the course content. This was highlighted when delivering a course to a Prince’s Trust group, so Carol felt that she had to adjust her delivery techniques in order to engage the group more effectively, which led to every candidate passing the course. This gave Carol a great deal of satisfaction, especially as she felt she had positively affected the candidates, not only from a coaching perspective, but also from a social skills viewpoint. However, it became apparent that not every course had given her such

pleasure, and she described a few instances that had “annoyed” her. I had established that, at times, Carol had to respond ‘diplomatically’ to candidates’ questions and comments when delivering certain aspects of the course. Despite, disclosing that she had received training of how to deal with problematic candidates during FA CPD courses, Carol mentioned that she had to conceal her feelings and portray the “FA’s image” by not initiating conflict with candidates. In doing so, Carol believed that she had remained ‘professional’. She seemingly attached significant importance towards maintaining this ‘image’, as she understood that the consequences of disagreeing with some candidates could potentially lead to her losing her role as an FA tutor, as well as her full time job as an FA Tesco Skills coach.

4.4 Dean's Narrative

Dean was an FA coach educator for eight years delivering the FA Level 1 award. This was a part-time role that entailed delivering three or four courses a year, predominately over a weekend. I found that Dean thoroughly enjoyed his position, and was comfortable delivering the award. He acknowledged that his UEFA 'B' coaching qualification he had previously attained only permitted him to deliver this level of award. He admitted he did not have aspirations to attempt to obtain higher coaching qualifications, which would then allow him to deliver the FA Level 2 provision, because he had failed the UEFA 'A' license on two previous occasions.

Throughout my interviews with Dean, I found him to be a very funny and open individual who shared many of his coach education, as well as life, experiences with me. His stories were full of sarcasm and humour, which allowed our interviewer/interviewee relationship to develop, and in turn allowed the interviews to become more like two friends discussing past experiences together. He recalled numerous positive experiences throughout his career as an FA coach educator, however, I soon realised that not all of his experiences were as similarly satisfying. It had become apparent through our discussions that, at times, when delivering courses he had to conceal his emotions in order to be seen as performing professionally in front of the candidates and his colleagues. Yet, even when discussing his negative experiences, I found it refreshing that he explained them with light-hearted humour, which he explained as his "way of 'dealing' with the problematic situations" that he had encountered.

Within Dean's narrative, his experiences of dealing with problematic political and emotional aspects of his role were explored. The structure of his account was structured around his working relationships with the County FA, his colleagues and the

coach learners, which in turn led to me to describe his dealings with these key stakeholders during his career as a coach educator.

4.4.1 Becoming a Coach Educator

Training to be an FA Coach Educator: “While the educator delivered it, there were a couple of us watching how he delivered it... What a scream that was!”

Dean discussed his pathway into becoming a coach educator during our interviews and I quickly established that he had not aspired to obtain this type of role when he had initially started coaching and achieving coaching qualifications. Before he got into coaching, he had been a youth team apprentice at a professional football club for two years after he had left school at the age of 16. However, he was released at the age of 18 and decided to attend college for a year to study to become a P.E. teacher, which he admittedly failed due to the “distractions of college life”. So, Dean then decided to join the police force because “there wasn’t any other real option for [him] and [he] needed to get a job”. Whilst he was beginning his career in the police force, he played semi-professional football for a number of years, before he eventually stopped playing because of his job commitments, which included more working shifts and less time to commit to playing football.

When Dean was 30 years old he started to become interested in coaching, as his two children “had started playing for the local cub team, and no one would take the team”. So he began managing the team because he explained that he wanted to assist their development by implementing his own knowledge of football to them. Dean admitted that he “was only interested in helping the team because [his] kids were playing and [he] saw they had ability”. He then went on to attain the FA Preliminary and UEFA ‘B’ awards, and gained a part-time role within the academy of his local

professional club, a position he held for 10 years. He attempted attaining the UEFA 'A' license twice, but after he had failed it on the second occasion, he accepted he "wasn't up to that level because [he] couldn't grasp the higher level tactical coaching aspects".

Dean decided to take early retirement from the police force at 52 years old, and he explained that was when the opportunity arose to enter coach education through a personal friend who had just acquired the County FA Development Manager's role. Dean explained that his friend enquired whether he "fancied doing some child protection workshops to get you away from the boredom of being retired" and Dean admitted he was more than happy to accept the role "to do something new and keep [himself] occupied". However, before starting his FA Child Protection training, a role became available to deliver the FA Level 1 award.

Before Dean could start this role, he mentioned that he had to be trained to deliver the FA Level 1 award. He described this process:

The first thing was to do a two day FA Tutor training course of how to deliver a Level 1 specifically. It also applies for other courses as well because it's called Generic Tutor Training (GTT), so the logistics are there for every other course, just not the content. So that allows me to be an educator, but then you have to get the specific training depending on what course you deliver... So we did the GTT, they showed us what we needed to do in the classroom and outside for the practical sessions. It was pretty basic and they just showed us what they expected our delivery to be like and how we should deliver it.

Once he had done the two day training course, Dean was then asked by the County FA to observe the delivery of an FA Level 1 course. In his own words, he described his experience:

I had to go watch a Level 1 be delivered before I could actually co-tutor one myself, just to get an understanding of how the course needs to be managed and organised... I went to watch a good friend of mine deliver a Level 1 in the county... So while the educator delivered it, there were a couple of us watching how he delivered

it... What a scream that was! We were sat watching it and I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. Some of the people on the course were just unbelievable characters. There were two blokes on it that were running a team in very run down area of the city. They weren't the most intelligent blokes, but they were nice enough guys, but they came out with a few things that were so inappropriate! They mentioned what the kids had got up to when they were trying to coach them, it was crazy, and they couldn't control them! The team they worked with, the kids were supposedly so badly behaved, but if they weren't coaching them kids, who will? So they had done this session and the educator is debriefing the group, and they just walked across in front of everyone and said, I don't have a fucking clue what we were doing there. They then just started to mess about and one of the guys whacked a ball at this other blokes head and I thought they would start fighting or something. I'm there thinking, fucking hell is that what I have to deal with these courses? Anyway, so I rocked up the following week to watch the final assessment procedure to see how it's done and that, and one of these guys turned up in a pink dress shirt on to do his session. He looked like he had just got in from a night out, or he was totally taking the piss! I'm there thinking, what do you say to the guy? He wasn't appropriately dressed for the session, but he said he had nothing else to wear. So they let him do the session because he had a pair of shorts on and this pink dress shirt. His session was actually quite good and he passed the course.

Despite this experience, Dean mentioned that he “was not put off from this”, and started his part time role as an FA coach educator. When I asked him why he still wanted to deliver coach education provisions after this experience, he told me “it was seeing the feedback the candidates were giving the coach educator and their reaction towards the outcome of the course”. Dean believed that the way the candidates responded towards the coach educator on that course, with their interactions, questions and enthusiasm to improve as coaches, “instilled [Dean] with a passion to want to develop coaches working at grassroots level”. He also mentioned that he “was used to dealing with problematic individuals within [his] career as a police officer”.

4.4.2 Working with the NGB

Maintaining Professionalism in front of the County FA: “If I didn’t portray the right image then I would be sacked, as simple as that”

Dean described that the County FA offered him around five or six courses per calendar year, and he delivered the FA Level 1 qualification at numerous venues around the county. He mentioned that in order to sustain the amount of courses he delivered, it was important not only to maintain his professional image when delivering the provision, but also when interacting with the various key stakeholders, in particular the staff members at the County FA. Dean felt that he had established positive working relationships with the County FA, and recognised that he had obtained a good reputation as a coach, and as an individual, with all of the staff members that worked there. He also stated that throughout his coach education career, his dealings with those County FA staff members were predominantly positive as he that he “had been very fortunate that [he] knew the staff personally from [his] previous background in football”. Additionally, due to these positive relationship, Dean felt that he was “able to approach the County FA regarding any problems, if they ever arose, which fortunately they never had”.

Furthermore, Dean mentioned that the “only time [he] really ever came into contact with the FA nationally was during CPD events”. He had to attend five hours of mandatory CPD training every year, and these provisions were delivered by other FA tutors. He explained that the events consisted of practical demonstration sessions being delivered by experienced FA coach educators that showed the attending coach educators how the sessions should be delivered appropriately for the FA Level 1. I found that Dean often attended these CPD events with the awareness that many FA staff members

were there overseeing the course so he felt he “was in the spotlight”. Therefore, he realised the importance of portraying himself “with the correct image”, which he thought involved engaging in “showing a willingness to take things on board, get involved in the discussions and take part in the practical sessions”. In doing so, Dean acknowledged that by wanting to learn from these courses, and in the process was demonstrating the ‘right’ attitude.

Dean did mention that many of these CPD courses were often extremely useful and he learnt new coaching methods that he could implement when he delivered FA Level 1 courses. However, he admitted that not all these events were always a positive experience. During one CPD event Dean attended, he described how he had joined in a practical coaching session because it was a bitterly cold day and observing on the sidelines meant that he was “freezing cold and bored”. In his own words, he described his experience:

This guy came to run the day and I honestly thought we had been set-up! Problem was we did the session, and initially I thought it was a wind up, because we had played for 20 minutes and we had never got going. We set up three areas and we had to pass it through the areas to the goalkeeper, and we started off, and the ball went out to a player straight away he stopped it, and he focused on this player asking him, “What could you have done there?” He did this four times... He kept stopping it and picking on the same bloke, bear in mind this was an actual FA coach educator being asked this by this guy delivering the CPD session. I couldn’t believe it! I was absolutely frozen by the end of this; it was such a cold day! Then another educator, who had done a very good session before it, came and said well done, good session. So I was there thinking that this was set-up for which is right and which is wrong? But it wasn’t at all! The guy actually coached like that. The rest of us were just stood about chatting about how bad the session was for the most of it! We were all FA coach educators with plenty of experience and we were stood there freezing cold!

When I asked Dean about whether or not he raised his concerns to the educator, he explained that he never did due to the other educator saying it was a good session.

Therefore, Dean decided to keep quiet because he felt that he “didn’t want to undermine the coach educators by disagreeing with the session”. Dean described his feelings of the experience to me:

I couldn’t say to the [main coach educator], “Are you taking the piss out of us?” I probably should have, but I felt like I couldn’t say anything... At the time it would not have sat right with some people, especially the FA tutors delivering the course... It would have had to have undermined him as a coach educator because I would have questioned everything he delivered compared to how the FA want us to deliver. I had to bite my tongue because it would have offended him straightaway, which wouldn’t have been a good situation at all. I know it would have been a situation which I would have thought, ‘Why did I open my gob then’ because it would have caused conflict, but I kept quiet even though I wanted to say something. I just totally disagreed with the way he coached the session... If I would have said something it wouldn’t have been taken well at the time, which then may have caused a problem with my reputation as well as my role as an educator... For me, it was my opinion of the session, I didn’t enjoy it, I didn’t learn from it, and many of the other coach educators taking part felt the same because we spoke about it... But I realised that there could have been consequences if I had said how I felt. So I decided to stay quiet.

Dean felt very frustrated about the session that he had witnessed, particularly as the methodology the coach educator had utilised contradicted the FA’s techniques of delivering coach education provision. However, Dean recognised that it was the right decision to manage his actions by continuing to engage in the session, even though he “had totally switched off and didn’t want to be there, [he] wanted to be elsewhere because in 20 minutes [he] touched the ball once”.

Dean explained that it was important to show that “professional image” as coach educator when delivering the courses, and in particular when attending CPD courses, because he realised that the perception of how other individuals ‘see him’ can affect his role as an educator:

My self-image is the most important aspect of being a coach educator. People have to trust me, the County FA, the candidates and my colleagues. They all have to trust me. If they trust you, they work with you. It makes everything easier. I have to portray that professionalism in everything I do... My image must be friendly, approachable, honesty and integrity. So by portraying this image, it 'fits' with everything. The thing is you have to show this image even if you don't actually feel like it at the time. It's important that I 'look' professional in front of the right people, and that's definitely when I'm delivering the courses or on a CPD course.

Dean admitted that on a few occasions he has “had to ‘falsify’ [his] behaviour and image to uphold [his] beliefs of portraying professionalism”, even though he perhaps felt differently at the time. He recognised that he could have revealed his true thoughts and emotions, for instance at the CPD event, but realised the potential consequences of doing so, could have resulted in him losing his position. Indeed, he explained why he sometimes concealed his feelings during his career:

The job is part-time, it wouldn't be a massive loss to me if I did lose the role but I love delivering the courses. Financially it's what it is, I get paid, but I don't need the money, my pension and part-time job as a bus driver sorts that out... If I didn't portray that right image then I would be sacked, as simple as that... I want to keep my role because I love the banter and people you interact with within football. It suits me, and I enjoy it too much to want to lose the role, so I make sure that I do the right things and say the right things by being professional. I am up for a laugh and joke all of the time, but I have learnt when the time is right, and it's just experience. I have learnt a lot from my previous experiences, mostly in the police, of how I have to behave, but when I'm able to have a laugh... I guess the biggest thing I have learnt is that I can't always say what I feel because it can offend people and revealing my own thoughts in the wrong manner can sometimes be detrimental to my position and my reputation.

Dean revealed that he has learnt how to behave in the right way through reflecting on his own experiences, especially those as a police officer. He explained that he knew from “first-hand experiences what it's like to say something in front of certain people that don't want to hear that”. He revealed that speaking his mind towards a certain

situation had actually damaged a very good reputation that he had gained, and resulted in him having to leave his job as a police officer:

One time I had asked for some transparency to a situation and they took it that I had undermined the management and actually interpreted that I had said something totally different. The problem with that was we had had a long meeting all day, and I was conscious I had to leave to get to coaching on the night, and I had brought this transparency issue up which caused a lot of problems, and then I asked the chief that I needed to leave, and everyone had a go at me and because it looked like I was leaving just after I had caused this uproar... From this unfortunately the conflict was never settled and my role and reputation was in jeopardy because what I had said had not sat well with the management and I had to eventually leave and retire early from the force because the situation couldn't be resolved.

From this experience, it was obvious to me that Dean had recognised that “speaking his mind in front of the wrong people at the wrong time” could be problematic. Therefore, during the CPD event he controlled his actions by deciding against ‘speaking his mind’ to the coach educator, because he realised that the consequences of his actions could have affected his coach educator’s role.

To conclude this section, Dean explained that his working relationships with the staff members of the County FA was extremely positive, but he realised that he had a reputation that he had to uphold by being professional at the right times. These instances were highlighted as delivering courses, interacting with the County FA and FA staff members, and attending CPD courses. He explained that many of these courses were insightful as he was able to implement what he had learnt from them in the future courses he delivered. Dean recognised that he had to portray a professional image in front of the County FA and FA respectively, especially at these CPD events, because he felt that he was in the ‘spotlight’ and they could be potentially judging his actions and behaviour. Predominantly these experiences were positive, but there were rare occasions when he had disagreed with the delivery of these provisions but felt he still had to

portray the ‘correct image’ even though he would have liked to ‘speak his mind’. However, it was identified that Dean had learnt from previous experiences that revealing his true emotions and thoughts can be detrimental to his position. So, he refrained from ‘speaking his mind’ and opted to remain professional in order to uphold his reputation, which would sustain his role as a coach educator.

4.4.3 Working with Colleagues

Working Relationships with other FA Coach Educators: “Sometimes the way he spoke to me I thought 1. I’m older than you, 2. I have more experience than you”

Throughout the interviews, Dean discussed the relationships he had with his colleagues and mentioned how he delivered a course with a colleague. With the new coach education structure, I acknowledged that coach educators work in pairs when delivering a course of over 10 candidates. They also delivered the initial training provision, as well as assessed the candidates’ final assessments. This had not always been the case. When Dean first started as an FA coach educator he delivered FA Level 1 courses alone. Even though he reflected on these early experiences, he explained that he preferred working with colleagues:

It makes it that little bit easier and a more enjoyable experience when you can bounce off the other tutor, and work together to make sure we can help the candidates as much as possible with our delivery. It gives me more of a chance to work individually with the candidates when there is two of us. I don’t have to worry about the other candidates as much when talking to one of the candidates because my colleague will be looking after them and vice-versa.

Dean favoured delivering coach education programmes with colleagues due to the reduced workload, which meant they had to assess fewer candidates so they could “get through the assessments a lot quicker together”. Additionally, Dean also liked working with colleagues because he “loved that interaction with [his] colleague during the

course”. He explained that many of the courses we enjoyable as “the banter between [the coach educators] rubbed off on the candidates and the atmosphere was much better”. He recalled his working relationship with one FA tutor in particular, Simon (a pseudonym):

Simon and I really got on well. We normally started off by having a dig at each other in front of the candidates. It loosened the whole group and the atmosphere from the outset with a group. He was a massive Leeds United supporter. So straight away we got that banter flying about who supports what team and make the candidates really feel at ease because it can be very nerve-wracking for them.

Dean believed that creating an environment where the candidates felt at ease was predominantly initiated by the rapport he had with his co-tutor. When I asked Dean how he created these positive working relationships he told me that it was through implementing humour within the delivery of the course content. He also explained that the more courses he delivered with a coach educator, the stronger their relationship became:

We have a discussion before the course begins. Normally it's I will deliver with this section and they will deliver another section, but it's pretty easy and low key, we always agree and happily do it. We all know the course inside out, so to me I am not too bothered which part I deliver. I get on well with them so it works... I like to do a course where it's nice and relaxed... That's the good ones, especially Simon; I think we are singing off the same sheet. We have got that understanding and the candidates seem to respond better when I deliver with him. It's much better for the candidates when you have two tutors that get on and work together so well.

Despite these positive working relationships Dean had established throughout his career as an FA coach educator, there was one particular educator, George (a pseudonym), that he “failed to on well with”. Dean explained that George was the County FA Development Manager, as well as the lead FA tutor for the Level 1 courses in the county. Initially, when Dean first started to deliver coach education provisions,

Simon was the lead tutor, but when George became a qualified FA Level 1 coach educator, he was appointed to take over Simon's role, which in Dean's opinion was totally unjustified:

He was the County FA Development Manager, and when he came in there was a little conflict because Simon was the lead tutor, but then George suddenly decided he was going to be the lead tutor. Just because of his role at the County FA he could decide that. In my opinion he was wrong in doing that because Simon had been doing it for so long, he understood the course inside out. We went to a meeting and George suddenly said that he was now the lead tutor.

This situation did not affect Dean directly, but he had to deliver the next course with George, which was problematic from Dean's perspective. He felt that George had used "his superiority over [him]", and as it was the first time they had ever delivered together, Dean disliked the experience:

The first time we delivered together was at a college, and he had only been doing it a little while. I found it awkward because he is the type of person that wants to take charge of everything. I didn't say anything; I just let him get on with it. I had been doing them for long enough and if he wanted to do it, then he could. I was happy to let him do it. I'm confident in my ability and he had only been delivering a few times, so he probably wanted to prove to himself he could deliver it... We were outside at the college, and I was doing one session, and we had split the group into two, he took half, I took half. I know that on a Level 1 course, for the candidates to pass the course all they need to do is the basics. So when I delivered the sessions to them, to show them how it's set up and done, I coach the absolute basics to make sure they understand that this is how they should coach to pass the course. On this occasion, he kept sending a candidate across from his group to my group and this candidate told me that [George] wanted me to progress it more and show different progressions... I said, "Yeah no worries". So I introduced the different progressions. We, as a group, got around 10 for this 1 session. But underneath it I was thinking it's all well and good because I could cope with this, but how are these inexperienced coaches going to deal with it? It got very complicated for their level... I had to accept it at that moment, but as soon as we had finished and the candidates were relaxing, I pulled George to one side and said, "Just bear in mind we are saying to them they can just pass by doing what's required. If they want to introduce other

things then that's fine". He couldn't see it and said, "Oh no we have to show them everything, that way they will get better"... Sometimes the way he spoke to me I thought 1. I'm older than you, 2. I have more experience than you, not just in football, but in life.

Dean admitted to feeling patronised and embarrassed, but the way George had done it (i.e. by sending another candidate across to tell Dean what he should be doing) meant that Dean could not show his anger towards the situation:

I'm stood there thinking for fuck's sake George, we need to move on, but I couldn't say that at the time because all the candidates are there and it would look totally unprofessional. If I was there telling George to move on and he was shouting back, "No we need more progressions" across two groups! He kept sending people across and they obviously were asking me if I had introduced something that George wanted, but because they had shouted it loud enough I had to then introduce it to the group, because I didn't want them thinking that they had missed out on something the other group had done.

From that moment, Dean believed he struggled to have a positive working relationship with George, but accepted this and he made sure that every course he delivered with George from then on was done "professionally to get through it as best as [he] could". However, trying to manage his interactions with George was often difficult, and Dean admitted that he could not show his true emotions during this. He realised that George's opinion of him could ultimately affect his status as an FA coach educator as "he had a big say in what goes on in the County FA". Therefore, Dean decided to "remain quiet and bite [his] tongue" in order to deliver the courses without any problematic issues. In doing so, Dean admitted to displaying "a professional front with [George]" as he understood that if there was any potential conflict between the two of them, the possibility of Dean "remaining as a coach educator was minimal". If this occurred, Dean acknowledged that the potential conversations between the employees within the County FA could negatively affect his reputation, so he realised he had to behave accordingly to the situation in order to preserve his coach educator's role.

From then on, Dean explained the difficulty of creating a positive working rapport with George when they delivered together on courses:

With George, it's just not the same, he is a bit uptight and it's his nature, he is a different character. Don't get me wrong, I like the guy away from work and get on with him, but when we do a course together it can be less enjoyable... He is a nice bloke, but he can be so pompous at times... The banter isn't there compared to the other educators I do it with. There isn't a great connection with him.

The more courses he worked together with George, the more anxious and less enthusiastic Dean felt about delivering the course. He felt that delivering courses with George “wasn't the same [as when working with his other colleagues] as it was boring and [George] overcomplicated the course using coaching terminology the candidates never understood”. Dean described his anxieties when he found out that he was working with George:

It's this pit of the stomach feeling, and I just think for fuck's sake, because I know I am not going to enjoy it. I am already thinking that I know it's not going to be as good as normal. I know it's going to be a struggle, but I just have to get through it... I'm always on edge when I do a course with him. I'm apprehensive; I have to pick myself up and show enthusiasm, put a front on and try get through it. With George I don't feel that excitement to deliver the course... He is not laid-back, he reminds me of an accountant. A stereotypical accountant who is boring; that's what I think of George... There are times on a course when he is delivering something in the classroom or practically and I'm just bored listening to him. He starts going off on tangents, talks about things that aren't appropriate to the level of the course. So that's why I try and make sure we always split the group up in to two, so I can deliver all the time, so I'm not bored. But that can't always happen, especially during the classroom tasks. So when he delivers it that's when I'm bored... I look forward to getting out on the grass doing the practical part; I get my own group then and can deliver it without him interrupting. After that first time when he sent that guy across, well he doesn't do that anymore, so I know I can get on with my sessions.

To conclude this section, Dean explained how different working relationships affected his enjoyment and behaviour when delivering coach education courses. Dean

described that he enjoyed co-delivering with Simon because their working and personal rapport was very strong. Yet, his relationship with George was totally the opposite, and it became apparent that their first experience working together ultimately led to Dean's struggle to enjoy co-educating future courses with him. However, due to George's role within the County FA, Dean realised he had to portray the 'right' image, by hiding his true emotions and thoughts in order to 'get through' courses with George. In doing so, Dean acknowledged that he was able to remain in his position as a coach educator.

4.4.4 Dealing with the Candidates

Motivations of Educating the Candidates on a Course: "I'm just thinking I can't be arsed today. Obviously I don't show this"

During our discussions, Dean mentioned that the types of candidates attending the FA Level 1 courses were extremely varied, in relation to their background and coaching experience. I found that he had delivered courses to school teachers, 16 year old teenagers, people with learning difficulties, and even grandads who needed to get the FA Level 1 qualification in order to continue to manage their grandson's under 7s team. Therefore, Dean believed that "every course was different because of the personnel on it", but he found that the "candidates all had the same target of wanting to become football coaches". He explained that he had to deliver the courses appropriately towards the audience attending, and he believed that acknowledging the diversity of the candidates was one of his key skills of his delivery techniques, as he felt that he "was able to gain a rapport with [the candidates] through [his] interactions and by making it simpler or more difficult for them". He said that he predominantly used the introduction of the course to involve "some sarcastic banter straight away", which he believed "relaxed the candidates and created a better atmosphere".

Dean explained that he thoroughly enjoyed working with the candidates that attended courses, and found he has been able to affect them positively over the years, especially with regard to “them becoming better coaches with their delivery and organisation”. However, he admitted that every course he delivered, when he “walks in beforehand absolutely crapping [himself]” because he believed the initial part of meeting a new group was “an uncomfortable experience”. Dean recognised that this apprehension, nervousness and anxiety he felt before delivering a new course was due to “not knowing the group and never knowing what problems may arise on the course”. Indeed, he understood the importance of not showing his apprehension to the candidates:

I can't show them how much I'm shitting myself before the course begins, so I make sure I'm enthusiastic and try and open with sarcasm and humour to settle me down more than anything... If I showed them that I was anxious about how the course went, I wouldn't gain their trust straight away, and that's massively important. I have to get them on side as early as possible in order for them to engage in the course... When I turn up to a course, I make sure I'm there extra early in order to set up, because I feel that if I'm prepared then that will make me less nervous, but I'm still apprehensive. I get that tight-knotted feeling because I want the course to go well and make sure everyone learns something from the course and enjoy it more than anything. That's the worry for me I guess... It's the days leading up to it when it's the worst, I'm thinking about how I want the course to go, and make sure everything is spot on with the preparation. I dread it to be fair and think why did I accept to do it, I could have had a weekend off. But once I'm there that all goes and I enjoy the interaction we have with the candidates.

Dean believed his apprehensive feelings vanished as soon as the course began, which then helped him gauge the type of interactions of the candidates. Indeed, this was a factor he considered an important aspect of his enjoyment of delivering a course as he preferred to deliver courses with “groups that interacted, encourage, and have banter between each other”. He recalled numerous good experiences working with the

candidates but he went into great detail to explain the “stand-out” course he had delivered:

The candidates make a course, not from a footballing point of view, it's from their interactions and this one course was brilliant for that. So I was with another educator who I get on really well with personally and have known for years, which made it easier straight away. On this course, the group were brilliant, but there were four women on the course and they were absolutely superb. I said to each of them afterwards, even though technically they struggled, “I would want you delivering to children because your enthusiasm was infectious”. One of the women was overweight but couldn't stop laughing throughout the whole course, but it was at the right times and it made everyone else so relaxed and it was such a good course to do. Afterwards I felt so good afterwards because the interaction was superb and I've come away from it thinking I have affected that and the result has been positive because they have all taken something from the course... Everyone passed, but these four women, when they coached the sessions, it wasn't the best technical information, but everyone wanted to be in there sessions because they made them so fun for everyone... I was buzzing coming away from it thinking I can't wait to deliver the next one but the problem is they are sometimes a few months away from each other that you lose it before the next course you deliver. But that one was fantastic because of the interaction that occurred throughout the course from the candidates.

Despite numerous positive experiences delivering the courses, Dean did admit there “had been a small amount of times when [he] had gone to deliver a course and [he] thought ‘I can't be arsed today’”. He mentioned that this had occurred when he delivered an FA Level 1 course for a group of male teenagers in the Prince's Trust, an organisation which assists young teenagers to gain support and further qualifications after leaving school:

The Prince's Trust course I delivered, there were 11 on it, and me and another educator delivered it. On the first day two dropped out and didn't come back after again... You have to accept it because I knew full well from the beginning of the course when then this lad came up to me and said he was going to do a Level 2 in construction building, he never turned up the next day. He just wasn't interested; a lot of them weren't because they got it free. If

they didn't want to do it then they didn't... It's an easy enough course, but after that first day all they were doing was taking the piss out of each other and they lost focus on every task we did very quickly... I wasn't looking forward to the next day with them because it was a struggle that first day.

Dean admitted to feeling “mentally drained” after that initial part of the course, and disclosed that he “really didn’t want to go back the next day and deliver”. He felt discouraged about the group because the candidates were unenthusiastic about the course, which Dean confessed “had in turn rubbed off on [him]”. However, he acknowledged that it was his responsibility to educate the group, so he adapted his delivery and interaction with the candidates in order to get them to complete the course.

In his own words he described the experience:

Obviously I didn't show that I was disheartened and discouraged about the whole thing. I was just not as up for it as I would be on other courses I guess. But when I got there I was enthusiastic, and I did the job to the best of my ability... It was important my body language showed enthusiasm and I looked positive. I thought back to a previous course of how my enthusiasm affected the candidates and I really enjoyed how it seemed to rub off on them... Not one of them wanted to be there, so their interests weren't there from the outset. I just had to try and engage them as best as I could. So we sped up the theoretical tasks and got them out on the pitch quicker so that they could play football and I engaged them that way... In the end we got through the course and everyone passed, so I had done my job. It was pleasing that they had all passed, but I was just glad it was over with really.

During this course, Dean realised that he had to manage his image and interactions appropriately in order to engage the candidates effectively. He did this by adapting the course content and delivery style to their needs. However, in doing so Dean demonstrated an enthusiastic representation of himself that failed to reflect his actual feelings of dejection. So, he reflected on previous courses he had delivered where he felt he had managed to affect the candidates to engage in the content through his enthusiastic manner. In doing so, Dean used this to ‘stir’ his emotions to “get the

candidates on side to try and affect them with their coaching by giving them what they wanted”. This allowed the candidates to escape the theoretical tasks and perform the practical element of the course earlier than expected.

During our discussions, Dean also revealed that individual candidates, not just groups of candidates, could be problematic during an FA Level 1 course as well. He described candidates who “frustrate [him] the most are those that haven’t put something in their books to complete the [FA Level 1] pack”. He then went on to explain an experience from a course he delivered:

There were three teachers on the course, and one of the tasks was set as homework for them to do, and one of the teachers didn’t do it, and on the morning of the assessment I was signing their packs off and this was incomplete. I thought you absolute idiot... I was really sarcastic with him. I said, “There is always one that doesn’t finish it” and he got the message, so when we were outside to do the assessment, he borrowed someone else’s and copied it. I was thinking, ‘He is away with the fairies and he teaches kids!’... It was very frustrating because before they can get assessed they have to have completed all of the modules in their packs, but you have to accept it and get on with it because they have to go and do their session and I have to assess them. So I can’t start losing my head with the fact they haven’t done something. So I just get on with it and think that they are an idiot for not doing it in the first place. You give them the opportunity and they haven’t done it, that’s frustrating. I lose their trust from it... They have been given all the answers! There is only so much I can do.

Dean illustrated how he used sarcasm to get his message across to the candidate he was frustrated with, but he went on to explain the reasoning behind why he believed he could not demonstrate how he truly felt at that moment:

I honestly thought ‘you stupid dick just write down the bloody answer when we tell you to, it’s not hard’. I couldn’t obviously say that to him though, so I did it in a very sarcastic way and said, “Couldn’t you have just put it in when the answers were up on the board, or when I told you it, or when it was on that flipchart next to you”... I did it that way, and even though I made sure I said it light-hearted, I was doing it so he know that he needed to do it. I couldn’t actually tell them that in an authoritative way and be angry with

him because to me if you did that you shouldn't be working as a tutor. I have to be professional and have an understanding of how to deal with people.

Dean believed that by portraying a different image to one he truly felt within that moment, one of sarcasm as opposed to frustration, he was able to get the candidate to perform the task without affecting his approach towards his final assessment practical session. Indeed, Dean believed that if he had demonstrated his frustrations towards the coach learner then the candidate “would have struggled on his assessment because his mental state would have been on [Dean’s] reaction rather than focusing on his session”. Therefore, Dean recognised that by not allowing his frustrations to surface, he recognised the potential detrimental effect it could have had on the candidate, such as performing poorly and failing the course. This would have reflected negatively on Dean, as he believed that his role was to assist the candidates as much as possible, not affect their performances unconstructively. Additionally, Dean also acknowledged that if he had revealed his frustrations then he thought that the perceptions of not only that candidate, but the others also, would have changed. I found that Dean wanted the candidates to be able to trust him as he “was approachable for help and assistance on a course”, but he recognised that if he had portrayed his true emotions with that candidate, the rest of the candidates may not have approached him for support as they previously had.

Dean explained another occasion where he felt he concealed his true feelings towards the candidates:

It's like this guy who had been telling me how nervous he was during the whole course, and he couldn't join in other peoples sessions because he said his legs hurt him, but then when he was stood on the sideline he was moaning to me how cold it was, and that he had circulation problems in his legs. I just felt like grabbing and shouting, “Just get on with it!” but obviously you can't say that because what happens if he genuinely has problems with his circulation. We were all cold, it was in November, but in the back of

my mind I'm thinking he is taking the piss here but I can't tell him that. I'm making all the right noises, but I'm thinking just get on with it and stop moaning but I'm never going to know if he was telling the truth or just didn't want to join in the sessions when he wasn't coaching.

Again, I believed that Dean recognised he had to demonstrate actions that he perhaps did not desire, but in order for him to help the candidate and “keep him on [his] side” it was important he sympathised with him. In doing so, Dean felt the coach learner could approach him for help with the course, even though “the guy was making excuses; [Dean] couldn't just ignore him because if there was something he needed help with then it was important [Dean] was there to assist and develop him”. Dean's thoughts and feelings of annoyance were instead portrayed as sympathy in order for the candidate to still “feel he could approach and trust [Dean]”. Dean recognised that “trust was a major aspect of the tutor-candidate relationship” as he believed that if he demonstrated an approachable persona towards the candidates, they would then attempt to “ask for his assistance in order to develop as a coach”.

I realised these “negative experiences were few and far between” over the course of Dean's career as an FA coach educator, but he understood the importance of portraying the correct ‘image’ in front of the candidates in order to “keep [the candidates] on board and doing the right things for them to pass the course”. I found that Dean's acknowledgement of hiding his true emotions during certain moments had been learnt from his professional career in the police:

It has stemmed back to the police, I really wanted to hit people but you have to be the cool, there are always people about, and when I'm thinking ‘they are a complete and utter arsehole that needs a good kicking’ but I can't do that because I have to stay professional, and the same goes in educating coaches, must keep my cool at times when I'm angry or frustrated by someone that hasn't done what I have asked them to. Once you have done it one profession, it runs in all professions.

Through his police background, Dean admitted that he was fortunate to have gained vital experience and knowledge of how to deal with certain situations, but he knew that during every course he delivered, he had to be adaptable to different circumstances that may occur. He described this in detail:

I had an idea there would be potential problems, probably because of my background before in the police. Whenever you have to work with individuals there will always be some sort of little situations that arise. Some can do it; others will need help. So I knew that I would have to help many people on the courses to get over confidence issues, and other things... You get it in all walks of life, never mind football, so the fact is you have to make sure that when people are struggling but they think they are doing ok, I have to bring them to one side and give them feedback, but help them along. I knew what I was getting into... That's what I think coach education is, helping coaches become better, but some don't always understand the methods that we try to use, or just don't want helping unfortunately.

I found that Dean had to attend every course with a professional outlook, which he did through his preparation towards the delivery of course content in advance of arriving at the course venue. Dean believed that if he was prepared beforehand with his PowerPoint, equipment, module outlines, and candidate packs, as well as arriving early, he felt he was “ultimately professional and was able to get [his] ‘game-face’ on”. Dean described his ‘game-face’ as the “act you have to show when you first start a course” because he realised the importance of creating the right atmosphere, which, in his opinion, allows the candidates to learn, develop and enjoy it from the outset. Consequently, he believed that he could then deliver the course to the best of his ability to the candidates. However, he did acknowledge the potential consequences of him failing to maintain this professionalism:

The consequences are that I would lose my role as an FA tutor, as well as my reputation... I have gained a good reputation over the years I have been in coaching, as well as coach education, so I know that I got to keep doing my job in the right way, which I do anyway because that's me as a person. I know how to have a good

time, and if people knew about some of those then I may not be in a job anymore, but when it comes down to it, you have to portray that professionalism at the right time... I know that when I'm on a course, I won't do anything that shouldn't be done.

Despite identifying that, at times, he did have to conceal his true emotions to the candidates, Dean did explain one occasion he expressed his exact feelings towards a candidate on a course:

This one particular lad was a complete dick. He had done a session partnered up with a lad with a learning difficulty and while he was doing the session he started shouting at the other candidates that had joined in the session. I pulled them both to one side, as they were working in pairs, and straightaway he just started blaming his partner, the lad with the learning difficulties... Because I had started to be a little bit critical towards him, as he hadn't really done anything except stand there shouting negatives to the other candidates joining in, this bloke suddenly let rip into his working partner and had a go at him. He was swearing at him and said, "It's all his fault". I had to take him to one side and told him, "You didn't do anything either so don't be having a go at him; you have both been worse because you have stood there shouting at everyone". He reacted by being very quiet and couldn't look at me, he was only 19, but there was a lot of bravado with him, and he didn't like being told off. I wasn't nasty to him because I'm not like that, but I told him that he was equally as responsible for the shambles of a session, and my tone was stern... I was very angry with his behaviour and I acted exactly as I felt. It was the right thing to do. The reason I did it was also because earlier in the course he made some comments while we were doing one of the theoretical modules inside the classroom... It was embarrassing what he came out with... He said that he wanted to become a coach so he could get make lots of money by coaching in as many schools as possible. I asked him did it matter about the quality of the coaching rather than the quantity and he replied with, "No, I just want to make as much money as possible, that's what it's all about this coaching lark". I'm thinking 'whoa hold on a minute, do I really want him to pass this course so he can go scream and shout at kids and earn money?'... My thoughts were expressed straightaway. I said to him, "There is no way you can do that". I had to stop him and say, "You're not on the course for that, that's not what the course is about. We have been through this and you are saying exactly the opposite". He couldn't grasp it and some of

the other candidates were also telling him it's not about that. It got quite heated until I calmed them down and moved to the next task.

Dean believed that on this occasion he had to display his true emotions and feelings to the candidate because he wanted him to understand “what he had said and the way he had behaved was totally unacceptable”. He also reported this situation to it to the County FA in order for them to deal with the situation:

As soon as the initial course had finished I sent an email to the County FA Football Development Officer about this guy saying I was concerned, but I couldn't do anything about it on the course except tell him, so I left it into the County FA's hands. I told them about the session and his comments. But to this day I do not know whatever happened to the guy, whether he got kicked out, or he actually went and passed. I don't know because it was back when external assessors assessed the candidates' final assessments. It reflects badly on the FA if this guy goes out coaching after he has got the qualification, it is a low qualification, but it does mean that they can go out and coach kids, and get some brass at the same time. It reflects on me too because I have been the coach educator that has educated him on his first course.

Dean believed that reporting the issue to the County FA was the right decision, and in doing so he felt he had “kept his integrity, dignity and professionalism throughout”. Dean admitted that demonstrating his true feelings on this occasion was for the benefit of the candidate, because “[the candidate] had to be told that he was behaving unacceptably and unprofessionally as a coach within a coaching environment”.

To summarise, I established that Dean believed his relationships with the candidates was an important aspect of his role as a coach educator. He considered that the atmosphere and interactions of the candidates determined how much he enjoyed delivering a course. Within this, he comprehended that in order to establish positive relationships with the candidates Dean had to promote a certain ‘image’ in front of the candidates to gain their trust. He did this through his professionalism, preparation and interactions, by being approachable, fun and honest. However, he did acknowledge that

on a couple of rare occasions he had to portray this image even though he felt frustrated or annoyed. Instead, he used sarcasm or sympathy to attempt to continue maintaining the trust between him and the candidates. Dean considered that, at times, concealing his true emotions, the candidates still perceived him as an approachable, trusting coach educator, which in turn allowed them to ask him for assistance, which would potentially improve their coaching ability in order to pass the course. In doing so, this reflected on Dean's performance as a coach educator positively, as he thought that if he failed to portray the correct 'image' in front of the candidates then the consequences of revealing his true emotions could result in him losing his role as an FA coach educator. However, there was one occasion when Dean identified that reacting angrily, and displaying his true emotions, towards a candidate was the right decision because his behaviour on the course was totally unacceptable. Dean reported this situation because he believed that there were certain actions coaches must apply when coaching in their own environment, and this specific coach learner was portraying inappropriate behaviours on the course to illustrate he was unsuitable to coach in Dean's opinion.

5.0 Discussion

In this section, I will provide a theoretical interpretation of the narrative-biographies of the four participant FA coach educators. Initially, that analysis will focus on the micropolitical features of their shared experiences. Here, my interpretation is principally grounded in Kelchtermans and colleagues' (1993, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2013) theorising on micropolitics. Following this, I will make sense of my participants' stories by drawing upon Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1971) social theory. Finally, I will analyse the coach educators' narratives from an emotional perspective by utilising Hochschild's (2000 [1983]) and Denzin's (1984) respective work. Even though I have separated these two sections for analytical purposes, I believe that these two aspects (i.e. emotion and micropolitics) of the participants' experiences are inextricably intertwined. My view on the relationship between micropolitics and emotions will be outlined towards the end of this chapter.

5.1 Coach Educators' Experiences of Practice: A Micropolitical Interpretation

One of the most striking features of my interviews with the participant coach educators was the importance that they all attached to protecting their individual interests within the working environment, which they considered to be characterised by considerable degrees of vulnerability and uncertainty. They not only attached great store to obtaining and maintaining their positions and careers as coach educators, but also, from my perspective at least, demonstrated an equal amount of fear in terms of potentially losing their employment in this role. Having obtained a position that they very much desired, their reluctance to relinquish it was clearly understandable.

Interestingly, the participant coach educators described how they continuously considered, and reflected upon, the image of themselves that they presented to their various key contextual stake holders (i.e. managers, colleagues, coach learners and external verifiers). Maintaining a desired professional image, or not as the case may be, was regarded by them as being perhaps the single most important factor in determining the number and level of coaching courses that they were asked to deliver. They also felt that this influenced their ultimate longevity and career progression. For example, Brian highlighted how fostering a positive reputation with his employers was a critical concern for him in order to obtain and maintain a consistent supply of work. Similarly, Dean, Andy and Carol, shared the importance they each attached to performing their role in the ways others expected of them, especially in terms of their competency to deliver high quality coach education provision. In short, what the coach learners, colleagues, verifiers and managers thought of them as individuals mattered a great deal.

It was perhaps unsurprising then that each of the coach educators shared with me the importance of 'defending' and 'protecting' their professional image and reputation whenever their practices were questioned or challenged by others. Here, Andy summed

up the collective feeling among the participants as the essential need to “cover your own back”. Indeed, I came to understand how they considered that the management of their reputation and perceived competency was a continuous, fluid and dynamic activity in which they chose to invest considerable time and energy.

The participant coach educators’ experiences could be understood in relation to Kelchtermans’ (2005, 2009a) work addressing *professional self-understanding*, *self-interests* and *visibility*. Kelchtermans (2005) suggested that the concept of professional self-understanding refers to the practitioners own perception of themselves in their working role. This self-understanding is not only influenced by the individuals’ own opinion of their working qualities and capacities, but also by how they think others perceive their performance in that particular role. Kelchtermans (2009a, 2009b) described how the development of practitioners’ professional self-understanding is dynamic and experiential in nature. This was illustrated in Struyve and Kelchtermans’ (2013) paper focusing on the perceptions and evaluations of new teachers in schools. It was suggested that their role and position in the educational organisation were constantly evolving or changing as they attempted to receive recognition from colleagues.

According to Kelchtermans (1993a, 2005) theorising professional self-understanding comprises of five inter-related sub-components. These are *job motivation*, *task perception*, *future perspectives*, *self-image* and *self-esteem*. These five different sub-concepts cooperatively encompass a person’s perception of their job role. Kelchtermans (2005) labelled job motivation as “the motives or drive that makes people choose to become a teacher, to remain in or leave the profession” (p. 1000). Task perception was explained as “the teacher’s idea of what constitutes his or her professional programme, his or her tasks and duties in order to do a good job” (p. 1001). Future perspectives referred to “a person’s expectations about their future trajectory” in

the role that they are working in (p. 1001). He described self-image as “the way teachers typify themselves as teachers” (p. 1000) and self-esteem as “the teacher’s appreciation of his or her actual job performances” (p. 1001). While it was recognised all five sub-components of professional self-understanding are important in terms of how an individual judges themselves in the workplace, Nias (1989) has argued that self-image and self-esteem play significant roles in terms of how an individual understands their identity.

Indeed, the importance individuals place upon being seen to perform effectively in front of the key contextual stakeholders is significant as their professional self-understanding of how they believe others perceive their performance enhances or reduces self-esteem, which in turn affects self-image (Kelchtermans, 2005; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). This could be understood in terms of Kelchtermans’ (2005) self-identity, which suggests that an individual’s *personal interpretive framework* is part of the process of how they perceive their job role because of their professional ‘know how’. Therefore, Kelchtermans believed that a person’s self-understanding is central to their own identity and advocated that when they experience vulnerability instances they cannot control, intense emotions will accompany this.

In relation to this, Kelchtermans (1993a) identified professional self-interests as the threatening of an individual’s ‘professional identity’. It was advocated that when a person’s identity, self-esteem or task perception is threatened, self-interests then emerge to protect “one’s integrity and identity” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 110). Furthermore, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b), suggested that self-affirmation and coping with visibility were major aspects of professional self-interests. Self-affirmation was described as the recognition an individual may receive for positive actions and behaviours they have portrayed in the workplace. The judgement of others plays a central role within this process of self-affirmation. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a)

believed that this was an important aspect within an individual's career, as gaining acknowledgment from others in their profession, especially others that are higher placed within the organisation, improves self-esteem and self-perception of their performance in the role. It was identified that when there is a high degree of visibility during working conditions, vulnerability is increased, for instance when other people are observing performances (Blasé, 1988). Therefore, an individual's perceptions of how colleagues 'see' and 'judge' them further increases the vulnerability surrounding an individual because of the high degree of visibility that is established, which suggests that organisational working environments represent a 'fishbowl effect' (Kelchtermans, 1993b; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). In addition, it was advocated that professional recognition, self-image and self-esteem can all be enhanced through this visibility (i.e. if an individual is 'seen' to be doing a competent job and is socially recognised within an organisation), but individuals can become more vulnerable within their work settings due to their understanding of how others will perceive their actions (i.e. if an individual is 'seen' to be inadequately performing their job role from their own perception) (Blasé, 1988; Nias, 1989; Kelchtermans, 2009a).

Those experiences that the participant coach educators shared with me related to Kelchtermans' (1996) suggestion that individuals tend to 'strive for recognition' through the professional image they present to others. Indeed, this could be understood as a 'politics of identity' (Kelchtermans, 1996; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), which refers to the development of a socially recognised 'identity' that could potentially assist in gaining better working conditions within the organisation. Kelchtermans (1996) believed that if this social recognition or 'politics of identity' is threatened, individuals can feel uncertain or vulnerable about their position in their job role (Kelchtermans, 1996). Indeed, it could be argued that these concepts described by Kelchtermans and colleagues (2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2009a) are all intertwined. This was illustrated through

all of the participant coach educators' narrative-biographies within this study, and it evidently revolved around how they believed they were perceived by the key contextual stakeholders. The coach educators were engaged in an ongoing process of presenting themselves in a strategic and desirable manner. This was especially so when they felt their role was under threat or subject to negative regard.

In addition, the participant coach educators' efforts to maintain, develop and protect their respective professional reputations could also be understood in relation to Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a, 2002b) discussion of *organisational interests*. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) defined this as "getting and keeping a job" and it is essentially the main self-interest within an organisation (p. 113). Despite Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a) study focusing on 'beginning' teachers and the importance of obtaining work because of their relative inexperience, it was suggested that organisational interests 'disappear' once an individual has a tenured position within an organisation (Kelchtermans, 2005). However, Kelchtermans (1993a) recognised that organisational interests not only correlate to early-career teachers, but also to teachers' career trajectories and job opportunities throughout their working lives. Therefore, in relation to my study, the participant coach educators all mentioned that ultimately their actions and interactions within their job role were surrounded by the notion of maintaining, and potentially advancing, their role as coach educators.

In terms of their respective relationships with fellow coach educators, I was struck by the degree to which these were characterised as much by disagreement, competition and varying degrees of trust as they were by cooperation and collaboration. For example, Dean shared his worries over the appointment of a new lead tutor, George, as he had "a big say in what goes on in the County FA", which made Dean feel "on edge" when working alongside him. So, Dean acknowledged that, at times, he had to "bite his tongue" to "get through the courses as best as he could". Similarly, Andy's

experience of having to co-deliver a course with James, after he “had done his legs in”, made Andy feel apprehensive. Furthermore, Carol described how she “struggled to engage the coach learners in the room” during her first ever delivery experience, which made her feel “embarrassed” in front of her colleagues. This led her to believe that she thought her colleagues may have felt she was inadequately capable of delivering the course.

Their individual relationships with coach learners were also considered to be far from unproblematic social encounters. For example, with regard to their interactions with the coach learners, the coach educators shared with me the importance of delivering the courses to the candidates as “professionally as possible”, despite sometimes having to deal with some problematic coach learners. This was highlighted by Andy, Carol and Dean who all explained how they had to remain professional through their interactions with these candidates so that they could influence the candidates and “keep them on [their] side”. In doing so, the coach educators felt that the coach learners could then “approach and trust” them in order to complete the course they were attending.

Similarly, their social engagements with verifiers and managers were not always straightforward affairs. For example, in discussing their interactions with the former, the coach educators illustrated how they had to sometimes shape their delivery of courses in order to be seen to be delivering the course as expected. Andy shared with me how he would perform the “right things in front of the verifiers so that they wouldn’t ‘slaughter’ [him] again”, after he felt he was “slaughtered” during his first ever delivery of a course as a coach educator. Equally, in terms of their interactions with their respective managers, the participants highlighted how they needed to ensure that they were seen to be performing the role “in the right way” desired by their employers. In addition, they

noted that if they chose not to perform in this way, they wanted to avoid being ‘caught’ for fear of the possible repercussions.

All of the participant coach educators shared with me the importance they attached to managing their professional image in front of their respective managers in the County FA, especially when attending CPD events with FA staff members. For example, Dean described an experience of being unhappy and frustrated with one of the sessions he had attended, but instead of voicing his opinions, he remained silent as he acknowledged the potential problems that could arise from doing so. Also, Carol mentioned how she believed she had gained a positive reputation by making a conscious effort to do the “right things in front of the FA”.

The coaches’ interactions with these various contextual stakeholders could be understood using Kelchtermans (2005, 2009a) concepts of *cultural-ideological interests* and *socio-professional interests*. Kelchtermans’ cultural-ideological interests referred to the norms, values and ideals that are acknowledged within an organisation’s culture, as well as the processes and interactions that ‘define’ that culture within the organisation (Altrichter & Salzgeber, 2000). It was advocated that when the goals, values and norms underlying an organisation become conflicted with the interactions of individuals, ideological struggle then sometimes occurs (Ball, 1987). However, it was implied that because of the importance placed upon self-interests and professional self-identity within the workplace (i.e. remaining in the job), many individuals often comply with the dominant values in order to protect and safeguard their professional interests (Lacey, 1977). Additionally, it was highlighted that cultural-ideological interests mostly occur when observed discrepancies between task perception and job motivation are threatened by the dominant culture within an organisation. This can affect and cause conflict between colleagues because one individual’s beliefs may differ from another’s about the

way someone should behave (Apple, 1982; Shapiro, 1982). These aspects were certainly illustrated in my data.

The emphasis the participant coach educators attached to their relationships with others in the organisation could be understood using Kelchtermans' (1996) concept of socio-professional interests. This was defined as "the quality of the interpersonal relationships in and around an organisation" (p. 115). It was suggested that individuals seemed to attach more importance to social-professional interests than any other professional interests because of the recognition of how positive social relationships can significantly enhance working conditions. This can then ultimately further enhance individuals' self-interests. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) suggested that "socio-professional interests often appear to weigh more heavily in teacher's decisions than other interests" (p. 115), which is a position my findings also support. All of the coach educators believed that the interpersonal relationships with their colleagues were an important aspect of their job because they all deemed that "good courses" relied upon the personal relationships with other colleagues that they delivered courses with. Such positive relationships with others were also deemed to reinforce their sense of social recognition and self-affirmation. Equally, problematic socio-professional relationships are capable of damaging working conditions due to the mistrust and conflict that might ensue between individuals, as well as eroding an individual's self-esteem (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996; Potrac & Jones, 2009a). Interestingly, while the coach educators acknowledge the importance of cultural-ideological interests, they appeared to attach greater significance to maintaining their socio-professional interests. That is, they were prepared to accept cultural-ideological demands that they did not necessarily agree with, in order to preserve their respective working relationships.

The meanings that the participant coach educators attached to their working relationships, interactions and career progression were grounded within their understanding of a fluid and uncertain career. From my perspective, the coach educators were acutely aware of the vulnerability associated with their role. Here, the coach educators shared with me how a failure to uphold the desired image and maintain positive working relationships could not only result in their reputations being tarnished, but potentially also the loss of employment. These were outcomes that they obviously wanted to avoid.

Interestingly, the notion of vulnerability in coach educators' careers has received little, if any, attention to date. I believe that Kelchtermans' (2005, 2009a, 2011) work on *vulnerability* in teachers' work could be productively applied to make sense of my data and provide more general insights into this phenomenon within the setting of coach education. While this concept has been discussed by scholars previously (Blasé, 1988; Bullough, 2005; Kelchtermans, 1996; Nias, 1999), such work has, from a conceptual and epistemological perspective, conceived vulnerability as an emotion or a mood (Bullough, 2005). However, Kelchtermans (2005) argued that vulnerability can, instead, be understood as "mediated agency", as it is not only is a "multidimensional, multifaceted emotional experience", but it is also a 'structural condition' (p. 997). This implies that individuals rarely, if at all, have total control over any situation in their setting. It was acknowledged that vulnerability refers to the way in which individuals experience their interactions with others within an organisation, which "encompasses not only emotions (feelings), but also cognitive processes (perception, interpretation)" (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 65). Indeed, Kelchtermans (2005) outlined this as *structural vulnerability*. He defined this as:

"always one of feeling that one's professional identity and moral integrity... are questioned and that valued workplace conditions are thereby threatened or lost" (p. 997).

He illustrated vulnerability through various examples that highlighted how teachers felt they were unable to acquire their desired ends with regard to their respective working conditions, relationships, contracts, and infrastructure.

Kelchtermans (2011) argued that there were three main sources of structural vulnerability; educational administration/policy, professional relationships, and limits to efficacy. These were evidenced in the coach educators' stories. On one level, it appeared to me that the participants recognised how the policy decisions made by administrators (i.e., the FA and County FAs) could have significant impact upon their career progression. This was a feature of their working landscape in which they believed they had no direct control over (i.e., job insecurity; see Blasé, 1988). In a similar fashion, the participants also shared with me how their possible progression and promotion within the organisation would ultimately be determined by the decisions of others. It became apparent to me that a lack of recognition from key administrators was something that the coach educators feared, as it led them to question their ability, competency, and their continued employment. The participant coach educators felt they were very much "under the microscope" in this regard.

Kelchtermans (2011) second source of structural vulnerability focused on the quality of professional relationships within an organisation. This aspect related to how vulnerable the participant coach educators could be within their relationships with the various stakeholders, especially when they felt "powerless or politically ineffective in their micropolitical struggles about their desired workplace conditions" (p. 70). This occasionally occurred when their competency levels were criticised by others, as well as when stakeholders had "different opinions about the best way" the courses should be managed and delivered (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 69). Therefore, the coach educators' experiences here could be explained through Kelchtermans' (2007, 2011) discussions describing how individuals within the same organisation can commonly fail to hold the

same ‘vision’, and find themselves in a “micropolitical organisational reality in which individuals and/or (sub)groups seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests” (Hoyle, 1982, p. 88). As previously discussed in the chapter, this was highlighted in Andy’s experiences of dealing with external verifiers’ visits, as well as being illustrated in Dean’s example of working with James. They both felt powerless to change things, which, as a result, increased their vulnerability within their workplace. Despite these instances being related to Kelchtermans and Ballet’s (2002a) cultural-ideological and social-professional interests, it could also be argued that these examples are explained in relation to Kelchtermans’ (2011) second source of structural vulnerability.

The final source of structural vulnerability was the efficacy of the individual, and their limits within their professional realities (Kelchtermans, 2011). This referred to the learning outcomes of the students in Kelchtermans’ study (or in this case the coach learners), as the teacher (coach educator) can feel disappointment, frustration and powerlessness towards the ‘students’ who are failing to achieve their desired outcomes because it reflects upon the educators’ efficacy as teachers. This can then lead to negative feelings towards one’s professional competency levels. This was highlighted by all the coach educators, who frequently felt frustrated when candidates struggled to implement the coaching content delivered to them during the practical element of the courses. This was clearly outlined by Andy, who explained how he “beat [him]self up” when his sessions failed to reach his expectations because of the candidates’ playing ability. Similarly, Brian and Dean both reflected upon the difficulties of assessing the candidates’ coaching sessions and their related written work. Here, they described the frustrations and disappointment they experienced when the coach learners struggled to incorporate “what [they] had taught them during the course”.

Kelchtermans and colleagues (1993a, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) highlighted that vulnerability occurred after so-called ‘critical incidents’ during teachers’ careers that were experienced as ‘turning points’ or ‘key experiences’ (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). In relation to my participants’ stories, there were a number of critical incidents that the coach educators believed had influenced their work place conduct. This was highlighted by Andy, who suggested that there were moments in his career that had ‘shaped’ his delivery methods. For example, the feedback he received from external verifiers directly impacted upon the way he delivered subsequent courses. Similarly, it could be suggested that Dean’s ‘turning points’ occurred through his outburst in his full-time job role in the police force. Furthermore, Carol described a comparable experience when she explained how the incident in the pub when dressed in her tracksuit influenced her behaviour. It could be argued that the coach educators, at some point in their careers, had all felt vulnerable within their job role, but they recognised that these instances impacted upon their future actions to sustain their position as coach educators.

Given the coaches’ understandings of their workplace conditions and relationships, I would argue that they demonstrated both a developed and continuously developing sense of *micropolitical literacy*. This concept of micropolitical literacy was described as the analysis of “learning to ‘read’ situations through a micropolitical lens, understanding them in terms of different interests as well as learning to effectively deal with them” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 117). In other words, micropolitical literacy is effectively the ‘seeing’, ‘reading’ and dealing with organisational circumstances in order to best protect an individual’s professional identity, self-interests and working conditions (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a; 2002b). Kelchtermans (2005) suggested that the concept of micropolitical literacy consists of three distinctive components. These are the *knowledge aspect*, the *operational* or *instrumental aspect*,

and the *experiential aspect*. The knowledge aspect was defined as the ability of an individual to interpret and understand the micropolitical aspects of a situation. It was suggested that individuals “that are ‘micropolitically literate’ will be capable of politically ‘reading’ situations, because they own the necessary ‘grammatical’ and ‘lexical’ knowledge on processes of power and struggles of interests” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 117). It is my belief that the coach educators’ micropolitical literacy and understandings influenced the way that they conducted their respective micro-level interactions with the various contextual stakeholders.

Perhaps one of the most striking themes that I took from my reading of the participant coach educators’ stories was the importance that they all attached to managing the ‘professional’ image of their respective selves that they presented to the various stakeholders they interacted with on an everyday basis in their role. The coach educators described ‘how’ and ‘why’ they sought to manage their interactions with these stakeholders, especially their co-workers and the candidates attending the courses. The coach educators described how they, at times, utilised ‘protective’ strategies in order to not only remain in, but also sustain and advance, their respective positions, an approach which was described earlier in the chapter relating to Kelchtermans and colleagues’ (1996, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2011) theorising of professional self-understanding, professional interests and structural vulnerability.

These findings could also be understood, interpreted and explained in relation to Kelchtermans and colleagues’ (1996, 2002a, 2005) work on micropolitical action, in particular the second concept of micropolitical literacy: the *instrumental or operational aspect*. This was described as the micropolitical ‘strategy’ an individual applies to effectively create, protect or repair positive working conditions (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). This implies that the political actions undertaken by a person are done so in the attempt to establish, restore and/or safeguard their professional self-interests and

improve their working conditions. Within this, it was situated that the different micropolitical strategies individuals employ are on a continuum, moving from reactive or proactive (Blasé, 1988). Blasé suggested that utilising reactive strategies were aimed at maintaining the situation and protecting self-interests (i.e. not losing the job role), whereas proactive actions were directed towards influencing a situation to improve working conditions. However, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) argued that the different variants of micropolitical action should be understood as cyclical or iterative, as opposed to positions on a continuum. Therefore, the concept of reactive and proactive micropolitical strategies fails to recognise the contextual components surrounding the different variants of engaging in micropolitical activity. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) recognised that implementing a micropolitical tactic in one setting may not always gain the same results in an identical situation in a different setting.

In relation to my study, the emphasis placed upon the micropolitical actions undertaken by the coach educators was arguably consistent with Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a) discussions addressing the use of reactive and proactive micropolitical strategies. They suggested that "actions to restore lost working conditions are, for example, reactive in goal and direction of action, but they imply proactive strategies that aim at changing the situation" (p. 117). This was highlighted in Dean's experience of "biting his tongue" in order to remain in his role when working with George. On one level, this is seemingly a reactive micropolitical action. However, by deciding to refrain from engaging in conflict regarding how the courses should be delivered, he was then able to maintain his position as a coach educator, which then allowed him to deliver more enjoyable courses with other colleagues. Therefore, this could imply that Dean utilised a proactive strategy as opposed to a seemingly reactive method.

Equally, the coach educators' stories, in particular the micropolitical strategies they adopted in their working roles, can also, in my mind at least, be understood in

relation to Goffman's (1959) work, *The Presentation of the Self and Everyday Life*, which portrays humans as 'actors' in front of an 'audience'. Goffman (1971) described the 'self' as a "performed character", and considered how individuals manage social circumstances as 'self-work' and how they go about their 'business' "constrained to sustain a viable image of himself in the eyes of others" (p. 185). This self-work implied that face-to-face social interaction was akin to a 'theatrical performance', where 'actors' seek to provide the audience with a credible and convincing performance. Goffman subsequently elaborated upon a 'dramaturgical' approach to human interaction in a detailed analysis that suggested "we present an impression of ourselves that we wish others to receive in an attempt to control how those others see us" (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

Whilst all of the coach educators engrossed in the 'act' of 'performing' through delivering the courses to the candidates in a certain style, it was clear that by engaging in this 'impression', the participants felt that they presented a 'professional' image to the various stakeholders they interacted with. Therefore, in keeping with discussions thus far, the coach educators' stories could be explained utilising Goffman's (1959, 1963) work addressing *performance* and *impression management*. These related notions suggest that the impressions people make on others have implications for "how others perceive, evaluate, and treat them, as well as for their own views of themselves, people sometimes behave in ways that will create certain impressions in others' eyes" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). In this respect, the participant coach educators highlighted how the utilisation of a combination of 'face work' (e.g. mannerisms and language), 'performance' (e.g. giving off a certain impression which, in turn, dictates the future) and 'professional front' (e.g. represented 'seen' image) provided the candidates, colleagues and superior staff members within the County FAs with a convincing impression that they were 'acting' in a way deemed appropriate.

Goffman (1963) described this ‘impression management’ as a process in the attempt to influence the perceptions of other people by regulating and controlling information during social interaction, which he believed was shown in peoples’ everyday lives as they manage settings, clothing, and verbal and non-verbal actions to create an impression during social interaction. Relating this to the participant coach educators’ experiences, I recognised that they were all aware of the ‘hierarchal observation’ and ‘surveillance’ by FA staff, especially on CPD days and whenever external FA verifiers evaluated coach education courses, which subsequently illustrated the FA tutors’ desire to appear to conform to the expected principles of working as a coach educator (i.e. Foucault, 1979). This was in accordance with suggestions that in order to uphold the standards of conduct and appearance expected of someone in a particular position, a “certain bureaucratisation of the spirit is expected” (Goffman, 1959, p. 56). These findings suggest that the participant coach educators, at times, put on a show for the benefit of their ‘audience’, irrespective of any sincerity, in order to sustain their role as a coach educator.

Additionally, this could also be explained by Goffman’s (1963) theorising of *interaction order*, which referred to the invisible, underlying codes that govern our behaviour: within “social interaction, one learns about the code the [other] person adheres to” (p. 12). In contrast to the rules in a game, Goffman considered rules within social life as indeterminate guidelines to the practical ambiguities inherent in day-to-day interaction. Therefore, it could be understood that the participant coach educators recognised that they had to conform to the ‘social rules’ of the coach education domain, as well as the guidelines that were apparently positioned within their interactions with the various stakeholders. In light of this, it could be considered that these rules were “subject to interpretation, to exceptions, and to decisions not to abide by them”, as well the possibilities to manipulate them, but understanding the potential consequential

nature of doing so (Jones *et al.*, 2011, p. 19). Again, with regard to this, it was clear to me that the participant coach educators seemingly recognised the situations in which, and to whom, they could manipulate these ‘rules’, but predominantly they appeared to conform to them in order to ‘protect’, remain in and advance in their position.

On another level, the experiences the participants shared with me of portraying the ‘right’ impression they believed was expected of them could also be explained by Goffman’s (1959) notion of *front stage*. According to Goffman (1959), the ‘front’ refers “to that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe performance” (p. 22). In relation to my data, the coach educators successfully constructed a ‘front’ that required them to carefully control a variety of communicative sources in order to convince the audience (i.e. stakeholders) of the appropriateness of their behaviour and its compatibility with the role assumed (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004). This was identified by the participant coach educators utilising their ‘professional front’ during their performance (e.g. delivery of the course content; attendance at CPD days; act in front of external FA verifiers).

Interestingly, through their conscious efforts to portray the ‘right’ impression, it was also apparent that the coach educators attached great importance to avoiding committing a mistake in front of any of the key contextual stakeholders, as the resulting embarrassment might threaten their reputation and professional image. It could be suggested that they managed their ‘impressions’ by putting on a ‘front’ in order to be seen as though they were all performing the ‘right way’, which resulted in them not being embarrassed or seen as incompetent. However, each of the participant coach educators recognised that there had been previous moments during their careers when they had to ‘protect’ themselves when they could feel a faux pas beginning to occur. This was highlighted in Carol’s story when she felt she “had to take a back seat” in

order not to be embarrassed in front of her colleagues and the participant coach learners attending the course. Similarly, Andy recognised that he had to re-do his sessions in order to reduce the embarrassment of delivering a poor session, which would potentially threaten his reputation.

These experiences could be explained in relation to Goffman's (1959, 1963) notion of *faux pas*. This concept referred to how an individual's performance can be brought to one's attention through unmeant gestures or inopportune intrusions, which can then potentially destroy a performer's 'image'. In this case, Goffman recognised *faux pas* as a source of embarrassment and dissonance that an individual would want to avoid. In doing so, it was suggested that individuals would then attempt to demonstrate flexibility and interpretation within the working situation, which relates to Goffman's (1959) belief that rigid devotion to a 'script' can lead performers to be in "a worse position that is possible for those who perform a less organised show" (p. 228). Therefore, it is arguably important for an individual to avoid presenting a transparent front within social interaction in order to reduce the possibility of being embarrassed (e.g. Jones, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Potrac *et al.*, 2002; Purdy *et al.*, 2008).

Furthermore, the fears the coach educators had about their competency levels in the role could be explained utilising Goffman's (1963) concept of *stigma*. Indeed, the conceptualization of the coach educators' "need to portray a virtual, as opposed to an actual, social identity brings into clear focus the perceived requirement to project and protect a desired self-image" (Jones, 2006, p. 1020). Goffman considered that the central feature of a stigmatized individual's situation in life is to gain acceptance and respect, which is what puts the stigma at risk, but with the value of the individual being consequently reduced. These notions of the discreditable and discredited are referred to as the managing of both information about the self and the "tension generated during social contact" (Goffman, 1963, p. 42). Indeed, this was explained as the basis on which

individuals participate in interaction, which can be difficult. This could be suggested that the coach educators were stigmatised or “disqualified from full social acceptance” within the role they were ‘acting’ during face-to-face interaction (Goffman, 1963, preface). Therefore, the coach educators were seen as “having built up a repertoire of coping behaviours, from feigning ignorance to self-depreciating humour to total avoidance, to maintain their established front” (Jones, 2006, p. 1020).

Within this notion of stigma, Goffman described three related concepts: *social identity*, described as the everyday way people are identified and characterised; *personal identity*, which referred to the identification of how a person is distinct from others; and *ego*, explained as the feelings a person has about their identity. This was highlighted in all the participant coach educators’ experiences as they emphasised the importance of delivering the coach education courses the “FA way”, which then enhanced their reputation (*ego*) as they would be seen to be performing their role adequately, but with their own personality affecting their position (i.e. being trustworthy and reliable). Also, within these three concepts was the notion of *virtual identity* that recognised the assumption and anticipations that individuals placed upon first appearances (Goffman, 1963). This was an evidently important aspect of the FA coach educators’ demeanour during the initial parts of delivering a new course to a new group of candidates.

Goffman’s (1963) consideration of “to display or not to display, to tell or not to tell, to let on or not to let on, to lie or not to lie, and in each case, to whom, how and where” is dependent upon the contextual situation (preface). This concept was described as *passing*, which is the attempt to conceal the stigma in everyday life (Goffman, 1959, 1963). Indeed, in relation to the coach educators’ experiences, the examination of their attempts to ‘pass’ as the person each of them wanted to be seen as, especially through controlling information about their selves and manipulating relationships, was essential in their protection of their personas. This was illustrated in the way they developed and

used different types of social interaction, such as humour, to explain their 'self'. Additionally, Goffman's (1963) work also involved investigations into how individuals cope with protecting, and *covering*, their 'image'. In relation to this, the coach educators all revealed that they, at times, covered their actions by appearing to conform to the perceived correct 'image' of an FA coach educator.

I believe that the coach educators' stories can be understood in relation to Roderick's (2006a) work addressing uncertainty in the working lives of professional footballers. This investigation focused on the 'cut throat' working conditions within professional football, which was described as being in an environment with "everyone in it for themselves" (p. 251), and how the participants responded to the uncertainty within this 'masculine culture'. Roderick highlighted that, despite being the 'glamorous entertainment sport' that football is seen as, which in relation to this study would be compared to the status and enjoyment of working as an FA coach educator, there is also a harsh reality that employment, and in essence having an established 'career' within the sport, is "underpinned by the constant threat that work can end abruptly" (p. 260). Relating the findings to the participant coach educators' stories, I found that the constant threat of losing their position and uncertainty surrounding ongoing employment were central to 'status-security' within the coach educators' roles (Roderick, 2006b). Indeed, the coach educators responded to this continuing uncertainty and coped with their insecurities by 'cushioning' themselves in the workplace through hiding their emotions and conforming to political discourse by "behaving appropriately" and "biting [their] tongue" as individuals. This was demonstrated in Roderick's (2006a) study, as it was identified that players refrained from complaining to managers and continually participated enthusiastically in order to regain their 'status' in front of the respected personnel that could enhance their 'careers'. Roderick understood this coping and 'cushioning' using Goffman's (1959) work, which addressed how individuals were

‘distancing’ themselves from rejection and portraying a confident ‘front’ through impression management.

Finally, in reflecting on my interpretive-interactionist theoretical stance I believe the coach educators’ micropolitical outlook to their work, as well as their related impression management strategies, can be understood in relation to Bauman’s (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) critique of work and social relationships in contemporary society. Indeed, following the recent research focusing on the ever-evolving, complex theorisation of micropolitics within the coaching science domain (Potrac, *et al.*, 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Purdy *et al.*, 2008), Bauman’s notion of liquid modernity offers a framework for advancing my interpretations of the problematic messy realities evidenced in the coach educators’ narratives. Interestingly, Bauman (1996, 2007) suggested that contemporary society can be personified as individualistic, uncertain, private and precarious within a constantly changing social domain where people are expected to be ‘free choosers’, yet fully understand and be responsible for the consequences of their actions. Here, an increasing insecurity has embodied the competitive attitudes in this world through less collaboration and teamwork, which suggests that individuals are willing to obtain further rewards over their colleagues (e.g. job promotions, status, etc.) despite the fact they are working in the same team environment. This has led to the “wear[ing] away [of] our capacity to think in terms of common fates and interests”, thus “contributing to the decay of an active culture of political argument and action” (Bauman, 1996, p. i). The self-interests and protective nature that surround an individual’s standing and status are now considered to exist at the head of their social life, which suggests that we often live “separately side by side” with others (p. 18).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that organisations are “arenas of struggle” (Ball, 1987, p. 19), where groups and individuals use power and influential methods to

achieve their goals, despite people working towards the same organisational objectives. However, within this context, further knowledge regarding vulnerability has been considered in the competitive and individualised social setting. Bauman (2007) suggested that within interactive environments there is a “natural suspicion” embedded within the dynamics of the social, personal and professional relationships that are established, built and sustained in an organisation (p. 87). Therefore, this suspicion is apparent because there seems to be little consideration for other people in the organisational environment (Potrac *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, in accordance with this notion, how individuals obsess with “getting the things that we want” and the “fear of failure” could also be related to this ‘suspicious’ outlook entrenched within socialisation, especially within organisations (Agne, 1999, p. 182). Agne’s work could be related to the coach educators’ narratives in consideration of the prioritisation of issues surrounding “am I going to be embarrassed? Laughed at? Left behind? Chosen? Accepted?”, which were highlighted by each of the participants when delivering coach education provision, interacting with colleagues and aspiring to obtain future work with their respective employers at the County FAs (e.g. Potrac *et al.*, 2013, p. 85). Therefore, the coach educators’ actions and their ‘selves’ were “perceived, interpreted, and judged by others”, which sheds further light on the uncertainty, vulnerability and constant scrutiny of engaging in numerous coping strategies to protect and advance their respective prospects within an organisation.

In summary, the findings thus far have suggested that the participant coach educators considered themselves to occupy a vulnerable position, over which they felt they had little control. However, it was clear they tried to protect and advance their respective positions through the presentation of an idealised image of themselves to the various stakeholders with whom they interacted. They believed that their success in their roles was dependent upon their ability to construct, maintain and advance positive

working relationships with the various individuals and groups with whom they interacted. Such acts of micropolitical action and impression management, even though strategic in nature (i.e. protect self-interests and enhance professional self-understanding), were accompanied by a multitude of emotions. Therefore, in addition to understanding and interpreting the participant coach educators' actions through Kelchtermans and colleagues' (2002a, 2002b, 2009, 2011), Goffman's (1959) and Bauman's (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) theoretical lenses, it could perhaps be suggested that there was an emotional aspect that was also intertwined within their decisions to conform to the expectations required. Indeed, this is perhaps more in keeping with the final characteristic of Kelchtermans and colleagues' (2002a, 2005) work of micropolitical literacy: the *experiential aspect*, which referred to "the degree of (dis)satisfaction" an individual feels within their micropolitical literacy (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 118). This characteristic of micropolitical literacy described the experiences provoked by particular instances relating to the micropolitical reality surrounding the contextual circumstances that can cause an intrinsic need to react to the situation (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b). Therefore, these experiences in actuality generate both positive and negative emotions within the micropolitical circumstance (Kelchtermans, 1996; 2005). Furthermore, the findings of this thesis also add further weight to the increasing view that coaches, and now coach educators, regardless of the setting in which they work, feel the need to engage in impression management in order to achieve desired ends. However, such actions were not only micropolitical but also emotional in nature. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

5.2 Coach Educators' Experiences of Practice: An Emotional Interpretation

While Kelchtermans' and Goffman's respective theorising provided a high degree of utility in developing my interpretation of the participant coach educators' narratives, I was not convinced that they fully captured the experiences the coach educators had described to me. In this regard, I was struck by their discussion of the emotional nature of their work and did not feel that Goffman's, nor indeed Kelchtermans', insightful analysis of face-to-face interaction fully captured the ways in which the coaches felt they had to manage and conceal their emotions when interacting with key contextual stakeholders. For example, Dean and Andy shared with me how their respective interactions with the FA and County FA staff members and line managers required them to suppress certain emotions when attending CPD events, and to express "the right emotions" in order to be perceived by the FA as competent coach educators. Equally, Andy and Dean both described the importance of managing their emotions in front of their respective colleagues while delivering courses, especially when working with those coach educators they disliked. By portraying a "professional front" they both believed that they made the courses enjoyable for the coach learners, as well as avoiding any possible sanctions that might accompany public conflict with their work colleagues. Similarly, in terms of their interactions with the candidate coach learners attending courses, Andy, Brian and Carol all described how they felt they had to manage their frustrations with candidates that "annoyed" them. They acknowledged that they could not portray these emotions to the candidates because they recognised they would not be representing the 'image' that the FA expected of them.

In this regard, I believed that the work of Hochschild (2000 [1983]) provided a theoretical lens that allowed me to better understand the participant coach educators' emotional experiences of practice. Hochschild's work focused on the emotional aspects of social life, in particular the interrelationships between social interaction and emotion.

Her most recognised text, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (2000 [1983]), studied the everyday realities of students, flight attendants and bill collectors from an emotional perspective. This work was derived from her fascination with her parents' work as foreign diplomats, which led her to examine relationships between individuals and analyse the ways in which people emotionally act for the benefits of themselves and others (Williams, 2008). Her theoretical understandings of social life were influenced by the work of C. Wright Mills and Erving Goffman. Wright Mills' work suggested that a person had to 'sell' their personality in order to influence individuals around them. However, Hochschild argued that the person must have a sense of the "active emotional labour involved in the selling" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. xi). Additionally, Hochschild expanded upon Goffman's theorising by exploring the emotional dimensions of the ways in which people try to control appearance and observe the rules of society. Despite Hochschild believing these theoretical perspectives of human interaction, she also believes they failed to fully consider the emotional aspects of individuals' behaviour. Therefore, she examined how a person acts on their feelings and what they act upon. Her intention here was to try "to get behind the eyes" of individuals through a consideration of the ways in which a person may feel their "sense of self" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. x; Potrac & Marshall, 2011).

I believe that the participant coach educators' feelings could be explained by Hochschild's discussion of *emotional labour*. The concept of emotional labour advocated that workers are expected to display certain emotions as an inherent part of their job. She suggested that employees of an organisation are often "required to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 7). Hochschild explained that emotional labour occurred within the work place, as it is "sold for a wage and, therefore, has exchange value" (p. 7). Grandey (2000) implied that emotional labour consisted of

employees managing their emotions consistently within a company's organisational rules, regardless of their feelings, opinions and emotions towards a specific situation in the workplace. The management of emotions that surround this notion of emotional labour was described as "management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 7).

Equally, at times, it could be argued that the participant coach educators engaged in 'acting' by displaying 'false' emotions in order to maintain their professional front. For example, this was highlighted in all of the participant coach educators' stories, especially when they mentioned how they interacted with County FA staff members, colleagues and coach learners. They admitted to acting 'professionally' by portraying the "right image", despite them sometimes feeling frustrated or angry with certain people and/or a course of events. This was illustrated by Andy and Dean, who both described how they believed it was important to present "the correct body language" and, conversely, "not show frustrated or dejected gestures in front of [the key stakeholders]". Also, all of the coach educators mentioned that they, at times, felt they had to motivate themselves to deliver some courses. For example, Dean provided a detailed account of having to psychologically "get [himself] up" for delivering some coach education courses. Here he outlined how he often reflected back on previous courses to help 'stir' and generate these desired emotions.

Experiences such as these could be explained using Hochschild's (2000 [1983]) concepts of *surface acting* and *deep acting*. In relation to surface acting, Hochschild described this as appearing to conform to the social (and emotional) rules of a certain situation or set of interactions. Here, Hochschild (2000 [1983]) believed that the bodily emotion work of surface acting related to an individual's body language, for instance "the put on sneer, the posed shrug, the controlled sigh" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 35). Such acts, she argued, are used to deceive others about how we are feeling without

deceiving ourselves (Hochschild, 2000 [1983]). The participant coach educators' narratives certainly highlighted how they used facial and bodily gestures in this particular way.

In contrast, the experiences of the participant coach educators, specifically Dean's example, of having to motivate themselves to deliver courses could be explained in relation to Hochschild's (2000 [1983]) concept of deep acting. She described this as "an individual working on his or her feelings through conscious mental work to the extent that he or she really believes in the emotions that are being expressed" (p. 36). Her development of this concept was influenced by the method actor and theatre director Constantin Stanislavski, who explored how actors "do not try to feel happy or sad", instead they "express a real feeling that is self-induced" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 35). Hochschild (2000 [1983]) argued that such self-induced feelings can be generated through exhortations, as well as an individual training his or her memory and imagination. Exhortations can be understood as the efforts that people make to feel certain emotions. In illustrating this point, she noted how her students' responses to her challenge to describe how they experience a deep emotion included replies that "were sprinkled with phrases such as 'I psyched myself up', 'I squashed my anger down', 'I tried hard not to feel disappointed', and 'I forced myself to have a good time'" (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 39). With regard to the ways in which an individual may train his or her memory or imagination, Hochschild (2000 [1983]) suggested that individuals may be able to believe the feelings that they are expressing. This, she argues, can happen when an individual transfers memories of a past emotion to his or her emotions in the current situation. The coach educators' stories provide further evidence that supports Hochschild's analyses in this regard.

In addition, the experiences of the participant coach educators, especially Dean's, could also be explained in relation to Grove and Frisk's (1989) classic work

that suggested that individuals modify their inner emotions in relation to how the organisation wishes their employees' emotions to be perceived in public. Indeed, it could be argued that Dean had engaged in deep acting to portray certain emotions, as he believed that these were the emotions his employers thought he 'should' feel and display.

The participant coach educators' understandings of the emotional nature of their work could also be explained in relation to Hochschild's notions of *display rules* and *feeling rules*. According to Hochschild (2000 [1983]), the concept of display rules refers to the 'appropriately displayed' emotions an individual demonstrates within a given social situation. Hochschild (1979) suggested that individuals learn which emotions are meant to be displayed in a certain situation through the reactions of others in that context, as well as through the understanding gained from wider social cultures and norms. Matsumoto (1990) described display rules as values relating to the appropriateness of emotional displays that are communicated from one generation to the next in order to identify the 'correct' emotional expressions to portray in a precise situation within a suitable context. In contrast to display rules, Hochschild (2000 [1983]) suggested that the concept of feeling rules was not only concerned with the representation of the emotions a person should demonstrate within a certain social situation, but also the degree to which that representation is in keeping with their respective role.

Hochschild (2000 [1983]) stated that "feeling rules are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed in the currency of feeling" (p. 18). Theodosius (2008) suggested that feeling rules are not only the means by which an individual comes to make sense of emotions they actually feel, but are also how they come to know which emotions they should express within a social encounter, and to what degree. Both these concepts were highlighted throughout the coach educators'

experiences with regard to how they acted, not only through their body language, but also how they ‘felt’ they should be feeling the ‘correct’ emotions in a specific situation.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the extent to which the participant coach educators ‘felt’ about engaging in the ‘rules’ within the social situation differed throughout their careers (Hochschild, 2000 [1983]). For example, I believe that participant coach educators, at times, adhered to utilising the ‘display rules’ by showing the ‘appropriate’ emotions during the delivery of coach education programmes, especially towards candidate coach learners, as opposed to continuously engaging in feeling rules. This was highlighted by Andy’s, Carol’s and Dean’s attitudes towards candidates who ‘questioned’ the FA’s methods, by portraying a ‘diplomatic’ professional front. While they may have agreed with these candidates and shared their frustrations, this was something they decided not to display. They described how they behaved in similar ways in terms of their wider interactions within the work place. Their emphasis appeared to be on displaying the ‘correct’ emotions that they felt needed to be portrayed in order to uphold their professional image, with little attention being given to reflection upon the “right currency of feeling” they owed (Hochschild, 2000 [1983], p. 18).

Additionally, these experiences described above, in relation to surface acting and deep acting, and display rules and feeling rules, could also be explained further through Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) theorising that *emotion work* is guided by the ‘social rules’. This refers to how individuals in a certain social situations ‘should’ feel and display the ‘right’ emotions. Indeed, it could be argued that the participant coach educators’ engagement in emotional labour required a considerable degree of emotion work. Hochschild (1979) defined emotion work as “the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling” (p. 561). Hochschild explained that there were three techniques of emotion work: cognitive, bodily and expressive emotion work. Cognitive

emotion work was expressed as the changing of images, ideas and thoughts to induce certain feelings. Bodily emotion work referred to the changes in the physical symptoms of the emotions. Finally, expressive emotion work was portrayed as the changing of the gestures of inner feeling. Indeed, Hochschild (1979) recognised that individuals ‘know’ the social rules from how others react to their emotive display and therefore learn how to portray these emotions in the future. She also suggested that people compare and measure the experience against an expectation, which leaves them motivating (i.e. what they ‘want’ to feel), mediating between the feeling rules (i.e. what they ‘should’ feel) and engaging in emotion work (i.e. what they ‘try’ to feel). So, it was highlighted that the degree to which a person displays an expressed emotion is in keeping within a given social situation.

In relation to the experiences of the participant coach educators, it could be argued that those feelings that the coach educators chose to display to others in the work environment had become ‘transmuted’ within a culture of organisational conformity (Bolton, 2005). That is, they suggested their emotions “belonged more to the organisation and less to the self” (Bolton, 2005, p. 49). This suggests that the ‘social rules’ within an organisation can impinge upon an individual’s ‘displayed’ emotions, especially in his or her quest to fit in, be accepted and gain positive regard from others. Therefore, in essence, the display rules around an organisation’s socially acceptable behaviour and image are entwined with Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) concept of emotional labour. As with the previously discussed concepts of surface and deep acting, it was apparent that the participant coach educators conformed to portraying the ‘correct’ display rules in order to emotionally and micropolitically manage their behaviour, image and actions. It could be suggested that this conformity is often dynamic and ever-evolving, as well as understood through the discourse, culture and values placed upon the social context within the coach education environment.

From my perspective, Hochschild's (1979, 2000 [1983]) concepts of emotional labour, surface and deep acting, and display and feeling rules have helped me understand, explain and interpret my data. Indeed, it could be argued that the emotion work the FA coach educators performed reduced their vulnerability. So, by not only managing their emotions, but also displaying 'false' emotions, the FA coach educators promoted themselves within their role positively, despite occasionally feeling negative emotions that they concealed. When I asked them why they felt that they had to manage their emotions in such ways, the participant coach educators shared with me how they had learnt what was expected of them in a variety of different ways. Indeed, this is in keeping with the previous discussions about micropolitical in chapter 5.1, as the findings related to the coach educators remaining 'professional' were also identified from an emotional perspective.

It could also be suggested that the previously discussed examples of the professionalism that the participant coach educators had learnt could be understood through Zembylas's (2005, 2011) work focusing on discourses surrounding professionalism. From my perspective, the coach educators' outlook of acting professionally lay at the heart of their practice and was an ongoing challenge for them in their working lives. Therefore, to further consider the already multifaceted social complexities highlighted so far that occur within the dynamic coach education environment, Zembylas's post-structuralist perspective exploring the challenging issues of culture, power and ideology helped me understand, interpret and make sense of the findings of my study. Indeed, Zembylas advocated that certain organisational and social discourses affect an individual's decision to adopt or resist those 'social rules'. The insights he provided highlighted how within the dominant discourse of an educational environment, teachers felt they were permitted or prohibited from experiencing certain emotions. However, it was found that despite this, teachers' emotions were actually

located in between an ‘individual’ and a ‘social’ domain, and were ‘interactional’ or ‘performative’ in nature (Leavitt, 1996; Zembylas, 2011). Yet, Zembylas’s work suggested that in order to understand an individual’s emotions from a performative perspective it is necessary to allow that individual to experience, discuss and explore their feelings in relation to their ‘sense of identity’. This suggests that emotions are publicly displayed, and are not exclusively private, as they are embedded within the social, cultural, political and ideological perspective within an organisation (Zembylas, 2007b). Despite this, scholars’ findings have identified that individuals portray the ‘correct’ emotions during certain situations to conform to the professional discourse surrounding the environment in order to avoid the consequences of showing their ‘true’ emotions (e.g. Hargreaves, 2001; Hochschild, 2000 [1983]; Lee & Yin, 2011; O’Connor, 2008; Zembylas, 2003, 2007a, 2007b). This was highlighted throughout all of the participant coach educators’ experiences, especially those of Andy and Carol when they discussed their actions towards the candidates attending the courses.

Whilst the management of emotions was a central theme across the coach educators’ narratives, it appeared that the management of emotions was not a simple or straightforward task. It would appear that such work entailed what Hochschild labelled *emotional stamina* (Nelson *et al.*, 2013). Hochschild (2000 [1983]) concluded that emotional labour can have significant psychological costs, which can include burnout and the loss of an individual’s sense of self. On occasions all of the coach educators described how it was, at times, very difficult to demonstrate or feel the expected emotions at the expense of their true feelings. Andy and Dean both mentioned that they, occasionally, found it difficult to maintain the FA professional ‘image’ during situations interacting with colleagues and candidates they disagreed with. Andy described one moment in his career when he could not uphold emotional labour any longer and “showed his true emotions” towards the secretary of the County FA, which evidently

was detrimental as it ultimately led to him resigning from his post as an FA tutor. He recognised that his outburst “wasn't very professional” and he was “wrong to do that”, but the conflict he had endured with the secretary over a period of time regarding Andy’s coaching academy had finally surfaced and was unable to be controlled.

Experiences such as Andy’s above could be explained using Denzin’s (1984) notions of *reflective* and *unreflective emotional consciousness*, *emotional temporality*, and the *double structure of emotional experiences*. Denzin explained that when caught in unreflective emotional consciousness “the experience of the emotion builds on itself internally, reflecting back on itself” and thus becomes contained within the emotional experience (Denzin, 1984, p. 72). This would seem to capture Andy’s explanation of his inability to control the frustration and anger he experienced as a result of the secretary’s attitude towards him, which Andy believed was an attempt to humiliate him in front of other staff members working at the County FA. These emotions seemingly “unreflectively engulfed and crushed” his emotional field at that moment in time and rendered him incapable of factoring any other thoughts into his conscious decision making (Denzin, 1984, p. 72). Indeed, Andy displayed his true feelings of anger towards the secretary with no consideration of the potential consequences of such behaviour. However, after this outburst Andy admitted that he partly regretted his actions because of the image he had failed to uphold as a coach educator, and he was “worried in case it had affected [him] with the other County FAs”. Here, this could be explained in terms of Denzin’s (1984) *double structure of emotional experience*, which illustrates the transition from unreflective to reflective emotional consciousness. This double structure of emotional experience was described as a “twofold passage through an emotion’s horizon to its core and then the passage out from the core, forward through an often new emotional horizon into a new stream of consciousness” (p. 99). As such,

he contends that “the experiencing of a particular emotion takes the person into and through other emotions” (Denzin, 1984, p. 99).

Here, Andy’s reflective state after the event is a useful example of how the micropolitical and emotional perspectives are dynamically intertwined. Firstly, from an emotional outlook, Andy’s feelings and reaction after the event could be explained in relation to Denzin’s (1984) *reflective emotional consciousness*. This was defined as instances when people “attempt to become objects in their own emotional stream of consciousness” (p. 72). Significantly, Denzin’s explanation of engaging in such reflective emotional consciousness illustrated how individuals:

“situate themselves biographically, in the lived present, in the emotion, and reflect the emotion onto themselves... This double reflection; the self of the person feels, reflects the emotion, and reflects on the emotion” (p. 73).

Denzin’s (1984) position advocates that a person’s attempts to guide and direct the feeling of the emotion in order to control their inner feelings through reflecting upon the situation can transform the experience, which alters the emotional consciousness. Even though Andy was unable to change his experience with the secretary, he was able to use the knowledge gained from his outburst for his future conduct. Andy recognised that he should not conduct himself in such an unprofessional way as he understood the consequences of his outburst. This, again, could be explained in relation to Kelchtermans and Ballet’s (2002a) notion of micropolitical literacy, especially the knowledge aspect, as he had learnt that demonstrating his true, raw emotions had not only resulted in him losing his position, but also it could have been detrimental towards his own professional reputation and future employment. When considering this example in light of Kelchtermans and colleagues’ (1996, 2002a, 2002b) work on micropolitical literacy, it could be argued that Andy came to recognise the need to control the ‘image’ of himself that he presented to others if he was to continue in the role as a coach

educator (i.e. Goffman's impression management and Hochschild's emotional management/labour).

With regard to the narrative-biographies of the coach educators, it could be suggested that due to the dynamic micropolitical and emotional perspectives being so closely interrelated, Denzin's (1984) notion of *emotional temporality* could be utilised to make sense of my data. Indeed, Denzin described emotional temporality as a process where "inner phenomenological time is continuous and circular, wherein the future, the present, and the past constitute a continuous temporal horizon against and in which the person's emotional consciousness is experienced and accomplished" (p. 79). Denzin explained that "in the circular horizon of temporality... the future moves towards them, the present is alongside them, and the past pushes the present forward" (p. 79). Kelchtermans (2005) also discussed terms of space and temporality from an emotional perspective. He suggested teaching was always embedded in relation to a 'where' and a 'when', and the coping strategies individuals employ during certain moments in their lives and careers are filled with emotion. Similarly to Denzin's emotional temporality, Kelchtermans (2005) argued that the emotional aspects of improving working conditions exemplify the temporal dimensions of practice. Therefore, age, career stage and generational identity are attached to people's own experiences and this affects the emotional and political consequences of the actions that they perform.

From the narratives presented it could be argued that the coach educators not only illustrated their 'false' feelings at that present time (i.e. towards the candidates and colleagues), but their reflective nature also allowed them to recognise how during their own previous experiences they had come to identify and understand the possible consequences of certain actions they portrayed. For example, Dean recognised that his previous outburst in his full-time role as a police officer had a negative result because he "spoke his mind". So, when he felt like he had to say something at a coach education

CPD event, he refrained from doing so as he acknowledged the potential impact of him acting in this way, which he believed would have been similar to his previous incident. Therefore, these examples could be related to Denzin's (1984) argument that in such instances, "the future, the present, and the past all become part of the same experience", as the FA tutors reflected upon their own experiences of adapting their emotional state to control the frustration they felt towards candidates (p. 79). From my perspective, this was certainly portrayed within the experiences that the FA coach educators shared during this study. In essence, I believe that the participants in my study sought to reduce their vulnerability within their job role. Here, they recognised the importance of looking, behaving and acting in the 'correct' manner within their relationships with their employers, colleagues and course candidates. By conforming, the coach educators acknowledged that they would remain in and further advance their position as a coach educator. Therefore, the coach educators understood that they had to apply strategies, through the knowledge they had gained, in order to remain professional, despite feeling certain emotions that they believed had to be concealed.

It is also important to recognise that the participant coach educators' engagement in emotional labour was not solely about negative experiences. They all shared with me how they had gained significant satisfaction from their ability to maintain what they considered to be an appropriate emotional performance in the eyes of their respective contextual stakeholders. For example, Andy, Carol and Dean all described how their experiences of engaging in emotion management during courses with the candidates allowed for positive emotions to surface further on as the "penny dropped" with the coach learners. When this occurred, the coach educators explained that this "made it worthwhile" as they realised they had enabled the candidates to learn and improve. Similarly, Brian mentioned that this was the case when he "enthused" candidates, which then made them "engage in the course fully". So, at times, the coach

educators all recognised how engaging in emotional labour can help them maintain their respective positions, as well as experiencing emotions associated with positive outcomes.

This finding could be understood in relation to recent research that has highlighted how engaging in emotional labour can be seen as a positive experience. Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) suggested that emotional labour is closely related to caring within an educational organisation. Despite the negativity that surrounds the term ‘emotional labour’, Isenbarger and Zembylas argue that emotional labour can have a positive impact on self-esteem, which was highlighted by Lynn’s case as a participant in the study. She recognised that by portraying the positive emotions she was ‘supposed’ to, as opposed to frustration and disappointment, she was “meant to be there” in the classroom (p. 131). This was similar to the coach educators in this study, as they all felt an “enormous sense of personal satisfaction” in performing their role (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006, p. 131). This was also identified by Shuler and Sypher (2000), who suggested that caring teaching may be associated with both negative and positive emotions, for instance positive aspects of engaging in emotional labour can be enjoyed despite the fact they display ‘ingenuine’ positive emotions (Goldstein, 1999). This was highlighted by Potrac and Marshall (2011), who suggested that, on occasions, individuals may believe that their emotional labour is rewarded by the outcomes that they believe they have achieved.

In developing the notion of structural vulnerability outlined in the previous section addressing the micropolitical aspects of the coach educators’ practice, it could be argued that this vulnerability was something that was felt. In this regard, the coach educators’ engagement in emotional labour and emotion management was stimulated by their recognition of the vulnerability of their situation in relation to ongoing employment and perceived competency levels in the eyes of the contextual stakeholders

(e.g. the FA staff members, FA external verifiers, colleagues and coach learners). This could be related to the notion that vulnerability is interrelated both from an emotional and a micropolitical perspective (Kelchtermans, 2005, 2011; Lasky, 2000). Despite Kelchtermans (2005) suggesting that vulnerability “can bring about both positive emotion and negative emotions”, to understand this concept clearly it was found that vulnerability “is not an emotion in itself, nor an attitude, an agenda or a strategy” but more of a stance that “helps us position the concept towards felt emotions, as well as toward actions and action agendas or coping strategies” (p. 999). Kelchtermans (2011) contended that vulnerability within a job role has two aspects: moral and political roots.

The moral aspect of this vulnerability engulfs the emotional aspect (i.e. the feelings that surround the vulnerability), which refers to how the individual experiences the situation ‘morally’, by “doing the ‘correct’ thing” (p. 75). The moral consequences of dealing with the demands of others in the organisation can often unearth the emotional and micropolitical aspects of this vulnerability as they are seemingly both intertwined within the moral integrity of ‘doing the right thing’ (Kelchtermans, 2005, 2011). Even though individuals strive to establish and maintain positive relations that enhance their moral integrity, the *politics of identity* is pivotal within this, because this recognition depends on others’ perceptions. Yet, within Kelchtermans’ (2011) example of Nicole’s story, it was evident that the different aspects of vulnerability affected the emotional and micropolitical aspects of vulnerability, as she was perceived negatively because of her professional competencies, so she engaged in micropolitical actions in order to regain recognition. Ultimately, work place conditions, “whether material, organisational, social, or cultural, always affect teachers’ [coach educators] professional self-understanding, so teachers’ political actions always, to some extent, involve politics of identity” (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 77). Therefore, in relation to the findings of this study, it could be considered that the political and emotional vulnerability the

participant coach educators highlighted within their experiences surrounded their professional self-understanding, which then affected their self-esteem. This consequentially affected their emotional state while performing their role, as well as interacting with the contextual stakeholders, which caused them to consider what micropolitical action to take, and evidently how they would display their emotions to the respective stakeholders in order to reduce their vulnerability.

Whilst the coach educators' narratives highlighted the vulnerability that they respectively experienced in their roles, I believe that it is important to recognise that they did not experience this in an identical or homogenous way. Indeed, I understood their actions, thoughts, and emotions in relation to this shared experience to vary in form and intensity. For example, I felt that the 'degree' of vulnerability each coach educator experienced was dependent upon the time in their career (i.e. early on in their career), the context (i.e. stakeholder interacting with), and the uncertainty surrounding their job role at a particular moment in time. This is perhaps illustrated in the experiences of Carol and Brian. While they both recognised the vulnerability inherent in their working roles, Carol appeared to exhibit a stronger sense of anxiety about living up to the expectations of her employers in my encounters with her than Brian did in my meetings with him. Arguably, this variation may be attributed to Carol's neophyte status in coach education and her efforts to develop a positive working reputation, while Brian was considerably more experienced as a coach educator and had already built a relationship with his employer that he believed was founded on mutual trust and respect. Of course, Brian recognised that this state of affairs was fluid and capable of changing and was careful in the ways that he nurtured his relationships with others. In a similar vein, Andy's narrative revealed that while uncertainty and vulnerability were long-standing companions in his unfolding career as a coach educator, he increasingly came to understand how he might manage the 'front' that he presented to others in

various situations in order to somewhat reduce or ameliorate, although not completely remove, them.

While Kelchtermans (2005, 2011) concept of structural vulnerability was undoubtedly a useful sense-making device for interpreting the experiences of the coach educators in this regard, I believe that it has the potential to be further refined in terms of its theoretical sensitivity. In particular, I believe that this conceptual framework might better engage with the temporal, subcultural, and situational nature of vulnerability and how these may respectively change across the course of an individual's career. This would seem a salient area of future inquiry for those interested in the careers of coach educators but also in the nature of careers more broadly. That said, I do not wish to seem unfairly critical of Kelchtermans work in this regard, especially as I am sensitive to the fact that much of his inquiry on this topic has focused the experiences of neophyte and early career teachers. Furthermore, I believe the concept of structural vulnerability did not adequately encapsulate the fears that seemed to be evident in each of the coach educators' stories, be it in terms of losing face being criticised by significant others, de-selection or the failure to be selected to deliver coach education courses at certain levels, or the termination of their employment in that role. This 'fear of failure' has been hinted at in the wider sports coaching research (e.g., Roderick, 2006; Potrac *et al.*, 2013; Purdy & Potrac, 2014; Sager, Bradley, & Jowett, 2010), especially within the context of football culture, but it is yet to be directly engaged with (Potrac, Gilbert & Denison, 2012). Indeed, there is perhaps much to learn about this emotion in the context of sports workers (e.g., athletes, coaches, support staff, coach educators, officials, and volunteers) careers, especially as sport is increasingly modernised according to neoliberal principles and values (Lusted & O'Gorman, 2010). Given the two points made above, I believe that this thesis has not only contributed to a better understanding of coach educators' working lives than currently existed, but that it

has also highlighted how Kelchtermans' theorising on this topic could be advanced or developed through further inquiry.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that micropolitics and emotions are closely interrelated. Arguably, both are cyclic, dynamic and 'temporal' in nature. There appears to be an interconnection between micropolitical literacy (i.e. reading situations to apply the correct strategy learnt from past experiences) and emotional temporality (i.e. the future's actions are based on the emotions in the present through reflecting upon the past), which suggests how the coach educators all recognised the importance of 'protecting' themselves through micropolitical actions and engaging in emotional labour in order to 'manage' interactions with the key contextual stakeholders (Goffman, 1959, 1963; Kelchtermans, 2005, 2009). However, these actions are learnt through past experiences, observations, and knowledge of understanding the consequences of performing certain actions and portraying emotions. Ultimately, the participant coach educators recognised that by protecting their self-interests (i.e. their job position) through displaying the 'correct' image and emotions while performing their role, they could maintain and/or advance their future opportunities and professional reputation within their organisations.

In terms of what this thesis has contributed to the existing literature, I believe that it has moved beyond the thought process of coach education being a functional and linear activity, and/or a matter of using the 'best' or 'right' pedagogical method. Indeed, this research has highlighted the social complexity of coach educator's work, especially in terms of the vulnerability that they have experienced in their roles, and careers to date. Additionally, this thesis has clearly illustrated the ambiguities surrounding the coach educator's ability to develop/maintain and advance working relationships with others whilst performing their job. Indeed, their thesis has arguably illustrated that coach educators' work is an inherently micropolitical and emotional activity and that

such understanding should be factored in future coach education research, as well as the suggestions and recommendations that academics make to coach educators in terms of how they could 'do it better'.

6.0 Conclusion

I end this thesis by providing a summary of the key findings of the research project, as well as reflecting upon what I consider to be the empirical and theoretical contributions of this work to the coach education literature. I then chart the methodological limitations associated with narrative-biographical inquiry, before outlining the possible agendas for future research within the coach education domain. Finally, I provide the reader with my reflections on the ‘messy’, micro-political and emotional experiences of conducting narrative-biographical research, as well as the practical applications of this study.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

The aim of this study was to explore the day-to-day working lives of four FA coach educators in an attempt to understand how their interactions and relationships with key contextual stakeholders (e.g. FA staff members, colleagues, and coach learners). In this regard, I believe that the thesis has provided some new and, indeed, novel initial insights into the micropolitical nature of coach educators working role. The findings have suggested that the participants understood themselves to be engaged in a dynamic and ongoing process of creating and re-creating the ‘right’ image of themselves in which they present to their respective key stakeholders in order to achieve their immediate, as well as long-term, career goals.

The coach educators attached a high importance to not only maintaining employment delivering coach education courses, but also advancing their position and reputation. Additionally, the data illustrated how the coach educators believed that their success in their respective roles was dependent upon their ability to construct, maintain

and advance their interactive relationships with these individuals. In doing so, the participants all described how they acknowledged that they had to perform their role in a ‘professional manner’, as they recognised they were ‘visible’ in front of the key contextual stakeholders they interacted with. Therefore, the coach educators believed they were conforming to the cultural professional discourse within the coach education context.

In order to make theoretical sense of the coach educators’ actions here, Kelchtermans (2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2009a) work addressing professional self-understanding, and micropolitical literacy theory, as well as Goffman’s (1959) classical text, which addressed *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which builds upon existing coaching and coach education literature (Ball, 1987; Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b; Potrac *et al.*, 2002; Potrac *et al.*, 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b) that found the participants to engage in many forms of impression management and ‘face work’ to construct and project a certain image of themselves. Similarly, the findings are in keeping with those highlighted in recent coaching research, which suggest that coach educators need to engage in strategic micropolitical actions in order to maintain, advance and/or improve their job role and working conditions. Indeed, this is not to say that the participants’ day-to-day working life was strife with political dispute in a negative manner, but it illustrates the constant political nature surrounding their roles.

An interesting related finding here was the importance that the coach educators attached to their micropolitical interactions in which they believed was characterised by a high degree of structural vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 2005). In this regard, the coach educators highlighted how their sometimes negative interactions with key stakeholders, especially their managers and colleagues, led to problematic issues within the relationships, which had significant effects upon how the participants presented their

‘image’. On one level, these experiences were understood in relation to Kelchtermans (2005, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) work on structural vulnerability, but also equally these understandings of vulnerability were explained through Baumann’s (2000, 2003, 2007) discussion of *liquid modernity* that addressed the ‘risk society’ and ‘natural suspicion’. Arguably, developing such multi-layered insights has much to offer in assisting greater understanding and recognition of critically engaging dilemmas and vulnerability within coach educators’ working roles.

In addition to the micropolitical understandings of their work, the narrative-biographical data also highlighted the inherent emotional nature of the coach educators’ everyday practice. The findings here illustrated how the participants highlighted their emotional struggles with how they managed and concealed their ‘true’ feelings, coinciding with the deployment of ‘false’ their expressions, as well as their understandings in doing so. As such, the coach educators’ experiences would suggest that, for them at least, their working lives could be classified as an emotional practice. This is not to suggest that their role was solely emotional, but how their emotions, both positive and negative, were significant within their interactions with key stakeholders.

In order to make sense of these findings, the data was explained in relation to Hochschild’s (1979, 2000 [1983]) work focusing on the *emotional labour* and *emotional management*, as well as Denzin’s (1984) notions of *reflective unreflective* and *emotional consciousness*, *emotional temporality*, and *the double structure of emotional experiences*. As previously identified, some recent studies have hinted at the emotional nature of the coaching practice (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy *et al.*, 2008), yet while these accounts have been applauded for highlighting a largely unknown aspect of practice, these were done indirectly. In acknowledgement of the above, I suggest that the findings within my study begin to address these emotional issues while building upon existing coaching literature on emotions in the sports coaching domain (Nelson *et*

al., 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2013). Also, the results highlighted here illustrated that the participants attached importance of being ‘professional’ by performing false emotions that there were in-keeping with the professional discourse (Zembylas, 2005), in order for the key contextual stakeholders to believe that they were performing their role correctly. This was also explained by Hochschild’s (1979, 2000 [1983]) notion of *display* and *feeling rules*.

While the notions of micropolitics, impression management and emotion have been described separately for the purpose of analytical clarity, I believe these concepts were, within the context of the participant coach educators’ understandings of everyday practice, were inextricably inter-twined. Indeed, the notion of the structural vulnerability the coach educators felt led to job insecurities or advancements because of their performance, reputation and/or interactions with the key contextual stakeholders. In turn, this directly affected the coach educators impression management and emotional labour/management as they wanted to be seen complying within the professional discourse of the FA coach education organisational structure. In doing so, the coach educators tried to establish and sustain the ‘right’ image in the eyes of those that matter (e.g. the contextual stakeholders). In doing so, they utilised micropolitical actions that they had learnt through their previous experiences and observations of others within the workplace, which led them to acquire the understanding of reading micropolitical situations (e.g. micropolitical literacy). This apparent dynamic, ongoing undercurrent underlined in the participants’ narrative-biographies appeared to be a cyclical process, as each coach educator reiterated that their position as an FA coach educator was regarded to be an extremely good job role within the coaching domain, therefore, they attempted to remain in this role by performing in the ‘right’ way.

In terms of the generalisability of these findings, I am drawn to the work of Williams (2000). Some would suggest that this thesis cannot be generalised, such as

Denzin (1983) or Guba and Lincoln (1994), who claim that generalisation is impossible in qualitative research. Indeed, this could be true, as I am only capturing four coach educators in one region delivering coach education courses. However, the aim of this study was not to portray every coach educator in the UK to be the same, so in light of this claim, Williams (2000) proposes that generalisation is inevitable, desirable, and possible with qualitative research.

It is held that interpretivism must employ a special kind of generalisation, characterised as *moderatum*. This type of generalisation requires ‘inductive inferences’ and is premised on drawing ‘categorical equivalences’ (Williams, 2000). In order to advance *moderatum*, generalisations sufficient detail must be given of the “characteristic being studied and, crucially, on the similarities of the research site to the sites to which generalisation is to be attempted” (Payne & Williams, 2005, p. 297). Although I have purposively selected research participants to meet my predetermined criteria of FA coach educators, this method has not resulted in a sample that can be considered statistically representative of people who deliver coach education courses elsewhere. However, I believe that the coach educators’ descriptions of their micropolitical and emotional aspects of their working practice in this study could be utilised as a resource for wider critical reflection. In this regard, Stake (1980) suggested that qualitative methods may “provide a vicarious link with the reader’s experience and thus be a natural bias for generalisation” (p. 64). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated “the final judgement is vested in the person seeking to make the transfer” (p. 217).

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

I believe that the findings of this study provide a useful starting point for future research into coach education, in particular the everyday realities of being a coach educator. I think that it was valuable in terms of allowing me to retrospectively access the meanings and emotions that the participant coach educators attributed to their everyday interactions within their role through the utilisation of the narrative-biographical approach. However, I do not believe that this approach represents the ‘best’, or indeed, ‘only’, way to develop our empirical and theoretical understandings of the coach education environment and in particular coach educators’ everyday working practices.

I believe that the findings of this study can stimulate further fruitful avenues of inquiry. More empirical research into coach education is needed in order to deepen our knowledge of the realities surrounding coach education programmes. In this respect, further qualitative research focusing on coach education programmes would be useful in terms of gaining a more in-depth understanding of how coach education is delivered and the perceptions and experiences of the coach educators and coach learners. Through employing different methodological approaches, future inquiry could focus on what actually occurs during coach education course, as well as why social actors think, feel and act in the various ways that they do. Indeed, a more auto/ethnographic approach could be used to develop more contextually sensitive and dynamic accounts of coach education practices. In addition, future research investigating the perspectives of contextual stakeholders at different hierarchy levels, as highlighted in the study (e.g. line-managers and coach learners, as well as more coach educators), could provide further understandings of the actions, interactions, behaviours, philosophies, opinions

and values of those involved in coach education (Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Nelson *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, with reference to the theoretical frameworks utilised in this study, future investigations could seek to examine the relationship and interplay between micropolitics and emotion. Here the work of education theorists (e.g. Ball, 1987; Kelchtermans, 2005; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b; Hargreaves, 2000; Hochschild, 2000 [1983]; Zembylas, 2005) for example, could be utilised to further develop our theoretical understanding of the interconnections between emotion, micropolitics, learning, and behaviour. In doing so, I believe we can hopefully not only begin to better understand coaches and coach educators experiences, but also the extent to which these experiences are recognised and understood as embodied ones.

While researchers in the sociology of work have increasingly considered the subjective experiences of employees in various organisations (e.g. Burchell *et al.*, 1999; Doogan, 2001; Kalleberg, 2009), little comparable attention has been given to sports workers (e.g., athletes, coaches, officials, support staff, administrators). Indeed, while developments in the wider sociology of work have contributed to an increased sociological understanding of “precarious work” and “insecure workers” (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 1) in neo-liberal societies, there remains a dearth of such literature within sporting contexts. This is somewhat surprising as, similar to the coach educators in this study, those working in sporting organisations might experience careers that are not only “relatively short term in nature”, but also include contending with “the ever-present possibility of career failure and rejection” (Roderick, 2006, p. 246; Andrews & Silk, 2012; Purdy, Potrac & Nelson, *in press*). Indeed, it could be argued that what is true of actor subjectivity in workplaces outside of the sporting sector, such as fears about the threat of unemployment, is also relevant to our on-going consideration of the

careers of sports workers (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac *et al.*, 2012, 2013; Roderick, 2006; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2014; Purdy *et al.*, *in press*).

Interestingly, from the feedback I have received during the viva-voce, and my own reflections upon it, I recognise that I now have an uncertain time ahead of me for in terms of where to next in my own career be it in an academic or non-academic settings. I also have to think about relocating if the career path leads me away from Hull, and how is my life, from a family perspective, and playing/coaching football, and the potential to become a coach educator, will now be affected. I believe that if I do decide to start applying for, and obtain, an academic research post, I will certainly have to give considerable time and thought to considering the question of ‘where to next’ with my research.

What I have recognised from the data I have collected (and did not obtain), the theorising of this data, my reading of sociological research in sports coaching/coach education, and my own experiences of academic and sporting organisations, is that a ‘career’ is likely to be gritty, ambiguous, political, and emotional. In many ways, I think this might in some ways be attributed to the various wishes, philosophies, demands, and fears that people bring to their interactions with others. Indeed, I would certainly like to find out more about how working relationships and conditions, career aspirations and trajectories, influence the identities of individuals. Therefore, my first research question to engage with would be:

- a) What are the interactions that occur between coaches/coach educators, their organisational contexts, the working conditions that they experience, and the impact that these interactions may subsequently have on their workplace identities and career trajectories?

In addition to the workplace interactions and their impact on career trajectories, I understand that life and relationships at work (which this thesis was focused on) also affects life and relationships at home. Even though I did not explore this topic within this thesis, my own experiences of the work-life balance, as well as my conversations with friends and colleagues, have led me to identify this as something that I would like to explore further. For example:

- b) How do the demands of the 'career' affect or impact on the home life of coach educators and their relationship with various significant others (e.g., partners, friends, parents)? What are the problematic features of these interactions? How does, if at all, engaging in the political and emotional 'games' at work affecting the balance of family/home life. How do coaches/coach educators attempt to deal with the dilemmas that they face in this regard?

Given my critiques of the theoretical sensitivity of Kelchtermans' concept of structural-vulnerability that I outlined in the preceding discussion chapter, I would like to further my understanding of the temporal, subcultural, and embodied nature of the anxiety and fear that my data hints is a feature of workplace vulnerability. This issue seems especially prevalent at this point in time, as employees working in sporting and non-sporting (and indeed academic) organisations are increasingly subjected to detailed scrutiny and evaluation. Such neo-liberal working practices appear, to be increasingly promoting a 'fear of failure' among individuals. So, my third topic for future research consideration is:

- c) When and how do coaches/coach educators experience fear and worry in the workplace? What is at stake for coaches/coach educators both professionally and personally? How are these emotions embodied? How do such emotions

influence their engagements with others both inside and outside of the workplace?

6.3 Reflections on the ‘Messy’ Realities of the Research Process

Often, as scholars and researchers, we engage in the research process, as well as read other studies, without paying attention towards the ‘actual’ research process (i.e. the ‘blood, sweat and tears’). Conducting research is a painstaking and time-consuming activity, especially in qualitative research investigations that require sustained and intense interactions with various participants. Given my ‘epistemological viewpoint’, I believe that it is important to recognise the emotional nature of my engagement in the research process, especially from a data collection perspective (Coffey, 1999). In addition, Dickson-Swift, James and Liamputtong (2008) suggested that the embodied experiences of researchers can be emotional in nature, and should therefore be examined and explored in relation to the qualitative research performed. Furthermore, Morrison-Saunders, Moore, Hughes and Newsome (2010), advocated that emotions are an integral part of the doctorate process, so, needs to be understood in relation to the process of undertaking a Ph.D. It is in light of this that I would like to end this study by sharing with the reader some my own experiences of being a qualitative researcher.

Throughout this empirical study, I, the research instrument, was constantly reflecting upon the process, experiences and emotions that accompanied the production of this thesis. In relation to Denzin’s (1984) illustration of emotionality, which suggested that emotionality is central to the intersection of the person and society, I would argue that emotions (and micropolitics) are central to the research process. Indeed, I have found that conducting this whole research project has been a ‘rollercoaster ride’ of emotions and, indeed, micropolitics (Morrison-Saunders *et al.*,

2010). Trying to see the world through other people's eyes has been intellectually, and emotionally and politically, demanding process of exploration and discover (Gilbert, 2001).

When initially starting out on the Ph.D. journey, I found myself feeling excited about undertaking a new research project; especially after I had enjoyed conducting and constructing my dissertation thesis in my undergraduate BSc Sports Coaching and Performance degree. I believed this was a new chapter in my life. At 23 years old, I recognised that by obtaining a doctorate there may be opportunities that would present themselves in the future from a coaching and coach education perspective, especially with my own background within football coaching at the time. My early enthusiasm reflects the work of Morrison-Saunders *et al.* (2010), who suggested that in the early phase of a doctorate study enthusiasm of undertaking the research project is linked to the challenge and anticipation of undertaking the Ph.D.

Once I had established the proposed research questions for this study, I quickly secured the collaboration of four FA coach educators. This was both a relief and also very satisfying. Fortunately, due to my own previous experiences playing, coaching and attending coach education programmes in football, I already knew the four participant coach educators personally. However, in my mind, there was some doubt as to whether they would accept to be part of the process and share their experiences in detail. I realised that it would be an extremely personal experience for each of the participants. So, throughout the initial interviews, I understood that I had to be patient in order to let each of the coach educators 'open' up in their own time.

I was extremely pleased with my initial interviews. I enjoyed listening to the coach educators' experiences and I was beginning to build relationships that were different to those that I had already established with them, in both a professional and

personal manner. I recognised that trust was the main factor in this new ‘interviewer-interviewee’ relationship that I had started to develop with each of the participants. My experiences here could be understood in relation to Herman’s (2010) suggestion that the emotions of the participants and the researcher play an important role within the research project. Indeed, similar to Herman’s reflections, I found that the “eager-to-talk respondents” kept me motivated and enthused about interviewing “in the field” (p. 286). The participants offered varying degrees of ‘openness’. Some seemed happy to talk about all of their experiences, while others seemed a little more reluctant. Andy was great and I looked forward interviewing him, as he seemed very willing to share his past experiences with me. Dean was funny but found it difficult to explain his emotions unless he was pressed about them and asked to go into more detail. Despite the problematic issues surrounding the ‘openness’ of the interviews, I enjoyed listening to the experiences and opinions of the coach educators on the whole. From my own personal perspective, I believed that I was starting to develop a better understanding of the coach educators’ role and the interactions that were a feature of their working lives.

However, there were times during some interviews, especially with Brian, that the participant coach educators struggled to ‘open-up’ emotionally. Instead they often ‘papered’ over this by generalising past incidents rather than specifically discussing their own experiences in as much depth as I wanted. This was most pronounced when asking them to share with me the more intimate aspects of their working lives (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, similar to Wilkins (1993) study, I found that trying to delve deeper into the emotional, political and experiential aspects of these themed experiences became a difficult and frustrating process. I recognised that there were many ‘hurdles’ I had to overcome in order to acquire the depth and quality of data that I finally obtained (Shaffir, Stebbins & Turowetz, 1980):

March 2012: Brian’s house

I am sat opposite Brian and I ask him to talk the feelings that he has had experienced when coach learners have failed to grasp what he had already demonstrated to them on the course. He sits there staring into space for a number of seconds and then replies with, "Erm, I guess I don't feel anything, I get on with it". I am sat there thinking that 'surely you must feel something'. So I re-phrase the question, "Do you feel frustrated when candidates fail to coach how you have shown them?" He replied straight away, "Maybe every now and again". Finally, I'm thinking he may begin to open up, so I ask him to describe an experience where he felt specifically frustrated. His reply was, "It's just in general, I can't think of any one time where I was frustrated, I guess I just go in and demonstrate what he could have done. It's more for the group more than the individual when I go in and coach the coaches..." For the next five minutes or so he starts to discuss technical points that the coaches struggle to grasp and why. Then he moves onto talking about why the new Youth Module strand of the FA's coach education pathway is better because coaches have different intervention strategies. Every pause he has I am trying to ask him about his frustrations about coach learners, but he keeps moving off on a tangent discussing the different strands of FA coach education courses. The moment had gone and I know I have to ask a few questions to get back to the frustrations again... More time wasted, and more transcribing information that isn't direct relevant to my research questions.

These instances had become more frequent occurrence during the interview process, especially when attempting to 'dig deep' into the feelings they had experience in particular situations, or why they had performed actions in a certain way. It was a difficult process. The rollercoaster ride of emotions had well and truly begun as I found that some interviews had gone really well, but others were a struggle (Morrison-Saunders *et al.*, 2010).

The transcription of the interviews quickly became an issue for me throughout the data collection process. Knowing that it was imperative to transcribe the interview data accurately in order to 'sift' through it to determine patterns, themes and 'make sense' of the coach educators' was becoming a 'weight' on me after every interview. At times, I procrastinated but this only added to the weight on my shoulders because

another interview then occurred and I realised I had two interviews to subsequently transcribe. Eventually, I realised that I had to transcribe the interviews if I were to engage with my chosen mode of iterative data analysis, and have the work prepared for the deadline meetings with my supervisors, which were arranged to discuss the findings of the interviews that I had completed. I felt the pressure mounting and I recognised that I had to motivate myself to start working harder in order to keep ‘on top’ of my data. Obviously, I felt that I could not let my supervisors know this, so I constantly exaggerated on how much work I had done in order to keep them ‘off my back’. I was very conscious of the fact I did not want to ‘let them down’, but in essence I felt I had already let myself down.

I began to struggle with the workload. This was made even worse when my supervisors would tell me that I needed to go out and collect more data to further ‘exhaust’ the participants. In particular, there were many times I was sat in their office and challenged to produce richer accounts of the participants’ experiences:

27th April 2012: 3.05pm
Supervisors Office

“I was sat in the stifling hot office feeling guilty knowing that I had two transcripts that I had not typed up yet. My supervisors asked me how things were going. I lied, “Yeah going well at the minute”. I then dragged out two copies of some transcripts that I had done in the last day. I was thinking 10 hours’ worth of typing and I don’t know where to start the analysis because the participants had gone off on so many tangents. My supervisors started to look through the basic analysis I had done, and all I thought was ‘I hope they are happy with this’. After discussing the analysis, they both said I needed to go ask more questions relating to this. I looked up, refrained from sighing, and told them, “No worries”. I walked out of the office feeling even more frustrated and angry thinking ‘when is this process just going to end?’”

In relation to the micropolitical and emotional frameworks used in this study, I increasingly recognised how my role as the interviewer/researcher could also be

understood in terms. During my interactions with the participants and supervisors, I found myself harbouring certain frustrations, anger, anxiousness, depression and self-doubt (Herman, 2010). When reflecting on Hochschild (2000 [1983]) discussion of emotional management, I, like my participants, constantly found myself managing my feeling. I did this in an attempt to hide the difficulties I was beginning to face during the research process from my supervisors. Even though I felt that I was struggling with the workload and issues arising with the data, I believed I had to portray a strong personality so that my supervisors trusted my ability to keep 'on top' of the workload.

In reflecting upon why I never showed my true emotions, my reasoning was two-fold. First, I felt that I wanted to be perceived as 'he knows what he's doing', I did not want to show weakness that I was struggling to comprehend the whole research concept. Second, I wanted to be seen as a 'positive' person because that is ultimately, in my opinion, 'who I am'. My reputation is based on the fact that I am a positive and enthusiastic individual. Reflecting upon this, my personality is to be 'up-beat', but whenever I fail to demonstrate this 'image' I believe others will think 'something must be wrong'. I have learnt that when things are 'wrong' in my life, it is important that I portray my usual positive 'exterior' to the best of my ability. However, during these occasions, it is 'false'. This was happening during this stage of conducting the research, especially in front of my supervisors. I believed that if they thought I was not 'being myself' then I would have 'let them down' and they would have questioned my ability to 'stick at it'. So, I believed, right or wrongly, that I had to keep sustain this 'exterior'. In order to maintain our positive relationships, I recognised the importance of portraying positive emotions throughout the whole research process. I did not want my supervisors to know that I was feeling frustrated with their feedback because I believed that if I had revealed my frustrations then they may not be as supportive further on in the research project. I wanted to keep them on 'my side' in order for them to help me in

the future to progress with the Ph.D., because if I would have ‘lost it’ then they may not have been as supportive, which would have likely affected my thesis work.

I felt similar when interviewing the participant coach educators. There were times I felt that I had to control my frustrations in front of the participant coach educators. I recognised that I had to remain ‘in control’ when interviewing them and asking them personal questions, instead of insisting on repeatedly attempting to ask probing questions that seemed uncomfortable to answer (Kleinmann & Copp, 1993). I understood that despite our previous positive personal relationships that had been developed over many years, which I was extremely conscious of sustaining, I knew that by revealing my frustrations I may have affected these relationships, personally, professionally and from a research perspective. In addition, there were occasions during the interview process with the participants in which I felt I had to show empathy to their experiences. Additionally, I recognised that I had attached a significant importance in remaining ‘professional’ during the interviews. This was in keeping with the work of Dickson-Swift *et al.* (2008), who suggested that by remaining professional during the research process “involved not showing any outward signs of emotion” (p. 87). However, I found this was a difficult process at times, due to my own passion surrounding coaching and coach education provision, which resulted in my ‘true’ emotions surfacing during tangential discussions. Reflecting upon this, I recognised that I was however extremely conscious of not displaying certain opinions, and emotions, that could have potentially impacted negatively upon my professional relations with the participants. During these instances, I acknowledged that I was laughing, nodding and agreeing with them as they told their stories. In these occasions, I considered that I was portraying an ‘image’ that sometimes was not in accordance with my ‘true’ emotions. So, in essence, I was performing emotion work (Hochschild, 2000 [1983]) in order to appropriately demonstrate the ‘correct’ mannerisms in relation to the discussions. This

was partly due to the fact that the majority of the interviews had taken place at the home of the participant, and in order to ‘respect’ being in that person’s house, I realised that it was important to show respect with my body language and mannerisms. Indeed, I was keen to avoid displaying any ‘inappropriate’ emotions, as I felt that to do so might negatively impact upon the willingness of the participants to continue to their involvement in this project (Kleinmann, 1991).

Halfway through my thesis work, I reached a stage where I felt I literally had enough of the whole thing. I was struggling to cope with everything. The balance of the Ph.D. work and the constant ‘scraping of a living’ combined with too many football matches and holding down part-time coaching jobs was proving to be a difficult challenge for me. It also meant that I had to spend many late nights and weekends in the working in the library. However, I found it was mostly the guilt of not doing enough work for my supervisors that really affected me. I was two years into the process and I had become so stressed that I had to tell someone:

5th May 2012: 12.13pm

My House

Phone call to Mum:

Me: *“I can’t handle this anymore Mum, it’s too much, I’m constantly scraping to live, no money, too much with coaching and playing football, but I need to continue to do this to get money. I’m not sleeping...”*

Mum: *“Calm down. Look it’s your decision but just think you’re nearly two years into the process and look what can happen at the end, think of the rewards.”*

Me: *“Yes but I can’t see how I’m going to get through this part, it’s too much and too hard!”*

Mum: *“Well put it into perspective, coaching and football will stop in the coming weeks and you will have more free time to make sure that you can concentrate on getting the workload right and start planning what you need to do.”*

Me: *“I just think I need to get on top of it, but I’m so far behind!”*

Mum: *“I’ll transfer you some money to help you get through the next few months and*

then you can concentrate on doing the work you need to get done.”

Me: *“Ok, thank you. I’ll set aside a month to just work every day on this. 100% focus.”*

I believe that my experiences here could be understood in relation to Morrison-Saunders *et al.* (2010) ‘middle phase’ of the research process, where the fieldwork, data collection, and data analysis occurs. It was advocated that this is often associated with frustrating repetitive analysis, re-analysis, and writing and re-writing of results. This was when I felt the most isolated and unmotivated. It was also a period where I had to suppress my true feelings on a regular basis so that I could maintain my desired positive ‘front’ in my dealings with my relevant contextual stakeholders (e.g. participants and supervisors) (Herman, 2010; Kleinmann & Copp, 1993; Morrison-Saunders *et al.*, 2010).

After the phone call with my Mum, I still had my doubts and I was extremely stressed, but all of a sudden I had been given some support and I felt more motivated to work and get back on track. In addition, I took two months out to go work in America coaching football, which gave me a ‘release’ from it all. I recognised that there was still a large workload waiting for me on my return. After explaining to my supervisors that I needed some time away, I was able to feel ‘refreshed’ for my remaining year to complete the work. However, the emotions of having to explain to my supervisors that I was about to leave for America for two months was an extremely stressful period of my relationship with them. Fortunately, they understood and I was able to set a deadline to motivate myself to complete some work before I went away.

On my return, I had started to finalise the coach educators’ narratives, and by December 2012 I had handed in full draft narratives and once again I had felt more positive about how the thesis was starting to be constructed. I had now approximately 45,000 words written and I was starting to become satisfied with how the thesis was

taking shape. However, my elation was not long-lived as my supervisors then returned my drafts back to me with red pen written all over them. In addition, we had to begin structuring the discussion chapter, what I considered to be the most important segment of the thesis. The discussions that I had with my supervisors during this period were definitely a high point in the research process as we finalised our conceptual sense making of my data. However, this soon turned into frustration, as I attempted to ‘write-up’ the discussion at the level expected. There were three different occasions when I had submitted draft copies of my discussion chapter of the thesis, and on each occasion they gave me back a new ‘thought-process’ of this particular chapter. So, with the narratives and discussion chapters, the emotional frustration and disappointment combined overwhelmed me at times. Again, referring back to Hochschild’s (2000 [1983]) discussion of emotion management and Goffman’s (1959) explanation of impression management, I felt I had to hide these negative emotions to my supervisors in order to sustain the positive ‘momentum’ that I had created since returning from America. Again, I recognised that my supervisors had seen my ‘up-beat, positive’ exterior, which was authentic once I had returned from America, but as soon as this started to diminish, I was conscious that I had to portray the ‘false’ positive attitude. I felt that my supervisors fed off my enthusiasm during our meetings, so I believed that if I failed to demonstrate this motivation then they would know there was something ‘wrong’ with me. I did not want to feel that I was going to let them down after everything I had gone through previously and remained ‘strong’ emotionally by not allowing my true frustrations to be revealed. Admittedly, I knew I could do it again, and I managed to accomplish this.

Eventually, these chapters, as well as the rest of my thesis, started to take shape, and I was able to submit a full draft thesis in July 2013 to my supervisors. At the time this was my biggest high of the ‘rollercoaster ride’ to date. I felt elation to have brought

everything together and look down at the bottom of my computer screen to see 96,027 words in one Microsoft Word document. I also felt a huge amount of pride, especially given the highs and lows that occurred throughout the Ph.D. process. This contrasted strongly with my earlier feelings of immense frustrations that nearly led me to end my candidature as a Ph.D. student. However, despite this happiness and relief, I recognised that there was still the worry of having to edit my whole thesis before the final submission could be made. So, a full week with my supervisors awaited me in November 2013, as well as a weekend in January 2014, which involved sifting through the thesis and editing the content to the required standard. 12 hour days, short lunch breaks, constant reading, typing, re-reading, re-typing, and organising in the hot offices of my supervisors, while they left me alone and read the other chapters. It was like a never-ending edit, I was happy with one section, I would tell them, and they would say “tell me more about this aspect”. By this time, I realised I was close to completing and submitting the doctorate; I was so focused and motivated to complete the work.

Finally, after two more months of reading, editing, re-reading and re-editing in my spare time I had finally tied up the ‘loose ends’ of the thesis and was ready to submit. However, these months were hard and ‘emotionally fatiguing’ as I had taken a new full-time job at Hull City Tigers Sport and Education Trust as the Education Coordinator. I found myself editing and re-writing my thesis in my spare time at work, or after work, or at the weekends, which was difficult. I had become increasingly fatigued at the thought of picking up my thesis where I had left it, but whenever I found time to edit it, I found myself determined and excited at the prospect that it was close to submission. I became emotionally ‘numb’ a few weeks before I had to submit as I knew I had got past the difficult aspects of the Ph.D. I believe that it was this ‘numbness’ that made me determined to finish the thesis despite the minor edits that my supervisors kept returning to me via email. Eventually I had realised that they wanted this thesis to be as

close as possible to perfection, as did I, so the little re-edits I had to re-write were fuelling, and re-fuelling, my energy towards completing the write-up and finally submitting.

6.4 Practical Implications

12th March 2014: 7.36pm

Parents' House

I am at my parents' house for a couple of nights before submitting this Ph.D. thesis:

Dad: *"So what did you find out from your study?"*

Me: *"I found that being a coach educator is difficult. It's political, especially when dealing with the FA, co-tutors, and candidates attending the courses. Also, the emotional aspect of being a coach educator can be hard. The coach educators I interviewed all said they hid their true emotions in order to remain in their job role."*

Dad: *"I guess it's quite similar to your own coaching role, in respect that you have to hold your tongue to the Head of Youth, players and coaching colleagues."*

Me: *"Yes definitely, I didn't think being a coach educator would entail similar things that occur in the coaching environment."*

Dad: *"Now you know that, are you still interested in becoming a coach educator?"*

Me: *"I'm a little more sceptical about it, but I think that since I'm used to it in coaching I could handle the political and emotional problems that we deal with when coaching."*

Dad: *"So how would you perform your role as a coach educator?"*

Me: *"Well I guess I found out that the better 'image' you have in the eyes of the FA, the better chance you have of advancing yourself in the FA. So I would have to be totally professional whenever I'm representing the FA. I guess with regards to the coach learners, I have found that the delivery of the content is the least of the coach educators' concerns, more important are the relationships they build with the candidates so that coach educators are seen to be helping them develop at every opportunity."*

Dad: *"Similar to coaching players then?"*

- Me: *“Extremely, but more scrutiny because at the end of the day they want a qualification to go and coach and develop players, and a coach educator’s decision allows them to do that. So it’s important as a coach educator that the decision is based on the right criteria. It’s difficult though because if they pass a candidate and then he does a poor job coaching it could come back on the coach educator because it was them that passed the candidate. Then on the other hand, if the coach educator decides to not pass the candidate, I’ve heard some experiences of having to deal with angry candidates.”*
- Dad: *“So a bit different to just turning up and developing coaches like you initially thought?”*
- Me: *“Totally, the pressure to perform at the standards and expectations of the FA, co-coach educators and coach learners seem extremely high, which then makes coach educators vulnerable as those people perceiving them may think they are a poor coach educator. They have to be able to back up everything they do in case someone questions it. There’s a lot of pressure just in that.”*
- Dad: *“So in light of these issues why would you like to become a coach educator then?”*
- Me: *“Similar to why I coach with these issues. I like the satisfaction and happiness you get from watching someone improve because of your own input. It makes it all worthwhile. Knowing that you can affect a person positively to improve, develop and learn to be better gives great job satisfaction. By doing this, I have found that their reputation improves. So, having to ‘perform’ and ‘act’ differently to how you feel at certain times, isn’t necessary always a bad thing, as it can sometimes lead to positive outcomes as well.”*

Following on from this, I would advocate that CPD for coach educators should involve a module of the ‘messy’ realities of being a coach educator. In this respect, the issues surfaced within this study would be an initial insight into what it’s like to be a coach educator delivering coach education provision. Also by drawing upon other research by Jones (Jones, 2006, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004), Potrac (Potrac *et al.*, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2013; Potrac & Jones 2009a, 2009b, 2011), among others (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Purdy & Jones, 2011) in the broader coaching research, could be utilised in order for coach educators to recognise how managing interactions with these stakeholders could be influential, or indeed detrimental, towards their future development. In addition, encouraging coach educators to analyse and reflect upon ‘narrative’ research could also help assist their own professional development (Smith, 1999; Smith & Sparkes, 2002). By illustrating the ambiguities,

nuances, on-going struggles, micropolitical and emotional in these narratives, the coach educators may become more aware of the issues that may arise and how they can deal with these. Furthermore, within this CPD module that could be implemented, the importance of current coach educators sharing their experiences through reflective practice would also assist the future potential development of neophyte, as well as existing coach educators. Indeed, I believe such work can assist to better prepare coach educators for the often 'messy' and contested realities of practice. In no way am I seeking to devalue the current development and delivery of the coach educators, as I recognise the value of their role and the role they play within developing coaching standards. However, from my perspective, it would seem unwise to continue to think about the coach educators' role in only a delivery of technical and tactical content driven by NGBs, especially the FA in this context.

7.0 References

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